

WOOSTER SAUCE

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A New Member of the Junior Ganymede Club

by Neil Constable

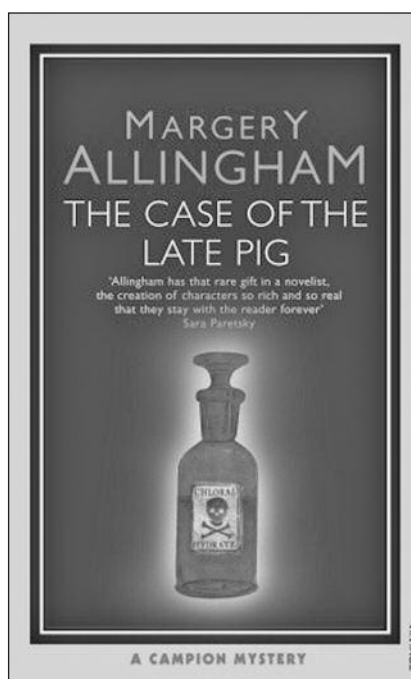
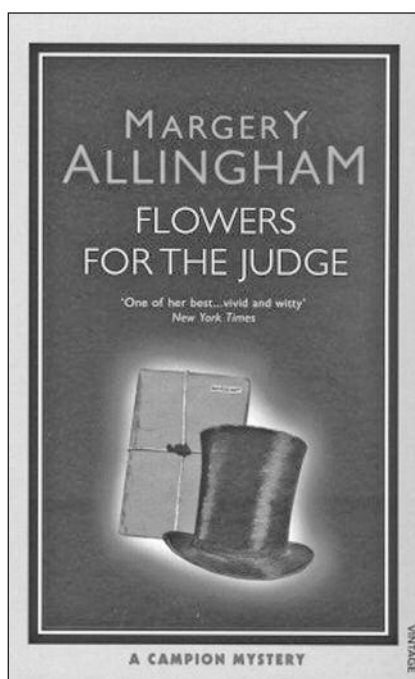
P. G. Wodehouse introduces us to the existence of the Junior Ganymede, a fictional club for male household staff, in *The Code of the Woosters* (1938), and briefly allows the reader a glimpse within its walls some 33 years later in 1971 with the publication of *Much Obligated, Jeeves*. Interestingly, though, it would appear that Wodehouse was not the first author to identify this Mayfair establishment and use it as a fictional ‘club’ for gentlemen’s gentlemen to meet and exchange opinions on the activities of their employers.

Anyone who has been privileged to join Norman Murphy on one of his Wodehouse Walks walks, or has dipped into his *Wodehouse Handbook*, might recall the clues assiduously pieced together over time to fix the exact location that inspired the Junior Ganymede. Like so many of Wodehouse’s settings, it proved to be based on a real address and, in this instance, an actual meeting place (albeit a pub rather than an actual club) that catered for the many butlers, valets, footmen, and chauffeurs who served the households of the

Mayfair district of London at the turn of the 20th century. Wodehouse himself separately placed it in Curzon Street in *The Code of the Woosters* and “just round the corner” from Curzon Street in the later *Much Obligated, Jeeves*. Norman, however, proved that the actual address was a nearby public house, now called The Only Running Footman, located on the corner of Hays Mews and Charles Street.

So imagine my surprise when I stumbled upon two earlier fictional references to the same establishment in works by Margery Allingham, the creator and chronicler of the exploits of amateur sleuth Albert Campion and his servant, the doleful ex-burglar Magersfontein Lugg. In Allingham’s novel *Flowers for the Judge* – published in 1936, some two years earlier than *The Code of the*

Woosters – Lugg is remonstrating with his employer over the latter’s involvement in a case which he sees as a ‘sex crime’ (wrongly as it turns out) and hoping his own part in it may be limited: “When they were all talking about it at the club, discussin’ the details, I said to myself, ‘I do ’ope I keep out of this.’” Campion inquires:



Allusions to *The Only Running Footman* pub, the source of the Junior Ganymede, can be found in these two Margery Allingham books.

"When you say 'the club', do you mean that pub in Wardour Street?"

A wooden expression crept into Mr Lugg's face. "No. I don't go there anymore. I took exception to some of the members. Very low type of person, they were. If you must know, I go to a very quiet, respectable little place in a mews up Mayfair way. There are several nice people there in my own line of business."

"Gentlemen's gentlemen, I suppose," said Mr Campion sarcastically.

"Exactly," agreed Mr Lugg belligerently. "And why not? A nice superior class of person I meet and hear all the gossip."

It is in seeking to imitate the habits of just such a "superior class of person" that Lugg inadvertently introduces his employer to a subsequent mystery, *The Case of the Late Pig*. Originally published in 1937, the year before *The Code of the Woosters*, this story commences with Albert Campion reflecting upon the character of his general factotum: "Lugg, who in spite of magnificent qualities has elements of the oaf about him, met His Lordship's valet in the Mayfair mews pub where they cater for gentlemen in the service of gentlemen and was instantly inspired to imitation." The imitation takes the form of reading aloud the *Times'* obituary column to his employer while the other partakes of breakfast in bed.

While Wodehouse knew Hays Mews from the mid-1920s, when he lived nearby in Norfolk Street, it is possible that Margery Allingham learned of the establishment during the period she attended the Regent Street Polytechnic in the early years of the same decade. It is interesting to speculate whether the Junior Ganymede in some latent form may have been shaped or even just

nudged along by these earlier references, presupposing, of course, that Wodehouse read Allingham's work. Clearly Wodehouse himself earned the affection of various leading detective writers of his day, with Agatha Christie, Anthony Berkeley, and Leslie Charteris all dedicating books to him. But it is possible that Margery Allingham was also tipping him the wink in *Flowers for the Judge* with the brief appearance of a character named Roberta Jeeves, author of *Died on a Saturday*, as a witness for the prosecution.

Whatever the inspiration, for anyone who has been introduced to both these gentlemen's gentlemen through the words of their creators, one can only wince at the thought of the two coming face to face at their mutual 'club', whether that be in the private bar (the preserve of butlers, gentlemen's gentlemen, and valets) of the pub of Allingham's telling or the smoking room of the club of Wodehouse's conception.

Imagine the impeccable, irreproachable, immaculate Jeeves meeting the caustic, derisive, and at times tawdry Lugg (who would think nothing of donning a "remarkable contraption consisting of a stiff collar with a black tie attached" before answering the door). Perhaps the closest we will get to such an encounter is the reaction of Jeeves to an approach by the uncouth Bingley at the Junior Ganymede as recorded by Bertie Wooster in *Much Obligated, Jeeves*:

"Good afternoon," said Jeeves, and I could see that the chap was not one of his inner circle of friends. His voice was cold, and anyone less lacking in and deficient in due respect would have spotted this and recoiled.

Society News

It's That Time of Year Again

Members will have found a higher than usual incidence of inserts (colour-coded for ease, both ours and yours) in this issue of *Wooster Sauce*. These include application forms for tickets to the Society's Percy Jeeves Memorial Lunch in July, and for our Dinner in October; you can read about these first two below and of course on the forms.

But the third insert – almost certainly bright yellow – is a reminder that your subscription renewal is due, and will only be going to those members who renew their subs using cash, cheque, PayPal, or bank transfer. If you receive a yellow form, we'd be so grateful if you'd renew as soon as you can – or let us know if you're not planning to renew. It's such a lot of work keeping track of who has paid and who hasn't, and sending out second reminders to members who meant to renew but didn't quite get around to it is surprisingly time-consuming. This is the busiest time of year for our Database Manager, and since we have a new volunteer this year – welcome and thank

you, Sue Williams, and her technical supporting act, husband Bryan – we don't want to put them off right at the start!

As we're sure you know, Standing Order and Direct Debit payers' subscriptions are renewed automatically, which (obviously) are the easiest methods for members and Society alike. Unfortunately, these options are only available to members with a UK bank account. Of those two options, Direct Debit is the Society's absolute favourite – it is set up online, flexible, reliable (more so than Standing Orders, dare we say), and well regulated.

If you pay by any of the other methods and have a UK bank account, do please consider changing to Direct Debit for this renewal.

Thank you.

– HILARY BRUCE

Society Meetings: What's the Buzz?

Talking to a companion over his customary Dirty Martini the other evening, our impresario noted how it only takes something to happen once or twice before it assumes the status of a long-standing tradition. "Who would have thought," he mused, "that within three short years our little quiz would have members beating down the door demanding to know when the next one will be?"

Well, he begs to inform those keen to pit their knowledge against his that they can save their knuckles a bruising. For on Wednesday, June 29, they will get their next chance to dazzle with their brilliance, as on that day the Fiendish Wodehouse Quiz Number 4 will take place in the upstairs boudoir of the Savoy Tup, just off the Strand, in the throbbing heart of London's West End. The customary apes, ivory, and peacocks will be distributed to the winning team, but these are but trash when compared with the honour and kudos of having their names immortalised in the Wodehouse Hall of Fame register, inscribed in copperplate and gold leaf. Indeed:

This story shall the good man teach his son;
 And June 29th shall ne'er go by,
 From this day to the ending of the world,
 But we in it shall be remembered—
 We few, we happy few, we band of brothers (and
 sisters);
 For he to-day that pits his wits with me
 Shall be my brother (or sister); be he ne'er so vile,
 This day shall gentle his condition;
 And gentlemen all through England then a-bed or
 watching *Emmerdale*
 Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
 And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
 That strove with us upon that memorable quiz night.

And if that's not exciting enough, our November meeting will spill the secrets of translating Wodehouse into Italian, courtesy of Gabriella Valentino, who knows a thing or two about it! "Oh, Mr Impresario", I hear you cry, "you are spoiling us!" No, don't thank me – it's my job.

– PAUL KENT

Percy Jeeves Memorial Tree Planting and Luncheon, July 14

There are still a few places left for the Percy Jeeves Memorial Lunch at Cheltenham on July 14, so we have enclosed another ticket application form with this issue (the blue insert).

You'll have read the story behind this event in the last issue of *Wooster Sauce* – how in 1913, Wodehouse enjoyed watching a promising young cricketer play at Cheltenham and later named a new leading character after him. Percy Jeeves volunteered as a soldier and was killed on the Somme on 22 July 1916. His body was never found; his name is one among tens of thousands listed on the Thiepval Memorial. Percy would never know his name would become famous throughout the world. Imagine how he would have felt, a quiet lad from

Goole whose name has come to represent sagacity and resourcefulness, and which has brought laughter to millions.

Percy was just one of so very many young men lost in that terrible battle, and ordinarily, few today would know of him. But thanks to P. G. Wodehouse, we do know Percy Jeeves, and as we honour him, this is also our chance to honour the millions of other young men who volunteered to fight for their country and died, unremarked save by their closest family.

Our memorial event marking the centenary of Percy Jeeves's death begins at 1.00 p.m., when we will plant a tree in his name and unveil the Society's memorial. Lunch and afternoon tea in a private marquee will follow. There will be some very short speeches at the planting and lunch, to give us plenty of time to enjoy the cricket, the beautiful grounds, and the excellent company. Among the Society's guests we are proud to number the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, the families of P. G. Wodehouse and Percy Jeeves, and many others, including Brian Halford, author of the excellent biography of Percy Jeeves. And, of course, there will be a good number of Society members with whom to fraternize while enjoying your day at this beautiful ground.

Do come if you can. Increasingly, it's promising to be a lovely and, we hope, meaningful day. And for a related story, see page 7.

– HILARY BRUCE

Tenth Formal London Dinner, October 20

The Society's tenth formal London dinner is to be held on Thursday, October 20, 2016. It will once again be held at The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, London WC1. Dinner will be 7.00 p.m. for 7.30; dress code is black tie.

We have once again been lucky to be offered very generous sponsorship, which means we have been able to keep the cost at £95 per head, for the third time. For this, those who attend will enjoy a champagne reception and a splendid four-course dinner, including wine, followed by entertainment that is of such a wonderful standard that no one is quite sure how we keep on doing it (but we do!). And all this in the stunning surroundings of the Gray's Inn Hall in the company of many of our patrons.

Further details of how to apply and application forms are included with this edition of *Wooster Sauce*. Members who have attended previous dinners will be aware how quickly the places were all booked. Gray's Inn Hall has a capacity of about 120 diners; places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. It is therefore strongly recommended that members apply for tickets by return. Applications will be acknowledged in late July, *but only if you enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope*. Letters of confirmation will be sent out at the end of August.

As usual, some places will be kept in reserve until mid-August for overseas members who will not be able to return the form as quickly as UK residents.

– TIM ANDREW

A Meaningful Evening at the Tup

by Tim Andrew

A goodly quorum gathered in the upstairs room at the Savoy Tup for our February 10 meeting.

We began, of course, on a sad note since the meeting took place soon after the death of our president, Sir Terry Wogan. Our Chairman, Hilary Bruce, spoke warmly of his enthusiasm for the writing of PGW and his warmth and generosity towards our society. Among her reminiscences, she remembered sitting next to him at the first of our dinners he attended, working up nervously to the suggestion that he might do something more prominent at the next. He'd clearly been there before and knew what was expected; before Hilary had to broach the subject, he simply said: "Don't worry; I'll be happy to speak." What a lovely man.

Tony Ring then told us about the Globe Reclamation Project (GRP). This is the astonishing work done by a group of mostly American Wodehouseans, led by John Dawson and assisted by Tony Ring and Norman Murphy in the UK. The aim was to identify Wodehouse's contributions within some 1,200 'By the Way' columns that were published when he was part of the group of writers responsible for it on the *Globe* newspaper between 1901 and 1908. It is a remarkable accomplishment that has resulted in two volumes being published. The first, edited by John Dawson, contains prose paragraphs he attributes to Wodehouse. The second, edited by Tony Ring, features 200 verses that the GRP believe were written by Wodehouse.

The detective work included scanning microfilm archives in London and Los Angeles, and over the course of 18 months every column published in the requisite time frame was reclaimed. (Karen Shotting alone, in Los Angeles, reclaimed 1,200 columns.) By cross-referencing with PGW's journal of *Money Received for Literary Work*, it was possible to work out which columns he could have contributed to, after which there was the small matter of judging from style and content which of the paragraphs might have been his. Amazing detective work and scholarship. The two volumes were available on Amazon, but unfortunately are now out of print.

Then followed the entertainment. A number of individual members were to tell us what Wodehouse meant to them. Paul Kent, who organises The Fun At The Tup for us, confessed to me afterwards that he hadn't been absolutely confident this would go well, it being the first time it had been tried.

Before the interval we had the first testimonial. Mark Smith had come all the way from Derbyshire to attend his first meeting at the Tup, and he was the first to tell us what Wodehouse meant to him . . . set

to music and accompanied by himself on the ukulele. It's a good job we had the interval after him. Quite apart from the pressing need to recharge glasses and answer calls of nature, there was the impossibility of anyone following him without the audience having an interlude to get over the astonishing and brilliant bit of fun they had just heard.



Mark Smith's superb musical tribute to Plum can be heard on YouTube: <http://bit.ly/224yBMO>


After the interval, the contributions were more conventional. Paul Kent, Elin Murphy, Hilary Bruce, and Norman Murphy told us what Wodehouse meant to them. Norman spoke almost entirely about the quality of the writing. Interestingly, enjoyment of the writing for the others, whilst patently obvious and a joy to them all, was almost a given. They talked about what PGW's work had given them in addition: an ear for grammar, a vocabulary, friendships, an alternative to life in a grim northern public school – in Elin's case a husband! Much of it was very moving. A shared enjoyment of PGW's work clearly brings more than an appreciation of the writing and a laugh at the humour.

Finally, Edward Cazalet reminisced about his visits to the Wodehouses on Long Island: the notes left for each other by PGW and Ethel; PGW completing *The Times* crossword so quickly that Edward thought he was writing notes. Edward shared with us a letter from Wodehouse to his adopted daughter, Leonora, Edward's mother (*see next page*). He also shattered many of our illusions by informing us that he had consulted a magistrate of seniority and long experience who could honestly say he had never heard of a case of a defendant being brought up before the bench for pinching a policeman's helmet.

No, Paul Kent need not have worried: it was a lovely evening.

From Plum to Leonora

Here is the letter that Edward Cazalet shared with members attending the Society's meeting in February.


 CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB,
 NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE,
 W.C.2.
 Jan 24. 1922


Darling Susky.


How's everything? Darned cold, what? So'm I.

I say, I've cut out the story a jeans story where Bertie visits a girls school & is very shy and snubbed by the girls & the head-mistress. Can you give me any useful details? What would be likely to happen to a

chap who was ~~being~~
 seeing over a school? Can you
 remember - was it at
 Hely? - the girls used to
 sing a song of welcome.
 Can you give me the
 words, the song & ~~the~~ when
 it would be sung? And
 anything else, that sort
 that would be likely to
 little Bertie.

Mummy's away in
 Kincaid with W & W
 Thosely. She may be
 away no more


 CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB,
 NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE,
 W.C.2.

week. I've cut
 Eric Shand staying
 with me till tomorrow.
 Very pleasant.
 Must stop now,
 as I don't hear the
 bell ringing.
 Love from
 Mummy 

And from Mark Smith to Us

As related on the opposite page, at our meeting on February 10, Society member Mark Smith's contribution to the theme of 'Why I Love P. G. Wodehouse' was a specially-composed ditty that he performed on his ukulele (or banjolele, if you prefer). Mark has provided us with the lyrics to his delightful song, but space constraints do not permit us to print them in full. However, here's a sample:

Even if the mountains tumble, you'll never see
 Plum crumble
 His prose could fill a mansion; his poems don't
 lack scansion
 But if your life lacks laughter, well I know what
 you're after:
 A trip to to where the Empress reigns, to
 Blandings Castle, that's in
 His world - where you just can't be glum, and
 you'll see
 His world - has impeccable style and always raises
 a smile
 If his books were pies, well I'd gobble every crumb
 And I'd say "that was great" and maybe swallow
 the plate
 And that's why I love Plum.

If you'd like the full set of lyrics, just write to the Editor (address on page 24). Or go to the YouTube link ([http:// bit.ly/224yBM0](http://bit.ly/224yBM0)) to listen and enjoy!

Introducing a New Series – Member Contributions Wanted!

As reported on page 4, members attending the Society's February meeting had been invited to speak on why they loved Wodehouse. Impresario Paul Kent led off with the piece you can read below, and we printed a contribution from Germany in the March *Wooster Sauce*. So, with two articles under our belt, we seem to have a series on our hands. Let's hear from you! We still welcome contributions on 'My First Wodehouse Experience' – but we'd also like to know just what makes reading Wodehouse so special for you. Please send your contributions (400–600 words) to the Editor (address on page 24).

Why I Love P. G. Wodehouse

by Paul Kent

Down the years, my appreciation of PGW has changed – or, perhaps more accurately, evolved. I was first introduced to the Master by a school friend, who loaned me his copy of *Psmith in the City*. From then I was hooked. I fell in love with the period setting and the atmosphere of the stories, which I conflated into a sort of 1920s/1930s soufflé of house parties; art deco; dressing for dinner; long, elegant cars; bright young things; and metropolitan living. Naturally, I found the books hilarious, too.

The Psmith books were followed by Jeeves and Bertie, Blandings, and then the others, scavenged one at a time from wherever I could find them in an area not exactly over-endowed with bookshops. The covers of the Penguin paperbacks (60 pence each), meticulously drawn by Ionicus, fuelled this love for the period setting and encouraged what was in essence a rather superficial engagement. I was, to paraphrase Evelyn Waugh's famous comment, being transported back to an age which appeared far less irksome than my own. Reading Wodehouse, I could pretend I wasn't having a miserable time at a minor Northern public school, where we were worked stupidly hard, rugby and the CCF were compulsory, the food was inedible, and it always seemed to be blowing a gale and raining. Instead, for a few snatched moments in the library, I could pretend I was strolling down Piccadilly with Bertie, or ensconced in a country house with a bunch of upper-class idiots being wined and dined and getting involved in jolly japes.

And then I grew up a bit. Only a bit, mind you, but to the point where I forgot all about Wodehouse. I, too, was having fun now – at University – and somehow the antics of Wodehouse's character all seemed to belong in my past. Sometimes I was even proud to think I had outgrown them. Yes, I still admired the language, the artistry, the brilliant plotting, the comic invention – all of it – but I was no longer a child and I decided to put aside childish things. Or what I thought were childish things.

Two decades went by. I was at least chronologically an adult by now, on whom the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune had begun to descend, and one day, during a particularly taxing period of my life, I picked up Wodehouse again. I'd like to say I

felt that immediate transportation back to a more innocent time, as I had when younger. But I didn't. Even Wodehouse couldn't immediately penetrate this carapace of gloom that had enfolded me. And then something really awful happened – and I actively began to despise Bertie et al for having made a better fist of life than I had. Stupid, I know – these were fictional characters – but nonetheless they were having more fun than I was. I couldn't bear either the reminder or the comparison, and back Wodehouse went on the shelf.

But not for long, as it turned out. One day, I asked myself a fatuous question: would you rather embrace Plum's approach to life or the unrelenting gloom of the Russian novels he poked fun at? No prizes for guessing my instinctive response. And it was then I suddenly realised, in a moment of blinding clarity, the blindingly obvious: that Wodehouse's world wasn't silly at all, but heroic. To love Wodehouse didn't represent nostalgia, running away from reality, turning your back on the bad things in life. Reading about Bertie and Blandings and Ukridge was actually far more than a guaranteed cheerer-upper – it was a call to arms, and so far different from my childish love of the period trappings of the stories as to bear very little comparison.

Wodehouse represents not complacency but struggle: the struggle to remain cheerful and optimistic in the midst of everything that conspires to make us sad from the moment we open our morning newspapers. It is not a superficial happiness, a flying-in-the-face-of-the-facts happiness, but a solid conviction that the world can be – and actually is – better than it appears. I'd long suspected it was far more difficult to be happy than sad, despite the fact that popular prejudice seems to have things the other way round – that to be happy is somehow bovine. And now I had my proof.

I don't have to read Wodehouse every day to be reminded of this. I'll confess that weeks and even months sometimes pass between my visits to Wodehouse's world. But he's always with me. The mental image is of that wonderful man with his typewriter, his pipe, and his dogs, surrounded, as in the wonderful Dickens portrait by Robert William Buss, by a host of the unique characters he created.

A Plaque for Percy Jeeves

by Brian Halford

By all accounts Percy Jeeves was, as well as a brilliant cricketer and highly courageous man, a deeply modest and grounded fellow, so I think he would have been astounded that there we all were, gathered on a spring day in Goole, to commemorate his life.

But I like to think that he would have approved.

The catalyst for our gathering was the unveiling of a blue plaque in honour of Percy – the man from whom P. G. Wodehouse took the name for his famous manservant character. Plum saw Percy play for Warwickshire against Gloucestershire at Cheltenham in 1913 and was so struck by the cricketer's immaculate attire and dapper style that he stored the name.

To this day, there is a letter in the museum at Warwickshire County Cricket Club's Edgbaston home, written to the club by Plum from his flat in New York in 1968, confirming that Jeeves the character was named after Jeeves the cricketer.

Intriguing. But there is so much more to the story of Percy Jeeves. Literary provenance. Excellent cricketing all-rounder. And, sadly, brave soldier who,

instead of playing cricket for his country, as he would certainly have done, died for his country.

The name P. Jeeves was destined never to appear on an England scorecard. Instead it is inscribed upon the Thiepval Memorial, in France, for soldiers with no known graves. Private 611 P. Jeeves, of the 15th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, disappeared without trace at High Wood in the Battle of the Somme on July 22, 1916. He was 28.

Four months earlier, on April 6, 1916, Jeeves and the 15th Warwicks were at Arras in the front line of that terrible conflict on the Western Front. So it was with great poignancy that, exactly 100 years to the day later, we assembled in Goole, in East Yorkshire, to remember Percy and unveil a blue plaque, proudly organised by Goole Civic Society, to honour him on the corner of Manuel Street, where he had grown up.

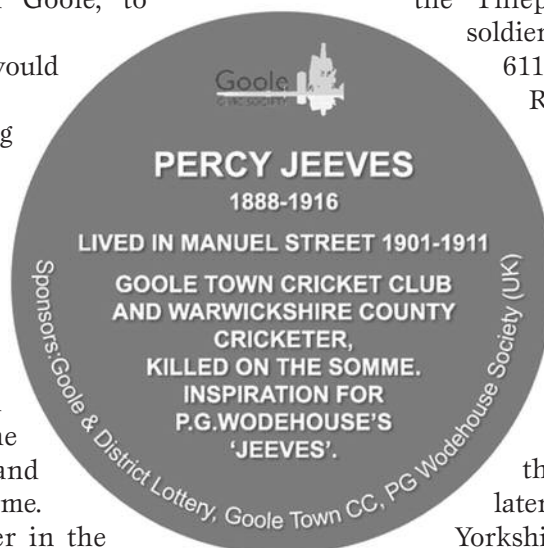
It was a lovely gathering, full of pride in Percy from his town and love for him from his family, led by great-nephew Keith Mellard, who had travelled down from Aberdeen for the occasion.

It was, I must admit, pretty poignant for myself, too. When you spend eight years researching the life of a man, as I did for my book *The Real Jeeves*, you get to know him pretty well. And as I delved further into Percy's life over the years, one thing became abundantly clear to me – that here was a man who, alongside all his considerable merits, belonged to one of the smallest categories of the human race: that of whom nobody had a bad word to say.

From all contemporary reports and, tragically, his premature obituaries, it was evident Jeeves was just a thoroughly nice man. A great guy. Who gave everything for his country.

As *The Daily Telegraph* put it, Percy's story is "as memorable – and surely more poignant – than any of P. G. Wodehouse's much-loved creations".

Brian Halford is the author of The Real Jeeves: The Cricketer Who Gave His life for His Country and His Name to a Legend, which is available through Amazon and other major retailers.



Percy Jeeves was commemorated in Goole 100 years to the day after he fought at Arras. (Thanks to the Goole Civic Society)

"If you would drink this, sir," he said, with a kind of bedside manner, rather like the royal doctor shooting the bracer into the sick prince. "It is a little preparation of my own invention. . . ."
(Jeeves gives Bertie his first pick-me-up in 'Jeeves Takes Charge', 1916)



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Jen Scheppers

Following a notice in the December edition of *Wooster Sauce*, Wodehouse Society members in the South West got together for lunch at The Longs Arms (highly recommended), in the charming Wiltshire village of South Wraxall. The day had a touch of *The Mating Season* about it: there was haddock on the menu, and nearby Bradford on Avon celebrates ‘The Gudgeon’ as the title of their town newsletter and local ale. We are planning similar jaunts in the region, which boasts many Wodehouse sights and connections. Please contact me at jenscheppers@hotmail.com if you’d like to join us.

For a related article by Jen, see page 10.



A Wodehousean gathering in Wraxall (l-r):
David, Geraldine, and Jen Scheppers, with Graham Palmer

From David Mackie

I was very interested in the article ‘A Personal Footnote to the Search for Blandings’ in *Wooster Sauce* (March 2016). I don’t know if David Salter is aware of this, but Apley Park was the birthplace and childhood home of Lord Berners – Gerald Hugh Tyrwhitt (1883–1950), whose eccentricities are legend: he owned pigeons which he painted in various colours using harmless dyes, and had a clavichord made which fitted into the front seat of his Rolls-Royce.

A diplomat in Rome during World War I, Berners was also extremely talented in several disciplines as a writer, painter, and musician, and it is as the latter that he is perhaps best remembered today. He was well known for several ballets but could turn his hand to anything, as in his music for the film *Champagne Charlie* (1944), which featured his wonderful and convincing pastiche of a Victorian Music Hall song, ‘Come On Algernon’.

He later bought Faringdon House in Oxfordshire, where he continued his eccentric behavior: he built a huge folly and put up signs on trees, one reading “Do not throw stones at this notice”. He left the house to a friend and companion, Robert Heber-Percy, another eccentric known at one time as ‘the Mad Boy’.

I profess no expertise in Wodehouse matters, but this is surely the stuff of a Wodehouse book itself? My copy of *Blandings Castle* states that it was first published in 1935. If that was the first appearance of Blandings, then by that time P.G. would almost certainly have been aware of Lord Berners (if he hadn’t come across him before), and Berners would certainly have been aware of P.G. – both men now in their fifties. In the light of this, and with David Salter’s research, I would think that Apley would be a very strong contender for the provenance of Blandings. With due respect to Norman, it certainly should be!

The Editor replies: It should be noted that *Blandings Castle* was first described in *Something Fresh* (1915), and Lord Berners and his admittedly Wodehousean eccentricities did not become well known until several years after this time. For Norman’s reply to David Salter’s article, see page 16.

From C. W. Dueker, M.D.

The Little Nuggets section of *Wooster Sauce*, March 2016 (pg. 9), ends with an unattributed report on a disquieting piece credited to *Forbes*. I realize that your staff merely reproduced the *Forbes* offering. However, in this innocent way untruth begins its propagation.

The combination of fish, Wodehouse, and brain health will prove popular with many readers. The reproduced piece suggests that a report in *JAMA* supports Bertie Wooster’s belief that fish strengthened Jeeves’s brain. The study in *JAMA* says nothing about brain health causation. It is the latest report to demonstrate that groups of the aged who claim to have eaten lots of fish may have less dementia (Alzheimer’s variant) than similar groups who ate less fish. Diet was self-reported. There is no way to prove that fish eating reduced dementia.

Of more interest to your readers, there was no intention to show that eating fish would result in a brain like that of Jeeves. Prevention of dementia (no causation demonstrated) is definitely not the same as production of super intelligence.

Wodehouse was broadminded on the association of fish eating and high intelligence. His characters supported, denied, or ignored the power of fish. Their positions were quite flexible from tale to tale.

The Little Nuggets piece ends with an amusing quotation reportedly from *Thank You, Jeeves*. Interestingly, this quotation argues against fish power. May I suggest: “His brain enlarged by constant helpings of fish, he had seen the way and found a formula acceptable to all parties.” That observation was made by B. Wooster in *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*.

The propagation of truth requires eternal vigilance.

The Mannering-Phipps Question

by Martin Stratford

In the December issue we presented some theories from members regarding the conundrum surrounding Bertie Wooster's last name. Martin's was inadvertently overlooked (sorry about that), but we are happy to revive the debate with his thoughts on the matter.

It occurred to me while reading the issue of *By The Way* that accompanied the September 2015 issue of *Wooster Sauce* that the question of why the narrator of 'Extricating Young Gussie' appears to be a Mannering-Phipps rather than a Wooster is readily susceptible to not one but two possible further explanations. For the sake of clarity, I shall refer to them as Possible Explanation A and Possible Explanation B.

Possible Explanation A

It was a slip of the pen, or, rather, the typewriter, by PGW. After all, when one wishes to type 'Wooster' it is perfectly understandable if one types 'Mannering-Phipps' by mistake. It could happen to anyone. There are, of course, one or two other such slips elsewhere in the canon. Was it Whiffle or Whipple who cared about the care of pigs? And was it Rev. Upjohn or Abney who taught Bertie in his formative years?

Perhaps there is a case for editing by a committee of eminent PGW scholars to determine the definitive name, relationship, etc., in all such cases and for future editions of the Great Works to be amended accordingly. Hold on, I hear you cry, would it not be literary sacrilege to change one word of the Master's sublime prose? A response might be that there have been revisions to literary works in the past. After all, someone once rewrote *King Lear* to give it a happy ending. Of course, I accept that meddling with the works of Wodehouse is a far more serious matter than mucking about with Shakespeare. However, if such revisions were agreed upon, it might be possible to find a benevolent publisher willing to produce a

fresh printing of all the Master's UK books in a uniform edition with spiffing covers. It would probably come to about 99 books in all that would . . . er . . . on second thoughts, perhaps I had better move swiftly on to:

Possible Explanation B

The name of Mannering-Phipps was used deliberately as a pseudonym. Bertie may have wished to avoid exposing his family name to public ridicule and therefore used M-P instead. There are several literary precedents for this as well. Many novelists of an earlier age would refer to Mr -- or the --shire regiment in order to keep identities secret. Watson often changed names, and even dates, to protect the identity of Holmes's clients.

Bertie might also have thought it prudent to change the name in case Aunt Agatha challenged him over airing the family dirty linen in public. It was only to be expected of the planning abilities of Bertram W. W. that he should amend the family name and then give the game away by failing to provide a pseudonym for Jeeves. As there was, therefore, no point in such subterfuge in the future, the true name of Wooster was used thereafter.

A similar explanation might be provided for some of the other apparent errors in the oeuvre (*si c'est le mot je cherche*). Whiffle might have changed his name to Whipple in later editions of his porcine masterwork in an attempt to fool the Inland Revenue and thereby to trouser a greater proportion of the royalties from future sales. Equally, the Rev might have assumed an alias to avoid being sued by former pupils who felt that their physical or intellectual growth had been stunted by the meals so movingly described by Kipper Herring in *Jeeves in the Offing*.

The above are, of course, merely suggestions. No doubt there will be many alternative views. The letters C to Z are still available.

Two Little Nuggets

A Lord for Us All

Thanks to ANDREW PARKER for writing to point out the maiden speech made by Lord Willetts to the House of Lords on 28 January 2016, as published on Parliament's website (see <http://bit.ly/1XNwITD>):

Lord Willetts (Con) (Maiden Speech): My Lords, it is an enormous honour for me to be speaking for the first time in your Lordships' House. Inevitably, as I stand here to give my maiden speech, I think back to a maiden speech I gave in another place, 24 years ago, after I was first elected to represent the constituency of Havant. I have tried to reflect my debt to it in taking it as part of my title. The borough

of Havant includes the town of Emsworth, where PG Wodehouse lived for a time and after which he named one of his most famous characters—though I resisted the temptation to take the title Lord Emsworth.

Quite Interesting Indeed

On a recent rerun of the Stephen Fry–moderated programed *QI*, broadcast on the Dave channel, our Patron discoursed on his youthful fascination with typewriters, noting: "Once I copied out a whole novel – *Frozen Assets*, by P. G. Wodehouse." Well, that's one way to do it, of course. (Thanks to MURRAY HEDGCOCK)

A Day Out with the Wiltshire Gudgeons

by Jen Scheppers

On March 19, a small but happy gang of Wodehouseans and almost-Wodehouseans gathered at The Longs Arms in Wraxall (see Letters to the Editor, page 8). The excursion inspired Jen to write this piece for her blog Plumtopia (honoriplum.wordpress.com).

Recently I visited the charming Wiltshire town of Bradford on Avon for a bit of browsing and sluicing with fellow members of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) – the first, we hope, of many gatherings in the South West. Our luncheon took place at an outstanding local pub called The Longs Arms, and we were unanimous in the view that, should we ever extend our activities to include compiling a Pub Guide for Wodehouse fans, The Longs Arms would make a worthy inclusion – the only obstacle being a lack of any obvious Wodehouse connection, unless you're prepared to accept haddock on the menu and the Mullineresque conversation of our very own 'oldest member', Graham Palmer.

And yet . . .

From the moment I alighted from the train at Bradford on Avon, I was struck with Wodehouse associations (fortunately not at the base of the skull). The most obvious of these is the town's celebration of 'The Gudgeon' in the title of their town newsletter, a local ale, and more (see photo). The Gudgeon they're honouring is, of course, the fishy variety, and not the memorable character created by P. G. Wodehouse.

Hilda Gudgeon has long held a special place in my heart, though she appears only briefly in *The Mating Season* as Madeline Bassett's school friend. Bertie describes her as "a solid, hefty girl, of the type which plays five sets of tennis without turning a hair". This Gudgeon is refreshingly unlike Madeline, and Bertie is initially disposed to like her (a view he revises when she offers to boost his chances of a union with Madeline).

"Good morning, Hilda," said the Bassett in that soupy, treacly voice which had got her so disliked by all right-thinking men. "What a lovely, lovely morning."

The solid girl said she didn't see what was so particularly hot about it, adding that personally she found all mornings foul. She spoke morosely, and I could see that her disappointment in love had soured her, poor soul. I mourned for her distress, and had the circumstances been different, might have reached up and patted her on the head.

If being unlike Madeline Bassett isn't enough inducement, Hilda Gudgeon is also fond of cricket:

"Have you seen the paper this morning? It says there's some talk of altering the leg-before-wicket rule again. Odd how your outlook changes when your heart's broken. I can remember a time when I'd have been all excited if they altered the leg-before-wicket rule. Now I don't give a damn. Let 'em alter it, and I hope they have a fine day for it."

Cricket was my first love before discovering Wodehouse, and I've always looked on Hilda Gudgeon as a kindred soul – I even made her the central character of my attempt at Wodehouse homage. Seeing the Gudgeon so revered by the good people of Wiltshire filled me with joie de vivre. I purchased both their newsletter and their ale – and what's more, I'd do it again!

Leaving Gudgeons to one side for the moment, though preferably not in the sun, there are Wodehouse connections in the area surrounding Bradford on Avon.

Young Wodehouse spent boyhood holidays with relations in Wiltshire and nearby Somerset, making it probable that he would have visited the town. His mother's family, the Deanes, excelled at the production of spinster Aunts, a gaggle of whom lived just 5½ miles away in the village of Box. Deanes also pop up in the registers at Freshford village, three miles to the west, and the area known as 'the Deverills' is roughly 20 miles away. This combination of aunts, Deverills, Gudgeons, and haddock can only mean one thing to a Wodehouse fan – *The Mating Season*.

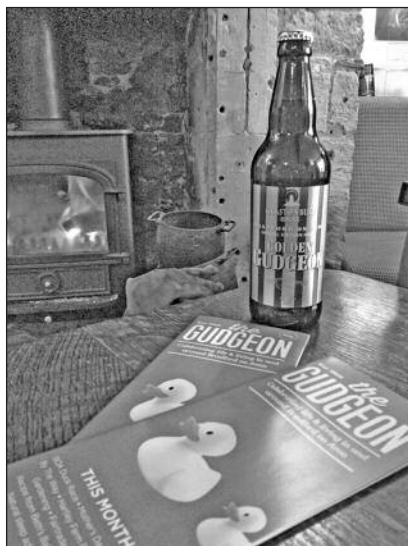
We may never know if young Wodehouse passed The Longs Arms on a country walk, or called in for a whisky and splash with the local raconteur, but if you're looking for a fine lunch (with an enticing menu that changes daily) in Wodehouse territory, I heartily recommend it. Better still, why not join us next time? We're planning further exploratory jaunts in the region, so please get in touch (jenscheppers@hotmail.com). We look forward to meeting you, although I can't promise that I won't slap you on the back and address you with offensive familiarity — in the spirit of the Gudgeons.

The solid girl, whom I had dimly heard telling the gardener he needn't be afraid of breaking that spade by leaning on it, came back and immediately proceeded, in what I considered an offensively familiar manner, to give me a hearty slap on the back.

"Well, Wooster, old bloke," she said.

"Well, Gudgeon, old bird," I replied courteously.

A hearty farewell to you!



Jeeves

by Gerard Palmer

I have been musing a bit lately – well, brooding actually – about Jeeves. As far as I can make out, the general consensus seems to be that he was a prince among valets and the perfect gentleman's gentleman.

Now, no one could deny that Jeeves carried out his professional duties with quiet efficiency and was extremely sound on matters of dress. His views on ties, socks, shirts, and spats cannot be faulted. And his patent morning life-saver is an essential aid to recovering one's poise after a somewhat jolly evening. We can take all that as read, I think.

And yet, and yet . . . I have this nagging suspicion that his role as a guide, counsellor, and friend to B. Wooster has been much exaggerated. It seems to me that, far from being the loyal, feudal helpmeet that he has been portrayed as, he often manipulates the situation to his own advantage. Although some may consider it close to sacrilege, my view is that he has achieved his present status by means of his calm, unruffled manner and all-knowing air of wisdom.

I mean, consider the facts. When helping some in-the-soup pal of Bertie's, the frequent outcome is that the pal escapes unscathed, but only because Jeeves has shifted the blame onto Bertie. And the schemes or ruses which he employs when it is the young master in danger nearly always end up with Bertie being widely advertised as next door to a loony. He has even gone so far as to describe Bertie as "mentally negligible". I mean, I ask you!

Jeeves also make free with Bertie's personal property – destroying the white mess jacket by leaving a hot smoothing-iron on it; giving a pair of purple socks to a lift attendant; handing a good suit to the head gardener and the much-favoured blue alpine hat with the pink feather to the Totleigh Towers butler!

You may think that this is over-stating the case for the prosecution, but wait: further examples of the callous way Jeeves behaves spring to mind.

1. *At Aunt Agatha's*: When Aunt A's loathsome son, Thos., maroons A. B. Filmer, the

Cabinet minister, on an island in the lake, Jeeves tells everyone that Bertie was the culprit.

2. *Lunch with Sir Roderick Glossop*: Sir R comes to assess Bertie's sanity and suitability as a son-in-law. Claude and Eustace have been allowed by Jeeves to deposit in the flat cats, fish, and a topper that happens to belong to Sir R, all of which they have stolen as trophies for an Oxford club. He omits to inform Bertie about these additions to the household. The upshot is that Sir R is convinced that Bertie should be placed under restraint.

3. *The Brinkley Court episode*: Jeeves induces Bertie to ring the fire-bell at 12.30 a.m., causing a panic, and then causes Bertie to be pressured into making an unnecessary 18-mile bicycle ride in the dark without a light to get the back-door key which he (Jeeves) has in his trousers pocket.

4. *At Sir Watkin Basset's country house*: For reasons too complex to list, Bertie is blackmailed into taking Sir W. Basset's Amber figurine in order to return it to its former owner. Jeeves tells Madeline Basset that Bertie is, and for years has been, a kleptomaniac as proof of this statement he produces the figurine which he says he found hidden among Bertie's underwear. He was, in fact, supposed to return the item in question to the collection room.

I fancy I need to say no more – a prima facie case stares one in the face.

Of course, I realise it may well be that other people – somewhat brighter than myself – have known this from the start and would be inclined to raise the eyebrows at my slowness of uptake. I can only say in my defence that some of us had a sheltered upbringing and regard the world with a touching innocence.

The Life of Aunt Agatha

Well-informed Wodehouse readers will know that among his many aunts on his mother's side was Mary Deane, one of the four Deane sisters who lived at Cheney Court in Box, Wiltshire, where the young Plum often stayed with them. Mary was a writer of mostly historical romances and a recorder of Deane family history – as well as being the model for one of PGW's best-known characters. In a letter dated January 14, 1955, he wrote: "Aunt Agatha is definitely my Aunt Mary, who was the scourge of my childhood."

Scourge or not, her life is now the basis of a book entitled *The Shadow of Mary Deane*, by Patricia Whalley. The author has drawn on Mary's personal notebook and three of her diaries to create a picture of her life growing up in Bath and subsequently living through the First World War in Box, where social life carried on regardless of the bad news from outside. The notebook and diaries had been found in a furniture store in Corsham.

For a description of the book and information on how to obtain a copy, go to <http://bit.ly/1WPaWQH>.

Wodehouse, Titleist

by Charles E. Gould, Jnr

When I was working on the quiz book *What's in Wodehouse*, I mentioned to publisher Jimmy Heineman that I planned a chapter on Wodehouse's titles. His reply, "But he had only the one", was uncharacteristic wool-gathering by one who, after all, had described himself as having gathered no moss; but in a sense Jimmy was right. Many of Wodehouse's titles, especially for novels, are much like one another – in short, only the one or two. This is not surprising, of course, from an author who wrote one book after another, sometimes the same one after another. He himself remarked, in the preface to *Summer Lightning*, "With my superior intelligence, I have outgeneralled the man [a critic] this time by putting in all the old Wodehouse characters under the same names." I confess that after fifty years in the field, I sometimes still have to think twice about a Wodehouse title to be sure it's not another one.

Peter Schwed (Wodehouse's editor and publisher at Simon and Schuster for 25 years) in a letter to me (January 21, 1974) wrote, "Over the years I have changed Wodehouse's original title (which Barrie & Jenkins blindly uses) [not always] to one I think has a better chance of distinguishing one book from another. Such was the case with *Much Obliged, Jeeves* which I changed to *Jeeves and the Tie that Binds*. In making that suggestion I had to justify it so, as I've sometimes done in the past [I don't know when], I wrote that last page or so in our edition in my best imitative style and sent it along to him for approval and for a rewrite in the matchless style of the master himself. He did approve, he did rewrite the page . . ." I don't know why he did: simply to keep the peace, or because traditionally publishers have the last word about titles; but Peter's title is strange, an allusion to an American hymn by John Fawcett (1740–1817) – "Blest be the tie that binds / Our hearts in Christian love" – that would not have sprung readily to the lips of Jeeves, to the ear of Bertie or of Wodehouse, or, one would think, to the mind of Schwed.

But the mind of Schwed, my friend and amiable correspondent for almost forty years, moved in mysterious ways. Wodehouse dedicated *Bertie Wooster Sees It Through* to him, and the framed proof-copy of that dedication (derived from a piece PGW did for *Punch*) took pride of place on the wall of Peter's office on 6th Avenue. In May 1975 I wrote to ask whether he'd ever run across a 1916 novel by H. G. Wells that I had retrieved from my grandmother's library on the off chance that . . . :

Yes – *Bertie Wooster Sees It Through* was my title and it certainly was inspired by *Mr. Britling*

Sees It Through, which was such a favorite of my father's that he bought all the original oil paintings used to illustrate the book . . . half a dozen large oils. . . . When we were broke, Parke Bernet auctioned them off. . . . They brought about enough to buy peanut butter sandwiches for the family. . . . Well, we liked peanut butter.

I think *inspired* is apt on this one, and I further respect Peter's pulling out of his hat the title of a novel (later a motion picture) by George Barr McCutcheon (the J. K. Rowling of Graustark): *Brewster's Millions*, which he converted to *Biffen's Millions* for publication on July 14, 1964, published exactly one month later by Jenkins as *Frozen Assets*.

Wodehouse's own original manuscript title for this novel was 'Great Possessions', which in its Dickensian echo I think makes Schwed's look comparatively lame and Jenkins's topically pedestrian. Some scholars have said that Wodehouse didn't know or like his Dickens, but that (like ever so much scholarship) is palpable nonsense. Wodehouse got the title *Their Mutual Child* from Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* and cribbed from that author, relentlessly, Bertram Wooster's superbly eloquent for all occasions "Oh, ah". And that wonderful, wonderful Wodehouse mixture of Alexander Pope and Shakespeare about Lo, the Poor Indian, has a Dickens aunt (specifically, Mr. F's) in it. Perhaps Peter was right: "Great Possessions by P. G. Wodehouse" might smack sordidly of the fiscally autobiographical.

After the Wodehouse Society convention in Boston in 1995, at my suggestion and perhaps others', Peter published a handsome, regrettably slender volume of his correspondence with Wodehouse, *Plum to Peter*. Many of the letters concern and debate titles, as I would think might be irritating to a writer of Wodehouse's prolific proficiency. But, apparently, in the published record at least, he was rarely irritated. The first such letter, dated from Remsenburg "Sept 4.1967" (which is how Wodehouse always did it; hereafter I'll conform to our standard usage), says: "This time I have got a title which you will almost certainly want to change, though you can't say it isn't arresting. It is DO BUTLERS BURGLE BANKS? so now be thinking of something else!" Schwed's note: "Plum was wrong. This time I left a title of his alone, and *Do Butlers Burgle Banks?* survived" in the U.S. and in Britain. But Plum knew his Peter. On the title page of the original manuscript (which, as we say in the trade, "passed through my hands" just a few years ago) Wodehouse had done the usual:

DO BUTLERS BURGLE BANKS?

BY
P.G. WODEHOUSE

and then (playing Schwed safe) appended in his own hand, holograph block letters,

ALTERNATIVE TITLE
HATS OFF TO HORACE

James Thurber ('What's So Funny?' in *Thurber Country*, 1953) set down his own "standing rules about humor", the first of them being: "The reader should be able to find out what the story is about." I recall titles in that regard that he suggested wouldn't do – 'The Barking Oven', 'The Burgundy Tree', and 'A Tricycle for Mama – and Schwed and I seem independently to have agreed that neither would 'Hats Off to Horace', not even our Homburgs. So butlers *do* burgle banks.

More debatable, apparently, was the title for the Simon and Schuster edition of the Monty Bodkin novel that first appeared in England in 1972. I bought a copy of *Pearls, Girls and Monty Bodkin* at Sotheran's in London shortly after it came out, sent it to Wodehouse when I got home, and he generously inscribed it for me: "Yes, this is the latest novel, just published in America under the title *The Plot that Thickened*." Years later, David Landman restored to my memory 'A Pearl, A Girl', a forgettable if not memorable poem by Robert Browning.

That notwithstanding, I thought Peter's title in this shape rotten. If conspicuous avoidance of a cliché is worse than the cliché itself, what price emblazoning one? Wodehouse might have agreed. In a letter dated from Remsenburg, July 6, 1973 (*Plum Lines*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Autumn 1991), he wrote to Captain [Bill] Blood, founder of The Wodehouse Society: "Pearls Girls was published in England last Fall, but it has only just come out over here under the title of *THE PLOT THAT THICKENED*. Not a good title, to my mind, but Simon and Schuster wanted it."

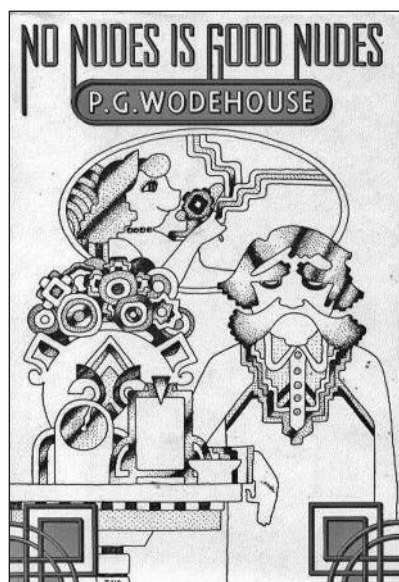
In the postscript to a letter to Peter Schwed the previous December, however, Wodehouse had said, "I am more and more attracted by your Plot Thickens title." Well, maybe he had to say that, for in a letter dated October 1, 1972, he had written to Peter: "As regards the title, I'm afraid I shall have to leave it to you. . . . Anything you suggest will be all right with me." Peter's note: "I accepted the challenge of coming up with a title . . . Plum liked it" (*Plum to Peter*, pp49–53). 'Bodkin Again in the Soup' or 'Bodkin's Broth' would have worked as well as far as I am concerned.

Many titles of Wodehouse's novels and short stories are, of course, clichés (*Service with a Smile*, *Quick*

Service, *Money in the Bank*, *Money for Nothing*), allusions (*Joy in the Morning*, *Company for Henry*, *The Girl in Blue*) or catchphrases of some species, what Richard Osborne calls "pulpit prose and race-course slang". I don't know whether magazine editors fooled about with Wodehouse's titles, but publishers, especially Peter Schwed, couldn't leave them alone. Wodehouse and he became friends, and Wodehouse was godfather to Peter's son Greg, but he knew something about his own art and what he didn't like, a compelling example being *The Brinkmanship of Galahad Threepwood*, which actually I don't think is so bad. It's an allusion to a series of books by Stephen Potter (*Oneupmanship*, *Gamesmanship*, etc.) which as a schoolboy I thought tiresome and obvious and which I'll bet Wodehouse didn't know, but in a letter to Derek Grimsdick at Herbert Jenkins, November 27, 1964 (*A Life in Letters*, edited by Sophie Ratcliffe) he said, especially attacking John Alcorn's "Did-you-ever-see-a-ghastlier?" jacket: "Taken in conjunction with the loathsome title, one feels P. Schwed ought to rent a padded cell in some not too choosy lunatic asylum." Well, if Grimsdick passed this on, Peter (like Anatole) could take some roughs with a smooth, remaining as cool as some cucumbers, and as you will find below he had not yet done his worst.

In 'A Source of Misquotation' (*Wooster Sauce*, June 2001), Nigel Rees turns up the ancestry of 'The Butler Did It' as early as a 1938 *Punch* cartoon, noting that it was already "redolent of detective fiction in its heyday" and finding it again in a *Strictly Richter* cartoon that Wodehouse sent to Schwed with a letter dated August 23, 1956: "I am wondering if it might not be a good title for the book. It certainly fits the story and it is a well-known catch phrase. Ponder on it . . ." Apparently Peter pondered, for he published the novel under that title on January 28, 1957, ten days after Jenkins published it as *Something Fishy*, the title under which it had already appeared in *Collier's*, August/September 1956. I think PG and Peter finally finished first on this one, no matter who originally fished first.

Twelve years later, however, Wodehouse wrote to Schwed, September 14, 1968 (*Plum to Peter*): "This is where I shall have to come down on you for a title. . . . What this is leading up to is – would *GALLY TO THE RESCUE* appeal to you? It fits the story perfectly. If you don't like it, can you suggest another Gally title?" Apparently not. Jimmy Heineman owned the finished manuscript, which in Wodehouse's hand was entitled 'Guests at the Castle (A Blandings Castle Novel)', the title Wodehouse had proposed to Peter Schwed in a letter of March 26:



Possibly the worst Wodehouse title?

“I have got the straight story for a new Blandings Castle novel. It looks good. I think I shall have to leave the title to you again, as the best I can think of is GUESTS AT THE CASTLE, which I doubt if you will pass.” Peter later appended this note (*Plum to Peter*, p.40): “The eventual title, for which I have to take responsibility although I am not particularly proud of it, turned out to be *No Nudes is Good Nudes*. Plum said he wanted a crazy title, and the plot of the book revolved around a stolen oil painting of a nude.” This appalling pun led me at once to wire Sir Roderick Glossop on Peter’s behalf, but all the good suites were booked at Colney Hatch. Upon reflection, however, I understood that Peter was trying to make *A Pelican at Blandings*, the Jenkins title (Grimsdick’s work at the crossroads?), accessible to the untutored American, and that was not a bad idea. I myself did not understand that title until Norman Murphy explained it; in 1969 I assumed it was a reference to Laertes’ phrase in *Hamlet*, comparing himself to “the kind life-rendering pelican”, which of course Gally Threepwood is. (Laertes wasn’t.)

It is well known that Wodehouse did signings of *Ice* (or *The Ice*) *in the Bedroom*, for both sides of the ocean, and the difference between the two titles aroused my transatlantic curiosity for a long time. Thanks to Tony Ring, who has the original correspondence (May 1960), we can now know who devised the title of this novel. Wodehouse’s own original title was ‘Hot Ice’. Peter (overlooking, I guess, the wit of PGW’s oxymoron and the faint echo of Spenser’s Sonnet XXX) wrote that he thought this sounded too much like “another Wodehouse” and proposed ‘The Ice in the Bedroom’. Wodehouse replied, “I think your title is an inspired one and we must certainly use it. But wouldn’t it be better with the ‘the’ omitted?”

Peter’s response: “A casual poll of the office shows we prefer the retention of the definite article.” The Simon and Schuster edition preceded the Jenkins publication on Wodehouse’s birthday, October 15, 1961, by eight months; and Wodehouse evidently prevailed with Jenkins, who dropped the article. Tony Ring says “Herbert Jenkins showed greater taste”, which I don’t see, but I am most grateful to him for generously putting my original question to rest. Oddly, it seems to me, the London version, without the article, is slightly risqué while the New York version is not—‘the ice’ being rather dated burglars’ argot for jewelry, ‘ice in the bedroom’ being, I suppose, a latter-day euphemism for something quite different – the lack, perhaps, of the family jewels, with which this story has no concern at all. I wonder how many middle-aged men, or women, sneaked a copy of this book home from Hatchards, only to find that “We pencil Freddie in as svelte” (Chapter 13) is about as close as it gets to advice on hotting things up in the boudoir. It’s *not* a treatise on frigidity.

On the other hand, why *not* ‘another Wodehouse’?

By 1960 that’s exactly what his readers were hoping for, and few would care what he called it. It seems to me that both P.S. and P.G. were starting to try too hard. The last book Wodehouse completed was a Jeeves and Bertie novel; Wodehouse to Schwed (March 19, 1974): “I have been waiting to write to you till I had finished my Jeeves novel. Aunt Dahlia with her unscrupulous outlook gets Bertie into a sea of trouble, and I thought AUNTS AREN’T GENTLEMEN would do. Or is ‘women aren’t gentlemen’ better? I’ll leave it to you.” As I have suggested in these very pages, either would seem lousy to me, but not as bad as the German *Fünf vor zwölf, Jeeves!* which doesn’t make a syllable of sense in any language as a title for this novel. (It just tells the time on the stable clock on the cover.) If for no other reason than that many Americans pronounce “aunt” *ant*, thus obliterating an already feeble pun, Peter would have rejected Plum’s title at once, if only to come up with *The Cat-nappers*, which, in my opinion, especially in conjunction with the truly ghastly and horribly awful out-of-the-picture anachronistic dust-wrapper illustration by Norman Green, represents an all-time P.S. and S&S low: paronomasia plus paranoia plus the purblind. But Wodehouse wrote, July 2, 1974:

Your title for the book. I like it, but I think it wants a touch of explaining. . . . Will you be thinking up a title for the one I’m doing now. It’s a Blandings Castle story and it’s all about Galahad fixing up a number of people’s marriages. LEAVE IT TO GALAHAD would fit, but does that clash with Leave It To Psmith? It’s exactly fifty years since the latter was published, so perhaps not.

Peter replied a week later:

Yes, I agree that the title needed a touch of explaining in the manuscript and I had already put in a sentence almost exactly like yours. However, now that I have *les mots justes* from the Master himself, I’ve substituted them [“Cat-napping. It’s as bad as nobbling a horse.”] . . . As for the new novel, despite the fact that Leave It To Psmith is 50 years old, it is one of your most famous. . . . So I would think you’d do better not to call the new one Leave It To Galahad. I’ll try to think of something and you do the same—I don’t *always* disapprove of your titles.

These, to me poignant, were almost Peter’s last published words to Plum. “The one I’m doing now”, “the new novel”, of course, is the one Wodehouse was working on in the hospital when he died, published posthumously, with notes and appendices by Richard Osborne, as *Sunset at Blandings*. I like to think that Dick is the one who proposed that title for PGW’s last work, sweetly and reverently, and that Peter and Barrie & Jenkins bought it from him. But, after all, P. G. Wodehouse was writing the book, with one title on his shoulders and yet another in his mind. Yes, Jimmy Heineman: he had many more than the one.

An Entertaining Amble

Bruce Allan reviews *A Wodehouse London Walk*

Living as I do in the northern extremities of the Kingdom, I've been an irregular visitor to the capital. When I have popped down it has usually been for largely hedonistic reasons – visits to the theatre, a concert or two and even the occasional football international at Wembley.

On those occasions I have been more inclined to observe the capital from the comfort of a convivial hostelry and rarely sought out the more cerebral side of the city. My knowledge therefore of London, you might say, is as incomplete as a Bertie Wooster Shakespearean quote.

So how marvellous it would have been, had I known of their existence, to have accompanied Norman Murphy, founding chairman of the PG Wodehouse Society (UK), on one of his celebrated Wodehouse Walks. Sadly, these walks ceased at the end of 2013. But hurrah for Andrew Chapman, the Society's onetime treasurer, to have the foresight to record a one-off in 2010 before they were consigned to history.

Now released on DVD and titled *A Wodehouse London Walk*, it is a captivating and compelling constitutional through Mayfair, Piccadilly and Pall Mall, passing through Trafalgar Square and ending up outside the Sherlock Holmes pub in Northumberland Street, beside which are sited the Turkish baths in which Psmith famously "persuaded" Mr Bickersdyke not to sack Mike Jackson.

This is no pretentious Oxbridge-historian-type documentary. Norman steals a march over professional TV presenters by delivering his talk throughout to a live group of accompanying Wodehouse fans, accompanied at all times by his well-furled brology.

Norman's research has been impeccable, but he manages to deliver his commentaries in a splendidly off-the-cuff manner. Suffice to say it is all the more entertaining for that, with comical asides and anecdotes aplenty.

We visit Berkeley Street, where the great man lived for a short spell and which featured as Bertie's address at 6A Crichton Mansions (so named, Norman points out, after The Admirable Crichton as Wodehouse and J M Barrie were good friends). Other addresses in Mayfair which feature in his books are also highlighted, and there is a strong emphasis throughout the DVD on the gentlemen's clubs of the

area, with Norman narrating the connection between the fictional Drones club, the renowned Buck's Club, and the Bath Club's notorious swimming pool.

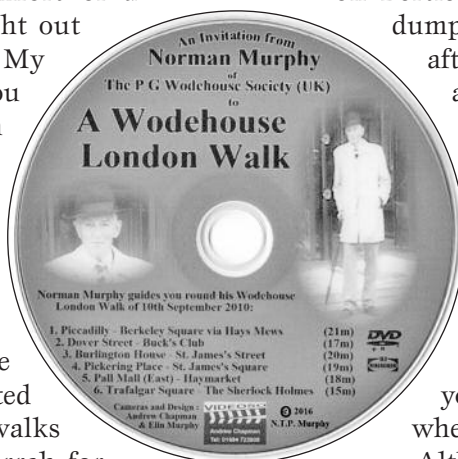
I particularly enjoyed his recollection of a chat with an elderly judge who recalled a true-life incident redolent of Tuppy Glossop's frightful trick on Bertie which resulted in our hero being dumped in the pool in full dinner attire after his chum had tied up the final ring across the ceiling. The judge said that he, too, had been the victim of that very prank at the Bath Club and admitted he still shuddered at the memory, more than 60 years on.

Norman also reveals that he met a top Burlington Arcade jeweller who agreed with Aunt Dahlia's advice and explained why you should never buy "modern Dutch" when purchasing a silver cow creamer!

Although advertised as a Wodehouse Walk, the tour is far from exclusively about Plum. Along the way you will discover the site of London's narrowest house, why Churchill wore zip-up boots, and the reason actors exhort their fellow thespians to "break a leg" before every performance.

But much of the charm of the DVD is its commendably natural feel. A painter and decorator brusquely shoves past as Norman delivers his spiel outside a house in Berkeley Square while his delivery is occasionally drowned out by the sounds of car engines and police sirens.

This is a thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining amble, all accompanied by delightful contemporary dance music and quirkily filmed by Andrew Chapman (who produced the DVD) and Elin Woodger Murphy. My advice to you is pour yourself a snifter, settle down in your favourite armchair, and pop Norman's disc in the old DVD player. It will be the most enjoyable walk you'll undertake without leaving your house!



The Search for Blandings

Norman Murphy Relates the Lesson of Balaklava

In the last edition of *Wooster Sauce*, David Salter told us why he believed Apley Hall was Blandings Castle. His points were so plausible that I feel impelled to reply.

David quoted Ian Greatbatch and Daryl Lloyd, who used a computer to find a geographical location for Blandings and settled on Apley. He also mentioned Colonel Cobb, who, using railway timetables, concluded that Buildwas, five miles north of Apley, was the most likely railway station for Market Blandings. In reply, I must mention the battle of Balaklava, that military disaster whose lesson was very firmly instilled into me: time spent in reconnaissance is never wasted. And reconnaissance cannot be done by looking at a map; it means walking the ground.

At Balaklava, Lord Raglan ordered Lord Cardigan to capture Russian guns that he could see very clearly from his position on The Heights but Cardigan, down in the valley, could not. The only guns Cardigan could see were those of the main Russian force at the end of the valley, so he led the Light Brigade straight at them.

I suggest Greatbatch and Lloyd were similarly misled. Their parameters were a view of the Wrekin, the Severn running through the grounds, a boating lake, and a 45-minute drive to Shrewsbury. They concluded: “We looked up the house on the internet and there it was – Blandings Castle, tower and battlements, exactly like the description in the books.”

There is no tower at Apley Hall (built in 1811), just ornamental turrets, indicative of the neo-Gothic style the Victorians loved. Like many other fake Victorian ‘castles’ in England (Highclere Castle/ Downton Abbey is one example), the picturesque crenellation on their roofs mislead people, but Blandings Castle was a Tudor building (*Something*

Fresh) when crenellations were a necessity, not just Victorian decoration. And one can see the Wrekin from as far as Winter Hill in Lancashire and Cleeve Hill in Gloucestershire. There are boating lakes in at least five of the estates nearby, while the 45-minute drive to Shrewsbury is more easily achieved from Weston Park than Apley Hall since the route is straight along the A5, the old Roman Road.

Yes, the Severn does flow through Apley Park, about 200–300 yards from the house. But the Severn is named only once in the Blandings stories (*Leave It to Psmith*): “Away in the blue distance wooded hills ran down to where the Severn gleamed like an unsheathed sword.” That does not sound to me like grounds “bounded by the river Severn”.

And, unlike Blandings, Apley has its own railway station: Linley Halt, which lies directly across the Severn from Apley Hall. It ran from 1862 to 1963, and the old station house is still there, now named Apley Forge.

Colonel Cobb’s identification of Buildwas is also arguable. Richard Osborne sent him a list of the Blandings train timings, and Colonel Cobb worked out that Buildwas was the nearest to the train times quoted. However, Osborne did not tell him that, for six years, Wodehouse had travelled from Dulwich in London to Stableford in Shropshire.

In 1982 I sent Colonel Cobb a copy of *In Search of Blandings*, and he said he was unaware of the theory that Wodehouse used real places in his stories. He added he had come to realise that Wodehouse had made up all the train times and summed up: “Taking a leaf out of your book . . . Shifnal is Market Blandings where the trains from London took 4½, 3¾, and 3 hours 31 minutes, the last being the 2.15 and the fastest of the day – which PG remembered from his Stableford days.”



The gardens at Weston Park

There is no single location for Blandings; as Wodehouse said, it was a mixture of places he remembered. So my only criterion was that the places he remembered would be within 10–12 miles of somewhere he had lived – the maximum distance for paying calls in a horse-drawn carriage. I did not know what I was looking for, but knew I would recognise it when I saw it. There are nine ‘Big Houses’

around Wodehouse’s old home at Stableford; I visited them all, and at Weston Park I recognised every feature of Blandings *outside* the house, including:

- * The drive swinging away from the house in a curve before passing down the side of it (*Something Fresh*).
- * The rhododendron bushes that shield a car as it leaves the front door and turns into the drive (*Heavy Weather*).
- * A Greek temple on a rise looking down on the lake (*Service with a Smile*), affording a splendid view of the Wrekin.
- * To the right of the terraces and rose garden in front of the house (*Something Fresh*), steps leading down to a lawn shaded by a magnificent cedar with the scars of hammock ropes on its lowest branches (*Heavy Weather*).
- * A shrubbery separating the lawn from the kitchen gardens behind the house (*Summer Lightning*), which include an over-sized pond where the infant Galahad nearly drowned (*Pigs Have Wings*).

Behind the kitchen gardens is the A5 London–Shrewsbury road (*A Pelican at Blandings*), and on the other side of the road is the small hamlet of Weston-under-Lizard, which fits the description of Blandings Parva perfectly.

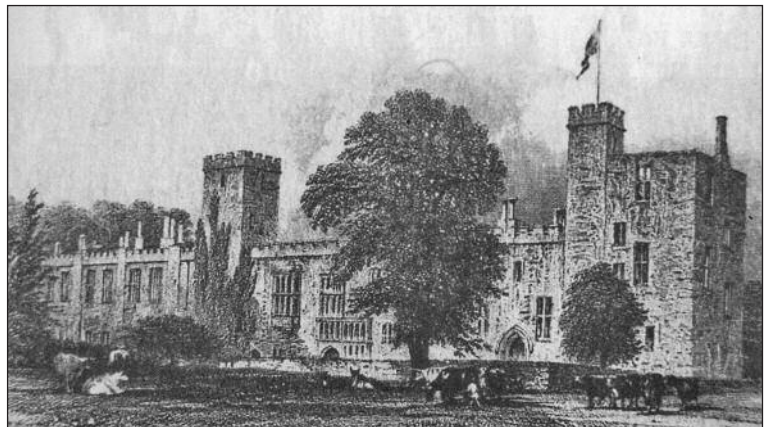
In *Something Fresh*, it is five miles from Blandings to Market Blandings, just as it is from Weston Park to Shifnal. In later books, Wodehouse reduced it to two miles when he realised that not everybody, including Sebastian Beach, shared his enthusiasm for long walks.

There is nowhere else within 20 miles of Stableford that possesses all the above factors.

As for the castle itself, Sudeley (pictured below) was built in the middle of the 15th century (1441), as was Blandings (*Galahad at Blandings*), and is famous for its yew walks (*Leave It to Psmith*). In chapter 1 of *Leave It to Psmith*, we learn Blandings is “not ten miles” from “Winstone Court”. The only Winstone in England is nine miles south of Sudeley.

The Blandings flag tower looks out over the valley (*Heavy Weather*), as does the Sudeley flag tower which separates the main block from the ruined west wing. As Richard Osborne postulated in *Sunset at Blandings*, it was part of the original castle, which was later extended.

I do not claim that these are the only candidates for Blandings; Corsham Court, for one, also played a part. Did Wodehouse visit Apley Hall with his parents? We shall probably never know, but we all have our own image of Blandings, and David Salter is fully entitled to choose Apley Hall as his. But I still maintain imagination comes nearer to reality at Weston Park and Sudeley Castle than anywhere else.



A Plum Encounter in Myanmar

by Mike Goldman

A funny thing happened to me on the road to Mandalay. A while back my wife and I took a boat ride on the river (sad to say, no flying fishes were seen), stopping along the way to do the obligatory touristic “see how the natives live” in their quaint villages. In one there were the usual schoolchildren’s welcome and songs; craft displays with artisans making and (thank God for those eager to take home a real cultural artefact) selling their wares; and, most important to the theme of this piece, pig pens, in front of which a gentlemanly (is there any other kind?) English boatmate announced, “Pig-hoo-o-o-ey, pig-hoo-o-o-ey!”

As I turned toward him – slightly askance and looking a bit quizzical, I suspect – he offered that that was the name of a Wodehouse short story, which, I

replied, I hadn’t read. Lo and behold, the next morning at breakfast, he approached our table and presented me with a well-thumbed edition of Wodehouse short stories (a treasured possession, no doubt, but urgently beckoning to be shared), including, of course, “Pig-Hoo-o-o-ey!” and also “Blandings and the Girl Friend” (so titled in that edition), proclaimed by Rudyard Kipling as Wodehouse’s best short story. (And, yes, I did return his copy and got one immediately upon returning to the States.)

Note. A retired professor of literature, Mike recently published A Dictionary of Literary Works, covering selected works of 275 authors. This piece comprises the introduction to his section on P. G. Wodehouse.

The Word in Season by Dan Kaszeta

Froust / Frowst

On several occasions, people have asked me how I go about finding inspiration for this occasional column. What is my *raison d'être*? Or more often, from friends and relations – “what the heck is wrong with you?” While these are deep-seated existential questions no doubt related to the psychology of the individual, I can answer them in the particular context of *Wooster Sauce*. Simply, this Word in Season malarkey is my outlet when I come across a new word, taught to me by none other than PG himself. Sometimes he’s made them up from scratch, other times he’s borrowed from the vernacular and elevated them into literature. And sometimes I am just being a bit dim and they are ‘real’ words all along.

This column’s word is ‘froust’. My first encounter with this word was from Gussie Fink-Nottle, when he was presenting prizes at Market Snodsbury Grammar School, in *Right Ho, Jeeves* (1934): “And I don’t blame you, there’s a froust in here you can cut with a knife.” Earlier on in the chapter, we learned from Bertie Wooster that it was a very hot day, that the school contained “not a little of the fug of the centuries”, and that “The air was sort of heavy and languorous, if you know what I mean, with the scent of Young England and boiled beef and carrots.” In this context it appears that ‘froust’ means a damp, muggy, sticky, airless, smelly, and otherwise unpleasant atmosphere.

We have other uses of ‘froust’ as a noun in similar use in the Wodehouse canon. In ‘The Crime Wave at Blandings’ (1936), we read: “There was a froust in the Rooms which you could have cut with a knife, but he drew it into his lungs as if it had been the finest ozone.” Much earlier on, *The Pothunters* (1902) contains: “Do you object to the window going up?” asked Dallas. “There’s a bit of a froust on in here.” As this was Wodehouse’s first published novel, it clearly predates many of the other uses of ‘froust’ I found in literature.

The Pothunters is also interesting for its secondary use of ‘froust’ as a verb: “Hang it all, if it comes to the worst, it’s better than frousting indoors.” Slightly later, in 1909, we find this quote in *Mike*: [I]t’s awful rot for a chap like Wyatt to have to go and froust in a bank for the rest of his life.” So, we can deduce ‘froust’ as a verb to mean to sit in some

airless, dreadful place. The *Oxford Shorter English Dictionary* tells me, however, that ‘froust’ is merely a spelling variant of ‘frowst’, and gives an example from John Betjeman in his amazingly named *Monody on the Death of a Leeds Platonist Bank Clerk* (1959). (Who says lexico-graphers are bereft of humour?).

Digging around, I found ‘frowst’ in Rudyard Kipling’s *Just So Stories* (1902). Kipling writes: “Or frowst with a book by the fire”, and he uses the word as a verb. We know for a fact from correspondence between Richard Usborne and PGW that Wodehouse was a fan of these particular stories, published the same year as *The Pothunters*.

The adjectival forms ‘frousty’ and ‘frowsty’ make appearances as well. We get Wodehouse using ‘frowsty’ (with the *w*) in the phrase “frowsty bedrooms” in *Thank You, Jeeves* (1934). We also see that in 2010 Rachel Johnson – surely a Wodehousean figure if there ever was one, given the parallels between *The Lady* and *M’Lady’s Boudoir* – used “frowsty” in one of her books.

Deeper research, alas, confirms my hypothesis that the word predates Wodehouse, both as a noun and (more rarely) as a verb. *Chambers Dictionary* unhelpfully lists it (in the *frowst* spelling) as being of obscure origins. But, did Wodehouse debut ‘froust’ with a *u*? It seems not. I have dug deep and found the depths from which ‘froust’ arises. In 1849, one William Ross wrote a lengthy and, frankly, boring 432-page account called *A Yacht Voyage to Norway, Denmark, and Sweden* in which the phrase ‘frousting here at Christiania’ is used. Surely, in newer ages, that can be used as a euphemism for something.

For those truly dedicated to the cause, I found the most amazing manifesto. I surely hope someone in this worthy Society stands me a treble gin for having dug up and performed an exegesis on *Osme, or The Spirit of Froust* (1853) by Rev. John Boland. It is a turgid diatribe on the perils of the ‘unventilated mind’. Helpfully, it defines ‘froust’ as a lack of ventilation, before flagellating the reader mercilessly. Please believe me, one can do better things than read this fruit of the vine of Victorian moralism. It does clearly place ‘froust’ in the literature of the day.

I must simply make an effort to get out more . . .

“I don’t know what you call wrong. I’ve just been told that I’m extremely likely to have my insides ripped out.”

“Who told you that?”

“Bill Oakshott.”

“Was he merely reading your future in the tea leaves, or do you mean that he proposed to do the ripping?”

“He proposed to do the ripping with his bare hands.”

“You amaze me. Bill Oakshott? That quiet, lovable young man.”

“Lovable be blown. He’s worse than a Faceless Fiend. He could walk straight into the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud’s, and no questions asked. He also said he would pull my head off at the roots, and strangle me like a foul snake.”

“Difficult to do that, if he had pulled your head off.”

(From *Uncle Dynamite*, 1948)

Mastermind Quiz 19: The Strong Arm of the Law and Others

1. In *Joy in the Morning*, which ex-school friend of Bertie Wooster is the local policeman and is engaged to Florence Craye?
2. In which novel does Jimmy Pitt fall in love with Molly McEachern, only to fall foul of her policeman father, John?
3. What is the name of the female private detective in *Piccadilly Jim*?
4. Jeeves pretends to be which police officer on the trail of 'Alpine Joe' in *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*?
5. In 'Pig-Hoo-o-o-ey!' which Blandings Castle employee does Police Constable Evans arrest for being drunk and disorderly?
6. Sergeant Claude Potter of Scotland Yard is on the case in which Wodehouse novel?
7. What is the name of the Roville Commissaire of Police who spoils the party in *French Leave*?
8. Constable Dobson and his uncle, Sergeant Voules, appear in which Jeeves novel?
9. In *Cocktail Time*, who poses as Inspector Jervis of Scotland Yard in order to get hold of a letter?
10. Which sometimes unscrupulous private detective appears in *Bill the Conqueror*, *Sam the Sudden*, *Summer Lightning*, *Heavy Weather*, *Something Fishy*, and *Frozen Assets*?

(Answers on page 21)

Who'd've Thunk It?

MIKE SWADDLING WRITES: On a long weekend in Budapest in March, one of my early impressions was that there were a lot of bookshops, so the natural progression of thought was whether they stocked any English authors' works in Hungarian and, if so, whether they had any PGW. Although I speak the major European languages, Hungarian is a complete one-off and almost impenetrable, so I would have to make enquiries completely in English; fortunately, it is spoken to a very high degree in the capital.

I picked a modern-looking shop and wandered up to the enquiry desk. The very helpful gentleman said they did have English authors – which was I interested in? Upon hearing my reply, he gestured towards a corner of the shop where I found not just the expected handful tucked away on a shelf – as I approached a display the size of a small Welsh dresser, there hove into view what looked like most of the new Everyman edition, all

The Wooster Source

by Graeme Davidson

*This is the real Tabasco,
It's the word from Bertie Wooster,
A Drone whose ample oofiness must
come from choice blue chip revenues
And his staffing needs being wholly
met by Jeeves, and not vast retinues.*



"Jeeves," I said.

"Sir?" said Jeeves. He had been clearing away the breakfast things, but at the sound of the young master's voice cheesed it courteously.

"You were absolutely right about the weather. It is a juicy morning."

"Decidedly, sir."

"Spring and all that."

"Yes, sir."

"In the spring, Jeeves, a livelier iris gleams upon the burnished dove."

"So I have been informed, sir."

"Right ho! Then bring me my whangee, my yellowest shoes, and the old green Homburg. I'm going into the Park to do pastoral dances."

'Jeeves Exerts the Old Cerebellum',
The Inimitable Jeeves (1923)

"Jeeves, a remarkably rummy thing has happened. Mr Glossop has just been here. He tells me that it is all off between him and Miss Bellinger."

"Yes, sir."

"You don't seem surprised."

"No, sir. I confess I had anticipated some such eventuality."

"Eh? What gave you that idea?"

"It came to me, sir, when I observed Miss Bellinger strike Mr Glossop in the eye."

'Jeeves and the Song of Songs',
Very Good, Jeeves! (1930)

translated into Hungarian! None of the titles looked remotely familiar, so I picked one which had Bertie Wooster in it and a cover picture of said BW in his bath with Jeeves hovering nearby. One of those rare pleasant occasions in life when one's expectations are actually exceeded.

I now have a new resolution and an answer to the question of what one does once one has the full Wodehouse 'set': on each jaunt abroad in the future, buy a PGW in the local lingo!

The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

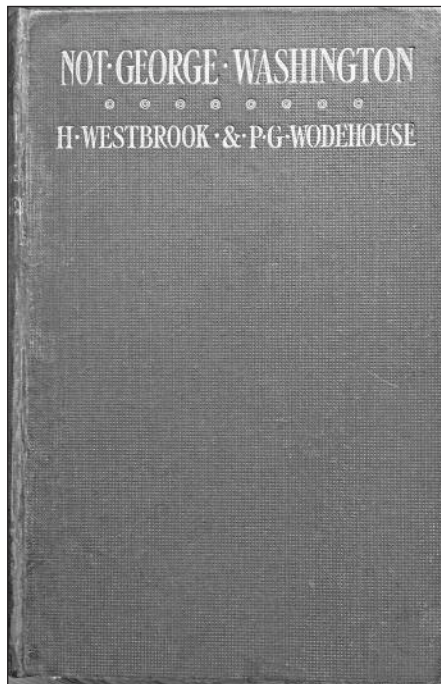
Not George Washington – Again

December 2015’s Bibliographic Corner dealt with *Not George Washington*, and posited the existence of a fourth state of the first edition, unrecorded in *McIlvaine*, on the strength of two copies which have the date stamp “9-1907” present on either page 176 or page 177, as opposed to page 96 as stipulated in *McIlvaine* for the third state (A9a3).

Following the Corner’s appearance, Ananth Kaitharam kindly shared with me the details of his own copy of the third state. He reported that the “9-1907” date stamp was present in his copy on pages viii, 96, and 176, albeit he could only see the top half of the date stamp on the latter two pages, as the stamp was located close to the stitching of the text block.

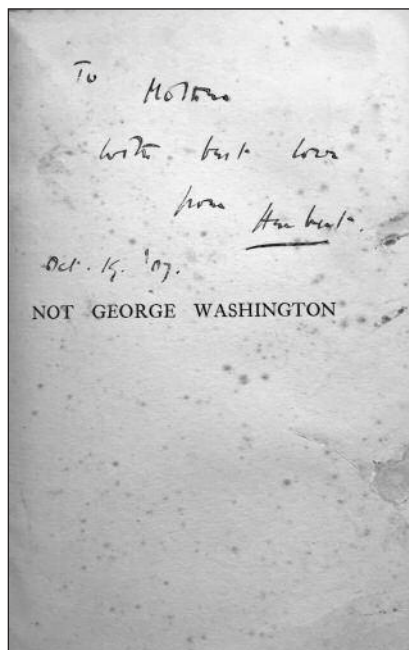
Ananth’s information prompted me to re-examine the copies in my own possession more closely. In the first edition, first state (A9a), the date stamp appears on pages viii, 64, 97 (as mentioned in the Corner), 128, 209 and 272. In the copy posited as the fourth state, the date stamp appears on pages viii, [1], 64, 160, 176 (as mentioned in the Corner), 209, and 272. I have also subsequently had the opportunity to examine a copy of the third state, and the date stamp appears on pages viii, 16, 32, 64, 97, 176, 192, and 193. As was the case with Ananth’s copy, several of these appearances were only partially visible, as the stamp was located close to the stitching of the text block.

What conclusions can be drawn from this proliferation of “9-1907” date stamps?



First edition, first state

State	McIlvaine Reference	Publisher’s Name on Spine	Number of Gold Circles
First	A9a	Cassell & Company Limited	8
Second	A9a2	Cassell	8
Third	A9a3	Cassell	7



Firstly, *McIlvaine* is not comprehensive on the subject of the date stamp, i.e. her mentioning its appearance on one page of a state does not preclude it from appearing on other pages in that state, and her not mentioning its appearance when giving details of a state does not mean that it is not present.

Secondly, the “9-1907” date stamps appear on such a variety of pages that it is impossible to use them as definitive points of reference to identify different states. I therefore retract the assertion I made in the December Bibliographic Corner that there is a fourth state, and I would now merely say that the third state comes with a variety of “9-1907” date stamps, due to the printing

and/or binding processes.

Having discounted the “9-1907” date stamp as an issue point, this means that the true issue points are only (a) the format of the publisher’s name on the spine and (b) the number of gold circles on the front board, as summarised in the table above.

It can be seen that, as the different states were issued over time, Cassell reduced the level of decoration and the amount of ink required on the boards, which is consistent with the practice of most publishers at the time of having the first edition, first state as the most ornately decorated issue.

Half title page of first edition, first state, inscribed by co-author Herbert Westbrook to his mother on 15 October 1907, three days before the official publication date

Which brings me back to what I was saying just now – that I’m not sure whether I shall tell her the Past. I may and I may not. I’ll have to think it over. Anyway, I’m going to write it down first and see how it looks. If it’s all right it can go into my autobiography. If it isn’t, then I shall lie low about it. That’s the posish.

(From *Not George Washington*, 1907)

The Word Around the Clubs

Wodehouse in Pakistan

In the last issue of *Wooster Sauce* (The Word Around the Clubs, page 15), we mentioned the formation of a new Wodehouse appreciation society in Pakistan. A report of their first meeting – ‘The P.G. Wodehouse Society of Lahore’, by Ananya Bhattacharyya – can be found on the website *Literary Hub* at <http://bit.ly/1UBZXRv>. The article’s subtitle – ‘A Genius of the Empire, Beloved in Its Former Colonies’ – says it all.

A Literary Party for the Masses

In the December 2015 issue of *Wooster Sauce* (page 9), we published word of an homage to Wodehouse in novel form: *Rannygazoo*, by Society member Yasmine Gooneratne. The idea was to write to Yasmine for a password that would enable the reader to enjoy the novel for free online. Yasmine now writes that the experiment has been extremely successful, with many enthusiastic readers writing to share the pleasure they have taken in the book. For this reason, and because many older readers have struggled with reading online, Yasmine has decided to remove the password restriction. Therefore, *Rannygazoo* is now available to anybody who wants to read it as a Word document. To obtain a copy of *Rannygazoo*, write to the Editor, Elin Murphy (address on page 24); or directly to Yasmine at ygooneratne@gmail.com.

Bertie at Sotheran’s

Members who have gone on Richard Burnip’s Wodehouse Walk in London (there’s another one in September; see page 24) may recall that one stop is the bookstore Sotheran’s on Sackville Street. Here, according to Richard (and Norman Murphy agrees), is where Bertie Wooster went when he attempted to purchase a book for Jeeves:

“Good morning, good morning,” I said. “I want to buy a book.”

Of course, I should have known that it’s silly to buy a book when you go to a book shop. It merely startles and bewilders the inmates. The motheaten old bird who had stepped forward to attend me ran true to form.

“A book, sir?” he said, with ill-concealed astonishment.

“Spinoza,” I replied, specifying.

This had him rocking on his heels.

The scene continues with Bertie working very hard to convince the chap that, indeed, Spinoza was what he wanted and intended to get. In their monthly newsletter, Sotheran’s noted: “Hopefully we are not quite so bewildered these days! Suggestions as to which present member of staff most closely resembles the ‘motheaten old bird’ are most welcome. As, then, we do not have any Spinoza in stock at the moment, we can offer a generous selection of P.G. Wodehouses.” That’s the right spirit! (Thanks to DAVID NARROW and JONATHAN HOPSON.)

Poet’s Corner *The Deserter*

A petition is being got up by the Smiths of Chicago to restrain a Smith of that town from changing his name. They complain that his act is an insult to the family of Smith.

Ye Smiths to whom Deceit’s taboo,
Whom rage compels to writhe
When meeting shady shufflers who
Pronounce their name as Smythe.

Who resolutely ban, condemn
All those (for such there be)
Who graft upon the parent stem
A needless final E.

Arise and smite this soulless man:
From dull inaction wake.
The honour of your ancient clan,
Believe me, is at stake.

Is he then wrought of nobler stuff,
Of finer clay than ye?
The name of Smith was good enough
For better men than he.

Search keenly through Fame’s golden scroll,
Is the name absent? No.
The scoffed-at title, on the whole,
Makes quite a decent show.

So rally round, and see that he
Gives up this deed of shame.
Only a female Smith shall be
Allowed to change the name.

From *Daily Chronicle*, February 1905

Answers to Mastermind Quiz

(Page 19)

1. G. D’Arcy ‘Stilton’ Cheesewright
2. *A Gentleman of Leisure*
3. Miss Trimble
4. Chief Inspector Witherspoon of Scotland Yard
5. Pig man George Cyril Wellbeloved
6. *Do Butlers Burgle Banks?*
7. M. Boissonade
8. *Thank You, Jeeves*
9. Frederick Twistleton, Earl of Ickenham, better known as Uncle Fred
10. Percy Pilbeam

I seemed to note in his aspect a certain gravity, as if he had just discovered a schism in his flock or found a couple of choirboys smoking reefers in the churchyard.

(from *Stiff Upper Lip*, Jeeves, 1963)

Recent Press Comment

The Telegraph, February 9 (from Carolyn De la Plain)
The ‘Toughie’ crossword no. 1548 had two PGW-related clues. 1 down: bird runs with Bertie when topless (answer: “Rooster”). 2 down: Annoy Prince Bertie’s man unlimitedly? (Answer ‘Peeve’)

Oxford Mail, February 12

In a piece commenting on the severe storms that had swept across the country, entitled ‘Cabbages and Kings: the lack of raging waters was a let down for some...’, Pete Unsworth began: “The storm seemed to be conking out a bit, as P G Wodehouse’s immortal character Bertie Wooster once put it, adding that ‘even the rain showed a disposition to cheese it’.”

The Times Literary Supplement, February 12
(from Barry Chapman)

In a review of *Fracture: Life and Culture in the West 1918–1938*, by Phillip Blom, Alex Danchev wrote: “Blom makes good use of P. G. Wodehouse, the imperishable Bertie Wooster and the imperturbable Jeeves. Incongruous as it may seem, *Thank You, Jeeves* is the touchstone of 1934.” He also alluded to “the priceless satirization of Roderick Spode and his Black Shorts in *The Code of the Woosters*, 1938 (‘by the time Spode formed his association, there were no shirts left’ according to Gussie Fink-Nottle)”. Unaccountably, he failed to quote the coup de grace delivered by Bertie himself – the one we all know and love re “Heil Spode” and his being such a “perfect perisher”.

The ‘I’, February 13 (from Roger Bowen)

In an article on the apparent dissent in the Cameron family over spending cuts, Matthew Norman wrote with reference to the PM’s aunt: “In P. G. Wodehouse terms, Clare appears to be the clan’s Aunt Agatha (the ferocious battle axe who constantly berates her nephew for being an imbecile) to David’s Bertie Wooster.”

Dickinson’s Real Deal, ITV, February
(from Roger Bowen)

A member of the public brought in a first edition of *Sunset at Blandings*. The dealer paid £50 for it.

Scroll.in, February 14

In her article ‘Wodehouse, Fry and Laurie – what a combination, by Jove’, Anita Chawla extolled the virtues of PGW, saying: “The extensive set of writings . . . doesn’t really need any introduction. But to those who may have found a way to never emerge from under the fossil-like rock under which they’ve been living and bask in the glorious sunshine that is Wodehouse’s brilliance, I’d like to say, ‘What ho!’ and then proceed with a short introduction.” (Which none of us needs, of course!)

The Hindu, February 16

In ‘The Book Shelf’ column, in a piece entitled ‘The Funny Man of Literature’, Arathi M wrote: “With a

frivolity that was lacking in many authors contemporary to P. G. Wodehouse, he wrote about characters such as the ‘mentally negligible’ Bertie Wooster, baronets who loved pigs, seemingly-tranquil butlers, etc. As the comic master, he was out to entertain and critics have not been wrong to think that he thoroughly enjoyed it.”

Bustle, February 18

The first entry in the article ‘On National Drink Wine Day, These Book and Wine Pairings Will Hit The Spot’ was “Pinot Grigot (*sic*) with *My Man Jeeves* by PGW – PGW’s dry and fruity English wit was made to be served up with an equally dry and fruity wine. Especially if that wine is brought to you by an impossibly wise butler (*sic*) by the name of Jeeves.”

Khaleej Times, February 19

Angeline Lewis, a PR and social media specialist, was asked, “Which books would you love to pass on to your children (or any young person) to read and treasure?” She responded: “I think books by P.G. Wodehouse should be read by all children – especially the ones about Jeeves. They display a unique style of humour that no one should miss out on.”

The Guardian, February 27 (from Terry Taylor)

In a review of the book *Adventures in the Strand: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Strand Magazine*, by Mike Ashley, the reviewer, Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, wrote: “Almost nothing he wrote disclosed a trace of humour, which is probably why a later writer, P. G. Wodehouse, found later stories such as ‘The Poison Belt’ such a source of inspiration. It did not require more than a nudge of irony for the final exchange between Doyle’s hero and his butler to be transformed into the comic rhythms of Jeeves and Wooster. ‘I’m expecting the end of the world today, Austin.’ ‘Yes, sir. What time, sir?’ ‘I can’t say, Austin. Before evening.’ ‘Very good, sir.’” (Austin may well be a butler – someone can, no doubt, advise on this.)

The Times of India, February 28

A blog by Twinkle Khanna entitled ‘The Books that Changed a Chubby Girl’s Life’ referred to *Right Ho, Jeeves*: “A chuckle a day keeps the shrink away, and Jeeves and Bertie Wooster must have kept many at bay for a lot of us.”

The Tufts Daily, February 29

Natalie Girshman, in ‘The ABC’s of Literature: P. G. Wodehouse’, devoted an entire article to PGW and wrote (inter alia) that “the works of P. G. Wodehouse are some of the most consistently funny that I’ve ever read. . . . [P]erhaps reading [him] won’t help you discover the meaning of life, but it’ll help keep you massively entertained. . . . It’s practically impossible to steer wrong with [him] and his elegant, clever and humorous prose.”

The Times, March 11 (from Leila Deakin)

The last word: “The fascination of shooting as a sport

depends almost wholly on whether you are on the right or wrong end of the gun.” (PGW in *Mr Mulliner Speaking*)

The Telegraph, March 14

Clue 7 across in the Herculis general knowledge crossword was: Timothy —; actor who starred in the television series *Blandings*.

Live Mint, March 19

In ‘On Tour with the Authors XI’, Tom Holland wrote about the revival of a cricket team that once had PGW as one of the opening batsmen.

The Guardian, April 2 (from Caroline Franklyn)

In ‘How spring has blossomed in literature’, Alison Flood summed up *Jeeves in the Springtime*: “Spring means love means trouble again”, and referred to the classic exchange (referencing Tennyson): “In the spring, Jeeves, a livelier iris gleams upon the burnished dove.” “So I have been informed, sir.”

Mail on Sunday, April 10 (from Terry Taylor)

In the feature ‘A Passion for Books’, author and wildlife filmmaker Martin Hughes-Games, when asked about his first true love, responded: “I was obsessed by P.G.W. as an adolescent. . . . Whenever I’ve been in trouble, I’ve always turned to Wodehouse. It makes me mad when people denigrate great humorous writing like his because it’s a wonderful gift to be able to make people laugh.”

The Times, April 13 (from Christopher Bellew)

The following comment featured in a review of the vocal group I Fagiolini’s performance of English madrigals at the Wigmore Hall: “Out came the ginger

beer and straw hats, and we were back on the Isis in the Bertie Wooster years.”

The Spectator, April 16 (from Christopher Bellew)

One of the winners of a competition to submit an inappropriate review of a book by a well-known person was George Simmers. Alan Turing’s ‘review’ of *The Code of the Woosters* included the following: “[A]t first I suspected a standard double Penfold encryption, possibly based on the keywords ‘Fink’ and ‘Nottle’. A week spent decoding on this assumption produced only gibberish.”

Difford’s Guide, April (from Jo Jacobius)

Writing about the recent death of the famous bartender Dick Bradsell, Theodora Sutcliffe wrote: “Dick Bradsell always seemed immortal. He adopted the protective carapace of the formal English bartender – one part Jeeves . . . one part eccentric schoolmaster and a dash of surrealist poet.”

The Guardian, April 22 (from Terry Taylor)

The “top 10 guardian angels in children’s books” featured, at number 4, *Right Ho, Jeeves*. Yet again Jeeves was described as B. Wooster’s butler (grrrr!), but interesting to see the tome described as a children’s book.

The Daily Mail, May 6 (from Terry Taylor)

Quentin Letts, in writing about David Cameron playing a round of golf with Barack Obama during his recent trip to the UK, quoted from his “literary pin-up, PGW” that golf “is a corrective against pride”. But he wondered whether “PGW was wrong and golfers can be pompous twerps?”

I say! I say! I say!

In June 2015 the Department of Education issued a guidance paper on exclamations as a sentence function, which sounds harmless enough but proved to be an excellent example of the old adage – if a statement can be misunderstood, it will be misunderstood.

For some reason, nine months later, in March this year, the Press suddenly decided that the DoE was trying to discourage children from using exclamation marks, which would then lead to ‘dreary bureaucratese’. This forced the School Minister, Mr Nick Gibb, to write a letter to the TES (formerly the *Times Educational Supplement*) in which he said: “I fear that there has been some wilful misunderstanding here! . . . An exclamation is a particular kind of sentence; an exclamation mark is a punctuation mark that can end several kinds of sentence, or be placed after a phrase or single word (e.g., an interjection).”

But despite this, people decided he wanted to discourage the use of exclamation marks, which was reported in the Press accordingly – sometimes dragging Wodehouse into the equation.

The Times (March 7), under the heading ‘Cripes!’, printed some dialogue from *Right Ho, Jeeves*: “Bertie, let me go!” “But I haven’t got hold of you.” “Release me!” This is described as “unimprovable. At least till now. Ministers are urging that children make sparing use of the exclamation mark.”

On March 11, Richard Glover supported the Minister in *The Age*: “Aghast teachers have argued that this would rule out the work of many noted stylists, most notably P. G. Wodehouse, whose Bertie Wooster couldn’t really speak without the pip-pip of a printed perpendicular: ‘Gosh!’, ‘Great Heavens!’, ‘What Ho!’.” He added that “the wonderful Wodehouse aside, it’s true exclamation marks are somewhat overdone”.

Happily, several of *The Daily Telegraph*’s readers knew their Wodehouse. As D. Ferguson expressed it:

SIR – P.G. Wodehouse was no lover of the exclamation mark (Letter, March 10). In a letter to his friend . . . in July 1928 he wrote: “Don’t you think the tragedy of an author’s life is the passion printers have for exclamation marks? They love to shove them in every second sentence.

“I’ve just finished reading *Piccadilly Jim*, of which I did not correct the proofs, being in New York, and the book is bristling with them.

“Specimen sentence: ‘But wait a minute! I don’t get this!’ It gives the impression of febrile excitement which spoils the whole run of the dialogue.”

Wodehouse was right. A quick scan of *Piccadilly Jim* reveals a plethora of exclamation marks throughout, whereas in *Right Ho, Jeeves*, they are confined to the end of the book where the events narrated fully justify their use.

Future Events for Your Diary

June 29, 2016 Society Meeting at the Savoy Tup

Please note the new date! Originally scheduled for the 20th July, our meeting will now be held on the 29th June, when impresario Paul Kent will once again challenge us with a quiz; see page 3. We meet at the Savoy Tup from 6 p.m.

July 2, 2016 Gold Bats vs. Sherlock Holmes Society

Our annual match against the Sherlockians will be played this year on a Saturday rather than a Sunday, as ever on the West Wycombe Cricket Club's pitch. We gather around 11 a.m. and all members are invited. Be sure to bring a picnic lunch!

July 7–August 12, 2016

Have a Heart in Wooster, Ohio

The Ohio Light Opera will be staging a production of the Bolton/Wodehouse/Kern show *Have a Heart* in repertoire this summer, along with other musicals and light operas. The OLO is located at the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. For further information, see their website at ohiolightopera.org.

July 14, 2016 Tree Planting at Cheltenham

To mark the centenary of Percy Jeeves's death on the Somme during World War I, the Society will be planting a tree in his memory during the Cheltenham Cricket Festival. See page 3 as well as the enclosed insert for details.

September 25, 2016

Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Richard Burnip will lead a Wodehouse-themed walk for London Walks (note: this is not a Society-sponsored event). The usual fee is £10, but our 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.

October 20, 2016 Dinner at Gray's Inn

The Society's biennial dinner will be held at our customary venue of Gray's Inn, London. The application form is enclosed with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*; see also page 3.

November 23, 2016 Society Meeting at the Savoy Tup

Our last meeting of the year – the AGM – is later than usual, but there you are. Following the business meeting, we will hear from Gabriella Valentino about translating Wodehouse into Italian. As ever, we will convene from 6 p.m. onwards at the Savoy Tup.

October 19–22, 2017 The Wodehouse Society Convention in Washington, D.C.

The Wodehouse Society (USA) will be holding their 19th biennial convention, 'Mr. Wodehouse Goes to Washington', in, appropriately enough, Washington, D.C., at the Hamilton Crowne Plaza.

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