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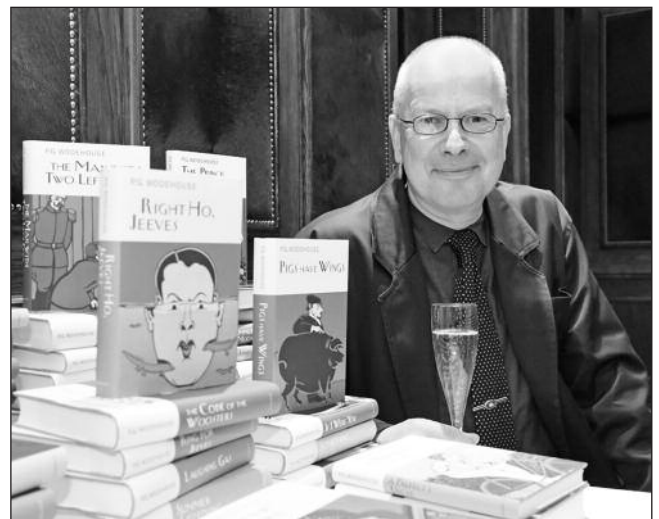
The Everyman Wodehouse Uniform Edition: Celebration of the Project Completion

by Robert Bruce

Most members will be aware that Everyman recently completed their Everyman Wodehouse uniform edition project. A celebration to mark this event was held on 20 April 2015 at The Goring Hotel in London. The venue was appropriate, The Goring having been the favourite hotel of that well-known Wodehouse fan, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. The involvement of Bollinger – sponsors of the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for comic literature (the 2015 winner of which is Alexander McCall Smith) – was much in evidence at the event.

Glasses were raised. The sound of corks popping from magnums of Bollinger was heard. And, at the urging of David Campbell, the publisher of Everyman's Library, we toasted the completion of the Everyman Wodehouse.

A packed throng of literary and Wodehouse types had gathered in The Goring Hotel, a mere cricket ball throw from the back garden of Buckingham Palace, to celebrate the fact that for the first time a full hardback edition, 99 books strong, was available.



Cover illustrator Andrzej Klimowski with his Everyman books (and glass of Bollinger champagne).

(Photo copyright Graham Fidger)

Campbell was celebrating not just the completion of the 16-year task but the fact that, since the emergence of the first books in the edition, Everyman has sold over half a million copies worldwide. He was in fine form, reminding everyone of his favourite Wodehouse nuggets. "It was one of those still evenings you get in the summer, when you can hear a snail clear its throat a mile away," he reminded us. And indeed it was an evening when summer felt not too far off.

Through the doors of The Goring we took our Bollinger for a walk across the hotel's croquet lawn (one of London's great hidden assets) and mingled with many Freddie Threepwood lookalikes, who we discovered were mostly members of the literary press. One of the happiest people in the throng was Royal College of Art professor Andrzej Klimowski, who had, over the years, created all the cover illustrations for the edition. A great roar of appreciation went up as Campbell praised his



Sir Edward Cazalet and David Campbell

(Photo copyright Graham Fidger)

extraordinary achievement. Many there rather savoured the idea that the last of what ought now to be known as the Everyman canon was *Sunset at Blandings*.

Wodehouse's grandson, Sir Edward Cazalet, was there to add the family imprimatur. He spoke of the joy of the young Plum when he first arrived in America as a young man seeking success in musical theatre and as a fledgling novelist. "My grandfather said that landing in the US was like arriving in Heaven only without all the bother and expense of getting there," he said. And even after the war, when the US had changed substantially, his enthusiasm remained undimmed. "He later said that it was like meeting an old friend you have not seen for a long time, who has put on an awful lot of weight."

The assembled throng, intent on drinking their weight in Bollinger, tended to agree, noisily. And the sun did indeed go down over the lawn.



Appropriately enough, PGW's final book was among the last three titles Everyman published.

There were men in London – bookmakers, skittle sharps, jellied eel sellers on race courses, and men like that – who would not know whom you were referring to if you had mentioned Einstein, but they all knew Gally. He had been, till that institution passed beyond the veil, a man at whom the old Pelican Club pointed with pride, and had known more policemen by their first names than any man in the metropolis.

(From *Sunset at Blandings*, 1977)

Honouring Bob Miller

Julian Hill reports on the charity cricket match at Audley End

A great match was held on the 17th May at Audley End House, in the proud tradition of 'the true gent' – our late captain, Bob Miller. In our annual charity game against the Patrick Kidd XI, the Gold Bats made 186 for 8, with good contributions from almost everyone, after a strong start from our top three batsmen: Stokes, Stokes (father & son), and Wilcox, plus a few runs later on from Lee and the captain.

Patrick Kidd's Times/Wisden All-Stars nearly chased it down and needed 20-odd from the last two overs (with two wickets left) – so all result possibilities were still on. However, despite them having their best players back in (under the 25-runs-then-retire-but-return-later rules), some great fielding and straight bowling from Lee and Martin, plus a wicket off the penultimate ball, restricted them, and they finished seven short!

Special mention for the Gold Bats in the field: great catches from Graham Stokes (yes, him again)



Close-up of the plaque on the bench dedicated to Bob Miller

and John Halliwell (in his now famous 'knit one purl one' sweater), plus a sparkling exhibition from Nigel behind the stumps (having never done it before and being given five minutes' notice while enjoying his tea) – oh, and seldom-seen-before Gold Bat athleticism in the field, notably from Johnsy.

A bench was aptly unveiled to the 'Father of the Gold Bats', Bob Miller (with his entry in this year's *Wisden* being read out by Patrick). How chuffed would the great man have been with that? It was wonderful to see the Millerettes (Maureen, Claudia, and Candice) looking gorgeous with their families at the game.

Many thanks to Patrick Kidd and Bill Starr for the day. Patrick reports that we raised £500, which is being donated to the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity in Chelmsford. That, too, is a fitting tribute to our late captain. We all agreed he would have loved this day.



The teams and groupies at Audley End

Society News

Renewals

If you pay your Society sub by cheque, cash, or electronically, you may spot a renewal reminder with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*. Of course, we hope you're planning to renew, but if you aren't going to do so, we'd be very grateful if you'd let us know by contacting one of the Society names on the back page. If we know, we won't keep chasing you up.

Treasurer Appointment Update

Following calls in previous issues of *Wooster Sauce* for volunteers for the prestigious role of Treasurer to the Society, a successor to the present incumbent, Jeremy Neville, has yet to be identified.

As previously mentioned, work and family commitments mean Jeremy just can't continue as Treasurer, a role which he estimates entails an evening every week or so, and ideally, but not essentially, physical attendance at three or four afternoon committee meetings in London annually. Contact with committee colleagues is mostly by email.

The role calls for numeracy and a basic familiarity with use of a simple computer-based accounting system, and ideally, in the short-term at least, to own or have access to such a system. That said, if possession of accounting software is a problem, well, Bertie would probably say that Love Will Find a Way, so don't let it stop you stepping up.

Win a Rare PGW Original!

The Committee are delighted to announce that all members attending the Society meeting at the Savoy Tup in London on 22 July will have a chance of winning a copy of a PGW rarity.

Just over 100 years before our meeting, on 26 June, 1915, the *Saturday Evening Post* started its first serialisation of a Wodehouse novel – *Something New*, which was retitled *Something Fresh* in the UK and was the first Blandings novel.

The names of all members present when the Chairman rises to speak at the meeting will be entered in a hat, and the Chairman will draw out the name of the person who will win a copy – admittedly not in pristine condition! – of the *SEP* for that date, which carries a banner headline about the serialisation on the front cover.

Cricket 2015

Didn't manage to make it to the Dulwich match? Don't worry, you can still enjoy watching the Gold Bats playing the Sherlock Holmes Society of London on Sunday, 21 June, at West Wycombe. The game is played

to our own interpretation of 1895 cricket laws and features generous breaks for lunch and tea so spectators and players can enjoy their own picnics at leisure. West Wycombe is a delightful National Trust village near High Wycombe, and the cricket ground is no less attractive, as the club's website, www.westwycombecricketclub.co.uk, demonstrates. Play starts at around 11.30 a.m., finishes around 6.00 p.m. – and tends to continue at one of the many pubs in the village. Hard to describe how to find the ground, but it has a postcode, HP14 3AE, which should help. It's a lovely day out, whether or not you're interested in cricket.

Help Wanted: Membership Manager

When, last year, Day Macaskill joined us as Membership Manager, sweetness and light abounded. Day picked up the reins from his predecessor, David Lindsay, with aplomb, throwing himself into the task of cleaning out and reorganising the database. And, like David, he has done sterling work, for which we are enormously grateful.

But alas, like Jeremy, Day has a full-time job and young family that deserve his full attention, and he can no longer carry on – so we need a new volunteer Membership Manager. Details of the position appeared in the December 2013 *Wooster Sauce*, but effectively the job entails managing the database, producing mailing labels, receiving and paying in cheques for dues, and liaising with other Committee members as needed.

Wooster Sauce Editor

In our last issue, we reported that Graeme Davidson would be taking over from Elin Murphy as Editor of this journal. We are sorry to report that this is no longer the case as it has become clear that there are differences between Graeme and the Committee regarding editorial policy. Following discussions with the Chairman, Graeme felt unable to continue because of those differences.

The Committee recognizes that Graeme has given a great deal of time to making this issue of *Wooster Sauce* his own, and we thank him for all the effort he put into it. We are sure that some of his innovations will continue to feature in future issues. Meanwhile, publication will continue as before, for the time being.

Letters to the Editor

From Harry Grove, Shropshire

Sir

How nice to see Mr Hunter proving that censors know all the truth. Would it be worth trying 'Top hole'?

Readers will recall that it was Allen Hunter who wrote, in the cover story of our March 2015 issue, of his efforts down in Australia to secure the car registration plate "WHAT HO!". As he reported, those efforts were thwarted by persons in the State bureaucracy responsible for approving the issue of car registration plates, who it is believed found the plate "inappropriate or offensive" due to language in the plate being the street-slang, or patois, of the rapster for a lady of dubious (or, perhaps more accurately, if less charitably, no) virtue.

The March 2015 cover story drew a deal of interest and tickled several people's fancy, and not just locally, getting picked up in The Times on 7 April 2015 (see Recent Press Comment section in this issue) and resulting in an interview with Allen Hunter for Australia Broadcasting Corporation's popular radio programme, Drive, conducted by the celebrated Australian broadcaster and writer (and Wodehouse enthusiast), Richard Glover (see On the Boards, the Screens and the Airwaves section in this issue). – Graeme Davidson

From Robert W Stimpson, Isle of Man

Sir

On recently discovering the Society, I thought I would make you aware of the background to Alice Dovey, the unrequited love of Wodehouse's time in New York, as referred to in *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*, edited by Sophie Ratcliffe.

A trained singer, Dovey performed with her sister before Queen Victoria as a child. She was the great-granddaughter of William Kennish (1799–1862), a Manxman who emigrated to America in 1848/9, with his family following a year later. He discovered the first

canal route linking the Pacific to the Atlantic without locks in 1852, and was a formative figure in the development of Royal Navy gunnery. Further details are shown on my Kennish website at www.william-kennish.com.

Of Alice, according to Sophie Ratcliffe, Wodehouse said, 'All the heroines in my books are more or less drawn from her' – so she must have been a really determined, tenacious as well as beautiful woman!

If any of your Society's members might be interested in reading about her great-grandfather's life and seeing the family background behind the person who inspired many of Wodehouse's female characters, my website may be of interest. It includes a Wodehouse section.

My book on Kennish concentrates on his Royal Navy career, his expeditions into New Grenada, his inventions, his poetry, and his published work, together with full details of Alice's family tree and some details of the lives of her family. Members interested in obtaining a copy of my book may contact me directly at enquiries@william-kennish.com. Copies can be provided discounted from the cover price of £26 to £21 plus postage which will be around £7.

From Gerard Palmer, email-land

Sir

My apologies for bothering you with what is, no doubt, a trivial concern, but your ability to command the massed ranks of the Wodehousian intelligentsia puts you in a position to help me overcome a problem which, when I wake in the small hours, occupies my mind and banishes sleep.

What happened after Gussie eloped with the (temporary) cook – you know, old Stoker's younger daughter? Did all go well or were there further upheavals?

Ed: If any of the intelligentsia can answer, they are invited to respond with their answers, conclusive or speculative.



A Prevalence of Pubs

I believe Market Blandings has at least 12 pubs, which hitherto I had thought an improbably large number. However, having read *Portrait of Elmbury* by John Moore, I am convinced that I was wrong. Moore's book is a description of Tewkesbury between the two World Wars and he observes that there were 28 pubs to serve a population of fewer than 5,000.

Incidentally, Ian Alexander-Sinclair and I lunched at the Beetle & Wedge on the Thames a few months ago. It would be an intoxicating challenge to find the 11 other pubs in Market Blandings: The Emsworth Arms, The Blue Boar, The Blue Dragon, The Blue Cow, The Cow and Grasshopper, The Goat and Feathers, The Goose and Gander, The Jolly Cricketers, The Stitch in Time, The Wheatsheaf and The Waggoner's Rest.

– CHRISTOPHER BELLEW

The Society, London-Centricity and the Wider Society Community

Following up on concerns expressed in the last issue of *Wooster Sauce* about the existence or perception of London-centricity in the Society, this is an early practical response. The point was made that only around 30% of our members live in London. Some living elsewhere in the UK or abroad take the opportunity to attend London-based Society events when they visit, and indeed one member regularly travels from Edinburgh for the purpose of attending London Society events. But we know that many members can't make it to London for our events except on a rare or occasional basis, but who might find it convenient and enjoyable to meet up locally to talk Wodehouse among friends.

As we said in the last issue, for obvious practical reasons we can't actually organise groups and events without reciprocal assistance from members who live in those areas. We invited members who would like to meet up with other members, and who might be willing to get involved in the organisation to let us know by getting in touch with Membership Secretary Christine Hewitt (contact details on page 24).

We're sure there are clusters of members who may not even realise they live in close proximity to fellow Wodehouse enthusiasts, perhaps in surprising

numbers and perhaps even in the next street. We wonder whether members not realising this might have inhibited them from expressing an interest.

So, to help members get together, it occurs to us that *Wooster Sauce's* Letters to the Editor page might serve a useful purpose to Wodehouse enthusiasts out there wishing to gauge the density in their area of fellow Wodehouse enthusiasts.

With that in mind, if you might be interested in meeting up with fellow Wodehouse enthusiasts, but feel reluctant to commit to anything until you know more, why not write to the Letters page? It could be just the rallying cry your neighbours need.

It might be helpful to know that the Society's database is regionalised – albeit fairly broadly – and can be used by the Society for Society business, for example a regional mailing.

You don't need to live in a vast conurbation for this message to be pertinent to you. You might live in a five-horse town, and discover through the pages of *Wooster Sauce* that the owners of the other four horses are as dotty about Wodehouse as you are.

So, discontinue the impression of the cat i' the adage forthwith, and start thinking about penning that letter.

Cosy Moments

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (from Barry Chapman)

Having installed the disk that came with his two-volume set, Barry has found it convenient to search through the dictionary on his computer. In doing so, he has come across numerous Wodehouse quotations used to illustrate words. For example, the definition for the word 'leap' is accompanied by the PGW line: "She sprang onto the pavement with a gay leap." For 'echo', the apt quote is: Don't repeat everything I say, as if you were an echo in the Swiss mountains." (No story attributions are included.)

The War That Ended Peace, by Margaret MacMillan (2013) (from Ian Alexander-Sinclair)

Ian writes: "I did not realise that the Kaiser, Wilhelm II, was an admirer of Wodehouse." He goes on to point out that in this excellent account of the outbreak of World War I, Margaret MacMillan (Warden of St Anthony's College, Oxford) describes pre-war Anglo-German relations as follows:

For their part Germans admired English literature, especially Shakespeare, and the British way of life. Even during the Great War, the Cecilienhof at Potsdam, built for the crown

prince, took as its model an English Tudor house. Its bookshelves to this day are filled with the works of popular British authors from P.G. Wodehouse to Dornford Yates. (*paperback edition*, p.53)

Furthermore, after Germany's defeat, Wilhelm lived out the rest of his days in exile in a small palace in Doorn in Holland. Margaret MacMillan says:

He kept himself busy by chopping down trees – 20,000 by the end of the 1920s; writing his memoirs, which, not surprisingly, showed no remorse for the war or the policies leading up to it; reading long extracts in English from P.G. Wodehouse to his staff; fulminating against the Weimar Republic, socialists and Jews; and blaming the German people for letting him down while still believing they would one day call him back. (p.604)

Ian writes: "The Cecilienhof was, incidentally, the palace at which the Potsdam conference took place in 1945. I wonder if Stalin took time off to dip into some Wodehouse, though this seems very doubtful as his biographer Robert Service says, 'Living writers had to be Soviet'."

Well, What *Is* in a Name?

by Charles E. Gould, Jr

Charles E. Gould, Jr, author of What's in Wodehouse, or Jeeves Has Gone A-shrimping and the Fat Pig Has Grown Even Stouter and other Wodehouse-related publications, writes from America, where we find him in a musing frame of mind as he ponders the matter of names in and of Wodehouse. – Graeme Davidson

If you ask me to tell you frankly if I like the name Pelham Grenville Wodehouse, I must confess that I do not. I have my dark moods when it seems to me about as low as you can get.' So says Pelham Grenville Wodehouse himself, in the brief appendage he wrote to the golf story 'The Battle of Squashy Hollow', 'Fifty Years is Practically Half A Century', to celebrate (June 6, 1965) the 50th anniversary of his first appearance in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Referring to *Something New*, which appeared in the *Post* in June 1915, he writes, 'I have always thought that what put it over was my changing my name [to Pelham Grenville from P.G.] . . . at a time when a writer for the American market who went around without three names was practically going around naked.' Perceptive. After all, the legendary *Post* editor who recognized *Something New* for the something new that it was went around calling himself George Horace Lorimer, while the illustrator was May Wilson Preston. If two heads are better than one, what price three names?

Sticking with the initials in England, he didn't go back to them in America until 1921, with *Indiscretions of Archie*, though the copyright page of the first two Doubleday, Doran & Co. issues of *Big Money* (1931) has him down as Pelham Granville (*sic*) Wodehouse. But even initials aren't foolproof. Simon and Schuster called him 'P. J. Wodehouse' on the spine of *Biffen's Millions* (1964). I wrote to Peter Schwed, Wodehouse's editor and publisher at S&S, asking about this. 'We claimed it was the printer . . . he claimed it was *us*. Mr. Wodehouse . . . is a very old and dear friend . . . and he would not have hit the ceiling in any event . . . but if he does find out about this I will know who to blame!' Should have been 'whom', of course, but I let it go: Peter retired as chairman of the Editorial Board in Babylon (in 1984) when I was still a schoolmaster/slave.

If PGW had a lifelong squabble with his own name, it crept from time to time, one way or another, into his work. Bertie Wooster, for example, is known to the beaks of Boshier and Vinton Streets variously as Leon Trotsky and Ephraim Gadsby, and on that garish but hollow night at the Mottled Oyster, he suggests to Florence Craye that she might be better off as Matilda Bott of 365 Churchill Avenue, East

Dulwich, at least for the nonce. On that occasion, when he hopes to press Stilton Cheesewright's suit and iron out his difficulties with Florence, he reflects that he would have to reply in the negative if anyone asked him, 'Are you making headway?' 'Not perceptibly, Wilkinson – or Banks or Smith or Knatchbull-Huguessen or whatever the name might have been.' Norman Murphy tells us that Knatchbull-Huguessen is 'a perfectly good English name. I wonder if PGW's choice of it had any connection with the family of that name who were neighbours of Leonora's in Kent.' I was raised on the wrong side of the Atlantic, but I myself wonder where the hell else he could have got it. I thought he'd made it up, until Norman put me right.

I will wager that PGW himself would say that he didn't know. When *Much Obligated, Jeeves* (*Jeeves and the Tie That Binds*, Peter Schwed's title for the S&S edition) appeared as the 90th-Birthday Celebration novel in 1971, I wrote to Wodehouse to ask how Arnold Abney, M.A., turned up in this story instead of Aubrey Upjohn, M.A., as Headmaster of Bertie's school, Malvern-on-Sea. His reply: 'I can't think how I came to make such a bloomer. The odd thing is that Arnold Abney seems to me an important character, and I can't place him. Comes of writing so much.' [Arnold Abney is Headmaster of Sanstead House in *The Little Nugget* (1914). 'Old men forget', as one of Shakespeare's Henrys or maybe Richards says, I forget which one.] Upon my making public this correspondence, the late John Fletcher went to some lengths to argue that Bertie had attended *two* schools prior to Eton and that this was not a 'bloomer' as Wodehouse himself said it was.

But it was a mistake, of course. It happens to the best: Henry Fielding, Charles Dickens, the poet Keats (who didn't know the difference between Stout Cortez and Balboa, and neither, apparently, did Jeeves or Wooster or Wodehouse), and Wodehouse's fellow *Strand* contributor Conan Doyle. In 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band', Miss Helen Stoner is 'Miss Stoner' most of the time but 'Miss Roylott' at another. Sherlock Holmes himself makes the mistake, but Conan Doyle missed it. Ogden Nash wrote a poem about it, 'Just Holmes and Me, and Mnemosyne Makes Three', the last line affording to us all a cheering piece of wisdom: 'Great minds forget alike.' 'Ah, yes,' said Wodehouse, as he turned 80, 'Wonderful memories, if only I could remember them.'

Having nothing better to do, and satisfied that there is nothing better to do, I have just been cataloguing a couple of Wodehouse's typescripts from the mid-1960s which, typically (I have Peter

Schwed's authority for this adverb), contain only a very few holograph corrections of typographical errors; but they contain a goodish number of 'bloomers' where names are concerned that Peter himself didn't catch, probably because he had reasonably come by then to assume that PG's prose sprang, like Minerva, from the head of Zeus and needed neither her nor his owlish oversight. The first of these is 'The Ordeal of Bingo Little', a self-derivative title for a story that was never published in this form or under this title: 16 one-sided pages, which emerged as the second of these, 'Stylish Stouts', seven one-sided pages appearing in this form under this title in *Playboy* (April 1965, 50 years ago) and in both the UK (1966) and US (1967) editions of *Plum Pie*.

In this latter version, 'Stylish Stouts' (a Bingo Little story: the title refers to the Fat Uncles Contest at the Drones Club), quite a lot of dialogue between Bingo Little and Henry Cuthbert Purkiss, the proprietor of *Wee Tots*, has been deleted. But several names have been 'changed to protect the innocent'. (Does anyone on either shore remember the television show *Dragnet*?) The name of Bingo's prize-winning Fat Uncle by Marriage to Mrs. Beenstock has been changed from Apthorpe (marked 'Weak' in pencil by PGW over the original) to Weatherbee. His name ultimately in *Plum Pie* is Sir Hercules Foliot-Foljambe. The name of Mrs. Beenstock's butler, Sprot, has been changed to Fotheringay. However, in both the UK and US editions of *Plum Pie*, this same butler (in this same story) is first Wilberforce, then, a few pages later, Willoughby. If Mr. Fletcher were with us, he might argue that Mrs. Beenstock had fired one butler and

hired another in the space of one story, but I say, with Tennyson, somebody blundered; for in the *Playboy* publication, he is Fotheringay throughout.

Wodehouse is awash with Wilberforces. Wilberforce is, of course, Bertram Wooster's middle name, and Maudie Wilberforce is the barmaid of Uncle George's dreams. Reggie Pepper's gentleman's personal gentleman is Wilberforce. And in 'Uncle Fred Flits By', Wilberforce Robinson is the pink chap in love with Julia.

The Fotheringays are also out in force . . . one of them actually *in* the force, an 'unusually nasty looking sergeant of police' envisioned by Bertie Wooster, frozen to the spot with Ma Trotter's pearl necklace on his person, in Chapter 19 of *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*. Fotheringay is Lady Widdrington's butler in 'Cats Will Be Cats', Lord Biddlecombe's in 'Came the Dawn' (both Mr. Mulliner stories). A Mr Fotheringay is working on 'Scented Sinners' at the Perfecto-Zizzbaum studio ('The Castaways'). Barmy Phipps, when not in Wonderland, is Cyril Fotheringay-Phipps. And, as everybody knows, Fotheringay is Freddie Widgeon's middle name.

Willoughby was a day-boy at Wrykyn, but I say nothing of him or the other Willoughbys in the works – one of Bertie's uncles, Enid, Lettice, two Misses, and one Mrs – for, with all these Wilberforces and Fotheringays surging about the grounds and messuages, why point a moral or adorn a tale? It takes a Garrison and a Murphy and a Jasen to sort them out and put them in indices, and if Wodehouse himself seems confused sometimes . . . well, perhaps he's just getting back some of his own for that 'Pelham Grenville' stuff. A Plum by any other name would taste as sweet.

Something Old, Something Fresh

Publication of Norman Murphy's latest book, *The P. G. Wodehouse Miscellany* (see a frothy review on page 11), breathed fresh life into discussion of a canard, with Norman's *Miscellany* skewering the canard. In truth, Norman not so much skewers the canard as re-skewers it, as he originally skewered it some 30 or so years ago.

One matter covered in Norman's *Miscellany* is identification of the real-life basis for Blandings Castle. In his *Miscellany* he revisits findings covered by him in his book *In Search of Blandings*, published some 30 years ago, and re-covered by him in his *A Wodehouse Handbook – The World and Words of P. G. Wodehouse*, published nearly ten years ago, with his *Miscellany* introducing us to some new nuggets.

Norman's arguments have built the compelling case for the basis of Blandings Castle being Weston Park and Sudeley Castle, with Hunstanton Hall and goings-on there inspiring certain matters synonymous with Blandings Castle, notably an aristocratic owner of a stately pile owning a black porker and having pride in a county agricultural show prize-winning animal (see also Johnny Dalrymple's article on pages 12–15).

Publication of Norman's *Miscellany* ignited interest in Shropshire about oft-repeated claims that a grand pile in Shropshire, Apley Park, was the inspiration for Blandings Castle, a choice briefly considered by Norman in *In Search of Blandings* and expressly discounted.

The Shropshire newspaper, the *Shropshire Star*, picked up on the *Miscellany*'s publication, and mentioned claims that Apley Park was the inspiration for Blandings Castle, including mentioning a Ph.D. thesis written in 2003, some 20 years after Norman's *In Search of Blandings* was published, which claimed to prove that Apley Court was the inspiration. The *Star* article then proceeded to quote Norman, taking the opportunity to include several, though abbreviated, typically compelling detailed reasons for Norman's conclusions.

The *Star* article was headed 'Battle of Blandings Castle rumbles on'. The heading suggested some continuation of uncertainty. By the end of the article, which closed with another of Norman's detailed points, it seemed clear that the *Star*'s reporter knew a canard had been well and truly rumbled.

– GRAEME DAVIDSON

Wodehouse in Language

Attention at *Wooster Sauce* was drawn by Tony Ring to recent interesting research and analysis which we thought we, in turn, would bring to readers' attention.

The impact of Wodehouse on the English language is enormous. Few writers or works seem to have had as big an impact as Wodehouse has had and continues to have, or so it seems to Wodehouse fans anyway.

Measuring the impact of a writer or a work on the English language in a scientific or other objective way does not initially seem easy or even possible.

There are, however, several indicators that point in a relatively specific way to a level of impact. One is the position occupied by a writer or work as a frequently quoted source in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and it is the recent research and analysis conducted on that front which we look at here.

Of all the quotations cited in the OED, 1,795 are sourced from the writings of Wodehouse, some 0.05% of all quotations in the OED. The figure places Wodehouse as the 224th most frequently quoted source.

Drilling down, the research points to etymological influence. Of the 1,795 quotations, 23 provide first evidence of a word, and 158 provide first evidence of a particular meaning.

The research threw up a list of the ten most quoted texts of Wodehouse. That list makes for interesting and surprising reading, as seen in the box.

The ten works account for roughly one-third of all Wodehouse quotations in the OED.

The nine books in the list may surprise Wodehouse readers, as they might well not seem Wodehouse's nine best or most quotable books.

Work Quoted	Total Quotations	Percentage of Quotations
1. <i>The Inimitable Jeeves</i>	113	6%
2. <i>Laughing Gas</i>	106	6%
3. <i>A Damsel in Distress</i>	61	3%
4. <i>Bill the Conqueror</i>	59	3%
5. <i>Letters</i>	56	3%
6. <i>The Coming of Bill</i>	53	3%
7. <i>Very Good, Jeeves!</i>	48	3%
8. <i>Hot Water</i>	43	2%
9. <i>Right Ho, Jeeves</i>	43	2%
10. <i>Carry on, Jeeves</i>	40	2%

The following point should, however, be considered, to help explain one arguably strange and surprising result of the findings, the identities and order of the nine books.

The work containing the 1,795 quotations is the OED, and not a Dictionary of Quotations or indeed a Dictionary of Humorous Quotations. The aims and purposes of the OED and, say, a dictionary of quotations are very different, hence perhaps surprising entries in, and obvious and surprising omissions from, the list of ten Wodehouse works.

Though not checked, it is thought that Wodehouse could come out even better and improve on those statistics of 0.05% and 224th position if the book were, rather than a dictionary of words, a dictionary of quotations or humorous quotations. The list, for the purposes of that book, would undoubtedly be markedly different from the above list. Some further research might usefully and pleasurably be carried out on that front by *Wooster Sauce* readers.

– GRAEME DAVIDSON



Picture from an Exhibition

As previously reported in *Wooster Sauce*, the Palace Green Library at Durham University staged an exhibition entitled *Books for Boys: Heroism, Adventure and Empire at the Dawn of the First World War*, from 27 September 2014 to 11 January 2015. The exhibits included these two books: a facsimile of *The Swoop* from Tony Ring's collection and a 1914 second edition of *The White Feather* from Nick Townend's collection. Nick also contributed a 1910 second edition of *Mike*. Thanks to JOHN INGHAM for sending this picture.

The Jeeves, Wooster and Roadster Bookplate

by John Tweed

John tells of the background to the creation for him of a 'Jeeves and Wooster' themed bookplate, for which he will be much envied by many. As the accompanying photograph shows, it is a wonderful-looking bookplate.

Now, it was a dull and dour Sunday afternoon on the west coast of mid-Wales when I was struck by a bolt of lightning. Well, okay, it was metaphorical lightning and a Tuesday evening, but it was very dull and dour. Also, the lightning bit is perhaps over-egging the pudding, but it was the moment when I thought “that would be a topping idea, old horse”. Talking to myself again, don’t you know, which is something often done living here in the wild west of mid-Wales. It’s that or talking to the sheep, and I find the crosstalk of the Welsh Mountain Sheep a tiny bit limited. Don’t get me wrong, with a helping of mint sauce and a few roast spuds they’re great, but mentally they’re negligible.

Anyway, sticking to the point, letting the caffeine wear off a bit and pushing along, it was the moment I read the article by Prof. W. E. Butler in the June 2012 issue of *Wooster Sauce* about ‘The Davidson Wodehouse Bookplate’. The Prof. wrote a nice piece about this excellent bookplate, and the idea was planted in my head that it might be a fine thing indeed to commission one of my own for the *Everyman* collection I am building up.

There are only two ways you can get away with sticking a bookplate in a good book. One is if the bookplate denotes a man or woman of some repute; for example, here in the wild west that might be Jones the Butcher, of course, who makes one heck of a sausage. Gosh, with a fried egg, black pudding, and bacon from a contented pig, there is nothing better, in fact I might just take a break and pop down and . . . no, no, sorry, must push on. Where was I, oh yes, the second reason is if the bookplate is a work of art. I mean, done by a chap or gal who has a bit of the old artistic talent, who knows one end of a paintbrush from another, if you catch my drift.

Having decided to commission the bookplate, and raising the necessary funds by selling off the wife at a Dorset Fayre (idea courtesy of Thos. Hardy), I looked to the web pages of The Bookplate Society (www.bookplatesociety.org) for inspiration. I perused the artists listed on the site and spent many long hours researching and referencing those listed therein. Well, all right, I shut my eyes, waggled my

finger, and pointed at the screen. Simon Brett was the carefully chosen artist, but he was a busy chap at that time, so recommended another person skilled in creative activity by the name of Andy English.

Andy English, Bookplate Artist, Illustrator and Wood Engraver *extraordinaire*. Well, as it was to be a b’day/yuletide present for myself, it was here where my dear Wife took over – I didn’t really sell her, you see – and carried on the commissioning work.

My requirements were that the theme had to be J&W, be loosely based around *The Code of the Woosters*, must include a Lagonda M45, and have old Bassett’s country pile, Totleigh Towers, in it, don’t you know. Now, what do you turn to in the modern

age for visual inspiration but the good old interweb. When giggling or whatever it is you do when searching the web, tap in ‘J&W’, and what images come up but mainly Fry & Laurie’s ITV interpretation. During that ITV series, old Sir Watkyn Bassett’s pile was Highclere Castle which is even better known now as Downton Abbey. Highclere Castle, being Jacobean Gothic in style, has many crenellations which I thought might be difficult to depict in a wood engraving measuring 5cm x 7cm. Well, I was wrong, completely wide of the mark, and also utterly mistaken.



Where I had made my error was judging Andy’s artistic abilities against my own, and, of course, he pulled it off with knobs on. There continued a small amount of to-ing and fro-ing, and also a bit of fro-ing and to-ing, with regards to minor details such as the number plate, and so on and so forth, but soon all was well and the engraving in boxwood was done with great artistic skill and dexterity.

I have had an initial 200 prints from the engraving with 10 artist-signed proofs. Am I contented with the bookplate? Well, indeed I am. In its own way, it gives as much pleasure to me as the writings of dear old Plum. My only minor regret is that I numbered the registration plate on the Lagonda with a ‘1’, when I should have chosen ‘38’, it being the year *The Code of the Woosters* was published, both in magazine and book form. However, all things considered, everything about the bookplate is oojah-cum-spiff.

Thank you to Graeme Davidson and Prof. W. E. Butler for the inspiration; to my Wife for effort, input, and raising the cash; to Andy English (www.andyenglish.com) for his artistic talent; and, of course, to Plum, for making the world a better place. Diolch i bawb.

Ring for Jeeves: A Party in Moscow

Reported by Masha Lebedeva

Sleeping Beauty spent several years waiting for the Prince before she finally got the kiss that was the breath of life for her. That kiss was akin in some respects to the support for the writings of P. G. Wodehouse that was provided by the charitable foundation Kislrod through their recently organised ‘Ring for Jeeves’ event, held on 15 February 2015. It was run with support from The Russian Wodehouse Society and paid tribute to Wodehouse, who passed away 40 years ago.

To create the atmosphere of the early 20th century, the event took place in a small café named (and decorated) after the famous French movie *Les Enfants du Paradis*. As the café owner is a close friend of the Kislrod foundation, all entrance fees were voluntary and went to the charity. Those who paid their fees got handmade bowties (men) and red and yellow paper flowers (women). The flowers were reminiscent of Tamaki Morimura’s buttercups at the 2009 US Wodehouse Society convention in St Paul.

The party was opened with a short speech from Kislrod’s president, Maya Sonina, who briefly introduced the audience to the Foundation’s aim, which is to help those who suffer from mucoviscidosis, the condition also known as cystic fibrosis. (NB. The Russian word for ‘oxygen’ is ‘kislrod’, hence the name of the foundation.)

The first presentation was by singer Thais Urumidis and her jazz band, Estate. Thais started with the song of songs, ‘Sonny Boy’. It was her good luck that neither Bertie Wooster nor Tuppy Glossop preceded her, and so she managed to escape the misfortune of Cora Bellinger. Moreover, Thais confided to us that she liked the song very much, and promised to include it in her repertoire. Thus, ‘Sonny Boy’ climbed onto the Russian stage.

After performing several other jazz compositions, Thais had to leave; however, her jazz band remained to provide musical accompaniment for the subsequent portion of the proceedings.

The next performer was the young actor Dmitry Vozdvizhensky, who amused the audience with a reading of the first chapter of *The Code of the Woosters*. However, the big hit was a retro fashion presentation by Asiya Aladjalova, the fashion collector and historian who runs a retro fashion studio. Girls from the studio demonstrated dresses from the mid-1910s to the end of the 1920s. Some of the dresses were replicas, and some were originals from Asiya’s own collection. The presentation was accompanied by informative explanations from Asiya, worthy of the first pages of *Milady’s Boudoir*.

After the fashion show, several ladies from the audience were lucky enough to get made up in the style of the 1920s, courtesy of Asiya. Additionally, those who so wished were photographed in retro style by Elena Chereda; one model is seen in the photo, left.



While girls revelled in the past, the rest of the audience enjoyed the charity auction. Among the items submitted was a manuscript piece by the late Inna Bernstein, the prominent translator who introduced Russian readers to Jeeves and Wooster. The item itself was a very interesting

collation of excerpts from texts of the Soviet author and satirist Mikhail Zoshchenko, whose stories, written in the 1920s, helped the translator find the right language and tone in her work on the Jeeves and Wooster saga.

Another auction item was an English policeman’s helmet, although it was such a small size that it raised a question as to the age at which people start police service in the UK. It also prompted another question regarding the moral qualities of a person who allows himself to steal a helmet from the head of a child-sized policeman.

The most impressive item of the auction was a cow-creamer – definitely modern, though maybe not a Dutch one. Even if it was not silver, but just silver-coloured, its appearance was ugly enough for both Uncle Tom and Sir Watkyn Bassett to have approved of it.

Having finished with the main programme, the lucky audience passed to the browsing and slicing with gusto, especially as the chef at the café had added to the *carte* two special items: cucumber sandwiches and a Jeeves cocktail. I didn’t order the cocktail, but observed it to be a reddish liquor. The sandwiches, however, were quite acceptable. The culinary theme continued with a specially published paper, ‘From the Cook-book of Blandings Castle’, by Svetlana Panich, a translator who is interested in Blandings cuisine.

In conclusion, I would like to offer special thanks to long-time Wodehouse devotee Maria Batova, the art manager of Kislrod, who organised such a wonderful party. She proved yet again that Wodehouse’s works always bring sweetness and light to the world, and support and help to those who seek it.

The P. G. Wodehouse Miscellany

A review by Bruce Allan

If I'm ever walking down a thoroughfare in the metropolis and spot Norman Murphy walking on the opposite side of the street, I shall cross the road and shake him warmly by the hand.

Why? Because this acknowledged authority on Plum has achieved what I had previously thought impossible – condensed the long and productive life of England's greatest humorist into a book comprising only 192 pages, while at the same time creating an informative and amusing tome.

The author's light touch guides us nimbly through Wodehouse's early years, smartly through his formative writing career, and, with the minimum of fuss, gives the reader a brief history of his brief, but often convoluted, sojourn in Hollywood.

And no biography, however potted, would be complete without putting the record straight about Plum's ill-advised, but naïve, wartime broadcasts. This regrettable incident in Wodehouse's life is dealt with accurately and succinctly and with the minimum of fuss, though not without a little sadness.

There are handy chapters devoted to the golf stories and Mr Mulliner, the real clubs behind the clubs, and the original models for Jeeves, Psmith, and even Ukridge. And I was fascinated to discover the octagonal building in the middle of the lake which features so dramatically in 'Jeeves and the Impending Doom' (in *Very Good, Jeeves!*) is based on a similar edifice which is still standing in a similar setting at Hunstanton Hall in Norfolk, where Plum and Ethel were regular guests of the owner, Charles Le Strange.

No stone is left unturned as Norman reveals the intriguing stories behind the real-life inspirations for Lord Emsworth's stately pile, Bertie Wooster's houses in London, and even some of the residences of other characters in arguably less celebrated works in the author's oeuvre, such as *Sam the Sudden* and *Pearls, Girls and Monty Bodkin*.

But I was particularly tickled by the occasional personal reflections Norman drops in, such as the recollection of the elderly former member of the Bath Club, on which the Drones was partly based, who recalled being caught out by the looped final hoop, having been bet, à la Bertie Wooster, that he couldn't swing all the way across the club's swimming pool while still fully dressed.

Or his chat with the son of the former chauffeur at Hunstanton Hall, who remembered Wodehouse visiting the house and being fascinated by the large pig domiciled in the kitchen garden. The book includes a photograph of said hog, the importance of which in literary circles

could only be equalled if someone showed me a Daguerreotype of a Victorian street urchin and informed me the child was the prototype for Dickens' *Oliver Twist*.

Mr Murphy explains how, over the years, Plum's characters have popped up in a large variety of different guises, from the modern Ask Jeeves internet search engine to the sculptor in Pennsylvania who manufactures china figures of the Infant Samuel to "smash in moments of stress".

And I am indebted to Mr Murphy for introducing to me a horse called Gussie Fink-Nottle (owner Mrs S. Sturman), which apparently came second in the Everest Maiden Stakes at Edinburgh (I believe Norman means, strictly speaking, Musselburgh) in 1992. I would have gladly paid more than any number of punters' winnings to have heard the linguistic gymnastics BBC's Peter O'Sullivan may have had to perform while commentating on *that* race.

But if you felt if even the relatively parsimonious number of pages in the book was too much to read, I would draw your attention to the fulsome list of the great man's books, plays, silent films, TV adaptations, and even an extensive inventory of Wodehouse websites that are included at the back and which make ideal dip-in and -out reading. The result is pretty much chapter and verse of the man's life in supra-abbreviated form!

Of course, no miscellany of Wodehouse could be complete without a reminder of the author's immaculately conceived prose, and the book is liberally sprinkled with examples taken from a wide selection of his books. If there are any other authors whose single lines can be taken completely out of context and still raise a laugh out loud chortle, I have yet to read them

As Stephen Fry says so accurately in his warm introduction to the book: "Norman Murphy's miscellany (is) the perfect introduction to the whole Wodehousiness of Wodehouse."

Perfectly put. Not for nothing is Norman known by the initials TMWKAE, or The Man Who Knows Almost Everything, and his knowledge and enthusiasm for his subject shines through on every page.

With summer fast approaching, I thoroughly recommend you find a small pocket in your travel valise to pop a copy in. I can think of no more appropriate accompaniment to a whisky sour while sitting poolside in some Mediterranean idyll than this fascinating and entertaining potter round Plum.

The P. G. Wodehouse Miscellany, by N. T. P. Murphy, is published by The History Press and retails for £9.99.

"It is never difficult to distinguish between a Scotsman with a grievance and a ray of sunshine."
The Custody of the Pumpkin

THE
P.G. Wodehouse
MISCELLANY

N.T.P. MURPHY
FOREWORD BY STEPHEN FRY

Hunstanton Hall – A Major Influence on Plum’s Writings

by Johnny Dalrymple

Wooster Sauce’s ‘Recent Press Comment’ section carries reports of several properties lived in by Plum over the years being put up for sale. One such property is a flat in one of the wings of Hunstanton Hall at Old Hunstanton, Norfolk. Now flatted, the Hall was once one large house, for many years ancestral home to the Le Strange family, North Norfolk squires for around a millennium, who came over from France in around 1100.

Now seems a suitable time, following that prompt of publicity about Hunstanton Hall and other Wodehouse homes or boltholes, to remind ourselves of the role and importance of Hunstanton Hall in the life and writings of Plum, as it played a major formative role in them.

To get the ball rolling for you, and help draw from your own memories facts reflecting that role and importance, and/or add to your bank of such facts, set out below are some random facts about Hunstanton Hall and its place in the world of Wodehouse.

Wodehouse’s first recorded visit to Hunstanton Hall, Old Hunstanton, Norfolk, is understood to be one with Ethel at Christmas 1924, according to Norman Murphy in volume 1 of *A Wodehouse Handbook – The World and Words of P. G. Wodehouse* (2006; page 348). (See also a letter from Plum to Bill Townend of 22 December 1924, an extract from which appears at page 173 of *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*, edited by Sophie Ratcliffe (2011). It contains the observation by Plum, apropos that upcoming Christmas visit, that “Charles L’Estrange [*sic*] . . . has the most wonderful house”. That arguably points towards some prior experience by Plum of Hunstanton Hall, albeit maybe reportage to him from a third party source, such as Ethel, if not direct personal prior acquaintanceship by Plum with the property.)

Ethel was friendly with the owner, Charles Le Strange, to whose family Plum was himself distantly related. Plum’s own family had strong Norfolk connections, the family title of Kimberley coming from Kimberley in Norfolk. Wodehouse/

Le Strange family linkages included the marriage of Anne Wodehouse (or Ann Woodhouse, depending on the records inspected), daughter of Sir Thomas Wodehouse and – note the interesting-looking surname – Anne Armyne, to Sir Nicholas le Strange (or Sir Nicolas L’Estrange, again depending on records inspected) on 2 December 1685 (or 2 December 1686, depending on records inspected).

After the Christmas 1924 visit, Plum visited Hunstanton Hall frequently, throughout the rest of the 1920s and in the early 1930s, staying as a guest in the summer of each year from 1925 to 1929, and also in 1933, when he rented the Hall for the summer following the death of Charles Le Strange in June 1933. Plum dedicated *Carry On, Jeeves* (1925) to Bernard Le Strange, Charles Le Strange’s brother.

Hunstanton Hall carried particular appeal for Plum, and has been described by David Jasen in his biography *P. G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master* (1975, page 103) as being a real-life Blandings Castle, the estate extending to over 1,000 acres and including a lake, a park, many gardens, and a moat. Norman Murphy has in turn observed that staying at Hunstanton Hall was as near to living in Blandings Castle as Plum ever got (*Handbook*, page 349). It should be noted, however, that Hunstanton Hall was not the original for Blandings Castle; Weston Park and Sudeley Castle effectively share the role for that, as Murphy has compellingly argued in his writings, notably *In Search of Blandings* (1986) and chapter 39 of his *Handbook*, volume 1.

Though Plum visited other country houses, Hunstanton Hall is the one that he appears to have had the closest connection with in terms of numbers and duration of visits and influence on him, and it seems to have had the greatest evident impact in informing his writing of a grand or big house, its occupants, and the lifestyle and practices followed there. Plum’s times at Hunstanton Hall patently fuelled his imagination and informed his writing across the four key aspects of people, places, events, and issues, providing him with a rich seam to



Hunstanton Hall in Norfolk

be revisited and mined by him over the golden period of a quarter-century or so of prolific Wodehouse novel-writing that followed.

In a letter Plum wrote in the latter half of the 1920s to Bill Townend about Hunstanton Hall, he included the following statement, revealing in a few words themes that would occur and recur in descriptions and plots in so many books that would flow over the next 50 years or so from the Wodehouse typewriter:

It's one of those enormous houses, about two-thirds of which are derelict. There is a whole wing which has not been lived in for half a century. You know the sort of thing – it's happening all over the country now – thousands of acres, park, gardens, moat, etc., and priceless heirlooms, but precious little ready money. The income from farms and so on just about balances expenses.

Various authorities and texts give different dates for this statement. In his own book *Performing Flea* (1953), Plum (who, we should remember, is not the most reliable authority for matters factual or autobiographical when accuracy and other *indicia* of reliability stand in the way of a good story or nice narrative) indicates at page 34 that he made the statement in a letter to Townend dated 26 June 1926. Norman Murphy, on the other hand, indicates at page 350 of his *Handbook* that the statement, more or less, was made in a letter to Townend of 12 May 1929.

In *A Life in Letters*, Sophie Ratcliffe includes, at page 178, extracts from Wodehouse's letter to Townend of 26 June 1926, and also includes, at page 194, extracts from Wodehouse's letter to Townend of 12 May 1929. While *A Life in Letters* is generally an enormously useful resource in helping 'un-muddy' waters muddied by Plum through *Performing Flea*, the terms of those extracts are not such as to result in *A Life in Letters* specifically identifying whether the source of the statement was one or other of those two letters.

Money for Nothing (1928), which centres on actions at fictional Rudge Hall, was written by Plum in major part at Hunstanton Hall, and he laid the scene for it there. Though, again, *Performing Flea* may not be reliable as an authority on the matter, at page 36 of that book Plum says he stated in a 27 July 1927 letter to Townend that he wrote major portions of *Money for Nothing* at Hunstanton Hall, before proceeding at page 46 to indicate that it was in a letter to Townend of 27 April 1929 that he laid the scene for the book there. (In *Portrait of a Master*, David Jasen largely repeats, at page 117, the 27 April 1929 letter, no doubt somewhat in reliance upon *Performing Flea*.)

As for Plum's indication at page 46 in *Performing Flea* that it was in a letter to Townend of 27 April 1929 that he wrote stating he had laid the scene for *Money for Nothing* at Hunstanton Hall, reference to

A Life in Letters discloses no such letter. However, *A Life in Letters* does disclose, at page 194, a letter to Townend of 12 May 1929, written from Hunstanton Hall, stating: "I'm here until after Whitsun. Isn't it a gorgeous place? I spend all my time in a boat on the moat. This is the place where the scene of *Money for Nothing* is laid."

The 12 May 1929 letter seems likely to be the actual letter forming the basis for Plum's 'confected' *Performing Flea* letter of 27 April 1929. Strengthening that likelihood seems to be the fact that the 12 May 1929 letter also contains an aside by Plum about a butler at Hunstanton Hall, whom he describes as having once been a jovial soul who used to join in the conversation at meals and laugh heartily, having given notice and now hovering like a spectre. The very same aside appears in the confected *Performing Flea* letter of 27 April 1929, almost word-for-word but for minor buffing-up by Wodehouse, the better to entertain a book-buying public.

It was while on one of Plum's visits to Hunstanton Hall that he wrote a letter to Townend on 26 June 1926 (one of the letters appearing in *Performing Flea*, page 34, and coinciding in key respects with the extract version of Plum's letter to Townend dated 26 June 1926 as appears in *A Life in Letters*, page 178), trotting out one of the famous lines about Plum's then writing practices when on such visits: "I spend most of my time on the moat, which is really a sizeable lake. I'm writing this in the punt with my typewriter on a bed-table wobbling on one of the seats. There is a duck close by which makes occasional quacks that sound just like a man with an unpleasant voice saying nasty things in an undertone."

Plum's novel *The Small Bachelor* (1927) was written at Hunstanton Hall, as noted by Norman Murphy in his *Handbook* (page 351). Picking up on the theme of Wodehouse's writing practices when at the Hall (and slightly displaying Plum's life-long practice of recycling), Plum wrote in the preface to the 1970 edition of *The Small Bachelor*: "I wrote most of it in a punt on a lake in a country house in Norfolk with gentle breezes blowing and ducks quacking."

As well as being a model for Rudge Hall in *Money for Nothing*, Hunstanton Hall and its environs were a model for Bertie Wooster's Aunt Agatha's house at Woollam Chersey (as noted by Norman Murphy in Chapter 32 of his *Handbook*, by Sophie Ratcliffe at pages 172–173 of *A Life in Letters*, and by Robert McCrum at page 164 of *Wodehouse – A Life* (2004)). Key among the topographical features shared by Hunstanton Hall and Woollam Chersey is a building on a small island in the middle of a lake, both being called the Octagon.

The Woollam Chersey Octagon features in the story 'Jeeves and the Impending Doom' in *Very Good, Jeeves!* (1930), its roof being used by the Rt. Hon. A. B. Filmer as a place of refuge from a hissing swan. In the story, Bertie recounts that the Octagon was run

up to enable a previous owner's ancestor to have a quiet place to practise the fiddle. As Norman Murphy notes at page 89 of *In Search of Blandings*, quoting from the memoirs of Lady Townshend, a neighbour (at nearby Raynham Hall) of the Le Stranges, the Octagon was apparently built by a Le Strange ancestor so as to have a place to practise his violin in peace. As often happened with Plum's writing, the chronicling of fact, seen through the Wodehouse prism, was but lightly spun and then woven into classic Wodehouse fiction.

As well as being the basis for Rudge Hall and Woollam Chersey, Hunstanton Hall provided the setting (noted by Murphy at page 352 of the *Handbook*) for Plum's 1926 story 'Mr Potter Takes a Rest Cure' (one of the stories later collected in *Blandings Castle and Elsewhere* (1935)), which features Bobbie Wickham's mother's place, the moat-girdled Skeldings.

Plum borrowed place names around Hunstanton Hall for characters he created. They include J. Sheringham Adair in *Sam the Sudden* (1925, published just months after Plum's Christmas 1924 visit to Hunstanton Hall) and *Money for Nothing*; Lord Hunstanton in *The Small Bachelor*; Algy Wymondham-Wymondham in 'The Reverent Wooing of Archibald (*Mr. Mulliner Speaking*, 1929); Lord Snettisham in 'The Love That Purifies' (*Very Good, Jeeves!*); Lord Brancaster in *Right Ho, Jeeves* (1934); and Lord Heacham in 'Pig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey!' in *Blandings Castle and Elsewhere*.

Plum appears to have written the Jeeves and Bertie story involving the Jeeves/Wooster canon's arguably most celebrated dog – McIntosh, Bertie's Aunt Agatha's Aberdeen terrier, in 'The Borrowed Dog' or 'Jeeves and the Dog McIntosh' (known in the UK as 'Episode of the Dog McIntosh') – for the October 1929 issue of US magazine *Cosmopolitan* (later published within *Very Good, Jeeves!*) while at Hunstanton Hall. This is predicated on a number of premises.

The letter from Plum to Townend of 27 April 1929, as appears in *Performing Flea* (pages 45–47), indicates that Wodehouse had written a Jeeves story in response to an urgent demand from America for the October 1929 issue of *Cosmopolitan*, writing it under pressure over some four days in the week that he wrote the letter. The Wodehouse story published in *Cosmopolitan's* October 1929 issue was 'Jeeves and the Dog McIntosh'.

Though admittedly now evident, in terms of comments above concerning the 27 April 1929 letter, that that letter was something of a confection, made up for *Performing Flea*, much of its content seems to have been drawn from and was included in the letter from Wodehouse to Townend of 12 May 1929. That letter (published in edited, incomplete form in *A Life in Letters*, pages 194–195) discloses opening lines which do not rule out (and indeed point towards) the possibility of the letter's full version containing text

about Wodehouse having to write at speed a story for the October 1929 issue of *Cosmopolitan*, much in the way that it actually contained text that appeared in the confected 27 April 1929 letter about the laying of the scene for *Money for Nothing* and the disconsolate, once-jovial butler.

All that being so, Plum wrote 'Jeeves and the Dog McIntosh' while staying at Hunstanton Hall, though it now looks, on the basis of the above, as though he wrote it not in the week running up to 27 April 1929 but in the week running up to 12 May 1929.

Plum rented Hunstanton Hall in the summer of 1933, and it was there, according to David Jasen in *Portrait of a Master* (page 137), where Plum worked on *Right Ho, Jeeves*.

Though Lord Emsworth made his debut in 1915 in the first Blandings novel, *Something Fresh* (1915), and it is hard to think of Lord Emsworth without Empress of Blandings, the Empress did not actually make her first appearance until some 14 years later when Wodehouse produced the Blandings novel *Summer Lightning* (1929). Crucially, the development of Lord Emsworth into a pig-loving peer came after the commencement of Plum's visits to Hunstanton Hall, whose owner, Charles Le Strange, reared Jersey cows and was inordinately proud of a particular one on the estate. The cow, called Glenny II, was a prize-winning specimen, being champion of Norfolk, Essex, Cambridge, and Suffolk, as noted by Murphy at page 68 of *In Search of Blandings* and page 427 of his *Handbook*.

As Sophie Ratcliffe neatly observes in *A Life in Letters* (page 173), "The owner of Hunstanton, Charles Le Strange, was a 'keen breeder of jersey cows' and Wodehouse bestowed elements of his host's interest in livestock on his hero, Lord Emsworth." Ratcliffe then adds, perhaps revealing her own particular preferences, "As Norman Murphy notes, Hunstanton's pigsty was likely to have been the inspiration for the most impressive of all Wodehouse's characters, the Empress of Blandings."

Hunstanton Hall, though not the inspiration for Blandings Castle as such, does boast a pigsty. Though it is sadly now derelict, it once hosted a black porker whom Plum befriended back in the late 1920s during his Hunstanton stays. It may be surmised, when all the other Hunstanton Hall information is taken into consideration, that that former resident of the pigsty played no small role in the creation of Empress of Blandings in the mind and writings of Wodehouse (see pages 119–120 of Norman Murphy's *The P. G. Wodehouse Miscellany* (2015)). The pigsty was rightly one of Hunstanton Hall's star features, along with the Octagon, inspected by the members of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) in the course of the Society's Weekend with Wodehouse in Norfolk in May 2012.

Plum wrote of charmed and idyllic lives where the fly in the ointment was often minor and singular, and might amount to nothing more horrendous,

when considered in the overall scheme of things, than having to accede to a sister's, spouse's, or host's wish or instruction to dress for dinner. It is interesting that, although Plum generally viewed Hunstanton Hall as something of a Garden of Eden, and much of his writing chronicled the real-life experiences of others written up by him through the Wodehouse prism, he wrote the following to Townend in a letter of 8 January 1930 (*A Life in Letters*, page 198): "Isn't it great to think that Christmas is over! I am resolved to spend next Christmas on a liner. I came in for the New Year festivities at Hunstanton, and had to wear a white waistcoat every night." (Very similar wording is employed in the letter of 8 January 1930 appearing at pages 51–52 of *Performing Flea*.)

Hunstanton Hall was the setting of one of the photographs which many Wodehouse lovers mentally conjure up when happily thinking of Plum in his prolific book-writing days. They will recall it from its

appearances in biographies and studies of Plum such as *A Life in Letters* (plate 23). For those of you trying to recall it and not having to hand a book containing it, it is the one of Plum standing in front of a marble fireplace in a grand room furnished, or over-furnished, in a heavy and overstuffed style arguably best described as 'in the manner of a theatre set for Ben Travers' *Thark* (or a Wodehouse farce)'. Plum appears in the photo dressed in tweeds and plus-fours and looking for all the world like a character that he might have written himself. Photographed in around 1929, Plum looks ambitiously proprietorial and more like a man just in from shooting some pheasants or a good score rather than a literary giant.

In closing, it is fair to say that Hunstanton Hall and Plum's times there, with distractions running to little more than quacking ducks, had an exceptionally large influence on Plum's writing in one form or another in the years following that momentous Christmas visit with Ethel back in 1924.

Mastermind Quiz 15: Aliases and Assumed Identities

by David Buckle

1. In *Leave It to Psmith*, who does the title character pretend to be when he visits Blandings Castle?
2. Which fraudster, who appears in several Wodehouse books, sometimes adopts the alias 'Thomas G. Gunn'?
3. In *The Little Nugget*, who assumes the false identity of a butler named 'White'?
4. What pen name does Percy Gorringer use when writing crime novels such as *The Mystery of the Pink Crayfish*?
5. Who disguises himself as 'The Masked Troubadour', in the short story of the same name, to avoid being recognised by his uncle?
6. Whose many impersonations have included Major Brabazon-Plank, J. B. Bulstrode, George Robinson, and Sir Roderick Glossop?
7. In *Summer Lightning*, who pretends to be Myra Schoonmaker, an American heiress?
8. Lady Wickham, who writes novels under the pen name 'George Masterman', is the first cousin of which Wodehouse raconteur and storyteller?
9. In *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*, which police officer does Jeeves pretend to be in order to apprehend 'Alpine Joe'?
10. Who, at various times, used the names 'J. Walker Williams', 'C. P. West' and 'P. Brooke-Haven'?

(Answers on page 19)

Accidents Indicate Scheme Folly – A Lead Story

by Robert Bruce

Robert, consort of our Chairman, Hilary Bruce, spotted mention of a get-rich quick scheme which had a distinctly Wodehousean barking-mad air to it, and which he therefore thought he should share with us. And quite right he was, too.

– GRAEME DAVIDSON

It is always enjoyable when life follows fiction. I am referring, of course, to the old Ukridge tradition. The unshakeable conviction held by the upper classes that, if only they could get a good, original money-making scheme, probably involving dogs, off the ground, their troubles would be over.

A recent review by Rosemary Hill, in the *London Review of Books* of a new book on the great Lord Lucan mystery (*A Different Class of Murder – The Mysterious Case of Lord Lucan*, by Laura Thompson, published by Head of Zeus), came up with a good example.

"Hare-brained schemes were fashionable," the reviewer said of the late 1950s. One of the Lucan set, having lost fortunes on previous schemes, came up with the idea of a patent retractable dog lead. And because they were also part of the Princess Margaret set, they thought it a good idea to persuade her to use one when presenting the prizes at Crufts, the annual dog show of great prestige. This, they thought, could only result in sensational publicity and, once again, their fortunes would be made.

They should have read their *Ukridge*. "In front of curious photographers she put the spring-load on the wrong setting and all but strangled a chihuahua."

The Word in Season by Dan Kaszeta

Billiken

The kind editors of this publication have seen fit to not snooter my work so far, so the struggle to pull words from the deep well of Wodehouseana continues. Whilst I have been tempted to delve into P.G.'s deep thesaurus of synonyms and euphemisms for drunkenness again, I have forced myself to reserve such a tactic for when I am truly stuck. So, back to mine the depths for new ore. Like one B. Wooster, I too once won a prize for scripture knowledge, so to dig through the canon is no chore for me.

My research has confronted me with a word new to most of us – Billiken, definitely spelled with a capital B as a proper noun. One example is this jewel of a sentence from 'Ahead of Schedule' (*Grand Magazine*, November 1910 – collected later as one of the short stories in *The Man Upstairs* (1914)):

When you send a girl three bouquets, a bracelet, and a gold Billiken with ruby eyes, you do not expect an entire absence of recognition. Even a penny-in-the-slot machine treats you better than that.

Earlier on in this lovely story, one Rollo Finch had bought and procured said Billiken (and other aforementioned objets d'amour) and had them sent to Miss Marguerite Parker at the Duke of Cornwall's Theatre. We need not even read the story to intuit that the Billiken did not have the desired effect.

Elsewhere in the Wodehouse canon we find Billiken as an endearing, if embarrassing, term of affection for the Ninth Earl of Rowcester in *Ring for Jeeves*. Another use is in 'Ruth in Exile' (*The Strand*, July 1912, also collected later in *The Man Upstairs*), wherein we can get some greater definition:

The peculiar quality of M. Gandinot's extraordinary countenance was that it induced mirth—not mocking laughter, but a kind of smiling happiness. It possessed that indefinable quality which characterizes the Billiken, due, perhaps, to the unquenchable optimism which shone through the irregular features; for M. Gandinot, despite his calling, believed in his fellow-man.

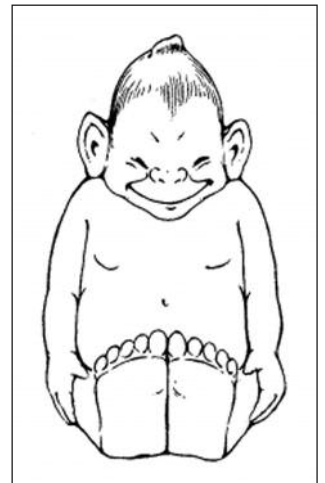
The last passage lets us know that the Billiken smiles upon us. But the root question is unanswered. What, pray tell, is a Billiken?

It must obviously have been, um, well, a thing circa 1910–1914, and a thing that is capitalised, like a proper name. At first, until I read the 'Ruth in Exile' bit, I thought it was a generic term for a thing-a-ma-bob, a bauble, or, dare I say it, a gewgaw. The latter word, gewgaw, turns out to have a fine literary provenance, having been used by none other than Alexandre Dumas and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The

Dutch, transmitted to us via Afrikaans, have a most splendid word for an object of indeterminate use and description – 'dingus'. I can even provide evidence of its use in American federal criminal investigations involving, erm, a dingus made from prohibited bald eagle feathers and posted to the White House. (Your correspondent has had a chequered and multivariate career, we'll just leave it at that.) But one digresses from the original point.

What sort of dingus is a Billiken? Is it a Wodehouse invention? As much as I would love to grant P.G. with the credit of this coinage, it turns out that, like the banjolele, a Billiken is a real thing. Indeed, it is a very specific thing, and not an indeterminate dingus after all. I found not just examples of the Billiken. I found the proto-Billiken. I cannot adequately render the Billiken in words. It is a good luck charm, a carved statuette of vaguely East Asian description. A kind of vaguely Buddha-like pointy-eared sort of garden gnome. Researchers are blessed with the fact that the hardworking clerks at the US government's Patent and Trademark office are kind enough to provide us with the diagram from "US Design Patent 39,603" issued in 1908 to Ms. Florence Pretz of Kansas City, Missouri. As this is a document in the public domain, we can reproduce the diagram from the patent here in *Wooster Sauce* (right).

The Billiken as an *objet d'art* has actual history. Art teacher and illustrator Florence Pretz claims to have seen the Billiken in a dream. The Billiken Company made no end of copies of the statuette over the years, and by the time Wodehouse wrote *The Man Upstairs* stories, it was very much



a thing. Apocryphally, and in rather neo-pagan fashion, it was marketed as 'The God of Things As They Ought To Be'. A Billiken was a plot device in the film *Waterloo Bridge* (1940), starring Vivien Leigh. The Billiken had a bit of a revival as a souvenir in Alaska, with natives carving it from ivory to flog to tourists. At one point, a minor league baseball team in Alabama was named the Montgomery Billikens. Today, the legacy of the Billiken can be seen in St. Louis, Missouri, where it survives and (evidently) works hard as the mascot of Saint Louis University.

Remembering Bob Miller

Patrick Kidd, cricket enthusiast and correspondent with *The Times* tells us of a matter of interest to Wooster Sauce readers. Patrick also wrote the obituary of Bob Miller that was published in the September 2014 issue of *Wooster Sauce*. (See also the report on the recent Audley End cricket match on page 2.)

The latest edition of *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack* is now out, and it includes an obituary for Bob Miller, who founded the Gold Bats cricket side in 1998, was a driving force behind them, and sadly passed away in August 2014.

Bob's *Wisden* obituary is quirky and poignant, and mentions his founding of the Gold Bats and his liking for "a proper Billy Bunter tea" at the Gold Bats matches.

Bob would undoubtedly be chuffed to know that he is commemorated in cricket's Bible alongside people who have played Test cricket, as well as some cricket-connected celebrities such as Richard Attenborough and Clarissa Dickson Wright.

Ed Ratcliffe 1924–2015

As this issue of *Wooster Sauce* was being readied for the printer, we received the sad news that Ed Ratcliffe, a lifelong Wodehousean and former Editor of *The Wodehouse Society* journal *Plum Lines*, passed away on 16 May, only two weeks shy of his 91st birthday. Ed had been a member of *The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)* since its inception, and he attended our biennial dinner at Gray's Inn in 2004. A full obituary will be published in the September issue of *Wooster Sauce*

How few men, says the Oldest Member, possess the proper golfing temperament! How few indeed, judging by the sights I see here on Saturday afternoons, possess any qualification at all for golf except a pair of baggy knickerbockers and enough money to pay for drinks at the end of the round.

(From 'Ordeal by Golf', 1919)

We Remember Mrs Linda J. Newell



The Committee of *The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)* was sorry to hear of the death in early April of Linda Newell (age 64), who had been the Administrator of *Emsworth Museum* for the last nine years and had planned to retire in three months. Such was her impact in the Hampshire town that the *St George's Flag* in the town centre flew at half-mast for a weekend when the news became known.

Linda was a very capable researcher and archivist, and wrote a number of books and booklets about the town, including *Uncovering the Past: Emsworth, Oysters and Men*, in which the fate of the town's oyster beds (referred to briefly in Plum's *A Damsel in Distress* under the town's pseudonym 'Belpher') was described; *Images of England: Emsworth* (a collection of some 200 photographs); and, of most relevance to Society members, *Emsworth's Plum*, a 36-page 'Short Biography of P G Wodehouse and his connections with Emsworth', produced for Museum visitors in 2004. She was responsible for establishing a permanent Wodehouse area in the Museum, and from time to time displayed additional material on selected themes to do with his life and work.

– TONY RING

The Wooster Source by Graeme Davidson

*This is the real Tabasco,
It's the word from Bertie Wooster,
The boulevardier from the avenues
And the utterer of the aperçus.*

Introducing a new column containing musings on life, events, and the universe, as culled by our Editor from the chronicles of Wodehouse's No. 1 boulevardier-philosopher, Bertie Wooster, a chap whose *pensées* and *aperçus* provide neat insights or set the spirits soaring – or both.

The quotes selected for this issue are:

She heaved a sigh which seemed to come straight up from the cami-knickers.

(*The Code of the Woosters*, 1938)

* * * * *

One prefers, of course, on all occasions to be stainless and above reproach, but, failing that, the next best thing is unquestionably to have got rid of the body.

(*Joy in the Morning*, 1947)



On the Boards, the Screens and the Airwaves

by Graeme Davidson

Lahore Literary Festival

February 2015 in Lahore saw for the third year running a major literary festival, the Lahore Literary Festival. One of the sessions this year, at another heavily attended event, was ‘The Eccentric World of P. G. Wodehouse’.

The moderator of the session was Peter Osborne, who, around the time of his moderating activities, was garnering agitated headlines in this country about the background to his departure from *The Daily Telegraph* as Chief Political Commentator.

The speaker at the session was author, journalist and editor Richard Heller, who delivered a very well received speech on Wodehouse. Heller used the Blandings Castle saga and the Drones Club stories ‘to highlight the expertise and rather effortless brilliance of Wodehouse in creating a masterpiece that would have his readership hooked and wanting more’, and observed that, though many have tried copying the style of Wodehouse, they have been unable to maintain anything close to his work.

Online listening at US public radio station kbia.org

A radio play of *The Mixer*, based on a tale by P. G. Wodehouse (first published in the UK in a 1915 edition of *Strand Magazine* and in the USA in 1916 in *Red Book*, and later published within the Wodehouse short story collection *The Man with Two Left Feet*), adapted by Brad Buchanan, could be heard as a podcast production of Maplewood Barn Radio Theatre. It was first available for live listening on 20 February 2015. Several other Wodehouse stories (*Jeeves Takes Charge*, *At Geisenheimer’s*, *Jeeves in the Springtime* and *Jeeves and the Chump Cyril*) are also understood to be found in their archives.

Chichester Festival Theatre

Chichester Festival Theatre (which, interestingly, is understood to take its name from its Sussex location and not from American shipping tycoon J. Chichester Clam of *Joy in the Morning* fame) has announced its summer programme of productions. That programme includes a new production of *A Damsel in Distress*, with music and lyrics by George and Ira Gershwin and book by Jeremy Sams and Robert Hudson, the basis of the book being in the 1919 novel of that name by P. G. Wodehouse and the 1928 play also of that name by Wodehouse and Ian Hay. The production runs from 30 May to 27 June 2015, is directed by the award-winning American director/choreographer Rob Ashford, and stars Isla Blair.

The Drive programme on Australia’s ABC radio

On 9 April 2015, Richard Glover, the Australian award-winning broadcaster, interviewer and

Wodehouse enthusiast, interviewed Society member Allen Hunter, in a slot in the popular *Drive* programme, about Allen’s recent attempts to persuade the car number plate issuing authority bureaucrats in Queensland to agree to his request for the issue of the number plate ‘WHAT HO’. Allen’s thwarted efforts were reported upon in a scoop in the March 2015 issue of *Wooster Sauce* and later picked up by others elsewhere in the media, hence Richard Glover’s antennae picking up on the matter and the resultant interview. The interview covered the problems experienced by Allen in his dealings with the authorities, who evidently believed the number plate contained a gangsta-rap reference to a woman of easy virtue, and touched on the sighting in New Zealand of a car with the number plate WHAT HO, the existence in the UK of the Bertie Wooster number plate PGW 38, and the appeal of the writings of Wodehouse.

The interview left one with the view that New Zealand number plate bureaucrats seem far more enlightened, better read and less suspicious than those in Australia, who may see or hear doubtful language in the most innocent of words and phrases. One wonders what the Australian bureaucrats make of the sports event which could on occasion see Bertie so over-refreshed as to be minded to pinch a policeman’s helmet, namely the Oxford Cambridge Boat Race. They are presumably left shocked and aghast by the frequent inevitable references by the commentators on the race to oarsmen, a word which, to the bureaucrats’ ears, might suggest an interest quite distinct from the innocent one of rowing. And you dread to imagine what they think the Lahore Literary Festival is about – mucky books, perhaps!

Carpenter Square Theatre and Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, and Taproot Theatre, Seattle

On 3–25 April 2015, Carpenter Square Theatre in Oklahoma City, USA, put on *Jeeves in Bloom*, a play based on Wodehouse characters, adapted by Margaret Raether from the writings of Wodehouse and set in Brinkley Court. *Jeeves in Bloom* is one of the three plays making up the trilogy of Raether’s three Jeeves plays, the two others being *Jeeves Intervenes* and *Jeeves Takes a Bow*, with the latter of those two being performed at the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, 11 April–3 May 2015. *Jeeves in Bloom* was also performed at the Taproot Theatre in Seattle, 1 February–2 March 2015, with *Jeeves Intervenes* being performed there 13 May–13 June 2015, sadly just that bit too soon even for early-bird attendees at The Wodehouse Society convention being held in Seattle on 29 October–1 November 2015.

Mastermind

A celebrity version of the BBC 1 quiz, first broadcast on 30 December 2012, was repeated on 19 April 2015. One of the celebrity contestants was popular Radio 2 presenter Ken Bruce, who chose for his specialist subject ‘the Jeeves novels of P. G. Wodehouse’, and did really rather well, not only winning the specialist round but also winning overall after the general knowledge round.

Today

Broadcaster and Wodehouse enthusiast James Naughtie presided over a very brief but very charming interview on BBC Radio 4’s *Today* programme on 20 April 2015, with publisher David Campbell of Everyman and actor Robert Webb, who has been playing Bertie in the Goodale Brothers’ *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense* to rave reviews. The cue for the interview was the completion of the Everyman Wodehouse project and something of a related puff for the continuing nationwide tour of *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*.

The interview was unforcedly enthusiastic, relaxed and happy, and had all the sound and qualities of an easy private conversation which the radio listener was simply eavesdropping on, rather than anything as might be described in such stiffly formal terms as an interview. It featured strongly on BBC iPlayer for a time, along with a video version which showed the interview taking place. The video version carried the additional visual treat of Naughtie, Campbell and Webb looking relaxed and animated, and disclosed, scattered about in the background and invisible to the radio listeners, others around the studio raptly listening in to the trio.

The interview ranged across various themes, including Wodehouse’s lasting popularity, his writing’s ability to make readers laugh out loud, its appeal to people from across the whole spectrum of ages and backgrounds, the importance of hardback books and the striking appeal of the Klimowski covers on the Everyman Wodehouse books. Soup to nuts in a five- or six-minute interview.

All three involved in the interview came across as being much in awe and admiration of the works and skill of Wodehouse. Of the three, two of whom are dyed-in-the-wool Wodehouse enthusiasts of long standing, it was, however, curiously Webb, understood to be something of a recent discoverer of Wodehouse when he came to take on the role of Bertie, who came out with unquestionably the best line of the interview.

Talking of the intricate and intertwined nature of a Wodehouse plot, Webb described unravelling a Wodehouse plot as being like “trying to unpick a spider’s web wearing boxing gloves”. It was a line worthy of Wodehouse himself, and so right for an interview which, in true Wodehousean way, left one feeling markedly the better for having listened in on it.

Poet’s Corner

An Appetiser

(Murder picture-postcards are said to be the latest craze)

Since first the earth began to roll
 Ingenious persons have invented
 Full many a boon to cheer the soul,
 And make there fellow-men contented.
 Of all such things that give delight,
 That make a man feel free from woe, blest,
 The murder picture-postcard’s quite
 The brightest, finest, best and noblest.

How sweet to leap from bed, and straight
 Towards the breakfast-board to trudge it,
 And find heaped up beside your plate
 A gruesome, yet artistic, budget.
 And, as with cheery spoon you crack
 The egg that forms your daily ration,
 “E’en so,” you feel, “did murderer Jack
 Hit victim Bill (see illustration).”

Oh, when I take my toast all hot,
 And probe the matutinal kipper,
 Propped up against the coffee-pot
 I scan the deeds of Jack the Ripper.
 As with knife I carve the bread,
 As through the crust I crisply run it,
 I ponder on the mighty dead,
 And think how Barnwell would have done it.

Yet, as I view these scenes of gore
 (The fact, I own, seems past explaining),
 The hunger that I felt before
 Has got a curious trick of waning.
 For food I seem to care no jot,
 Though keen at first through early rising;
 Perhaps a murder-picture’s not
 Particularly appetising.

From *Evenings News and Evening Mail*, 4 June 1903

Answers to Mastermind Quiz

(Page 15)

1. The poet Ralston McTodd
2. Thomas ‘Soapy’ Molloy
3. ‘Smooth’ Sam Fisher
4. Rex West
5. Freddie Widgeon
6. Frederick Altamont Cornwallis Twistleton,
 aka Uncle Fred
7. Sue Brown
8. Mr Mulliner
9. Chief Inspector Witherspoon of Scotland Yard
10. P. G. Wodehouse

The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

Omnibus Volumes: Part Two

March's column commenced a review of the Omnibus volumes in section B of *McIlvaine*, and progressed to 1935.

The final pre-Second World War title was *Week-End Wodehouse* (B6b), published in 1939. Although there is no introduction by Wodehouse, it is of note as it contains a five-page introduction by Hilaire Belloc, which is devoted to explaining why he had described Wodehouse as “the best writer of English now alive” and “the head of my profession”. Belloc, like Evelyn Waugh later, was particularly impressed by Wodehouse's use of similes: “In parallelism Mr Wodehouse is again supreme. There is no one like him in this department.”

No doubt partly because of Wodehouse's wartime broadcasts, in the immediate post-war years the first two omnibus volumes were only published in the US.

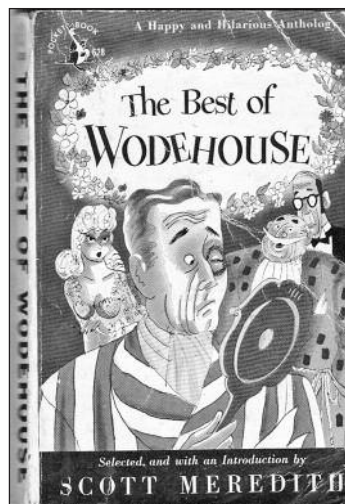
The Best of Wodehouse (B8a) was published in paperback by Pocket Books Inc. in the US in 1949, with the illustration on the front cover being the same as that used in the previous year on the dustwrapper of the US first edition of *Spring Fever* (A67a). The contents were selected by Scott Meredith, Wodehouse's literary agent, who also provided an introduction. The volume is of interest because, although there is no introduction by Wodehouse, it contains the only publication in book form of ‘Good-bye to Butlers’, which had originally been published under the title ‘They'll Go No More A-Buttling’ in *Town and Country* magazine in October 1947 (D66.1). It also contains the first ever publication of the short story ‘Freddie, Oofy and the Beef Trust’, which only finally appeared in a “conventional” Wodehouse book in 1959 in *A Few Quick Ones* (A82b), under the slightly revised title ‘Oofy, Freddie and the Beef Trust’.

Further volumes in collaboration with Scott Meredith soon followed. *The Best of Modern Humor* (B9a) was published by Medill McBride Company Inc in the US in 1951. This volume was edited by both Wodehouse and Meredith, who each dedicated the book to the other, and was a general anthology of humour writing, containing Wodehouse's own ‘Sonny Boy’, which had originally been published in book form in *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets* (A62a). It contained a five-page introduction by Wodehouse.

The opening sentences were a slight reworking of part of his 1934 preface to *A Century of Humour* (B4a): “[N]obody, I think, can deny that the swiftness with which I have become a force in American letters is rather remarkable. It is a bare forty-six years since I broke into

the game over here, yet already I am the author of an Omnibus Book, and now the Messrs. Metcalf and their Associates have asked me to emcee this volume of collected humor, a job which entitles me to wear pince-nez and talk about Trends and Cycles and What Is The Difference Between Humor and Wit. The difference between Humor and Wit beats me and has always beaten me.” Anyone wishing to compare this with the earlier version should refer to Part One of this article (*Wooster Sauce*, March 2015, p20). Wodehouse also laments the rise of what we might now term political correctness, demonstrating that it is not a recent phenomenon: “Bless my soul, I can remember the time when you could be funny about anything. But now every section of the community is on its dignity, waiting with the sand-stuffed sock to bean the comic writer who dares to let out the feeblest chirp which can be considered personal.”

The following year saw another Wodehouse/Meredith collaboration, with the publication of another anthology, *The Week-End Book of Humor* (B10a), published by Ives Washburn Inc. in the US. ‘Trouble Down at Tudsleigh’ was the representative Wodehouse story, which had originally been published in book form in *Young Men in Spats* (A55a). The UK edition was published as *The Week-End Book of Humour* (B10b) by Herbert Jenkins in 1954, being the first such omnibus volume bearing Wodehouse's name to be published in the UK after the war. Wodehouse contributed a four-page introduction which was, for him, relatively serious, lamenting the post-war decline in



humorous writing and attributing it to the seriousness of the times, coupled with a decline in the magazines and the rise of television. The following extracts are typical: “Humour implies criticism of established institutions, and nowadays the country is trying to keep its faith in the established order intact. . . . The feeling exists that there is a suspicion of reproach in writing humour now, and some humorists have tried to alibi themselves against this by putting a Message of Social Significance into their humour. . . . No doubt many writers of humour do feel edgy of seeming frivolous these days.”

The book was subsequently reprinted in the US under the revised title *P.G. Wodehouse Selects the Best of Humor* (B10a4) by Grosset and Dunlap in 1965, and reprinted in paperback format in the UK in 1966 under the same title (with *Humor* changed to *Humour*) by Ure Smith (B10a5 – confusingly, *McIlvaine* includes this UK edition within her listing of US editions (B10a) rather than within her listing of UK editions (B10b)).

Recent Press Comment

This edition of Recent Press Comment was prepared by Graeme Davidson. Thanks to those readers who wrote in and drew attention to various Wodehousean references in the press, to which Graeme has occasionally added personal commentary.

The Guardian, 19 February 2015 (from Terry Taylor)

A piece by Peter Bradshaw, prompted by recent media coverage of tax avoidance wheezes and banking group HSBC, drew attention to the possibility of a trump card which HSBC might play to help counter the adverse publicity of the coverage. Bradshaw reminded readers that Wodehouse had in his early years been an employee of HSBC and drew on his experiences there when writing *Psmith in the City*. However, given the political and other sensitivities surrounding the recent HSBC travails, Bradshaw concluded that HSBC are likely to remain silent on the Wodehouse connection, particularly as Wodehouse's writings teased bankers and those with political aspirations (a notable specimen of a politically aspirant banker being *Psmith in the City*'s Bickersdyke, the model for whom, so Norman Murphy's *The P. G. Wodehouse Miscellany* suggests, was David Cameron's great-great-grandfather, Sir Ewen Cameron, the manager of HSBC's branch in Lombard Street where and when young Wodehouse toiled in banking).

The Guardian, 21 February 2015 (from Terry Taylor)

The Magazine section carried a recipe for coffee cake, with an aside that Wodehouse breakfasted on coffee cake on a daily basis, though it did not actually assert that the coffee cake described in the recipe was the coffee cake apparently consumed daily by Plum. Given the rich nature of coffee cake, as understood by many, in general, and the specifically rich nature of the coffee cake described in the recipe, the aside prompted a flurry of email comment on PGWnet on whether it was truly credible that Wodehouse would have breakfasted on a rich coffee cake on a daily basis. The flurry resulted in the discovery that, in America, a relatively simple plain cake or biscuit-type affair, not even one necessarily consisting of any coffee flavouring, be it butter-cream or otherwise, to be taken with coffee, is known as coffee cake. *Et voila*, a mystery, or surprise, was cleared up.

The Daily Telegraph, 23 February 2015 (from David I Lindgren)

The clue for 8 across in the Herculis General Knowledge crossword was 'Full ____: P. G. Wodehouse novel set in the fictional locale Blandings Castle (4)'. The answer was 'Moon'. The compiler of the crossword was evidently in something of a benevolent mood when setting that particular poser.

Efinancial News, 26 February 2015 (from Elisa Foppa)

The service carried a profile article on Bill Winters, the US financial heavyweight who moved from the USA to London and cut a swathe through the world of banking and investment in the all-conquering progression of his career. Winters was recently recruited to become Chief Executive at banking giant Standard Chartered, the news of the recruitment clearly prompting the profile article. The article reported on a book spotted on Winters' bookshelves, one not typically found amongst the reading material of financial titans, namely Wodehouse's *Bill the Conqueror*. It was apparently a gift from Bill Winters' clearly well-read son. The article explains, perhaps for the benefit of less well-read readers, that the Wodehouse novel tells the story of an American who leaves his wild ways in New York and moves to London.

The York Press, 28 February 2015 (from John Dundonald)

The York Press carried an article about Yorkshire aristocrat Lord Gerald Fitzalan-Howard. His lordship has taken up pig husbandry (involving Oxford Sandy and Blacks) at his North Yorkshire seat, Carlton Towers, as part of a venture by him to produce fine pork for the Cookery School at Carlton Towers. Despite a commercial air to the exercise, his lordship is nevertheless quoted as saying, in touching upon the porkers' habitat, in a sylvan setting on the estate, that '*they will be the happiest pigs in the world*'. Inevitably, for an article about a pig-loving peer, pampered porkers and an ancestral pile, references are, of course, made in the article to Lord Emsworth, the Empress, and Blandings Castle.

Bibliophile, March 2015

Yet another issue of the remaindered books sales magazine yielded a bumper crop of over half a dozen Wodehouse quotes. They were used to introduce sections, covering books advertised, on topics as diverse as Psychology and Sociology ('Some minds are like soup in a poor restaurant – better left unstirred.');

True Crime; Erotica ('The voice of Love seemed to call to me, but it was a wrong number.');

Literature ('There is no surer foundation for a beautiful friendship than a mutual taste in literature.' – *Ed: That could almost be a motto for, or driving philosophy behind The P G Wodehouse Society*); Sport; and Pets ('A dog without influence or private means, if he is to make his way in the world, must either have good looks or amiability.'). No other writer, however lofty, came close to the number of quotes used to adorn the March issue's pages as those from Wodehouse. It leaves it ever harder to believe that *Bibliophile* does not have on its staff a seriously hardened Wodehouse addict.

The Daily Telegraph, 3 March 2015 (from Andrew Irving)

In an item on the bleak ending of the TV dramatisation of J. K. Rowling's best-selling adult novel *The Casual Vacancy*, it was reported that the ending had left the writer herself crying her eyes out, even though the dramatisation's ending was more upbeat than in the book. A quote from a *Telegraph* review by Allison Pearson on the novel's release was pleasingly revisited. She described the ending as '*so howlingly bleak that it makes Thomas Hardy look like P. G. Wodehouse*'.

The Guardian, 4 March 2015 (from John Dundonald)

In an article reporting on the annual Douglas Adams Lecture, delivered this year by writer Neil Gaiman, in which Gaiman spoke about his memories of Adams, Gaiman was quoted as having been told by Adams that his literary inspiration was Wodehouse, but that, as Adams had added, nobody ever noticed. The article closed with an observation about the sadness of there not being more of Adams's work, and contrasting the volume output of Wodehouse with that of Adams, noting that, in the case of Adams, the amount of shelf-space taken up by the books written by Adams is sadly little, though '*with Wodehouse you could have a shelf of books*'. Shelves at *The Guardian* are evidently very long.

The Lady, 6 March 2015 (from Caroline Franklyn)

In a report on winners in a competition run by *The Lady* for naming a favourite fictional heroine, a Margaret Moundon of West Sussex was listed for her winning entry, that of 'Bertie's Aunt Agatha from P.G. Wodehouse's Jeeves and Wooster novels'. There were three winning entries in all, described in the report as standing out for their eloquence, humour and

warmth. Margaret Moundon's winning entry read: 'Everyone should have an Aunt Agatha in their life. She stands no nonsense from anyone and, in her day, she ruled the Empire. Under her critical eye, people sat up straight, kept their elbows off the table, showed respect, spoke clearly and behaved sensibly – otherwise she let them know about it. They were good values that we seem to overlook today, to our loss – but I doubt her nephew Bertie would agree.' Clearly a redoubtable woman with firm views and not to be messed with, Aunt Agatha that is.

The Daily Telegraph, 7 March 2015

The letters page carried a letter from a clearly and rightly proud father whose pride was alloyed with concern. The father, Andrew Tindall of Southampton, wrote of how his sons, aged 9 and 6, dressed for World Book Day as Jeeves and Wooster. His pride clearly lay in his young sons knowing of, and choosing to dress as, Jeeves and Wooster. His concern equally clearly lay in the fact that an explanation apparently had to be provided to the sons' teachers as to who Jeeves and Wooster were.

The Daily Telegraph, 13 March 2015 (from Dr D. J. Anderton)

In writing of the passing on 12 March 2015 of best-selling comic fantasy novelist (and recipient of the 13th award of the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for Comic Fiction, for the novel *Snuff*) Sir Terry Pratchett, several publications made reference to P. G. Wodehouse in a variety of ways and for a range of reasons. The thoughtful obituary for Sir Terry in *The Daily Telegraph* made a particularly neat point. It observed that, though Pratchett was often compared to Swift, he was not a satirist, and, in pressing the point home, it noted that he was closer to Wodehouse than Waugh, being a writer who preferred to create a self-contained world in which he could dictate everything, with human nature being the only factor outside his control. (It is, however, not to be forgotten that Wodehouse did not dictate or create everything that he wrote, insofar as he frequently chronicled that which he saw and heard, albeit with his 'spin' on it.)

The Guardian, 14 March 2015 (from Terry Taylor)

An interview with popular humorous writer Bill Bryson, who has been appointed Chair of the judges for the Wellcome Book Prize, for fiction and nonfiction works engaging with some aspect of medicine, health or illness, quoted Bryson, no slouch in the world of writing humorous prose, as saying that he is not confident judging fiction: 'If it's not P. G. Wodehouse I don't think it's my area of expertise.'

The Daily Telegraph, 14 March 2015 (from Carolyn De La Plain)

The issue was ankle-deep with Wodehouse references. The clue for 25 across in the cryptic crossword (no. 27,748) was 'English gentleman – bow-tie sort 'ere possibly (6, 7)'. The answer was Bertie Wooster (an anagram of 'bow-tie sort 'ere').

In an article in the Gardening section, discussing the reason for holes in Swiss cheese plants, Ken Thompson stated: 'Unfortunately the answer is not so simple, and so before we proceed it might be as well, like Jeeves, to make sure that the old brain is on tip-top form by eating plenty of fish.'

Metro, 17 March 2015

The Clockword puzzle, where all the answers were 6-letter words ending in 's', contained the clue 'Fictional valet'. The answer was 'Jeeves'. (Well done that puzzle compiler for not asserting Jeeves is a butler. Clearly a Wodehouse reader.)

Metro, 18 March 2015

In an article regarding the remake of the BBC series *Poldark*, actor Jack Farthing's involvement was described as representing a villainous change for him. After starting his career on

stage, Farthing won strong reviews for his portrayal of posh idiot Freddie in the starrily cast *Blandings*, which found him playing alongside Jennifer Saunders and Timothy Spall. Of his *Blandings* experience, Farthing said: 'At first I felt completely out of my depth, but it was a great privilege to be alongside such talent. By the end, I felt I'd stepped into someone else's shoes and found Freddie's character. The downside was that, after *Blandings*, a succession of posh dimwit parts were on the table.'

The Guardian, 19 March 2015 (from Terry Taylor)

Writing in praise of Clive James, Peter Bradshaw says that his first volume of memoirs, *Unreliable Memoirs*, should be put on the GCSE list as a set text, adding, 'It is his prose masterpiece, and an example of English comic writing that should be taught to school-children alongside the works of Waugh and Wodehouse.' High praise indeed!

Private Eye 20 March 2015 (from Robert Bruce)

In a spoof animal welfare report, headed 'Peer distraught as RSPCA shoots his prize pig', a piece appearing under the by-line 'Our Animal Welfare Staff, P. I. G. Wodehouse', it was reported that a peer, the 9th Earl of Emsworth, had been charged, following a raid by RSPCA inspectors at the peer's home, with cruelty on a pig, by poking it with his walking stick. The report added that the pig was later put down by a vet, on RSPCA instructions, on account of having suffered 'prolonged psychological trauma'. The raid was reported as being a Summer Lightning Raid, patently having been framed by someone with an interest in Wodehouse.

The Mail on Sunday, 22 March 2015 (from June Arnold)

A clue in the Prize Crossword was 'Another name for a valet such as Jeeves in the P G Wodehouse stories'. The answer was Jeeves (though the clue rather begs the obvious question of whether there ever was, is or will be, a valet such as Jeeves).

The Daily Telegraph, 25 March 2015

The leader column item commented on new research out of Cambridge University, into people in parts of the UK having a particular disposition generally and which suggested that Scots are mostly blessed with a sunny disposition and too good natured to bear a grievance. The item opened by referring back to Wodehouse's contrasting observation that it was never difficult to distinguish between a Scotsman with a grievance and a ray of sunshine. Of course it did, with what else would such an item have opened?

The Daily Telegraph, 25 March 2015

In an article about the new must-have luxury for the super-rich, a nanny for their dogs, Wodehouse was cited as having observed that the wealthy have always been enamoured with what he called their 'dumb chums'.

Financial Times, 27 March 2015

Sir David Tang, the Hong Kong businessman and socialite, and a man considered sound on Wodehouse, wrote of adoring pigs, and adoring Wodehouse's *Blandings* stories, singling out 'Pig-hoo-o-o-o-ey!' as one in which he 'wallows in merriment' in particular.

The Economist, 28 March 2015 (from David Lindsay)

Unusually for *The Economist*, it carried a Wodehouse quote in an article about the growth of messaging services. The article included the following: "I propose, if and when found, to take him by his beastly neck, shake him till he froths, and pull him inside out and make him swallow himself." It is not often that Silicon Valley's denizens quote P. G. Wodehouse. But this is what Benedict Evans of Andreessen Horowitz, a venture-

capital firm, expects the success of messaging services could do to both mobile and corporate software.’

The Guardian, 31 March 2015 (from Andrew Irving)

It was reported that Alexander McCall Smith, Irvine Welsh, Joseph O’Neill, Caitlin Moran, Nina Stibbe, and Helen Lederer, have been shortlisted for the 2015 Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for Comic Fiction, with the winner being announced just before the Hay Literary Festival in May 2015. (It has since been announced that the Prize has been won by Alexander McCall Smith for *Fatty O’Leary’s Dinner Party*.)

The Times, 7 April 2015 (from Hilary Bruce)

The Diary column picked up, with evident delight, on the *Wooster Sauce* cover story from its March 2015 issue which reported on Allen Hunter’s battle, sadly ultimately thwarted, in getting the bureaucrats in Australia responsible for approving car number plates to approve the Wodehousean number plate WHAT HO! (See also page 18.)

The Oldie, April 2015 (from Mike Swaddling)

Jim Smith, writing of the Cheltenham Festival (that is The Cheltenham Festival, the horse one, not the book or the jazz festival ones), described it as representing ‘the finest people-watching in world sport . . . the entire gathering appears to have been scooped from the pages of P. G. Wodehouse’.

The ‘Quote . . . Unquote’ Newsletter, April 2015

Early use and origins of the phrase ‘they wandered off into the sunset’ was covered, with reference being made to the origins lying in the image appearing in silent films, and mention was made of the phrase appearing later in print. The earliest published instance quoted was that of ‘And together they wandered off into the sunset’, which was mentioned as appearing in P. G. Wodehouse’s *The Heart of a Goof*. Clearly stout research work is being done at the ‘Quote . . . Unquote’ Newsletter, though let us not forget that the esteemed Nigel Rees, of ‘Quote . . . Unquote’ fame, is a Patron of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK).

The Daily Telegraph, 11 April 2015 (from Alan Hall)

A report appeared on the day of the running of the 2015 Grand National about a Wodehousean-sounding cleric, the Really Rev. Jonathan Greener, Dean of Wakefield, placing a bet on a horse called, perhaps appropriately enough, Godsmejudge to win the big race. The bet, one of £50 at odds of 20-1, was placed by the Dean in a bid to raise £1,000 towards paying for the roof of his church being mended. Included in the reportage on the matter was, almost inevitably, given that it dealt with the matter of wagering and clerics, amusing reference to the Wodehouse story ‘The Great Sermon Handicap’, along with an expression of the hope that the Dean would be luckier that afternoon than Bingo Little in his wagering venture into an unknown field. (As it turned out, the 2015 Grand National was won by Many Clouds, a horse that went off at 25-1. Godsmejudge was not even placed, and indeed was pulled up, and did not complete the race. In that outcome a lesson of some sort may well lie.)

The Guardian, 11 April 2015 (from Hilary Bruce)

The property pages in the Magazine section carried details of a six-bedroom wing of a grand and substantial country house in Norfolk that is up for sale at a whisker or so shy of £1,000,000. And what is the Wodehouse connection, you ask. The grand house in question is Hunstanton Hall in Old Hunstanton, Norfolk! Yes, that’s right, THAT Hunstanton Hall. It’s the very house in which Wodehouse in the 1920s and 1930s wrote some of his peerless prose, and also, perhaps more typically of Plum, prose which does contain peers, indeed prose that is replete or

totally chocka with peers, including in particular Lords Hunstanton and Brancaster. That peerless prose observation prompts a Publisher Alert for Marketing Teams at Wodehouse publishers from here at *Wooster Sauce* – wouldn’t a corking strapline for Wodehouse books be something along the lines of ‘*Wodehouse’s comic prose – it might sometimes be peerless, but it’s always without equal*’? There could even be a similar strapline-type affair for Plum’s love-match/mis-match rom-coms, something about being matchless but never surpassed or equalled. Bit of an idea there.

The Sunday Telegraph, 12 April 2015

The ‘50 Years Ago’ archive section reminded us of the news item from half a century back that the BBC had announced its intention to put Jeeves and Wooster on the television. The intention culminated in *The World of Wooster*, which ran from 1965 to 1967, consisted of 20 episodes (now sadly largely wiped), and starred, in the role of Bertie, Ian Carmichael (considered by some as too old in the role, though Terry-Thomas, who had played Bertie in two dramatisations earlier in the 1960s, ‘Indian Summer of an Uncle’ and ‘Jeeves Takes Charge’, was apparently an initial choice for the series, and T-T was born in 1911 and was some nine years older than Carmichael); and, in the role of Jeeves, Dennis Price (who was excellent in the role, even if some considered that he, like Bertie, was slightly too old for the role).

Private Eye, 17 April 2015 (from Terry Taylor)

In the *Eye’s* Pedantry Corner letters column, Liz Rechniewski wrote observing, apropos the above pig’n a poke piece in the 20 March 2015 issue of the *Eye*, that the Earl of Emsworth ‘would never have poked his beloved Empress with his walking stick. That dastardly deed was done by the Duke of Dunstable (see *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*).’

The Daily Telegraph, 21 April 2015 (from Dr D. J. Anderton)

Jessica Fellowes, who has written companion books to *Downton Abbey* and is the niece of the *Downton* writer-creator, Julian Fellowes, wrote a fulsome paean of praise for the writings of Wodehouse, prompted by the news that ‘super-fan and publisher David Campbell has worked tirelessly to bring all 99 (ninety-nine!) of Wodehouse’s works under one imprint, Everyman.’ Her paean rightly addressed the high production standards of the Everyman books and the wisdom of picking up some Wodehouse to help wipe away cares.

Cannily, in commenting about the world of Wodehouse fiction, she wove in mention of *Downton Abbey*. That’s not surprising in the circus, and, of course, given the unmentioned fact and coincidence that her Uncle Julian wrote the screenplay for the most recent film version of Wodehouse’s *Piccadilly Jim* (2005) and *Downton Abbey* is a total televisual doppelganger for Totleigh Towers from Fry and Laurie’s *Jeeves and Wooster*. Every time the likes of the Earl of Grantham bobs up on screen, one half-expects to see Sir Watkyn Bassett tagging along.

The Daily Telegraph, 25 April 2015 (from John Dundonald)

The Property section carries news of yet further property, once occupied by Wodehouse, coming onto the property market, majoring on a grand white stucco fronted property, 16 Walton Street, Knightsbridge, London, where he lived from 1918 to 1920, and also noting that a smaller two-bedroom apartment in a red-brick property in Dunraven Street (Norfolk Street in Plum’s day), Mayfair, where he lived from 1927 to 1934, is also up for sale, the former being on the market for £7,995,000, and the latter being priced at a more modest, comparatively speaking, £4,750,000 – handy for those of us for whom £7,995,000 is more than a shilling or two more than is in the savings jam-jar.

Future Events for Your Diary

June 21, 2015 Gold Bats vs. Sherlock Holmes Society
This traditional match in bucolic surroundings is always fun; bring a picnic lunch! We will be convening at the West Wycombe cricket club in the morning and starting play at 11.30.

July 12, 2015 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk
Richard Burnip is leading a Wodehouse-themed walk for London Walks. The usual fee is £10, but Society members get a discounted price of £8. No need to book a place; just be at exit 2 (Park Lane east side) of Marble Arch Underground station at 2.30 p.m., and identify yourself as a Society member.

July 22, 2015 Society Meeting at the Savoy Tup
Our next gathering will feature a Fiendish Quiz, fiendishly created by quiz master Paul Kent – not to mention a chance to win a fabulous prize (see below). Enjoy the lively debate engendered by some of Paul's more controversial questions! We gather at the Savoy Tup (2 Savoy Street, Strand) from 6 p.m.

News Flash! As this issue was being readied for the printer, word came of a prize-winning opportunity for members who attend this meeting. See page 3.

October 13–25, 2015 *Oh, Kay!* in New York City
Musicals Tonight! kicks off its 2015–16 season – its last

one ever – with *Oh, Kay!*, featuring music by George Gershwin, lyrics by Ira Gershwin, and book by Guy Bolton and Wodehouse. For further details, see the Musicals Tonight! website: www.musicalstonight.org.

October 29–November 1, 2015

The Wodehouse Society Convention, USA

The Wodehouse Society will be holding its 18th biennial convention, 'Psmith in Pseattle', at the Fairmount Olympic Hotel in Seattle, Washington. These weekend gatherings are renowned for their fun events and edifying talks.

November 18, 2015 Society AGM at the Savoy Tup

In addition to the AGM, we are promised a special guest speaker, whose identity will be revealed in a future *Wooster Sauce* as well as on our website. We kick off around 6 p.m. at the Savoy Tup (2 Savoy Street, Strand), with Parish Notices and the AGM commencing at around 6.45, followed by our speaker. It promises to be another fun evening.

March 8–20, 2016 *Oh, Boy!* in New York City

Musicals Tonight! will stage another classic Bolton-Wodehouse-Kern musical at the Lion Theatre in New York City. For further details, visit the Musicals Tonight! website: www.musicalstonight.org.

"This," said Mrs Waddington, turning to the clergyman and speaking in a voice which seemed to George's sensitive ear to contain too strong a note of apology, "is the bridegroom."

(From *The Small Bachelor*, 1927)

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