

WOOSTER SAUCE

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Perfect Nonsense Goes East

by David Goodale

For the benefit of the unenlightened, *Perfect Nonsense* is ‘a play within a play’, in which Bertie Wooster attempts to re-enact the whole of *The Code of the Woosters* in the form of a one-man show. As he inevitably falls at the first hurdle, Jeeves and Seppings, Aunt Dahlia’s aged butler, step into the breach to play not only themselves but also all the other characters, both male and female.

After a year in the West End and three UK tours, the time felt right to unleash this *Nonsense* upon the rest of the world. In early December 2015, while the cast and crew were being forcibly inoculated against myriad tropical diseases, the original set was being lovingly restored and made ready for its passage to India.

The set, which consists of four giant boxes on wheels, known in the business as ‘trucks’, has apparently been constructed by Jeeves. These huge mobile walls, complete with doors, windows, French windows and fireplaces, are constantly reconfigured as the action moves from location to location. The set is essentially a testament to Jeeves’ ingenuity and almost becomes a character in its own right.

So, with little more than a fortnight until ‘curtain up’ in Mumbai, it was something of a blow to learn that the set had been deemed too bulky to be airfreighted and would have to travel by sea instead – the significant downside being that it would not arrive until three weeks after the final performance. Thankfully, our resourceful Indian producer came up with the simplest of solutions: just email the blueprints to Bollywood, and a team of skilled

craftsmen would build a replica at the drop of a hat. So we held our breath over Christmas and New Year before apprehensively heading off to India in the first week in January.

Our first morning in Mumbai found us pootling down Wodehouse Road, which seemed to confirm that we were in a place where Plum still reigns supreme. We later discovered that the road was actually named after a distant relative,* but it still felt like a good omen. The journey to Bollywood, however, became increasingly less auspicious, and

when we pulled up outside what looked like an urban farmstead, our hearts sank. We were led through a maze of ramshackle agricultural buildings until we reached an open-sided barn with a thatched roof, under which stood a perfect replica of the set.

We immediately gave our seal of approval, and it was loaded aboard a couple of ancient lorries, which set off on a perilous journey through the

chaotic Mumbai traffic towards the tranquil surroundings of the National Centre for the Performing Arts. There, at least fifty stagehands were waiting to unload the precious cargo, which they precariously balanced on their heads. They teetered slowly towards the stage, where a team of skilled carpenters set to work installing Jeeves’ over-mantel picture-winding system. This is not unlike the roller destination blinds once used on London buses, but the destination panels have been replaced with reproduction oil paintings. So, with one turn of a lever, a new painting appears and the audience is



Selfie time in Bengaluru: audience members prepare for the show.

seamlessly transported to a fresh location.

The first night was soon upon us, and as the auditorium started to fill, a Hindu priest sat cross-legged behind the curtain performing a puja ritual with a coconut. As the cast and crew reverentially laid their hands on the aforementioned coconut, the construction manager was desperately trying to attract our attention. It transpired that a member of his team, who had been installing the picture-winder mechanism, was now stuck inside the ‘truck’ with no obvious means of escape. A team of ten stagehands hurriedly manhandled the truck onto its side, and the incarcerated carpenter managed to wriggle out.

At 8.00 on the dot, the curtain rose to reveal Bertie asleep in an armchair on an otherwise empty stage, which was greeted with a respectful round of applause. “How much more would they applaud as Jeeves’ magical set took shape?” we mused. “Quite a lot” came the answer, but it was the Wodehousean wit that really captured the attention of this polite crowd. It was clear that they knew the books so well that they could frequently be heard pre-empting the punchlines.

A few months later, our original West End set finally cruised sedately into Sydney Harbour at the start of an Antipodean and Far Eastern tour, which all went rather swimmingly, but the Bollywood set was clearly feeling underemployed and wanted us back in India. So in November we returned – this time to the cities of Chennai and Bengaluru.

The audiences were as polite and respectful as before, but once they’d got to grips with the concept of breaking the fourth wall, they became willing participants in the anarchy. There is a moment in the play when Constable Oates, convinced that his helmet has been stolen, undertakes a search of Bertie’s room. While Oates is distracted, Bertie leaps into the auditorium and hands the helmet to an unsuspecting accomplice in the front row. An element of mischief surfaced amongst our local crew, who started picking targets, and at one performance Bertie innocently thrust the helmet into the lap of the Chief Justice of Madras. Other targets were more sensitively selected. A very distinguished-looking



David Goodale
(co-author of *Perfect Nonsense* with his brother, Robert)

lady, who was a lifelong Wodehouse fan, was there to celebrate her 90th birthday, and received the helmet as if it were the best present imaginable.

Thirteen-year-old Kirit, also a lifelong Wodehouse fan, demonstrated a level of devotion to Bertie Wooster that most teenagers would reserve for the likes of Harry Potter. He had never been to the theatre in his life but had read every single Jeeves and Wooster novel at least once and was determined to meet Bertie in the flesh.

One of the most endearing endorsements of the show came from the Sondhi cousins who were

devastated not to have been handed the helmet. Both in their 20s, they, like Kirit, represent a new generation of Wodehouse nuts. They were introduced to Plum’s works in their early teens by Yash’s father and have been devotees ever since. Spotting our posters in Bengaluru, Yash bought himself a seat at the back of the stalls for the opening night. As soon as the curtain came down, he was on the phone to his cousin, Roshni, in Delhi, insisting that she fly down to Bengaluru at her earliest convenience. For our final matinee they sat in the front row of the stalls, eagerly awaiting the policeman’s helmet, only to be upstaged by young Kirit. They consoled themselves by joining us backstage, clutching what is probably the most well-thumbed copy of *The Code of The Woosters* in existence. As Yash was enthusing about Wodehouse, he revealed that after completing his Masters degree in Biology, he was hoping to come to Cambridge to do a PhD in butterfly brain activity – I suspect Gussie Fink-Nottle would be envious.

The Bollywood set is now back in storage but eagerly awaiting another outing, and as far as I know, the original West End set is still bobbing around on the Indian Ocean aboard a container ship. Destination unknown!

* For the curious, Wodehouse Road is named after Sir Philip Wodehouse, Governor of Bombay (as it was then known) from 1872 to 1877. He and Plum were second cousins once removed on his mother’s side, first cousins twice removed on his father’s side. (Or, if you prefer: Sir Philip’s maternal grandfather was the Rev. Philip Wodehouse, PGW’s paternal great-grandfather.)

“It is no use telling me that there are bad aunts and good aunts. At the core, they are all alike. Sooner or later, out pops the cloven hoof.”

(From *The Code of the Woosters*, 1938)

Society News

Renewal Time

Spring has sprung, the grass is riz, and suddenly it's the time of year when some members will have found an urgent yellow communication with their *Wooster Sauce* reminding them to renew their subscription. Only members who renew using cash, cheque, PayPal, or bank transfer need these reminders – subs paid by Standing Order or Direct Debit are renewed automatically – and if you have received one this time, we'd be very grateful if you'd pay your sub as soon as possible, please.

Renewal time is always challenging for the Database Manager. It's a pretty significant operation, keeping track of who has renewed and who hasn't among the several hundred recipients of the dreaded yellow notice, and keeping the database up to date. And then, in September, all the weary work to do again, sending out final reminders to members who meant to renew in May or June, but forgot. So do please pay your sub as soon as you can as it will make it so much easier for us volunteers.

Thank you.

–HILARY BRUCE

Important Message from Our Entertainments Impresario

Dear Society Members,

On July 12, 2017, we will be reaching out to those of you who have not yet attended one of our annual Quizzes. Perhaps you think there's no place for you in a roomful of throbbing cerebella, each one crammed to bursting with Wodehouse trivia, keenly debating whether it's possible to travel to Valley Fields direct from Victoria station, or whether the 04:34 milk train from King's Cross running on alternative Tuesdays in February (changing at Herne Hill) will do the job just as well. If so, please put your mind at ease: the wearing of anoraks is not encouraged, and our Quizzes are more about conviviality than competition.

Good cheer and fellowship will be the order of the evening, and you can relax in the company of

like-minded Wodehouse enthusiasts who will welcome you into their team with a friendly smile and open arms, even if you can't tell Dog Joy from Buck-U-Uppo. So on the basis that there's no such thing as strangers, only friends you haven't met yet,* why not come along to the Savoy Tup, conveniently located just off the Strand, from 6 pm onwards and join our merry band? You'll be so glad you did.

–PAUL KENT

* *The Dictionary of Unctuous and Ingratiating Phrases for Every Occasion*, comp. SF Utridge

Twittering About

What fun! The Society now has a Twitter account, and as of this writing, we have already tweeted or retweeted numerous Society- or Wodehouse-related items – chief among them the glorious news about Alexander Armstrong becoming our President. We invite all members who use Twitter to follow the Society's tweets. It's easy to find us – just search for: @PGWodehouseUK



A Note from the Editor

Members will probably have noticed that the retrospective of the Society's history by Paul Kent has taken up quite a lot of space in the journal, leaving very little room for other pieces. Each quarter I face hard decisions about what can or cannot be printed after all the must-print items have been laid out, but it has been particularly difficult with the March and June issues this year. The result is another backlog of articles in the queue to be printed. My apologies to all those who are still waiting to see their contributions in print, and please know I will do my best to catch up with the backlog in the September and December issues. Thanks for your patience!

Fond Memories of a Glorious Character

Robert Bruce reflects on the Society's tribute to Norman Murphy at the Savoy Tap in February

In the dark days of February, the Society's meeting could have been a mournful one. On the 15th, a packed throng of members and friends gathered to recall the late Lieutenant Colonel Norman (NTP) Murphy, founding Chairman of the Society, latterly its Remembrancer, and the fount of all known knowledge on Wodehouse and his world, who died in October last year.

But how could we be cast down? The exuberance of the man, his famed attempts to impart all of his knowledge at a speed that defied the speed of his mind providing it, and all his other eccentricities, overcame all that. His widow, Elin Woodger Murphy, started the evening by describing her first meeting with him in 1993, while she was on a visit from Massachusetts. On her last day in London, he gave her and her friend one of his London walks – an all-day venture, as it turned out. "He wore his bowler hat, a broly, and a raincoat," she recalled. "I was knocked right over." She made a tape of what he said, couldn't understand a word of it, and wrote to him for elucidation. She got "pages and pages" back, and a correspondence began. Then, after Norman was widowed, he came to the US Society's convention in Houston. "He wanted someone to hold his hand," she said. And the rest was history.

Murray Hedgcock then recalled meeting him for the first time in May 1973 at a symposium on Wodehouse at Moor Park. He, too, was set back on his heels by the unstoppable Murphy and recalled travelling back on the train with him while Norman gave "a masterclass on what we passed from Farnham to Victoria". Murray summed him up perfectly: "He had an ability to get fun out of everything."

Wodehouse's grandson, Sir Edward Cazalet, pointed



Edward Cazalet presented a delighted Elin Murphy with Plum's last-used pen and pencil in a specially inscribed case.

out that everyone owed an enormous debt to Norman, and how he (Edward) always had to take notes, to make sense of what Norman had been saying. Then he took something out of his pocket. When Wodehouse had been in hospital after his heart attack and had died on St Valentine's Day 1975, the nurse had taken the pen and pencil with which he had still been writing to the end and put them in an envelope for safekeeping. Sir Edward now presented them to Elin as a tribute to Norman. The room, packed as it was, cheered.

Christine Hewitt, the Society's membership secretary, then told of her first encounter with him at her first Society meeting back in 2001. She had arrived at the meeting with great fear and trepidation. But "then out bowled Norman and he started introducing me to everyone and then gave a talk on hog-calling". It was, she said, "amazing".

Hilary Bruce, Norman's successor as Chairman, recalled her first encounter with him at a committee meeting in the Palm Court of the Waldorf Hotel. A committee member had said the fledgling society needed advice on marketing and public relations and could she come along to talk to them. "Everyone was eating cream teas and a lady was playing the harp," she recalled. And to her amazement, at the end of the meeting Norman had voted her onto the committee "by acclaim". Throughout, she hadn't understood a word that he had said. (See also the photo on page 5.)

James Hogg, the author of *Lord Emsworth's Annotated Whiffle*, praised Norman's generosity and his ability to bring seemingly disconnected facts together. He described how they had once met in the old reading room at the British Museum. "I queried something and that set Norman off," he recalled, "and we were led from the room in a chorus of 'ssshs'." He was, said James, "a



Murray Hedgcock delivering his tribute to Norman. Murray now asks: "I wonder if any current Society member was at Moor Park in 1973? I've never met anyone else who was there. Given that it was 44 years ago, I think there may be a few survivors." If a reader was at the Moor Park symposium, and remembers it, please let the Editor know.

specialised walking Google”. [See the box below for more of James’s comments.]

I then recalled the extraordinary day on the Millennium Wodehouse Tour in 2000 when Norman gave two Wodehouse walks around central London and (as I later reported in *Wooster Sauce*) “his brisk pace and speed of delivery of all known, and many unknown, facts about Wodehouse and London carried him through a total of five unprecedented hours of unburdening of his knowledge and detective work”. The problem was that London that day was plagued with more roadworks, traffic, and noise than ever. As I said at the time: “The noise and the chaos was tremendous and at times not all of it was coming from the Society’s chairman.” Norman loved that description and repeated it back to me many times over the years.

Committee member Lesley Tapson recalled how she had first met him on an excursion to the National Theatre for a question-and-answer session with the Society’s then President, the actor Richard Briers. She was baffled when Norman asked him if he could give him any advice on how to speak slowly. “Why did he ask that?” she puzzled to herself. “And then we all walked across Waterloo Bridge and I realised.”

Elaine Ring remembered Norman going on a tour during the US Wodehouse Society’s 1995 convention in Boston, Massachusetts, and bedevilling the poor guide with comments and corrections. “I was convinced Norman was the one leading the tour,” she said.

Kris Fowler, onetime President of the US Society, recalled how she asked him if he could mention horse racing at the St Paul Convention in 2009 as everyone was to go to the local races as a finale. Norman, unfazed as ever, regaled the convention with tales of the occasion when a gathering of bishops at Church House on a sweltering summer’s



The irrepresible Norman: Hilary Bruce recalled this occasion in 2008 at the Newbury Show, when Norman impulsively decided to enter the Novice Pig Handling competition and borrowed a champion sow, Truffle. He came in third and rewarded Truffle with a back-scratch that, as reported on page 11, sent her toppling to the ground in pure ecstasy. It was a typical Norman Moment.

(Photo by Tony Ring)

day in London had quietly started betting on which bishop would loosen and remove their gaiters first. And she also recalled his chivalry on the Week With Wodehouse in 2007. “We had to pass through a kissing gate,” she said, “and he stood there, doffing his hat and kissing every woman passing through.”

Others spoke as well; everyone had fond memories of a glorious character. And the evening came to a fitting, and touching, end when Hal Cazalet, Wodehouse’s great-grandson, sang Plum’s song ‘My Castle in the Air’. It was such sweet music and the last line – “Your life’s one long delight” – pretty much summed everything up.

James Hogg on Norman Murphy

Norman had the two key attributes of the ace researcher. Firstly, his fine-tuned mind was brimming over with the fruits of many years of reading. His range was wide, though centred on the period 1850 to 1940.

Secondly, he had the quality which separates the mere compiler of facts from the truly original historian. He had the necessary powers of recall, certainly, but the vital extra ingredient was his ability to bring disparate facts together and turn them into a convincing theory. Just to cite one example from his indispensable *Wodehouse Handbook*: the chapter on the Empress of Blandings showcases both his mastery of detail and his powers of advocacy. I’ve often thought how splendid it is that such a first-class brain as Norman’s should apply itself to the frothier end of popular culture.

Another quality I’d like to mention is his generosity. He was quick to praise and to help whenever he could. When my *Annotated Whiffle* came out many years ago, he went out of his way to give it a plug in America, which coming from him was the best possible leg-up I could have had.

Only once were we in danger of an altercation. After the *Annotated Whiffle* came out, the publishers Michael Joseph wanted a follow-up of some sort. It was agreed with the Trustees that I should write Gally Threepwood’s Memoirs. Luckily, I hadn’t even embarked on it when, at a Wodehouse gathering, Norman came over looking agitated and told me he’d already put six months’ work into that very idea, but hadn’t told anybody yet. Well, you know the outcome. Norman wrote and published *The Reminiscences of the Hon. Galahad Threepwood*, and so good was it that I was able to write to him and say what a blessing it had turned out that way. He knew far more about Gally’s particular milieu than I would ever know.



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From June Arnold

Congratulations on an excellent edition (*Wooster Sauce*, March 2017). I loved the coloured photos, the sections in a different colour ink, and lots of interesting facts and figures. Having read the article ‘A Musical Celebration’, I felt annoyed at myself that I didn’t go to it. Thank you for letting me be a part of it.

With Alexander Armstrong as our President, I think the magazine and the Society will go from strength to strength. Here’s to the next 20 years!

From John Pett

What brilliant thinking! An excellent President – I could think of no one better! Well trousered!

From Linda Tyler

I completely agree with Penelope Forrest (*Wooster Sauce*, December 2016) on the subject of the joint winners of last year’s Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize. Neither made me laugh. My time would have been better spent re-reading any of Plum’s novels; they remain funny no matter how many times read.

Editor’s note: The winner(s) of this year’s prize were due to be announced as Wooster Sauce was going to press; we will report in September. It will be interesting to see whether another controversial choice will be made.

From Katrina Quinton

Having finally found the time to read the December edition of *Wooster Sauce*, I was comforted to read that the Wodehouse Archive of Sir Edward Cazalet is to reside at the British Library. My late father-in-law, Tony Quinton, was a Patron of the learned Wodehouse Society and, in his time, also Chairman of the British Library. I am supremely confident that he is smiling benignly from

his cloud above that two of his greatest loves are now united forever. What a generous contribution from Sir Edward to the future well-being of the world and its essence of good humour.

From Derek Pedder

Fay (my late wife) introduced me to PGW with an old book from her parents’ bookshelf – just one of the many things for which I thank her. My introduction to the Society came from a different quarter. I have never been a fan of Tony Blair’s political views and I did not vote for him in the Labour Party leadership election which led to him being Prime Minister. However, I owe him a great debt. I had read in a newspaper of the foundation of The P G Wodehouse Society, but no contact details were given. The article did mention that Prime Minister Blair was a member, so, without much hope, I wrote to him at 10 Downing Street, as one did in those days, and was delighted to receive a reply containing all the information needed for me to join, which I did forthwith, and which I would have done fifthwith or forthwithout if necessary.

I subsequently joined the US Society as well, and the days when the newsletters arrive are indeed red-letter days.

From David Balmer

Earlier this year Harriett Baldwin MP, Minister for MOD Procurement, was answering a question in the Commons and was reading a prepared answer. When finished, she ad libbed to the opposition: “As P. G. Wodehouse would say, it is never difficult to distinguish between a Scotsman with a grievance and a ray of sunshine.” Presumably the questioning member was a Scot. It will be in *Hansard*. I watched it on the Parliament Channel, BBC.



The Lit & Phil – and Alexander Armstrong

While on a family trip to Northumberland, the Society’s Chairman took care to pay a courtesy visit to The Literary & Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne – the other organization of which Alexander Armstrong is proud to be President. And who can blame him? The Lit & Phil (as it is popularly known) is completely wonderful – the largest independent library outside London, housed in a beautiful building, and open to all daily, although lending only to members. It holds close to 200,000 books, 18,000 LPs and CDs, and sheet music galore – and a Children’s Library that our President happily frequented as a child.

Alexander remains very proud of his long association with the Lit & Phil, especially since his Northumberland roots mean his family has been involved with the library over many generations. In the photograph to the left, our own Chairman is sitting beneath a portrait of Robert Spence-Watson, one of Alexander’s forebears, who was on the board of the Lit & Phil some generations ago. The portrait is in the Music Library, which also serves as the Boardroom.

The staff were so welcoming, and so enthusiastic about their marvellous library, and their President, too. If you are in the North East, do make sure you pay a visit there – it’s just the sort of place in which a book lover of any stripe would feel very happy and comfortable indeed. (See www.litandphil.org.uk)

The Society at 20

A Special Anniversary Salute: Part 2

by Paul Kent

Continuing our look at the Society's past 20 years, as seen through the pages of Wooster Sauce. And for a history of our occasional newsletter By the Way, see Tony Ring's report starting on page 19.

2004

Robert McCrum's magisterial biography of Plum was finally published in September, prefaced by his remark in *WS*: "To a degree unique in twentieth century English literature, Wodehouse and his work inspire a devotion that is just a white coat short of a clinically recognised condition." In his review, Stephen Fry (having quickly dispensed with what he called "the BBB" (the Berlin Broadcasts Business), wrote the following:

Wodehouse's apprenticeship in his craft was steady throughout the turn of the old century and into the new and McCrum captures quite marvellously the flavour of the particular London in which our hero worked, astutely anatomising the language and manners of the age, sifting the codes and nuances of the parade of Knuts, Mashers, Coves, Dudes and Blighters that bestrode the Edwardian stage. . . . While not claiming to be a literary biography, McCrum's book allows [the] connections between early life and final artistic flowering to be perfectly made. The rest is supremely well told, and, considering its lack of eventfulness (the BBB excepted), surprisingly riveting.

Praise indeed. At the other end of the literary spectrum came two preposterous pieces by self-styled 'journalists'. Writing in the *Daily Mail*, Nigel Lewis came up with this work of imagination: "Blandings castle is the setting for dozens of the Jeeves and Wooster yarns and is where Bertie Wooster's mad uncle Lord Emsworth lived with weekend visitors such as Freddie Threapwood [*sic*] and Rev Rupert Bingham plus his ten

formidable sisters as well as brother Galahad." And *The Times* provided this, courtesy of one Robbie Millen: "Your bookshelf is a window to your soul. For instance, spot too many PG Wodehouses sitting between someone's bookends and you can easily dismiss the owner as a man (for it is likely a chap) who is ill at ease with our age. He probably owns a novelty bow tie, knows his cricket stats, is chirpily irritating and self-consciously uses slightly archaic words like rum cove or chap." Tosh and piffle, of course; our Editor sighed heavily and moved on.

Helen Murphy's article "Wodehouse – A Male Thing?" quite brilliantly demolished at least one of those journalistic sneers with her initial premise that "Wodehouse is one of the most consistently feminist writers of the twentieth century. . . . I think there are several reasons for this, mainly empathy, the work ethic and Platonism."

As an example of the first, she quoted a passage from 'The Romance of an Ugly Policeman', in which PC Ted Plimmer has to arrest his inamorata: "There was the misery of the stricken animal in her gaze. He had seen women look like that in Whitechapel. The woman to whom, indirectly, he owed his broken nose had looked like that. As his hand had fallen on the collar of the man who was kicking her to death he had seen her eyes. They were Ellen's eyes, as she stood there now – tortured, crushed, yet uncomplaining."

Then there was work: "All his most powerful and popular female characters work. . . . They sculpt, or nurse, or are secretaries, or of course chorus girls – and remember Wodehouse could describe accurately how hard that was. . . . The longest discussion on this is in *Doctor Sally*, who not only works hard herself but cannot ever love a man who doesn't."

Lastly, Platonism:

He knew that the Platonic philosophical ideal is one from which all other forms derive as flawed imitations. Therefore, he could hardly help creating ideal forms himself . . . his female characters being strong, memorable female characters. . . . The aunts are some of the strongest characters in all the books, of course, and Wodehouse was writing about these middle-aged women long before he moved on to his other favourites, often American: women of a certain age, almost all of whom, once again, work. What better role model than Aunt Dahlia, not least for her power of invective, if not her magazine editing skills. Not a writer for women?

Sadly, Helen Murphy, daughter of Norman and his late wife Charlotte, died in April 2004 (soon after this article was published) at the age of 38. She had been the Society's Treasurer and later Membership Secretary.

Newt and Vicar News

Wiltshire Council spent £100K on lit and ventilated newt tunnels beneath the A350 near Trowbridge, and Ascot Racecourse a further £100K on "newt enclosures" during redevelopment.

The Rev. Christopher Davidson, Rector of Banham, New Buckingham, Old Buckingham, Eccles, Quidenham, Wilby (the Quidenham Group, Norwich) has become also priest-in-charge Blo' Norton, Garboldisham, Kenninghall and Riddlesworth with Gasthorpe and Knettishall (the Guiltcross Group, in the same diocese).

In brighter news, the Gold Bats' first female player, Cassandra White, took the field, scoring 1 not out, but failing to prevent defeat at the hands of the Dusters by four wickets. The first husband-and-wife combo, Paul and Lesley Rush, also couldn't stave off ignominy in the Sherlockian game. The team's crestfallenness was slightly offset by the appearance of a smart new cap, which carried the image of two crossed bats on a plum background.

Forty Wodehouse titles had been translated into Hungarian; the original for Ukridge's chicken farm was identified at Fairfield House, near Lyme Regis; and it was revealed by the mighty brains of Stirling University that Scotsmen are less happy with life than their male equivalents in other parts of Britain.

2005

News was a bit thin on the ground this year, but not that of the porcine variety. In a special supplement to the June edition of *WS*, the Society announced its campaign to Back the Berkshire in hope of helping to save this rare breed. One way of doing this was entitled 'The Emsworth Paradox' – to wit, the best way to save the breed is to eat Berkshire pork! (The Society made good on this pledge by serving Berkshire meat at its formal dinner in October 2006.)

On May 23, "Barbarella, a Berkshire sow in pig, entered the cast of *The Archers*. Her owners, the Grundys, commented on the Berkshire qualities both as a living animal and a source of meat and crackling" And then we learned that Patience, the Society's sponsored Berkshire sow, had produced a litter of no fewer than eight. Cue further rejoicing. Also in May came this, from *The Independent's* Christopher Hirst, on the subject of the call 'Pig-hoo-o-o-ey!':

I'd always believed this to be a fictional device, an invention by the most fertile comic brain of all time. But during a visit to Southwest Spain last week, I discovered that it was the literal truth. This is how Julio, a pigman from Western Andalucia, called his herd: "Hooo-Waaaay! Hooo-Waaaay!" Sure enough, he was soon trailed by maybe 40 or 50 Iberian porkers, who sauntered after him like chatting peers on their way to the House of Lords.

Then came the main event: throughout the summer, as Elaine Ring informed us, at agricultural shows up and down the country "champion Berkshires had been awarded rosettes proudly displaying the Society's sponsorship as part of the Back the Berkshire campaign". At the Newbury show in September, Hilary

Bruce, our Chairman, was much in evidence "to see fair play in the contest for the ultimate prize of supreme champion". The Jo Clarke Memorial Berkshire Cup was won by Dusty ("who had to be bribed with a juicy Granny Smith to ensure a photographic record"), and she later triumphed over all the other breeds to carry off the Champion of Champions award – and this, despite making "several attempts to return to bed" during the judging.

In other news: Hugh Massingberd revealed (at the seventh Great Obituary Writers' Conference held in Bath) that his criterion for hiring staff was whether or not they were familiar with the works of P G Wodehouse; the first translation of PGW into Hebrew was published (*Right Ho, Jeeves* became *Tov Veyafe, Jeevs*), bringing the total of translated languages to "at least 26", which included Japanese; a seminar entitled *God, PGW and Winnie the Pooh* was held near Crawley; and, finally, it was reported that the most popular

leisure activity among Bangalore's "computer whizz-kids" was to organize marathon quizzes on PGW's works.

Murray Hedgcock picked a fairly sizeable bone with the compilers of *Everyman's Dictionary of Fictional Characters*. This "miserable volume", while containing no fewer than ten entries from "the not very exciting light novel from Plum's later years, *Cocktail Time*, [has] not one of the immortal Blandings company – which means no Beach, no Freddie, no Angus McAllister, no Efficient Baxter, not one of the Emsworth sisterhood [and no Empress or even Lord Emsworth himself]. No Bassetts, no Spode. None of Bertie's aunts: not another Drone to stand by the lonely listed figures of Bertie and Chuffy. No Bingo, no Tuppy, no Gussie, not a one. No Bobbie Wickham. No Florence Craye, no Stiffy Byng. And perhaps most horrifying, for

those who see him – and there are many – as PGW's supreme creation, no Psmith."

Cue disbelief and righteous snorting – but maybe we shouldn't be too hard on the compilers: *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Literature* doesn't even acknowledge Plum's existence . . .

2005

It was announced that *Wooster Sauce's* esteemed and indefatigable editor, Tony Ring, was to step down, to be succeeded by Elin Murphy. Tony gave his farewell in Number 40, the 10th-anniversary issue, and the first to feature full colour. In a two-page spread in which several committee members celebrated the work (often unsung and always unpaid) of their colleagues, Tony

BACK THE BERKSHIRE

A Special Supplement from The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) June 2005

Message from the Chairman

The Empress of Blandings was a Berkshire sow. As one of P.G. Wodehouse's principal and most engaging characters she is naturally held in esteem and affection by Society members and, by association, the Berkshire breed is admired and supported by Wodehouse lovers. Many have visited Berkshire farms and rare breed parks to pay their respects.

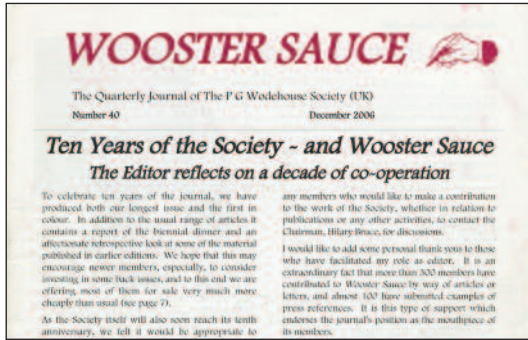
The Society is confident that in city or a hundred years time, Wodehouse's work will continue to be read and enjoyed. New generations will be captivated by the Empress, and will want, in their turn, to pay respects to members of her breed. But there are only three, or four hundred Berkshires in the UK today – not enough to secure the future. The Rare Breeds Survival Trust classifies the Berkshire pig as 'Vulnerable', so there is no room for complacency. Only by increasing the numbers very substantially, perhaps fourfold, will the Berkshire get off the danger list, and be safely re-established as a viable, though still rare, breed of Traditional British Pig.



The P.G. Wodehouse Society (UK) wants to play its part in ensuring the survival of the Berkshire. In this supplement we remind members of the relevance of the Empress of Blandings to the Wodehouse oeuvre, explain the relationship between consumption of Berkshire meat and the breed's survival (the 'Emsworth Paradox'), list many of the farmers who sell Berkshire meat, and provide information as to where members of the Society can visit Berkshire pigs. The information provided will, of course, only be up to date when this supplement is prepared, and members should bear this in mind if planning to visit any of the places mentioned.

The pig featured in the photograph above is Patience, the first Berkshire sow acquired by Daylham Rare Breeds Farm in Suffolk. Alert members will recall that sows of Patience were presented to the attendees at our last formal dinner in October. Since then, Patience has been suckled and occurred from a nasty viral illness (which is why she was inside at the time of the photo), and is now being next day to a large white boar. This will enable the dams to judge when she will be ready for mating, at which time she will be artificially inseminated from a Berkshire boar. Members can monitor her progress at www.daylham-house-farm.co.uk.

This supplement accompanying the June 2005 issue told us everything we wanted to know about Berkshire pigs but were afraid to ask.



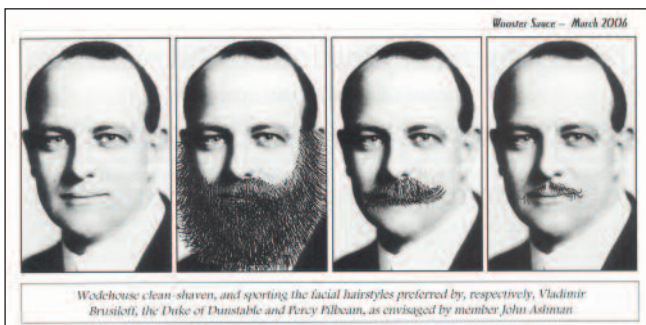
modestly omitted to draw attention to his own immeasurable contribution to the Society's health and well-being. So here, in the 2016 20th-anniversary issue, we're finally correcting his oversight – albeit ten years late. Tony, of course, continues his sterling work, publishing several books of immense value to the casual reader and scholar alike, shining his light into hitherto unexplored corners of PGW's enormous legacy, and tirelessly helping others in their investigations.

Not to be outdone, that other giant of Wodehouseana, Norman Murphy, announced, in that same issue, the imminent arrival of his two-volume *A Wodehouse Handbook*.

The year opened with a cracking "Compendium of Wodehousean Views on Facial Hair", of which this is but one:

[I]n a letter to Bill Townend in May 1942, [PGW described] some of his experiences of internment. "A lot of us grew beards. Not me. What I felt was that there is surely enough sadness in life without going out of one's way to increase it by sprouting a spade-shaped beard. I found it a melancholy experience to be compelled to watch the loved features of some familiar friend becoming day by day less recognizable behind the undergrowth. A few fungus-fanciers looked about as repulsive as it is possible to look, and one felt a gentle pity for the corporal whose duty it was to wake them in the morning.

No hipster he. Fellow writer Compton Mackenzie remarked that Wodehouse had "a natural shaving face . . . Hairs on such a face would be as odious as greenflies on a La France rose, as hairs themselves in soup". See:



Patrick Wodehouse contributed a touching portrait of his grandmother Eleanor Wodehouse, Plum's mother, from which the following is taken:

Because Plummy, Eleanor's third son, saw so little of his mother in boyhood, it is said that the total time he was with her between the age of three and fifteen amounted to a total of six months. So I probably knew her much better than he did, as my family lived with her for several years and she lived with us throughout her later years. My first

recollection was at Bexhill, when I was four years old. Plummie took me up the hill to Mrs Gordon's and left me there for the next four years, while my parents were in India. Every Sunday a housemaid took me to Grandma's for lunch and retrieved me again after tea. It was the typical Sunday ritual; Grandma sat at the head of the table and would correct me for every slight lapse of table manners. The dessert course often included red jelly. On one occasion, she placed a portion of jelly in the centre of the plate, saying, "This is an island in the sea", and taking up the cream jug, "and these are the ships". With that, she made a series of small drips of cream around the jelly. To reach me the plate had to pass Grandpa, and as it came by he seized the cream and smothered the jelly, saying, "This is the snow all over the mountains." Grandma said nothing, but her face is never to be forgotten.

2007



Another moving Wodehouse family portrait was printed in the September issue. Written by Edward Cazalet, it described a trip to Remsenburg in 1974 that proved to be the final time Edward and his wife, Camilla, were to see Plum alive. It's a long piece, so what follows are a few choice paragraphs from the visit.

As we drew up in the car, Plum could be seen writing at his desk in the summer room. As we got out of the car, two dogs started barking. We reached the front door at the same time as Ethel. She was covered in jewels and as I made to kiss her, she immediately inclined her head with the obvious purpose of preventing me disturbing her make-up. Plum remained immobile at his desk even though we must have been making quite a noise. It subsequently transpired that his hearing had become very bad.

We went in to see Plum. He had lost a lot of weight since I had last seen him two years before. His movements were unsure and much slower, although this was not surprising as he had had a fall two and a half weeks previously and had cracked two of his ribs. Nevertheless it soon

became apparent that his brain was as clear as ever.

After dinner I talked for an hour to Plum. He wanted to have a talk but wished to find out about England and did not want to discuss himself. He first asked about the Pakistani cricket tour and then wanted me to explain precisely the rules of a one-day match. He said that so much in the world was changing but he thought this was probably right, although he knew that, on the whole, people would not be happier. . . . He said that he was thrilled to have heard recently that he was going to be put in Madame Tussaud’s and he reckoned that this was a great honour. He asked about the English countryside and said that it was this above all that he would like to see again in England.

I went in to see Plum to say goodbye to him as we were returning to London that evening. He was reading *Smokescreen* by Dick Francis. “His plots are really imaginative,” he said. I told him that we had to go. He began to get out of his chair. I told him not to move. As we shook hands, he said, “Goodbye, old boy. We have loved seeing you.” As I left his room, I could not resist looking back – after all he is 93 and I won’t be going out to Long Island for quite a bit. Plum was already back in his book, fully absorbed.

The September issue was accompanied by a special full-colour supplement devoted to the year’s great Society event: A Week With Wodehouse. In celebration of the Society’s 10th anniversary, 43 Wodehouseans from nine countries took part in seven days of events that included no fewer than three disparate Wodehouse Walks in London and Dulwich, the final gathering of Society members at the Savage Club, and visits to Lord’s and Emsworth before the group headed into Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Wiltshire in search of Blandings,



The back page of the Week With Wodehouse supplement featured the superb tea towel designed by Jane-Ann Cameron.

Heroes and Villains, Part 5
Writers who are/were fans of PGW
(as reported in WS)

Bill Bryson, Ruth Rendell, Kate Mosse, Donna Tartt, Caitlin Moran, Michael Bond, Keith Waterhouse, Bernard Cornwell, Kathy Lette, John le Carré, John Bayley, Terry Pratchett, Jay McInerney, Lynne Truss, Marion Keyes, Philip Pullman, Umberto Eco, Bertolt Brecht, Douglas Adams, Salman Rushdie, Kazuo Ishiguro, David Nobbs, Joanne Harris, Philip Hensher, Craig Brown, Frank McCourt, Alan Titchmarsh, John Mortimer

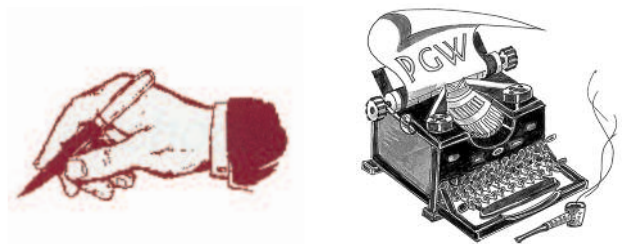
culminating in a visit to a breeder of black Berkshires, home of champion sow Truffle and her piglets. The great time concluded with a fabulous dinner at the Arts Club in Dover Street. Among many positive comments received afterwards, perhaps Ranjitha Ashok summed it up best: “I think this tour confirmed that Wodehouseans are the best variety of human beings in the world.” Too true!

Overall, this was a very newsy year. HRH The Duke of Kent agreed to become a patron (and to contribute his thespian skills to every Wodehouse Dinner ever after). A California lady found a copy of *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets* “in our living room wall” and wrote to ask if this “cook book” was “worth anything”. Bob Dylan quoted PGW on his radio show: “There is only one cure for grey hair. It was invented by a Frenchman. It’s called the guillotine.” The New York Public Library’s search engine returned 293 results for ‘Wodehouse’ – but then asked, “Did you mean ‘whorehouse?’”

But then came a bombshell: Norman Murphy announced that after 25 (or so) years, his Wodehouse Walks were to come to an end. They didn’t, as it turns out. . . . I remember one lady who turned up and left after 15 minutes with the scathing comment that she wasn’t going to spend the morning walking all over London.”

2008

Great excitement in the Society as a new logo was finally revealed!



The Society’s logo, as was and as is

On March 28, the Society gathered “to embarrass Tony Ring thoroughly with a tribute dinner” – a black-tie do attended by President Richard Briers, with music

from Lara Cazalet, who amended the lyric of ‘Bill’ to: “We love him, because he’s wonderful, because he’s Tony Ring!”

In other news, PGW made 38th on a list of favourite authors among British adults. And the winner? Enid Blyton! As a consolation, Plum made it to third place in the new-fangled Classic eBook bestsellers chart for June 2008, and again took the bronze in the *Daily Telegraph*’s list of ‘50 Reasons to Love Britain’. In September, the Editor had cause to rue her decision to run a Wodehouse Clerihew Challenge, as she was swamped with entries.

Pause for Thought

As humour necessarily goes with good sense and the reasonable spirit, plus some exceptionally subtle powers of the mind in detecting inconsistencies and follies and bad logic, and as this is the highest form of human intelligence, we may be sure that each nation will thus be represented at the conference by its sanest and soundest mind. Let Shaw represent Ireland, Stephen Leacock represent Canada; G.K. Chesterton is dead, but P.G. Wodehouse or Aldous Huxley may represent England . . .

(From *The Importance of Living*, by Lin Yutang, published in 1937)

The Gold Bats had a packed and eventful season: the Dulwich match was rained off at tea, and the Sherlockians game marked the first (and so far last) time an ambulance was called to a fixture, the injured man pluckily returning to the fray after treatment to help secure a draw. Further matches were played against the Charterhouse Beaks and Intellectuals (the Gold Bats won – and with contributions from 11-year-old George Lewis); against the Hollywood Golden Oldies, an offshoot of the Hollywood Cricket Club, of which Plum was a member (won); against the Kirby Strollers, in the annual Audley End charity game (won); and amalgamated with the Siegfried Sassoon Society against Matfield (won).

Norman Murphy added yet another string to his bow at the Royal County of Berkshire Show, when he won third place in the novice pig-handling event, partnering ex-champion and old friend Truffle, to whom he gave a back-scratch “in just the right spot”, following which the porker “toppled to the ground in ecstasy and eventually had to be revived by her owner so the next event could begin”. [See picture on page 5.]

And September’s issue featured a fascinating article entitled ‘The Political P G Wodehouse’, by Bengt Malmberg, a member of the Swedish Wodehouse Society, from which the following are two all-too-brief extracts:

In most biographies, PGW is portrayed as naïve, politically ignorant, and uninterested in mundane matters, which would partly explain the big mistake of his life when he gave talks on the German radio. He has been compared with Lord Emsworth, described in *Something Fresh* (1915):

“Other people worried about all sorts of things – strikes, wars, suffragettes, diminishing birth rates, the growing materialism of the age, and a score of similar objects. Worrying, indeed, seemed to be the twentieth century’s speciality. Lord Emsworth never worried.”

In *Homage to P. G. Wodehouse* (1973), Auberon Waugh makes an important point: “The political world does not take kindly to alternative perceptions of its own importance. Politicians may be prepared to countenance subversive political jokes, but the deeper subversion of totally non-political jokes is something they can neither comprehend nor forgive. It is no accident that of all twentieth-century English writers, Wodehouse is the one they have chosen, in their time, to persecute most bitterly.” He goes on to say that Wodehouse’s influence politically is his sense of the ridiculous: “By teaching us that the best jokes ignore everything in which men of authority try to interest us, Mr Wodehouse has kept the torch of freedom burning in England more surely than any avowedly political writer could ever have done.”

2009

A message from our President, Richard Briers, featured on the front cover of June’s *Wooster Sauce* as the journal reached issue number 50. “I could, as president, take all the credit,” he wrote, “but I won’t. I am a firm believer in delegation, which means somebody else does all the work while I just look forward to enjoying the next 50 editions.”

On May 30, the Society unleashed a black Berkshire – and Stephen Fry – in Mayfair (outside the Heywood Hill bookshop to be precise; see below) in order to publicize that establishment’s excellent “Plum Pie” exhibition. It was revealed that PGW’s books had made it up Mount Everest, into “a dusty corner of Iraq”, and out to the Maasai Mara. Patron Shashi Tharoor was

WOOSTER SAUCE
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Just Another Day in London
by Hilary Bruce

Sunday, May 30th, and the day dawned bright and clear. Slightly earlier, in fact, than the hour at which we chairmen neatly flourish, but we were dutiful in Mayfair, to put out the welcome mat for an Empress.

It all started at a meeting about Plum Pie, Heywood Hill’s forthcoming Wodehouse exhibition, when publicity ideas were solicited. “I could get you a pig,” said a voice, brightening proceedings perceptibly. Too late, I realised the voice had been mine and shortly afterwards, the response came by telephone: “Could you really get a pig?”

Luckily, I could. That sort of request is meat and drink to our friends at the Berkshire Pig Breeders Club, whose championship the Society sponsors under our Back the Berkshire initiative. Just two phone calls secured a pig-in-principle; two more established that setting a live pig loose in Mayfair was unlikely to attract Constable Oates’s censure; so just the Walking Licence remained. Yes, truly, a Walking Licence. Which presented us difficulty, once Christine Coe, our pig expert, discovered that the Animal Licensing official was a huge Wodehouse fan. What are the chances, eh?

At 7.30 a.m. Curzon Street does not usually bustle, but outside Heywood Hill it was positively congested: two photographers; booksellers in muff; assorted hangers-on, including self and consort, as well as David Cazalet, Wodehouse’s great-grandson; and a farm trailer on a yellow line. Chris Coe – members will recall her witty explanation of the finer points of pig breeding and shearing at a Society meeting a while ago – had risen substantially earlier even than the Chairman to chauffeur Gloria the Berkshire sow from Warwickshire to London, but showed no sign of it as she temptingly modelled, now dubbed the Empress of Mayfair, from the comfort of her trailer. A nice bit of apple did the trick.

The thing about kerbs is that they don’t exist to any great extent in Warwickshire fields. Gloria was rightly suspicious and refused point-blank to step up onto the pavement. And as she made her stately way down the middle of the road towards the zebra crossing on the corner. At every step there were sniffs so captivating that she seemed not to notice the traffic. Most drivers affected little interest, although we noted exceptions – the cabbie who loudly advised “I’m not having her in the back of my cab” and the striking number of garbage trucks on the streets at that early hour, every one of which have to alongside Gloria as, to a man, the operatives photographed the scene on their mobiles.

Stephen Fry does not look as though Constable Potter is about to serve a summons on him for moving pigs without a permit. (Photo by Chairman’s Consort)

Special Supplements

Wooster Sauce has always been the heart and soul of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK), but sometimes there is more news to provide than can possibly be fitted into its pages. Here are some of the special supplements that members have received over the years; see also pages 8 & 10.

MILLENNIUM TOUR
Special Report
September 2000

July 17: the Great Opening Night

Sven Sahlin from Sweden reports:

London greeted the Wodehouseans from all over the world with glorious sunshine – very close to the summer days we’ve read about in the books on Blundells Castle.

At the Plaza Hotel we had a sunny welcome at the hospitality desk, capably and efficiently welcomed (if that’s a bit overstated) by Hilary Bruce and Elaine King.

With our tour programmes, souvenir gifts and free drinks tickets we toddled off to the great meeting room. It was filled to its brim by Wodehouseans patiently queuing up for drinks or just assembling in crowds for introductions and chats.

John Fletcher beamed benevolently behind a very well stocked and very well visited table, full of various Wodehouseana including a new, purple UK Society tie but otherwise mostly lovely books.

Thomas Schlachter from Switzerland:
What stands out for me is the general atmosphere and trying to drink in everything there was. I think it will definitely help me in some way with my translations, not for particular problems but just giving me an idea about, for instance, the English language... things I didn't really know and really hadn't seen.

Norman Murphy, our host and chairman, walked around with a friendly smile, introducing all those pilgrims to each other. The US contingent was by far the greatest with some heavy heads, but one could detect dialects with influences from Holland, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Portugal and Russia.

Masha Lebedeva from Russia:
I think that everything was wonderful, especially for me. I feel like I've met a miracle society. So many good people, very interesting for me, and such a beautiful country.

Quotations from P.G. Wodehouse are reprinted by permission of the Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate and/or Hutchinson

Eight-page report of the great Millennium Tour, July 2000, with contributions from 12 members – and the bus driver!

WE REMEMBER YOU WELL

A fond farewell to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother from The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)
June 2002

Recollections of a Momentous Day in June 1988

On Friday June 3rd, 1988, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother honoured the late Sir P.G. Wodehouse by agreeing to unveil a plaque at the house which he and his family had owned and occupied for several years in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Wodehouse fraternity would like to pay its own tribute to The Queen Mother with an account of that day's proceedings including much material that has never previously been presented to the public.

The proposal to place a plaque commemorating Wodehouse's time at 17 Norfolk Street (once Danvers Street) had been the brainchild of Michael Peaton, who had obtained Wodehouse's own approval before approaching English Heritage as long ago as 1974.

Edward Caszeli, pictured below with Nancy and Patrick Wodehouse, invited Her Majesty to unveil the plaque in the following terms:

"Your Majesty, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I say how deeply honoured we all are as devoted Wodehouse fans that Your Majesty should have seen fit to accept our invitation to come and unveil this Plaque on the old Wodehouse home.

Plum would have been both surprised and deeply touched that this ceremony should be taking place. He tended to be in awe of important occasions.

I like to think of him, had he been alive today, peering down at us from a second floor window, making a chink between the curtains to see what was going on.

I remember, some years ago, Your Majesty paying Plum a compliment which I know he would have valued more than any other. Your Majesty said that after a long and busy day there was no better way of ensuring a good night's rest than by reading a Wodehouse novel before turning in. This meant that one passed into that happy and tranquil Wodehousean world and one would go to sleep with a serene smile across the face.

May I on behalf of all of us and in particular on behalf of all Plum's family thank Your Majesty for being with us today. I now invite Your Majesty to unveil the Plaque."

The Society saluted the late Queen Mother with this four-page look back at a special (pre-Society) event in 1988.

Oh, Gee, Oh, Joy!

What a splendid seven days it was, surpassing all expectations, and not even the occasional spot of rain (or downpour one day) could spoil the sheer exhilaration of our Week With Wodehouse. Though planned as a celebration of the Society's 70th anniversary, it really was a celebration of Plum himself, bringing together members from nine countries who visited Wodehousean sites in and around London, Hampshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire. The core group of 43 dedicated Plummers who participated in all events bonded so well from the first day that many of them were hauled by the end of the week, such was the roar of voices amid tidal waves of laughter. In the wettest summer for nearly a century, we were blessed with good fortune – no rain during the Wodehouse Walks, nor during the visits to Hatley Castle and Sudeley Castle – and an unexpected bonus when one of our members confirmed the location of the Angler's Rest. "Jolly good" doesn't begin to sum up our feelings. For one week England became a Wodehouse Elysium for a lucky few, as the following pages should make abundantly clear. (And see also pages 11-16 in Wooster Sauce for more reports and photos.)

Happy gems from the Week With Wodehouse entourage after their visit to Sudeley/Blundells Castle. (Photo provided by Susanna Sew Copple)

A magnificent full-colour, twelve-page report of the July 2007 tour, with contributions from 21 members.

A Weekend with Wodehouse
The Society Explores Norfolk
May 24-28, 2012

On a picture-postcard Saturday in May, forty enthusiastic Wodehouseans, along with their foot, Michael Meakin (centre front, in striped shirt), gather in front of the legendary Octagon for a picture taken by Michael's son Charles. Two more were from atop the structure that Bertie Wooster and the Rt Hon. A. B. Filmer climbed to escape an angry swan. But no swans threatened us on this warm, sun-drenched, and quite magical day – the highlight of an unforgettable weekend for all who took part in the Society's explorations of Norfolk and its Wodehousean connections.

assured, but for good measure we had Norman Murphy to ensure the ideal itinerary and provide a wealth of historical background, and Tony Ring to keep us all thoughtfully entertained on the coach.

The fun began on Thursday 24 May, with a London Wodehouse Walk conducted by Norman. (Those who couldn't make the Thursday Walk could do it on Monday the 28th instead.) On Thursday evening, the Weekenders gathered at Champagne Charlie's, near the Embankment. There, in addition to drinks, we received our name badges, packets stuffed with information about the sites we were

The Society had previously enjoyed two week-long excursions (in 2001 and 2007) that explored Wodehouse's associations with London, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, and Hampshire. This left only one corner of any Wodehousean significance – Norfolk, once the Wodehouse family seat and home to Hunstanton Hall, which PGW visited often and portrayed in many stories. With Chairman Hilary Bruce (whose bright idea this was) in charge of the planning, the weekend's success was

going to see, and a very warm welcome from Edward Caszeli, who wished us a joyous weekend filled with sweetness and light. And thus it turned out to be – a rare pleasant and sunny weekend in what has turned out to be England's wettest year since records began.

But the weather wasn't the only delightful part of the experience, as the following pages will demonstrate. There were also a few surprises, one of them provided by the Weekenders themselves. The Wodehouse gods were surely smiling on us!

For more articles and pictures from the weekend, see the September 2012 issue of Wooster Sauce, pp.11-14.

The latest – but surely not the last – of the Society's tours was our weekend in Norfolk, reported in four full-colour pages.

**Heroes and Villains, Part 6
Castaways on BBC Radio 4's Desert
Island Discs who have chosen
works of PGW as their only book
(to 2012)**

Douglas Adams, John Allegro (archaeologist), Rowan Atkinson, Henry Blofeld, Robert Bolt, George Chisholm, Richard Dawkins, Stephen Fry, Anatole Grunwald (film producer), Hugh Johnson (wine expert), Ann Leslie (journalist), Jonathan Lynn (writer), Lord Oaksey, Peter Sallis, Alan Titchmarsh, Terry Wogan (twice!)

elected to the Indian Parliament as a member of the Indian National Congress. Back home, the prolific playwright Sir Alan Ayckbourn was added to the list of Society Patrons, replacing Sir John Mortimer, who had died in January. In his obituary, Edward Cazalet quoted a short passage from Sir John's speech at the Society's inaugural dinner in 1998: "Anyone on a wet Tuesday afternoon can write a tragedy; to write great comedy is difficult, [and] the great gift of Plum was to depict ordinary people and get them into extraordinary situations. Here was a writer who was highly educated, who could write a joke in the style of Euripides or Shakespeare, and you get from him an insight into the whole of our cultures."

That said, William Shawcross's official biography of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, mentioned that PGW's novels were her favourite books, and that "[o]nly a person of her upper-class background and temperament could have praised them, as she did, because they were "so realistic". Comeback king Norman Murphy returned to the trail with his Wodehouse Walks after a short hiatus, and a controversy erupted over the proper nomenclature for Wodehouse fans – Wodehousean? Wodehousian? Wodehusian? Or even Wodehouseian? – with the Editor declining to arbitrate: "De gustibus non est disputandum," she breezily remarked. And the ubiquitous Stephen Fry (a prolific Tweeter himself), speculated whether PGW and Jeeves would have indulged in this pastime: Yes and No were the respective conclusions.

2010

As it transpired, 2010 proved to be a year of firsts, winners, and records. After wading through several hundred clerihews, a committee appointed by the Editor plucked a victor from the pile, jointly written by Jenny and Susan Inglis of Glasgow:

Claude 'Persian Monarchs' Pott
Sympathetic to poor swains is not
He wants his daughter Polly
To marry Lolly.

Runners up? There were two – from Geoff Millward:

Constance Keeble
Terrified the feeble.
Just one look
Was all it took.

and from Jonathan Radgick:

Uncle Fred
Would rise from his bed
And spend morning 'til night
Spreading sweetness and light.

Talking of competitions: the *Spectator* issued its readers with the challenge to "submit a bedroom scene written by a novelist who would not normally venture into such territory". We can't print the whole thing (for obvious reasons), but here's the beginning and the end:

"Pluck the budded rose of my maidenhood,
Bertie. Take me. I am yours."
"Right ho," I said.

.....
This begetting business wasn't the doddle it's
cracked up to be in the OT.

The most quoted Wodehouse 'nifty' from the Recent Press Comments section in 55 editions of *Wooster Sauce* (at least, after the runaway winner of the Scotsman and the ray of sunshine) is this, from *Cocktail Time* (1958): "Why do you want a political career? Have you ever been in the House of Commons and taken a good look at the inmates? As weird a gaggle of freaks and sub-humans as was ever collected in one spot."

Lynn Vesley-Gross wondered whether she had stumbled across the first Wodehouse reference in a computer game (the director's cut remake of *Broken Sword*, since you ask), in which an interview with the designer revealed he often listened to Wodehouse audiobooks given to him by his father. Patron Jonathan Cecil notched up his 40th unabridged Wodehouse audiobook – a brilliant rendition of *Big Money*; and "despite the recession" (and the strong pound), a record 14 Americans attended the biennial dinner, including Elliot Milstein, who gave a brilliant speech and offered the toast to PGW and the Society.

'My First Wodehouse Experience' is a popular *WS* series dating back almost to its beginnings, but surely none could have been more touching than September's, from Simon Bond:

Towards the end of 2009, I was diagnosed with cancer. Surgery and chemotherapy followed in short order, and I spent most of the winter in bed, extremely ill and surviving on a diet of dry cream crackers and goat's milk. I went through a terrible time emotionally as I passed through all the usual stages – denial, fear, anger (though I never quite got to grips with acceptance). With what amounted to a Sword of Damocles hanging over my head, I was finding it impossible to "look at the positives" even though I was getting the best of care. To tell you the truth, good humour was a little bit thin on the ground.

And then my fiancée gave me a copy of *Thank You, Jeeves*.

Now, strictly speaking, this was not my first Wodehouse experience; I had read the odd thing before and found it – well, okay. But given the tight spot I now found myself in, the penny dropped, in a big way. It would be stretching things to say that Jeeves and Bertie got me through my treatment; at times I barely had the energy to read. But I laughed. I smiled. I felt the warm glow of impeccable jokes, perfect prose and downright silliness. And given where I was at that moment, that amounted to something like a miracle.

And now? The treatment is over, my prognosis is good, my hair has grown back, I've read *The Mating Season*, and I am about to start *The Code of the Woosters*. And for my recent birthday – a birthday I'd almost given up hope of ever seeing – my beautiful, wonderful fiancée gave me the gift of membership of The P G Wodehouse Society. I don't know how much it cost. But in a crazy way, it felt priceless.

2011

More competitions, including another belter from the *Spectator*: “Submit a book-jacket blurb for a well-known work of fiction that is designed to be as off-putting as possible.” George Simmers provided the following:

A feeble-minded young man lives a life of useless pleasure in London, until he is inveigled into crime by a bullying relative. Admirers of the grimmer works of George Gissing will appreciate this author's remorseless chronicling of his anti-hero's increasing desperation as he struggles to escape the consequences of his actions. Daringly, Wodehouse makes the simpleton himself the narrator of the story, so that for 200 pages we are trapped within the confines of his limited sensibility as he struggles to make sense of his plight, his only intellectual resource a collection of tags vaguely remembered from a wasted education. Cunningly, the book's subtext implies a quasi-Marxist analysis of class relations, as the hopelessness of the book's anti-hero is contrasted with the resourcefulness of those doomed to spend their existences in the servants' hall.

There you have it – *The Code of the Woosters* in a whole new light! And in a competition to identify ‘Who's Your Modern Bertie?’, the runners and riders included Boris Johnson, Prince Harry, Richard Branson, Hugh Grant, Jude Law, and Stephen Fry. None of these usual suspects won, however: the honour (and the prize of champagne that he was too young to drink) went to 12-year-old Charlie Pope, whose father commented, “What have I spawned?”

Appointments in the Clergy Revisited

The Rev Canon Edward Holbrook, rector, Wimborne Minster St Cuthberga, and priest-in-charge, Witchampton, Stanbridge and Long Crichel with More Cruchel St Mary and priest-in-charge, Horton Chalbury, Hinton Martel and Holt St James, and rural dean Wimborne Deanery, and chaplain, South and East Dorset Primary Care Trust (Dorset), to be Bishop of Brixworth (Peterborough).

Sophie Ratcliffe's brilliant *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters* was published to excellent reviews, and our future patron (and President) Sir Terry Wogan treated us to a highly personal documentary, *Wogan on Wodehouse*, on BBC2, explaining his love of the Master in the company of a stellar cast of celebs, as well as Edward Cazalet . . . and Norman. In cricket news, the Gold Bats' two main fixtures were both rained off for the first time ever, but PGW did make it to the *Daily Telegraph's* “All-time amateur XI” as opening bat. Fellow team members included Boris Karloff, Harold Pinter, Russell Crowe, Siegfried Sassoon, David Niven, and Eric Clapton. And it emerged that during World War II, two covert operations against the Nazis were codenamed UKRIDGE and BLANDINGS. Sad goodbyes were said to actor Jonathan Cecil and Patrick Wodehouse, who died aged 72 and 90, respectively.

2012

After outing himself as a Wodehouse fan on TV the previous year, Sir Terry Wogan was invited to take on, and graciously accepted, the role of Society Patron. On April 22, The Wodehouse Society (US) unveiled a marker proclaiming the site of PGW's grave at Remsenburg Community Church, Long Island, in a ceremony attended by Wodehouseans from Japan, Switzerland, Canada, the Netherlands and representatives from the UK Society. Former WS Editor Tony Ring described the wet but enjoyable day.



Another Society charabanc trip – A Weekend With Wodehouse in Norfolk – passed off without serious injury or the attentions of the local police. It took in Hunstanton Hall, Castle Rising, Blickling Hall, Kimberley Hall, and several local hostelries, and judging by the tour's colour supplement (see page 12), as well as

the gallery of extra pictures in *WS*, a marvellous time was had by all!

The July Meeting witnessed the first-ever Society Balloon Debate (held at The George in the Strand), which was jointly won by Eddie Grabham (as the Duke of Dunstable) and Paddy Briggs (as the Empress of Blandings), who got to stay in the basket and drift off into the sunset. Ditched ballast included Aunt Dahlia, Psmith, Roderick Spode, Lord Tilbury, and Ukridge, who all plummeted to a painful death (but were revived in the bar afterwards).

Bonny, a Berkshire sow, triumphed at the Newbury Show, and both main cricket matches were rained off for the second year running.

Salman Rushdie has often acknowledged his love of Wodehouse, and in December *WS* published this short extract from his memoir *Joseph Anton*, in which he ponders his decision as a 13-year-old in Bombay to leave his city and family to take up a place he had won at Rugby:

Why did that boy decide to leave it all behind and travel halfway across the world into the unknown, far from everyone who loved him and everything he knew? Was it the fault, perhaps, of literature (for he was certainly a bookworm)? In which case the guilty parties might have been his beloved Jeeves and Bertie, or possibly the Earl of Emsworth and his mighty sow, the Empress of Blandings.

And while our gaze is overseas, Tamaki Morimura allowed *WS* to reprint her fascinating article from a learned journal about translating Wodehouse into Japanese (she had translated 17 titles by the time this was written):

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

2013

“What a Year!” trumpeted the cover of *WS*'s December issue – and so it was, albeit one that got off to a terrible start with the death of Society President Richard Briers, aged 79. He once commented, “I don't normally undertake commitments outside acting, but when I was asked to become President of the newly-formed P G Wodehouse Society (UK) in 1997, I felt I couldn't refuse. And I'm glad I didn't.” And so were we.



On a more cheerful note, it seemed that PGW's name was everywhere – on TV, in the theatre, and in print. The BBC's six-part television adaptation of what it called *Blandings* hit our screens in January, starring Timothy Spall and Jennifer Saunders as Lord Emsworth and Lady Constance. The reaction in the pages of *WS* and in the press was, we might say, mixed, ranging from calls for the adapter to be “taken out and shot” (*The Oldie*), to “just the ticket, by jove” (*The Guardian*). Our Editor took the prudent course of compromise, broadly agreeing with the *Independent's* leader that “even if a single person is tempted into [PGW's] glorious and inimitable world, then the BBC's job is well done”.

Sebastian Faulks's novelistic tribute or homage (call it what you will), *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells*, similarly divided opinion among members and commentators, but there was much to praise, even though some found themselves enjoying it almost despite themselves. “Sebastian Faulks is to be congratulated,” wrote Norman.

Greater consensus was enjoyed by *Perfect Nonsense*, a manic three-handed stage play written by Robert and David Goodale and directed by Sean Foley that hit London's West End late in 2012. “With his glassy grin and an astonishing laugh that puts one in mind of both a braying donkey and a door creaking open on rusty hinges,” wrote Charles Spencer in the *Daily Telegraph*, “Stephen Mangan proves the perfect Wooster, achieving exactly the right mixture of bonhomie, idiocy and panic.”

Finally, Tim Pigott-Smith and Zoe Wanamaker starred as PGW and Ethel in BBC4's drama *Wodehouse in Exile* by Nigel Williams, which concerned that wartime incident. Again, an almost unanimous thumbs-up – and two memorable quotes:

"A hell of a lot of people still get this story wrong. I wanted to say, 'Can we stop this?'"
(Nigel Williams)

"I'd never read Wodehouse before, but I've started and he's great."
(Zoe Wanamaker)

In other news, 2013 marked 100 years of Wodehouse in Swedish: the short story 'Ruth in Exile' was "probably the first translated Wodehouse story in the world". And novelist Jonathan Coe (winner of the Bollinger Everyman Prize in 2001), contributed a brilliant article about Wodehouse's humour which is so bang-on it is uneditable, and so the following sentence will have to suffice: "All humour should really aspire to the condition of Wodehouse."

This was also the year of Percy Jeeves, with more than 30 Society members attending a memorial cricket match at the Cheltenham Cricket Festival, as Murray Hedgcock explained:

It is 100 years in August since P. G. Wodehouse, visiting his parents at Cheltenham, took a break from writing to spend a day at the cricket festival played in the picturesque grounds of Cheltenham College. . . .

Plum saw the home county, Gloucestershire, defeat Warwickshire by a crushing 247 runs in the match played on August 14/15/16 – but his eye was caught by a visiting bowler. And when, a couple of years later, he needed a name for a man-servant soon to become one of his most splendid creations, he remembered, and chose – Jeeves. . . .

The curious point about PGW's adoption of the name Jeeves was that the promising young all-rounder did virtually nothing in that Festival game. He bowled 17 wicket-less overs in Gloucestershire's first innings, conceding 43 runs. He did slightly better in the second innings, taking one wicket for 12 runs off seven overs, and picking up two catches. With the bat, he made one and nought. . . .

Wisden for 1916, in its long and deeply moving list of 'Deaths in the War', including many young men barely out of their school elevens, recorded of Jeeves that England "lost a cricketer of whom very high hopes had been entertained . . . Mr PF Warner [the "Grand Old Man" of English cricket] was greatly impressed and predicted Jeeves would be an England bowler in the near future. He was very popular among his brother players."

It is sobering to think that less than three years after Wodehouse saw him play, Jeeves was dead, aged 28, killed on the Somme serving with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

In other cricket news, the Sherlockian game was called off for the third successive year (due to a

waterlogged pitch), and the Dulwich Dusters beat the Gold Bats "with some ease".

2014

"We are delighted to announce that Sir Terry Wogan has enthusiastically agreed to become the Society's new President" announced the front page of *WS's* March issue. And as if to start as he meant to go along, the great man himself wrote this:

There is, it is said, in the dusty archives of the British Museum, an early photograph, possibly taken by Cartier-Bresson, of a convivial group raising the cup that cheers in celebration. I can now reveal that the happy crowd number, from left to right, Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh, and myself. And to whom are our glasses raised? Who else but the man we all acknowledged as the greatest writer of English of his age – our beloved Plum, P. G. Wodehouse.

Appointed an OBE in 1997 and knighted in 2005, Sir Terry had been named BBC Radio 2's 'Ultimate Icon' on the station's 40th birthday. His new position, of course, was far more prestigious than any of these,

and, joking aside, one did get the impression that the invitation brought him genuine joy. After all, he had been a Wodehouse addict since the age of 12, when an aunt (how appropriate!) sent him a copy of *The Code of the Woosters*. Writing of his predecessor Richard Briers, he said that he was "honoured to be following in the footsteps of the finest portrayer of Bertie Wooster".

Tony Ring and Norman Murphy both added to their impressive and invaluable stock of Wodehouse publications, the former with the self-explanatory *What Goes*

Around, Comes Around – A Celebration of Wodehouse Verse, the latter with *Phrases and Notes: P. G. Wodehouse's Notebooks 1902–1905*, which casts a fascinating light on Plum's early career after he had left the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank.

Bob Miller stood down as leader and organizer of the Gold Bats, a position he had held since 1998. He bequeathed the position to Mark Wilcox, whose grandfather had been a housemaster at Dulwich in the 1890s, and whose father, himself a captain of the Essex county side until 1939, was a good friend of Plum's. Sadly, Bob was to die in August 2014, and a memorial bench was unveiled the following year at Audley End, the venue for the annual charity match Bob and Patrick Kidd inaugurated in 2007.

Talking of Patrick (a revered journalist on the *Times* who often inserts Wodehouse references into his

Four Hundred ~ and Then Some

Since Issue Number 1 in 1997, *Wooster Sauce* has printed articles from more than 400 writers – 405, in fact, if our Index is to be believed, and that doesn't include contributors of numerous letters to the Editor and small items that have appeared in Press Comment, filler boxes, and columns such as *The Word Around the Clubs*. The most prolific contributor has been Tony Ring, with well more than 80 credited and uncredited articles. A close second has been Nick Townend: 73 articles published, including all his 'Bibliographic Corner' columns. Murray Hedgcock claims third place, with 68 excellent contributions published over the years. In the runner-up slots we have Norman Murphy (46), Eddie Grabham (24), and Robert Bruce (17). Kudos to these Old Reliables, and to all the members who have contributed to the *Why I Love P. G. Wodehouse* series over the years – 66 of you so far!

WOOSTER SAUCE
The Quarterly Journal of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)
Number 72 December 2014

Celebrating a Special Centenary

On September 30, 1914, P. G. Wodehouse and Ethel Rowley Wayman were married at the Church of the Transfiguration – better known as The Little Church Around the Corner – on 29th Street in New York City. One hundred years later, the occasion of the Society's ninth biennial dinner at Gray's Inn was clearly the right time to celebrate the event in grand style.

P. G. and Ethel Wodehouse had been married for more than 60 years by the time of his death in February 1975.

Green-grandchildren Lara and Hal Casale were brilliant!

We were delighted to welcome many luminaries, including our new President, Sir Terry Wogan; the distinguished actor Sir Michael Gambon; Wodehouse biographer Robert McCrum; Sebastian Faulks, author of *Javes and the Wedding Bell*; and Ann Davies, actress and widow of our late President, Richard Briers. Sir Michael and Mr Faulks also took part in the evening's entertainment, a celebration of Plum and Ethel's wedding made memorable by the contributions of their great-grandchildren Lara, Hal, and David Casale; Society Patrons Lucy Tregear and HRH The Duke of Kent; and Society Committee members Paul Kent, Jeremy Neville, and Tony King.

With such a lineup, and with several Wodehouse songs superbly sung by Hal and Lara added to the mix, the evening was more than a

corcker – it was a triumph. A report by Graeme Davidson, along with more pictures, begins on page 12.

Photos of the dinner by Katy Rogers. If you were at the dinner and wish to obtain photos of the evening, see the information provided on page 14.

Sir Terry Wogan gave the toast.

The entertainment included HRH The Duke of Kent, Lucy Tregear (as Ethel Wodehouse), and Sir Michael Gambon (as Plum).

– which was to last over 60 years – in an all-star performance at Gray's Inn that included Sir Michael Gambon, HRH The Duke Of Kent, and Sebastian Faulks.

2015

World Exclusive! It was reported in the March issue that the personalized car number plate 'WHAT HO' was not only to be disallowed, but its proposer, Allen Hunter was to be fined AUS\$100 for trying to procure an "inappropriate or offensive" plate. Those familiar with the street argot of gangsta rap would perhaps understand, leaving the rest of us completely puzzled that a greeting beloved of PGW and even used by Shakespeare could be condemned as obscene by an over-zealous bureaucracy.

Everyman published its 99th and final Wodehouse re-issue, *Sunset at Blandings*, bringing this mighty (and mightily worthwhile) 16-year project to a successful close. The Chairman's Consort, Robert Bruce, reported on the celebration held at the Goring Hotel, noting that over half a million of the new editions had been sold to date.

And two more celebrations: June 2015 marked the 100th anniversary of *Something Fresh* (*Something New* in the States), the debut of *Blandings* and its cast of familiars (at this stage lacking pigs, Gally, Uncle Fred, nephews, nieces, and noxious neighbours). Wodehouse had clearly entered mid-season form, for a mere three months later 'Extricating Young Gussie' introduced Bertie and Jeeves to a world little suspecting it was to be taken by storm. Here's what Norman had to say:

In 'Extricating Young Gussie', Jeeves has just two lines: "Mrs Gregson to see you, sir" and "Very good, sir. Which suit will you wear?" This is a pretty dull introduction for a character who was to become a legend, and it gives credence to the theory that the 'trigger' in developing Jeeves was the publication of Harry Leon Wilson's *Ruggles of Red Gap*. In a letter to Richard Usborne in 1965, Wodehouse wrote: "I read *Ruggles* when it first appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1914, and it made a great impression on me and in a way may have been the motivating force behind the creation of Jeeves, for I remember liking it very much but feeling he had got the English valet all wrong. I felt an English valet would never have been so docile about being handed over to an American in payment of a poker debt. I thought he missed the chap's dignity. I think it was then the idea of Jeeves came into my mind."

The two lines from 'Extricating Young Gussie' give no indication, but Wodehouse was not long in developing Jeeves. 'Leave It to Jeeves' came out only five months later, 'The Aunt and the Sluggard' two months after that, and 'Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest' in December 1916. The series Wodehouse aimed for was well on its way.

Richard Heard lifted the lid on Wodehouse's 'Daily Dozen' – a set of callisthenic exercises the Master performed every morning (usually at 7.30 am) from 1919 reportedly until his death. They were obviously beneficial, as he could still touch his toes at the age of 90! The Daily Dozen was the creation of Walter Camp, who lived from 1859 to 1925 and named his patented exercises as follows: Hands, Hips, Head, Grind, Grate, Grasp, Crawl, Curl, Crouch, Wave, Weave, and Wing. Phew!

columns), he tweeted of the then Prime Minister, "Surely David Cameron must be Boko Fittleworth, of whom Bertram W said 'He almost had a job once'?" (It was later revealed that DC's great-great-grandfather Sir Ewan Cameron was the manager of the HSB Bank in Lombard Street when the young Wodehouse toiled there, his employment for which, as *Psmith in the City* attests, he developed a visceral dislike).

Readers of *Milady's Boudoir* – sorry, *The Lady* – learned that the winner of the magazine's Favourite Fictional Heroine was Aunt Agatha. "Everyone should have an Aunt Agatha," opined her proposer and champion, one Margaret Moundon: "She stands no nonsense from anyone and, in her day, she ruled the Empire. Under her critical eye, people sat up straight, kept their elbows off the table, showed respect, spoke clearly and behaved sensibly – otherwise she let them know about it. They were good values that we seem to overlook today, to our loss."

And, lastly, a second series of *Blandings* was transmitted by the BBC before being gently laid to rest.

The Great Sermon Handicap was re-run at the July Society meeting, with attendees asked to 'bet' how long a cunningly abridged reading of the story would last. Uncannily, Nirav Shah's estimate of 23 minutes and 5 seconds was within 4 seconds of the actual duration.

The Biennial Dinner brilliantly celebrated the centenary of Plum's marriage to Ethel Rowley Wayman

Pointless Listicle Alert 2

Along with Sherlock Holmes, Leonardo di Caprio, Beethoven and Ted Heath, Bertie Wooster is listed as one of the Guardian's '10 Best Bachelors'.

On the academic front, a milestone international Wodehouse project was completed and published. In two volumes, *P. G. Wodehouse in the Globe Newspaper* distilled 21,000 uncredited paragraphs and 800 poems from the publication, identifying the 1,300 paragraphs and poems in Volume 1 and 200 poems in Volume 2 as having that “indefinable unmistakable Wodehouse ‘touch’”. The young journalist wrote at a prodigious rate, working precisely 1,378 days at the *Globe’s* offices in the Strand between 1901 to early 1908, where contributions written in the morning and prompted by topical events would be printed in the afternoon. The books represent a massive addition to the Wodehouse canon, and of course, his printed legacy, and will no doubt prove a gold mine for PGW scholars.

local beauty parlour, where his Italian therapist reveals herself to be a keen cook and also an amateur pugilist: “After I had my treatments, Donatella said, if I fancied a bit of linguine, I could wait for a few minutes, she’d shave her pecorino in the kitchen and then I could see her box.” An incensed Janet then shuts his head in the trouser press. If any other broadcaster (with the possible exception of Humphrey Lyttelton) had come out with anything half as risqué, it would have been the cue for industrial quantities of media humbug questioning the continued existence of the BBC: but because it was Terry, the Corporation’s regular knockers parked their agendas and laughed along with him.

– PAUL KENT

[As] a member of the tri-Service Central staff, [Norman] served as a British representative on NATO committees. In 1986, just retired, he was recalled by the Thatcher government – he always claimed this was by the Prime Minister herself – to run a one-man study on NATO logistics. This led to the production of the first NATO Logistics Handbook. Before addressing the Senior NATO Logistic Conference in Brussels to introduce [it], Norman presented his draft to US General Homer Smith, “theoretically in charge/responsible for me, who nearly fainted. They don’t make jokes in the American Army, apparently, and he forbade me to use any of them”. Norman always acknowledged that his French was “execrable”, and so began his address: “Secretary-General, Gentlemen. At the request of my French-speaking colleagues, I shall address you in English.” (I paused, and I got my laugh). ‘At the much more urgent request of my English-speaking colleagues, I shall speak at one third of my normal speed.’” This drew shouts of laughter “mingled with cries of incredulity from those who knew me best”.

– MURRAY HEDGCOCK

A third notable act of remembrance took place on July 14 – the commemoration of the death of Percy Jeeves 100 years previously at the Battle of the Somme. Chairman Hilary Bruce, Sir Edward Cazalet, organiser and committee member Tim Andrew, and Keith Mellard, Percy Jeeves’s great-nephew, all took part in a tree-planting ceremony at Cheltenham College, where Jeeves had first impacted on Wodehouse’s consciousness. Hilary’s moving speech announced: “We are planting this tree to honour Percy Jeeves and, with him, all the others who died alongside him in that battle, lost in the mud at High Wood, and to honour all the other young men who died on foreign fields in the First World War.”

Previously, those present at the February 2016 Society meeting heard eloquent testimony from fellow members on the theme of ‘Why I Love P G Wodehouse’, among which was this contribution from Mark Smith, who graced us with a song of his own, complete with



2016

This was a notable year on both the world and Wodehouse stages, much of the time for the wrong reasons. It was bookended by the deaths of our President (in January) and Founding Chairman (in October). Being stalwarts of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK), their passing was marked with appropriate respect, but also with considerable good humour. Here are extracts from their respective obituaries:

Latterly, Sir Terry read out short unsolicited scripts [on his long-running BBC Radio2 breakfast show]. By far the most popular were the jaw-dropping innuendos and single-entendres of the ‘Janet and John’ stories, penned by regular listener Mick Sturbs (Kevin Joslin), that regularly made Wogan and his on-air team corpse helplessly. In one episode, John innocently recounts his visit to the

Heroes and Villains, Part 7 Well-Known Fans Not Yet Mentioned

Richard Dawkins, Barry McGuigan, Sir Patrick Moore, Clarissa Dickson-Wright, Joan Bakewell, William Deedes, Lars von Trier, Osbert Lancaster, Barry Norman, Alistair Cooke, Richard Ingrams, Gyles Brandreth, Hugh Massingberd, Alex Graham

ukulele (*not* banjolele) accompaniment. Here is a sample of the lyrics:

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 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, we'll I'd gobble every crumb
 And I'd say "That was great" and maybe swallow the
 plate
 And that's why I love Plum.

As do we all!

The *By The Way* Supplement: A History

by Tony Ring

In the first part of his retrospective of the Society as seen through the pages of *Wooster Sauce* (see the March issue), Paul Kent explained how and why our present Society was relaunched in 1997 with under a hundred members. The embryo committee realised the importance of attracting new members as quickly as possible, and the creation of the quarterly newsletter was the first major step we took.

At the same time, the idea of having another circulated paper, perhaps less regular and certainly shorter, each issue of which would have a distinct theme, was discussed. We felt it might help to distinguish us from other literary societies, which also had their regular magazines, and at the same time provide members and potential members with a flow of hopefully ongoing interesting and perhaps practical information which would have a longer life than that in *Wooster Sauce*. (Remember, we are talking about a time when few people had access to a reasonably rapid internet connection – and in any event there would have been few websites offering historical information of this type.)

We concluded that it would be worth a try, and named the new paper *By The Way*, in honour of the column in *The Globe* to which Wodehouse had contributed so much for several years. Our initial aim was to provide no more than three issues per year, and each should take up no more than one sheet of A4 paper (two-sided). To ensure maximum impact, the first three issues were sent together in a separate mailing in May 1997 and included 'Bertie Wooster's West End', prepared by Norman Murphy, who described the importance of

eleven locations which could be found on the full page map on the second page. The second listed all the audiotapes of Wodehouse stories then available, and all the books by or about Wodehouse then in print in the UK, while the third reproduced the description of Wodehouse's 'Daily Dozen' exercises from *Collier's* magazine of June 5, 1920.

During the next few months, for financial reasons, we modified the circulation timing to include one issue with each of the first three circulations of *Wooster Sauce* each year – i.e., the March, June and September issues. This policy remained in force from June 1998 until 2009.

Another idea which emerged from those early discussions was the possibility of a Christmas present for members to be included in the December circulation. We obtained the approval of the Wodehouse Trustees for members to receive annually a piece of Wodehouse writing that was not generally available in book form, which would be a real reward of membership. How this idea was put into practice between 1997 and 2009 before being specifically incorporated as part of the *By The Way* series in the December circulation from 2010 onwards, will be the subject of a

short article in this year's September issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

The impact of restricting each issue to a single sheet of paper was that in practice the text could not exceed about 1,500 words, or fewer if illustrations were included (as they regularly were). As the potential of various topics was considered, it became clear that more flexibility would be required to ensure that adequate



coverage of each was provided for members. In this way the idea of including series within the *By The Way* framework was born, and it was used for the first time in September 1998, with the first of six issues (in successive Septembers) describing Wodehouse's most significant contributions to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (coloured red in the list on page 21).

No topic or subject was off limits. During the winter of 1998–99, England's cricketers, managed by Graham Gooch, toured Australia and were thoroughly beaten. It was the work of a moment for the Editor to recall the surprising plethora of characters with the rather unusual name of Gooch who had appeared in minor roles in Wodehouse's work (there were found to be references to 21), and the March 1999 issue provided brief details of each. In such a manner did members learn about Brewster and Pearl Gooch from the *Strand* magazine story 'Back to the Garage', together with their son Elmer and the fiendish Ellabelle, Brewster's sister, who was suspected of preaching vegetarianism to Elmer whilst engaged in baby-sitting duties.

As further experience was gained, and benefiting from appreciative comments received from members, it became normal to have at least one series running each year, often two. The rule remained that series should only appear at the same time each year – a small incentive to those members specifically interested in a subject to remember to renew their membership! More seriously, this ensured that a year's issues contained a reasonable variety of topics, which might catch the imagination of different members.

Series which have been included so far (though, looking back, not all were headed as such) are:

- 2000–02 June Him, Ancient and Modern (describing Wodehouse's family tree)
- 2003–04 June Brand Names Invented by Wodehouse
- 2006–16 March Performers on Wodehouse's Stage
- 2006–08 June Russian References
- 2010–14 Sept. Religious topics: Churches, Bishops and Lesser Clergy
- 2011–16 June 'Legal' matters: Lawyers, Detectives, Magistrates, Crooks
- 2016– Sept. Where Was Wodehouse? And When?
- 2017– March Painters and Paintings

The June 2000 issue concluded with a potentially contentious summary of the possible distant family relationship between Wodehouse and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Norman Murphy provided a list of known Wodehouse dogs and cats in the March 2002 issue; books known to be dedicated to Plum appeared in March 2004; and in September 2004 and March 2005 there were successively notes about prefaces appearing in Plum's books: first those he wrote himself, followed by those written by other authors.

The longest series took eleven years, and the text was manfully provided by Eddie Grabham (in purple in the list on page 21). It concerned most of the better-known actors and actresses (for those who like to maintain the distinction) who appeared onstage in Wodehouse's theatrical productions. These were generally accompanied by photos of the individuals involved. Another member, Masha Lebedeva, contributed the text for the June 2006–08 series on Russian References, while in September 2006, 16 images of Jeeves as portrayed by different artists over the years left little room for text.

The June 2009 issue accompanied the 50th *Wooster Sauce* and listed 20 less-well known snippets about Wodehouse's career, including the 1935 recording of *Thank You, Jeeves* that was one of the first talking books for the blind in

America, and how in 1937, when New York Public Library had its third season with an Open Air Library in Bryant Park, Wodehouse was the library's most popular author.

The series of related issues have been to the forefront in more recent years, perhaps because of laziness on the Editor's part. I am always open to suggestions for new topics – either

for individual issues or a series. Please do not assume that making a suggestion that is accepted would commit you to its preparation, although significant contributions have been made over the years by Eddie Grabham, the late Norman Murphy, and others, and offers to help with the planning and preparation of suggested topics would also be welcomed! It is always satisfying to present the expertise of members to the wider Wodehouse community represented by our circulation list. Please send your ideas to ring.tony@yahoo.co.uk, where they will be gratefully received.



By The Way Issues in Number Order

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| <p>1 (May 1997): Bertie Wooster’s West End</p> <p>2 (May 1997): Current P G Wodehouse Publications</p> <p>3 (May 1997): Keeping Fit the Wodehouse Way</p> <p>4 (June 1998): Sir P G Wodehouse’s Commemorative Plaques</p> <p>5 (September 1998): Wodehouse in the OED – 1</p> <p>6 (March 1999): Gooch? Who’s Gooch?</p> <p>7 (June 1999): What Else Should We Read?</p> <p>8 (September 1998): Wodehouse in the OED – 2</p> <p>9 (March 2000): Unabridged Audiotapes</p> <p>10 (June 2000): Him, Ancient & Modern – 1</p> <p>11 (September 2000): Wodehouse in the OED – 3</p> <p>12 (March 2001): Wodehouse on the Radio</p> <p>13 (June 2001): Him, Ancient & Modern – 2</p> <p>14 (September 2001): Wodehouse in the OED – 4</p> <p>15 (March 2002): The Wodehouse Menagerie</p> <p>16 (June 2002): Him, Ancient & Modern – 3</p> <p>17 (September 2002): Wodehouse in the OED – 5</p> <p>18 (March 2003): Films Plum Did Not Write</p> <p>19 (June 2003): Plum’s Invented Brand-Names (1)</p> <p>20 (September 2003): Wodehouse in the OED – 6</p> <p>21 (March 2004): Books Dedicated to Plum</p> <p>22 (June 2004): Plum’s Invented Brand-Names (2)</p> <p>23 (September 2004): Prefaces (by any other name) to books by P G Wodehouse (Written by PGW himself)</p> <p>24 (March 2005): Prefaces (by any other name) to books by P G Wodehouse (Written by other writers)</p> <p>25 (June 2005): Wodehouse in the Tauchnitz Editions</p> <p>26 (September 2005): With the launch of a boxed set of DVDs of ITV’s <i>Jeeves and Wooster</i> series, it’s time to look at Sir Watkyn and Madeline Bassett</p> <p>27 (March 2006): Performers on Wodehouse’s Stage</p> <p>28 (June 2006): Wodehouse’s Russian References: Culture</p> <p>29 (September 2006): The Illustrated Jeeves</p> <p>30 (March 2007): The Girls On Wodehouse’s American Stage</p> <p>31 (June 2007): Wodehouse’s Russian References: History</p> <p>32 (September 2007): What the Well-Dressed Man Is Wearing</p> <p>33 (March 2008): Seymour Hicks and Ellaline Terriss</p> <p>34 (June 2008): Wodehouse’s Russian References: History and Spirit</p> <p>35 (September 2008): Ionicus Covers for Wodehouse Paperbacks</p> <p>36 (March 2009): The Brothers Grossmith – George and Lawrence</p> | <p>37 (June 2009): Not a Lot of People Know This!</p> <p>38 (September 2009): Spoons, Niblicks and Cleeks</p> <p>39 (March 2010): Male Actors of the Grossmith Company</p> <p>40 (June 2010): Plum’s Politicians</p> <p>41 (September 2010): Wodehousean Churches</p> <p>42 (December 2010): The Old Cricketer’s Story (by PGW)</p> <p>43 (March 2011): The Ladies of the Grossmith Company</p> <p>44 (June 2011): Wodehouse’s Lawyers</p> <p>45 (September 2011): Wodehouse’s Bishops
<i>(Note: This issue was accidentally printed with the wrong date – as another Issue 44, June 2011!)</i></p> <p>46 (December 2011): Aubrey’s Arrested Individuality (by PGW as P Brooke Haven)</p> <p>47 (March 2012): Four Damsels in Plum’s ‘Repertory Company’</p> <p>48 (June 2012): Wodehouse’s Detectives and Detective Agencies</p> <p>49 (September 2012): Wodehouse’s Lesser Clergy – Part I</p> <p>50 (December 2012): The Dramatic Fixer (by PGW)</p> <p>51 (March 2013): Four Men in Plum’s ‘Repertory Company’</p> <p>52 (June 2013): Wodehouse’s Magistrates and Magistrates’ Courts</p> <p>53 (September 2013): Wodehouse’s Lesser Clergy – Part II</p> <p>54 (December 2013): Offprint from <i>Thursday Review</i> (‘The Moulding of Britain’s Youth in the Forge of the Preparatory School System’, by The Rev. Aubrey Upjohn, M.A.)</p> <p>55 (March 2014): American Superstars Play Plum</p> <p>56 (June 2014): Wodehouse’s Crooks – Part I</p> <p>57 (September 2014): Wodehouse’s Lesser Clergy – Part III</p> <p>58 (December 2014): For Love or Honour, by E Oppenheim Le Curdler (probably PGW)</p> <p>59 (March 2015): Occasional Performers in Plum’s Plays</p> <p>60 (June 2015): Wodehouse’s Crooks – Part II</p> <p>61 (September 2015) Unresolved – After a Hundred Years</p> <p>62 (December 2015): Dancing Mad (by PGW)</p> <p>63 (March 2016) Plum’s Last West End Play</p> <p>64 (June 2016): Wodehouse’s Crooks – Part III</p> <p>65 (September 2016): Where Was Wodehouse? And When? – Part I</p> <p>66 (December 2016) Capital Recollections (by PGW)</p> |
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*Series identified by colours
(All articles by Eddie Grabham in purple)*

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Ian Nilo-Walton

My first Wodehouse experience fits neatly into the concept of ‘entertaining angels unawares’. Many years ago – very many years ago! – as a 15-year-old English schoolboy, I was revising for what were then called O-level examinations. These covered a whole range of subjects, one being English Language, which required the scholar to satisfy the examiner in what are now arcane areas such as spelling, grammar, and comprehension. In pursuit of the last-named, I came across a question which I now guess invited a comparison of what was communicated in two conversations:

The first went, simply:

?

!

and the second, at greater length:

“They say the crops need rain.”

“What?”

“The crops.”

“What crops?”

“Oh, just crops.”

He laid down his paper.

“You appear to be desirous of giving me some information about crops. What is it?”

“I hear they need rain”

“Indeed?”

That concluded the small talk.

It was only when, by now passing myself off as an adult, I was reading PGW, that by some miracle I remembered these quotes well enough to recognise the original sources.* This, of course, implies that, for me, there was a second Wodehouse experience of which, sadly, I have no memory at all. One section of



my bookcases has always contained well-thumbed PGW volumes. Where they all came from, and when I bought them, are mysteries which might tax Chief Inspector Witherspoon. What matters is that they have always been a source of amusement, solace, and appropriate quotations. My favourite, as Bertie says of himself:

“Lay off him, I say. Don’t try and change him, or you may lose the flavour.”

You can imagine the circumstances in which this comes useful!

* The first is ‘The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy’ (from *Carry On, Jeeves*); the second is ‘The Inferiority Complex of Old Sippy’ (from *Very Good, Jeeves*).

A Wodehouse Tomb in Norfolk

Hickling Church is in the heart of the Broads, in a lovely peaceful spot. It was heavily ‘restored’ by the Victorians, but in a corner of one of the aisles there is a very interesting tomb. The church leaflet says:

By the pulpit, the large chest tomb is thought to be that of Sir William Wodehouse, who was granted the Priory by the Crown in 1542 after the Dissolution in 1536. Sir William was knighted for gallantry in 1544, was MP for Yarmouth (1545–1547) and became a Deputy Admiral of the Fleet in 1547. His coat of arms, described in the County History of 1808, has disappeared, but the tomb is covered with much interesting old (and some more recent) graffiti, the earliest dated 1627. “Roundhead 1645” apparently dates from the Civil War period. . . . The Wodehouse family was very prominent in this area in the 16th century. A tomb inscribed to Sir Thomas Wodehouse (brother of Sir William) stands in Waxham Church.



I shall put Waxham Church on my list for my next visit.

–JOE SELFE

Wodehouse in Russia, and Not Only

by Masha Lebedeva

From 1 November 2016 to 31 January 2017, the adult library of the ZIL Culture Centre in Moscow hosted the exhibition *Wodehouse in Russia, and Not Only*, dedicated to the 135th anniversary of P. G. Wodehouse's birth. The exhibition was created from the archives of the famous Soviet movie director Leonid Trauberg (1902–1990) and his daughter Natalya Trauberg (1928–2009), one of the first and foremost translators of Wodehouse's masterpieces in post-Soviet Russia.

The exhibition started with a short glance at Wodehouse's life (as much as it is possible to shorten such a long life), and then passed on to Leningrad in 1924. That year, Natalya's mother, Vera, was renting a room from the ballerina Valentina Khodasevitch when she heard two young men laughing out loud in the next room. It turned out they were reading a Wodehouse book. One of the men was Leonid Trauberg, whom Vera would eventually marry. It was probably one of the first times that Wodehouse brought two loving souls together.

Plum's works were extremely popular in the Trauberg family, and the exhibition showed several volumes from Leonid's collection. Many had been published in Russia before 1929, after which Wodehouse was banned for many years. Among the exhibited works were the cover and pages of the magazine *Mir priklyucheni* (World of adventures), issue 10 (1915), which contained Wodehouse's story 'The Education of Detective Oakes'; a 1928 edition of *The Man with Two Left Feet*; and a cutting from an unknown version of 'The Romance of an Ugly Policeman'.

In 1966 Leonid Trauberg wrote a letter to his favourite author, and one part of the exhibition was dedicated to his long-term (1966–74) correspondence with Plum. Visitors had a chance to see copies of

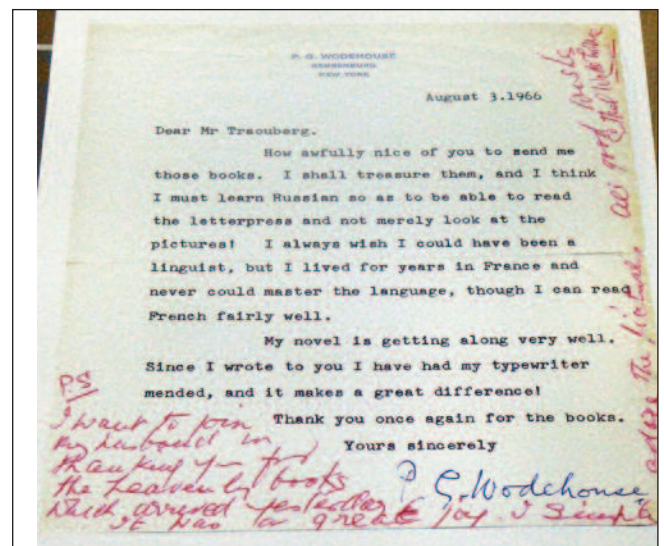


The exhibition at the ZIL Culture Centre

letters typed by Wodehouse, as well as some handwritten notes from Ethel. There were also some books signed by Plum and a photo of himself and Ethel that he had sent to Leonid.

The exhibition documented Natalya Trauberg's translating work and her role in the publication of the first post-Soviet editions of Wodehouse's works. Among the items on display were several of her magazine articles, dedicated to Wodehouse; the cover of the samizdat edition of 'A Slice of Life', translated by Natalya and printed by her son; and two of the books that were the result of her collaboration with The Russian Wodehouse Society's chairman, Mikhail Kuzmenko, who has also played an important role in boosting the publication of Wodehouse's work in post-Soviet Russia.

In addition to the main exhibition, there were two lectures: 'Pelham Grenville Wodehouse: The Humorist in Literature and in Life' and 'The Fashion of the English Novel: From Jane Austen to Pelham Grenville Wodehouse'. There was also a showing of the 1937 film *A Damsel in Distress*. Overall, it was a wonderful event!



One of the letters from PGW to Leonid Trauberg

Paradisiacal: The decision of *Today*, the influential BBC Radio 4 news programme, to broadcast all of its Saturday morning edition on the 22nd April from a farm in Shropshire to highlight rural issues in the run-up to the General Election was a felicitous one. Within a minute of it starting, the presenter, Sarah Montague, waxed lyrical at the landscape in front of her and pointed out that P G Wodehouse had proclaimed Shropshire to be "the nearest earthly place to paradise". And so impressed was she by this quote that at 8.39 she said it again. Wodehouse was obviously more spot on than the politics.

—ROBERT BRUCE

Confessions of a Former Butler

by David Charles

Plum, if I may use his soubriquet, influenced me from a very early age. I remember as a schoolboy being transported to a wonderful world of eccentric characters and hilarious situations.

I read, mainly, the Jeeves and Wooster stories and was so influenced by them that when I heard on the radio that there was a school for butlers, I was very keen to become a Jeeves. My grandmother had taught me how to press a shirt, and, being a bit of a dandy with an eye for clothes, I thought I might make it. Coming from a remote dairy farm, my father wasn't too keen on the idea of me becoming a servant but when he saw that I was set on the idea, he agreed to pay my way.

Ivor Spencer was then the Chief Toastmaster in London and a marvellously charismatic personality. I had a great time learning from him about correct form, wines, and spirits and the best tailors, shoemakers and shirt makers to go to as well as how to serve a meal and general household management.

Following my training, I had intended to go to the US, but I stayed in London and found a position for a VIP Butler at a top hotel in South Kensington. This entailed meeting and greeting VIP guests and making their stay as comfortable as possible. I had to prepare a continental breakfast for 7 am, squeezing my way through a box of fresh oranges every morning! I also served teas and coffees throughout the day and cocktails at night, as well as polishing shoes and pressing clothes.

The whole Hotel was a happy place with a mixture of nationalities: Filipino waiters, Portuguese and Spanish porters, etc. Staff at the front desk were mainly European, with some very attractive girls.

There was a lovely Ghanaian chambermaid – being a chambermaid is very hard work – and a German concierge who chewed garlic. The Head Concierge had been a member of a famous Irish band. My fellow butler was William – a kind, well-mannered, and sweet-natured young man. There were so many characters; a whole world within a world with so many different departments to keep the ship afloat.

One day I saw a strange man walking down the VIP corridor; he gave me a grin. I knew he wasn't a guest, so I paged Security, and they called back. I said, "There is a shifty-looking chap on the seventh floor!" The reply came back: "You're speaking to him!" It turned out that it was the new Security man's first day on the job. I expect he got a ribbing about that!

When there were empty rooms, Reception would upgrade aircrew staff to the VIP floor. Most were very pleasant, but I did catch one pilot pinching a box of Belgian hand-made chocolates from my butler's pantry! Bertie might have given him marks for initiative. I let him take them, anyway. Perhaps if I had been as experienced as Jeeves, I would have had a quiet word in his ear or put chilli in his coffee.

After two years, I decided to go to university, so that was the end of buttlng. I obtained a degree in agriculture, but unforeseen circumstances prevented me from starting a career. I started writing my 'Farmer John' children's stories using the time I had available, and they are the humorous antics of an eccentric farmer told for children ages of 5–8 and up (see www.farmerjohnsbooks.co.uk). I am sure that Plum has influenced me to some degree in my writing – I would like to think so, anyway!



David serving sherry to his Gran some years ago

Kaiser's Choice

One hundred years ago, Schloss Cecilienhof, the last of the Prussian castles, was built in Potsdam. Kaiser Wilhelm II, the German Emperor and grandson of Queen Victoria, built the Tudor-style manor for his son. The Kaiser is known to have been a Wodehouse reader, so one is not too surprised to find *Very Good*, *Jeeves* and *A Gentleman of Leisure* among hundreds and thousands of other books in the castle's original library. Cecilienhof Castle is most famous for hosting the Potsdam Conference in 1945. Comrade Stalin didn't like Wodehouse officially, and Mr Churchill apparently didn't like him personally, so one can assume that they didn't read the books, but maybe Mr Truman dipped into *A Gentleman of Leisure*? Today that volume can be found on the shelves in 'Truman-Zimmer', the room where the US President stayed during the post-WWII peace treaty negotiations.

—MARTIN BREIT

Binging with a Bountiful Book

by Jonathan Hopson

This book contains Tony Ring's scripts of the post-prandial performances that have delighted those browsers and sluicers fortunate enough to attend the Society's biennial formal dinners. Pleasing a well-oiled crowd of aficionados with favourite readings and songs should be simple enough, but here is revealed a greater ambition – to create an elaborate series of themed entertainments drawing on the full range of Wodehouse's genius displayed in his fiction, essays, letters, and verse, with particular attention paid to his achievement as a lyricist. A highlight for me is the 2004 *This Is Your Life* interview (conducted by Stephen Fry and the late Anton Rodgers), which is as informative as it is amusing.

As Lucy Tregear observes in her foreword, this is an “invaluable historical document” that records the many contributions by readers, musicians, and toast-makers, not forgetting the sponsors (ever generous with the necessary oof to make a party swing). The Society has called upon the talents of various distinguished authors, broadcasters, actors, and singers, as well as its royal patron HRH The Duke of Kent, whose august presence subdues any bread-throwing tendencies, especially when playing the role of a masterful Jeeves.

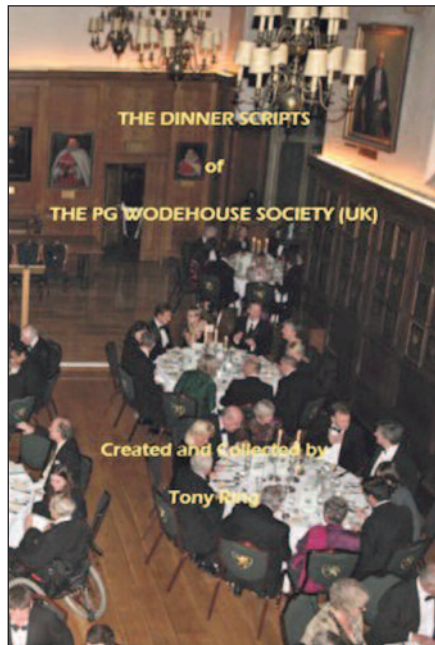
Excellent trenchermen in the class of Lord Emsworth will take pleasure in the reproduction of the menus. In these troubled times, reveries of such

Anatolian feasts can provide the same solace that the dyspeptic J. Preston Peters took from his much-thumbed cookbook in *Something Fresh*. But the pleasure may sometimes be bittersweet, for how I regret missing the inaugural dinner's *Poulet d'amour au Ukridge*, preceded by *Saumon fumé et oeufs de caille Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe*. (What became of the prawns? I fear we will never know.)

This book celebrates the legacy of a writer whose *oeuvre* stimulates *bonhomie*, *espièglerie*, and appreciation of the *douceurs de vivre* among his readers. It also serves as a tribute to the organisational skills, creative flair, and sheer hard work of dedicated enthusiasts that enable a society such as ours to flourish, notably Tony Ring (our very own Flo Ziegfeld). In the

words of the Society's Grace (helpfully reprinted here), “Euge bone serve et fidelis – Well done, thou good and faithful servant”.

In short, *The Dinner Scripts of the PG Wodehouse Society (UK)* is the perfect appetiser for the next binge to stagger humanity.



Ecclesiastical Movements

Thanks to MURRAY HEDGCOCK for continuing to spot candidates for the After The Great Sermon Handicap series, all of which must surely please Plum. Among Appointments in the Clergy, *The Daily Telegraph* of December 13, 2016, recorded:

The Rev. Trevor Lewis, assistant curate, Osmotherly with East Harlsey and Ingleby Arncliffe and Cowesby and Felixkirk with Boltby, Kirby Knowle, Leake with Over and Nether Silton and Kepwick (Diocese of York) to be associate priest Hurstbourne Tarrant and Vernham Dean (Diocese of Winchester).

Murray writes: From eleven cures to just two: the Rev. Trev must feel he has gone early to Heaven.

On January 13, 2017, the *DT* offered us this delightful mouthful:

The Rev. Rosemary Ives Stewart Rycraft, assistance curate of Mildenhall (known as parish priest), Beck Row with Kenny Hill, Eriswell, Icklingham All Saints with St. James and Tuddenham with Cavenham, Herringswell and Red Lodge (Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich), to be priest-in-charge and team vicar-designate of Dalham, Gazeley, Higham Green, Kentford and Moulton (same diocese).

And from the *Telegraph's* Clergy News of February 2:

The Rev. Alveen Fern Thoresen, associate priest Boxwell, Leighterton, Didmarton, Oldbury-on-the-Hill, Sopworth, Badminton with Little Badminton, Acton Turville, Hawkesbury, Westonbirt and Lasborough (Diocese of Gloucester) has retired.

Exhausted, presumably.

Mr. Wodehouse Goes to Washington

*The 19th International TWS Convention
October 19–22, 2017, Washington, D.C.*

Now is the time for all chaps to come to the party! You – yes, you – are cordially invited to register, attend, and enjoy a bash to stagger humanity. The Wodehouse Society (US and outliers) is looking forward to hosting you in Washington, D.C., in October, where Wodehouseans of all stripes (do we really have stripes?) will foregather, browse, sluice, listen to edifying and amusing discourses, maybe learn the Charleston, and generally bask in the glow of each other's companionship.

The talented duo of Maria Jette & Dan Chouinard will entertain us with an encore performance of songs of the Master. There will be guaranteed riveting talks by riveting speakers plumbing (so to speak) all matters Plum. Pulitzer Prize winner Michael Dirda (he also knows a thing or two about Conan Doyle) will give our keynote speech. Tony Award winner Ken Ludwig is no doubt already slaving away on an improving skit designed to uplift and spread sweetness and light.

In case you have never heard of it, Washington, D.C., is the capital of a former British colony located somewhere to the west of London. Thanks in no small part to a generous bequest by English chemist James Smithson, Washington boasts many world-

class museums and art galleries, most of which are free of charge even to non-tax-paying foreigners. It is also a quite beautiful city, with much bold architecture, many monuments, and – smack dab in the middle – the 1,754 acre Rock Creek Park. Our convention hotel is centrally situated within walking distance of many touristic destinations, and is just a few feet from a Metro stop.

It is not too late to register for the convention and the hotel. The registration form for the convention is available on our website: www.wodehouse.org.

Please note that hotel registration is separate from convention registration. To reserve a room at the Hamilton Crowne Plaza, book online at their website: <http://hamiltonhoteldc.com>, or call the hotel at (00)1-877-

270-1393. Be sure to ask for a room in the block for The Wodehouse Society. (*NB*: the cutoff date for our room block is September 19 and rooms are subject to availability. Once they're gone, they're gone.)

This convention is hosted by the Capital! Capital! chapter of TWS, led by major-domo Scott Daniels. He will endeavour to give satisfaction.

–BOB RAINS



A Sonnet in Appreciation of P & G Wodehouse

'Tis not for naught Plum's dubbed the master scribe,
As remedy for gloom he can't be beat,
His subjects are the leisured English tribe,
Named Bingo, Bertie, Gussie and Catsmeat,
Their revels they conduct while at the Drones,
Where bread-roll missiles nightly fill the air,
A world unstained by death or mobile phones,
Where lovers' tiffs and scrapes are the worst you'll bear,
Where foolish, harmless, innocent young men,
Invite us to enjoy their sunlit bliss,
All problems yield to Jeeves' advice and then,
Each man's united with his ideal miss,
Inverted snobs who spurn the pleasures here,
Achieve but this: to rob themselves of cheer.

–Paul Slade

“Wet, isn't it, what?” I said.

“I had already observed it,” said the Right Hon. in one of those nasty, bitter voices. “I thank you, however, for drawing the matter to my attention.”

Chit-chat about the weather hadn't gone with much of a bang, I perceived. I had a shot at Bird Life in the Home Counties.

“Have you ever noticed,” I said, “how a swan's eyebrows sort of meet in the middle?”

“I have had every opportunity of observing all that there is to observe about swans.”

“Gives them a sort of peevish look, what?”

“The look to which you allude has not escaped me.”

(From 'Jeeves and the Impending Doom', 1926)

The Wooster Source

by Graeme Davidson

This is the real Tabasco,
It's the word from Bertie Wooster,
Plum's sublime creation, who,
unlike Psmith, is not monocled,
Yes, Wooster, whose exploits two
publishers have oft chronicled,
or certainly they used to,
that is to say both Barrie & Jenkins
and Simon & Schuster



"If you will pardon my saying so, sir, Mr. Biffen has surely only himself to thank if he has entered upon matrimonial obligations which do not please him."

"You're talking absolute rot, Jeeves. You know as well as I do that Honoria Glossop is an Act of God. You might just as well blame a fellow for getting run over by a truck."

'The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy', *Carry On, Jeeves* (1925)

Nobody is more alive than I am to the fact that young Bingo Little is in many respects a sound old egg; but I must say there are things about him that could be improved. The man's too expansive altogether. When it comes to letting the world in on the secrets of his heart, he has about as much shrinking reticence as a steam calliope.

'The Metropolitan Touch', *The Inimitable Jeeves* (1923)

When tottering to my room and switching on the light, I observed the foul features of young Bingo all over the pillow. The blighter had appeared from nowhere and was in my bed, sleeping like an infant with a sort of happy dreamy smile on his map.

A bit thick, I mean to say! We Woosters are all for the good old mediaeval hosp. and all that, but when it comes to finding chappies collaring your bed, the thing becomes a trifle too mouldy. I hove a shoe, and Bingo sat up, gurgling.

"'S matter?' 's matter?" said young Bingo.

"What the deuce are you doing in my bed?" I said.

"Oh, hallo, Bertie! So there you are!"

"Yes, here I am. What are you doing in my bed?"

"I came up to town for the night on business."

"Yes, but what are you doing in my bed?"

"Dash it all, Bertie," said young Bingo, querulously, "don't keep harping on your beastly bed. There's another made up in the spare room. I saw Jeeves make it with my own eyes. I believe he meant it for me, but I knew what a perfect host you were, so I just turned in here. I say, Bertie, old man," said Bingo, apparently fed up with the discussion about sleeping-quarters, "I see daylight."

"Well, it's getting on for three in the morning."

"I was speaking figuratively, you ass."

'The Metropolitan Touch', *The Inimitable Jeeves* (1923)

Wodehouse Quiz 23

Locations, Locations, Locations

by David Buckle

1. Based on Dulwich, which South East London suburb is the setting for much of *Sam the Sudden* and *Ice in the Bedroom*? It is also where Sebastian Beach's niece Maudie lives.
2. In which county is Ickenham Hall, the seat of Uncle Fred, Frederick Twistleton, Lord Ickenham?
3. Heath House, also called The Cedars in later stories, is a substantial property near Wimbledon Common. Who lives there?
4. In *A Gentleman of Leisure*, what is the name of the Shropshire pile that is home to Sir Thomas Blunt?
5. In *Right Ho*, Jeeves, Gussie Fink-Nottle, having had too many special orange juices, presented the prizes at a grammar school in which town?
6. G. Ovens is the landlord of which Wodehouse hostelry, a drinking hole in many a story?
7. A forerunner of the Drones Club, which gentleman's club was frequented by Galahad Threepwood, Uncle Fred Twistleton, Plug Basham, and Puffy Bengier, amongst others in the 1890s?
8. What is the name of the home of Dame Daphne Winkworth, friend of Bertie Wooster's Aunt Agatha, which features in *The Mating Season* and where Jeeves's uncle Charlie is the butler?
9. What is the location of the golf and country club where the Oldest Member can be found at the nineteenth hole?
10. Which father and daughter live at Totleigh Towers?

(Answers on page 29)

I mean to say, there was Old Uncle George, for instance. The medicine-man, having given him the once-over, had ordered him to abstain from all alcoholic liquids, and in addition to tool down the hill to the Royal Pump-Room each morning at eight-thirty and imbibe twelve ounces of warm crescent saline and magnesia. It doesn't sound much, put that way, but I gather from contemporary accounts that it's practically equivalent to getting outside a couple of little old last year's eggs beaten up in sea-water. And the thought of Uncle George, who had oppressed me sorely in my childhood, sucking down that stuff and having to hop out of bed at eight-fifteen to do so was extremely grateful and comforting of a morning.

'Clustering Round Young Bingo', *Carry On, Jeeves* (1925)

The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

Summer Moonshine

The serialisation dates of Wodehouse's novels in the UK and the US were often pivotal in determining not only the first edition dates in each country but also the precedence between the UK and the US first editions. *Summer Moonshine* provides an instructive example of this.

The story was serialised in the US in the weekly magazine *The Saturday Evening Post* in eight instalments. The first instalment appeared in the issue for 24 July 1937 (McIlvaine, D59.101), which advertised the start of the serial on the front cover of the magazine, under an illustration unrelated to the serial. The serial then appeared weekly thereafter, with the eighth instalment appearing in the issue for 11 September 1937 (D59.108).

In the UK, the story was serialised in the monthly magazine *Pearson's*, but at a later date than in the US. The first instalment appeared in the September 1937 issue (D118.27), the month in which the US serialisation concluded. As in the US, Wodehouse's appearance in the magazine was advertised on its front cover, but the accompanying illustration was one of Wodehouse himself. Interestingly, the wording on the front cover gave neither the name of the story nor the fact that it was a serial. The serial then appeared monthly thereafter, with the eighth instalment appearing in the issue for April 1938 (D118.33). In case any lynx-eyed reader is wondering why the *McIlvaine* numbering seems to imply only seven issues (D118.27–33), the answer is that *McIlvaine* omitted the second instalment, meaning that it was numbered as D118.27a when it was recorded in the *McIlvaine Addendum*.

Knowledge of the serialisation dates makes it clear why the US and UK first editions were published when they were. The US first edition (A59a) was published by Doubleday, Doran and Company, on 8 October 1937, less than a month after the serialisation in *The Saturday Evening Post* had concluded. In the UK, the serialisation was still proceeding in more

leisurely monthly instalments, and the Herbert Jenkins UK first edition (A59b) was not published until 11 February 1938. In fact, it is surprising that UK publication occurred as early as February, given that the magazine serialisation did not conclude until the April 1938 issue (which was presumably published sometime in March 1938). One might have expected Herbert Jenkins to have delayed the book publication so as not to steal *Pearson's* thunder.

McIlvaine quotes from an April 1939 letter from Derek Grimsdick, the managing director of Herbert Jenkins, dealing with this subject: "Both in this country and the United States the date of publication in book form is very largely governed by the serial arrangements. For a

number of reasons it is apparently not always possible to arrange for simultaneous serialisation in the two countries and if the English serial has to be held over for a month or so, we are forced temporarily to withhold publication in volume form.

As far as we are concerned *Summer Moonshine* [published in the UK in 1938] was ready early in the previous autumn [1937]; then we had to wait."

The UK first edition was published in red boards with black lettering. Unrecorded by *McIlvaine*, variant first editions exist in grey boards with red lettering, and in orange boards with black lettering. *McIlvaine's* description of the first edition dust wrapper contains an error: it states that the back flap of the wrapper has an advertisement for

six Bindle books, but in fact only five Bindle books are listed.



The Word Around the Clubs

Tim Pigott-Smith, 1946–2017

The Society was saddened to learn of the death of actor Tim Pigott-Smith on April 7 this year. The accomplished thespian will be known to Wodehouseans for his portrayal of P G Wodehouse in the 2013 television film *Wodehouse in Exile*. Not as well known is the fact that he played Beach in the Martin Jarvis’s adaptation of *Summer Lightning* for BBC Radio, originally broadcast in 2010. Our condolences to his family.

Lost Connection

A big bravo to Society member MARK SMITH and his teammates – known collectively as The Psmiths – for their efforts on the BBC Two game show *Only Connect*, hosted by Victoria Coren Mitchell. Having successfully won two rounds, The Psmiths lost in a quarter-final broadcast on March 3, but under the rules they were granted another shot at the title. Alas, it was not to be: on March 23 they lost to the Verbivores, who went on to become champions for the season. All the same, The Psmiths had done admirably well. Mark writes: “I have enjoyed seeing our exploits getting a mention in the pages of *Wooster Sauce*, and am satisfied with being a quarter-finalist – anything more than that seems like showing off.”

Stead, Journalist

Society member CHRISTOPHER BELLEW maintains a blog with his reflections on a variety of topics, including architecture, art, family, travel, and so on. Occasionally he mentions P G Wodehouse, and recently he managed an interesting link to our hero in a post about the Irish journalist W T Stead (1849–1912), to whom there is a memorial on the Embankment in London. Christopher did a bit of research and discovered that Stead had been a crusading journalist in his time – perhaps providing a model for PGW’s *Psmith Journalist*? We shall never know. Christopher’s blog can be read here: bit.ly/2pKkQ8r

Horrors!

Recently, while searching online for an audiobook version of *Indiscretions of Archie*, MARIA JETTE came across a recording narrated by Frederick Davidson, being offered by Audiobooksnow. The listing seems innocuous enough until one sees to which genre the publisher has assigned the work: ‘Fiction – Horror’! Maria, who says she is “definitely not a fan of Davidson’s approach”, thinks they may be going a bit too far with such a designation. Well, perhaps, yes . . .

Poet’s Corner

The Road to Success

[The Prophet Dowie attributes his success in life to the fact that he had a beard at the age of seventeen. “People”, he said, “used to think me about twenty-five, and I soon got the salary of a man of twenty-five, when I was seventeen.”]

If you’re anxious to outdistance
In the struggle for existence

Every rival on the scene.

You must imitate your Dowie,
And try hard to find out how he

Grew a beard at seventeen.

If prosperity you’d snatch, oh,
Spend your hard-earned wealth on Tatcho,

It’s the only thing to do;

And, remember, never harbour

Thoughts of calling in a barber,

Though your chin be rough and blue.

And everyone will say,

As you walk your prosperous way,

“If this young man can grow a beard

(Which has never occurred to me),

Why, what a most particularly gifted sort of youth

This sort of youth must be.”

When your cheek, once smooth and chubby,

Becomes noticeably scrubby,

And your beard grows long and thick;

Then employers, who’d secure you,

Offer princely sums to lure you;

And you simply take your pick.

Though your friends begin to drop you,

Do not let such trifles stop you,

Never heed their foolish whims:

Merchants offer countless dollars

For a clerk in Eton collars

Who resembles George R. Sims.

For everyone will say,

As you walk your pard-like way,

“If this young man, who’s still in his teens,

Has beard enough for three,

Why, what a most phenomenally brainy sort of youth

This brainy sort of youth must be.”

From *Vanity Fair* (UK), January 5, 1905

Answers to Wodehouse Quiz (Page 27)

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Valley Fields | 6. The Emsworth Arms |
| 2. Hampshire | 7. The Pelican Club |
| 3. Julia Ukridge | 8. Deverill Hall |
| 4. Dreever Castle | 9. Marvis Bay |
| 5. Market Snodsbury | 10. Sir Watkyn & Madeline Bassett |



Victoria Coren M. (@VictoriaCoren)

28/12/2016, 10:16

I heartily recommend jars of Stilton. Not as heartily as I recommend PG Wodehouse, you know, but a bit. (Having said that, TOGETHER...) 🌲🌲🌲

Spotted on Twitter last December (thanks to Caroline & Charles Franklyn)

Andrews wrote: "There is a P.G. Wodehouse story called 'Something Squishy' in which a butler returns a mislaid snake to its rightful owner with the words, 'Your serpent, sir'. We need that butler – restoring order and proprietorship – in the age of multi-sphere movie delirium featuring reptiles." Someone knows their Mr Mulliner!

New Indian Express, March 26

J S Raghavan wrote about 'Commuting to work with a Wodehouse' and recorded that "The first book I bought from my first salary was . . . *Carry On, Jeeves* . . . while commuting for work. . . . I [then] read, one by one, the masterpieces of 'Plum', the comedic guru. The regulars . . . looked at me apprehensively as I burst into laughter . . . tickled in the ribs by the feather of a Wodehouse gem."

Austin Daily Herald, March 26

In an interview, Faith Sullivan, author of *Good Night, Mr. Wodehouse*, commented that when she picked up her first Wodehouse novel, "I went through it like a bowl of salted peanuts".

The Daily Telegraph, March 28

(from June Arnold and Alan Hall)

Cryptic Crossword 13d: "Head for Bertie's on arrival then southern seat of Lord Emsworth (9)." Answer: Blandings.

The Guardian, April 1 (from Terry Taylor)

Bertie Wooster got a nod from John Mullan as an example of a character who never ages, in his piece noting that Adrian Mole would now be 50 years old.

Quote . . . Unquote, April 2017

In his periodic newsletter, Society patron Nigel Rees looked at recent media references to Donald Trump that summoned up Bertie Wooster's famous denunciation of Roderick Spode in *The Code of the Woosters*. Among others, he quoted Matthew D'Ancona, who, in an article in *The New York Times* (May 2016), had this to say about that wonderful scene: "One of the reasons that Bertie's outburst is so enduringly funny is that he is normally such an equable gent. His exasperation is the voice of Englishness recoiling from the sheer vulgarity of the would-be autocrat."

JSTOR Daily, April 1

Matthew Wills posed the question whether PGW should be considered an American humorist as well as a master of British farce. In 'P. G. Wodehouse: Great American Humorist?' he posited that "it was precisely his farcical take on England that gave him such a fanatical readership in the U.S., a country that

continues to eat up his felicitously written, masterfully-plotted, humorous tales." Quoting Edward L. Gannigan, Wills wrote: "Quite possibly, Galligan concludes, 'Wodehouse saved the world from something monstrous when he devoted his own high intelligence to the making of "frothy" farces'."

Patheos (blog), April 8

Anne Kennedy attempted to answer the question, "If I've never read any PG Wodehouse, where should I start?" In addressing this 'Important Matter', she listed several diagnostic questions, including, "Do you like pigs, very fat pigs? . . . Do you have too many aunts . . . that bay like mastodons across the primeval swamp? Do you want to read lines so carefully crafted, so charming . . . so surprising in simile that you have to stop and read them aloud again and again? If the answer to all of those questions was No, well, then, I don't know what to do about you. May God have mercy on your soul."

The Guardian, April 20 (from Robert Bruce)

In an article about rugby, of all sports, Paul Rees wrote that the director of rugby of the Harlequins, who had just been defeated, "wore the air of a man who, in the words of P G Wodehouse, had searched for the leak in life's gas-pipe with a lighted candle".

BBC Radio 4, April 21 (from Ian Nilo-Walton)

In the radio play 'Far Side of the Moore', Patrick Moore was described as being "P G Wodehouse in space".

The Post Star, April 24

Will Doolittle wrote of reading *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* and described PGW as writing "fabulous, intricate fantasies . . . the books are a delight. . . . You read Wodehouse for one reason and that is to laugh. But is there a better reason to read a book?"

Puzzler Magazine, April 2017 (from Gwen Williams)

"Memories are like mulligatawny soup in a cheap restaurant. It is best not to stir them." P G Wodehouse

The Oldie, May 2017 (from Mike Swaddling)

An article about a mischievous Oxford don, Dr Angus McIntyre, who wrote a spoof biography of Sir Humphrey Appleby (of *Yes, Minister* fame) on the Magdalen College Register bemoaned the fact that Dr M's untimely death robbed him of his plan to include another fictional undergraduate on the register – one Bertram Wooster.

Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal Sentinel, May 6

Gave a resounding thumbs-down to a production of *By Jeeves* at Milwaukee's Windmill Theatre.

Future Events for Your Diary

July 12, 2017 Annual Pub Quiz at the Savoy Tup

For the third year running, the centrepiece of our July meeting will be a Fiendish Quiz, fiendishly created by Entertainments Impresario Paul Kent. Some of his questions have been known to start riots – it could be a controversial evening, so well worth attending! We gather at the Savoy Tup from 6 pm; see page 3 for more.

October ?, 2017 Society AGM

Due to a concatenation of circumstances, the date and venue of our October meeting, which will feature the ever-popular AGM, are not yet known. If the location is the Savoy Tup, then the date is likely to be Tuesday, October 3 (not our usual Wednesday night). When plans become firm, they will be posted on our website – and in the September *Wooster Sauce*, of course.

September 10, 2017

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

The Wodehouse Society will be holding its 19th biennial convention, 'Mr. Wodehouse Goes to Washington', in, appropriately enough, Washington, D.C., at the Hamilton Crowne Plaza. See also page 26.

October 29, 2017 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Take a walk with Richard Burnip and enjoy so much about and by Wodehouse along the way! See September 10 for details on when and where.

"For the last time, Bertie, will you lend me a couple of sheets and help knot them?"

"No."

"Then I shall just have to go off and hide somewhere till dawn, when the milk train leaves. Good-bye, Bertie. You have disappointed me."

"You have disappointed *me*. I thought you had guts."

"I have, and I don't want Roderick Spode fooling about with them."

He gave another of those dying-newt looks, and opened the door cautiously. A glance up and down the passage apparently having satisfied him that it was, for the moment, Spodeless, he slipped out and was gone. And I returned to my book. It was the only thing I could think of that would keep me from sitting torturing myself with agonising broodings.

Presently I was aware that Jeeves was with me. I hadn't heard him come in, but you often don't with Jeeves. He just streams silently from spot A to spot B, like some gas.

(From *The Code of the Woosters*, 1938)

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