

WOOSTER SAUCE

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

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Fearful No More

*Our newest Patron, Jonathan Coe,
writes of a mid-life crisis – resolved*

When I was a child, P G Wodehouse used to frighten me. There was a BBC television series in the 1970s called *Wodehouse Playhouse*, the first two series of which were introduced by the great man himself, sitting at his typewriter, as I recall. These introductions, delivered by a man who seemed impossibly elderly to me (PGW would have been in his early 90s), his bald pate festooned with liver spots, used to scare me to death and put me in no mood for the high jinks to follow. I decided that Wodehouse wasn't for me.

Spurred on by my grandfather – a huge Wodehouse fan – I read a few of the Blandings Castle books as a teenager, but under the influence of favourite writers such as Joseph Heller, Flann O'Brien, and David Nobbs, I developed the attitude that comic novels should have an edge to them, a darkness, some underlying solemnity of purpose which I didn't find in Wodehouse's utopian world.

So by and large I continued to stay away from him, until in 2001 I was lucky enough to receive the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for my own novel *The Rotters' Club*. The prize, as readers of *Wooster Sauce* will surely know, is presented at

the Hay Festival and involves the winner being photographed alongside a magnificent pig, but in my case there was a nicely Wodehousean comic twist: 2001 was the year of the foot-and-mouth outbreak and there was a ban on transportation of livestock. So no pig for me. But I did receive a set of the beautiful new Everyman edition of Wodehouse (then still a work-in-progress, so my

set was sadly incomplete), and that gave me the reason I had been looking for to plunge myself headlong into his world. In the process I discovered Ronald Eustace Psmith, who I think remains my favourite Wodehouse character, and *Leave It to Psmith* my favourite novel overall.

Reading these books in a great rush, so late in life, not only was an almost too intensely pleasurable experience, but also enriched and deepened my understanding of the tradition of the

English comic novel, something of which I am proud to be a tiny part.

It's a great honour to become a Patron of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK). In this issue of *Wooster Sauce* (page 14, to be exact), I eulogise another fine English comic writer – very much in Wodehouse's debt – whose genius will, I'm sure, be known to and appreciated by many of its readers.



Photo by Matilda Coe

Society News

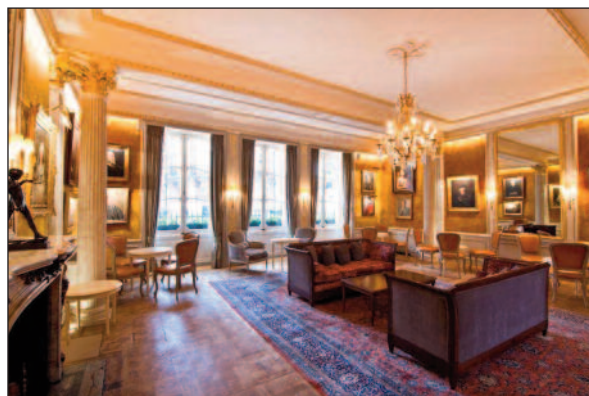
Urgent and Exciting Diary News! New Meeting Venue and Date!

Please note that the Society meeting and AGM scheduled for the first week of October 2017 has been brought forward to **Monday, September 25**, from 6 p.m. Not only that, our regular venue has now changed: until further notice, we will be meeting in the **Drawing Room** at the **Savile Club, 69 Brook Street, Mayfair, London W1K 4ER**.

Situated in the heart of the West End and a five-minute stroll from Oxford Street, the Savile Club is located in an 18th-century building with a rich history.

The nearest tube station is Bond Street on the Central, Jubilee, and (from next year) Elizabeth lines. *Please note there is a modest dress code:* no jeans or trainers, please, and gentlemen are required to wear a jacket. Apart from that, it's business as usual, with entertainment and a cash bar serving a full range of wines, beers, and spirits.

The meeting on the 25th September will be a 'Get To Know You' evening – and, despite the comparatively short notice, we hope to celebrate with as many members, both new and familiar, as possible. If you haven't attended a meeting in a while, or were nostalgic for our former home at the Arts Club in Dover Street, please come along – you will be most welcome and, we hope, pleasantly surprised. Our events impresario, Paul Kent, will give a short talk on the



history of our new home, which will be followed by a brief Eggy, Beany, and Crumpety entertainment celebrating Wodehouse's clubland heroes, the Drones. But the main focus will be conviviality and a celebration of this exciting relaunch for our social events.

Our new premises, are, quite simply, magnificent and utterly appropriate to host our Society. One of the less orthodox clubs, the Savile has always encouraged members from a broad range of backgrounds. Established in 1868, it moved to its current location in

1927, where it has thrived ever since. Past members include Robert Louis Stevenson, Thomas Hardy, H. G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling, Compton Mackenzie, Max Beerbohm, Evelyn Waugh, and W. B. Yeats. John le Carré is a regular too – and those are just the writers!

The Society's introduction to this establishment was proposed by our own Patrick

Kidd, political sketch writer and diarist for *The Times*, and it's thanks to his initiative and some inspired deal-making by our Chairman, Hilary Bruce, that a mutually advantageous arrangement was negotiated. The Drawing Room itself is a particularly pleasing space, as the photo above shows. If you'd care to see other pictures of the club, visit www.savileclub.co.uk and have a browse. We look forward to seeing you at the Savile on the 25th!

Renewals and Database News

As some of you will have spotted, this is the time of year when members who haven't renewed receive their final reminders. Those who have received a bright yellow reminder with this issue know that if they don't renew now, then, sadly, this *Wooster Sauce* will be their last.

Fortunately, membership renewal is quick and simple, with a host of different ways to do it. Just follow the instructions on the form, and your supply of *Wooster Sauces* will continue unhampered for the next year.

Those who haven't received a yellow reminder probably pay by standing order or direct debit – our favourite method – and so have automatically renewed. Thank you. But a small sector of our membership has become, albeit unwittingly, rather pioneering. This is because we have already reminded all our PayPal-using members by email, ahead of this issue.

In other news, we have been trying, for some considerable time, to clean up our database – now more than 20 years old and running very crankily on a fairly obscure system. It is not exaggerating to say it's been

traumatic. We've had a number of membership/database managers over the years, each using a different computer, each making minor tweaks to keep the rickety old system going a bit longer whilst every month importing new member data, which has been a rather fraught process.

But Sue and Bryan Williams have put in the long hours to get the database closer to shipshape than it has been for some time, and for which we thank them profoundly. We're not quite there yet, but we are in a position where we can start to communicate with members by email, in some bulk. And, simply because PayPal users tend to have email addresses, they have become pioneers of this dazzling technological advance. We're hoping that this more direct way of contacting and reminding people will be even more effective than the rather vibrant reminder notices.

So please make it worth our while, chaps, by renewing at speed – and providing us with up-to-date email addresses so that, in future, you can avoid receiving the yellow screamer herein!

– HILARY BRUCE

A Blaze of Colour

To celebrate the Society's 20th Anniversary, we printed the March and June issues of *Wooster Sauce* in glorious technicolour. The editorial team liked it a lot and so, it seemed, did our members, from whom we received an enthusiastic response. Always eager to please, we wondered whether we might stay in colour for the future. Technological changes mean that nowadays colour printing is not that much more expensive than 'black and white with spot colour on the banner', as we editorial types like to style these things, so we showed the quotes to the Treasurer, and sat up and begged. Rather wonderfully, he didn't just say yes, he said he thought it was a jolly good idea.

And so, dear readers, we plunge into our future in a blaze of colour that would bring tears of joy into the eyes of a pyjama-clad Bertie. We haven't dared ask Jeeves.

Calling All Would-be Reporters

Wooster Sauce is one of the most successful of all literary society magazines. And we have a good range of people who enjoy writing and contributing to it in all their different ways. But we are always on the lookout for more people to help spread the load. This is your chance to add writing about the Wodehouse world to your existing reading about Wodehouse achievements. As he said, all you have to do is apply the seat of the trousers to the seat of the chair.

Are you planning to attend a Society meeting or the biennial formal dinner? Will you be attending a play, watching a television programme, or listening to a radio broadcast that offers something special for Wodehouse fans? Is there a unique event in your area that touches on Wodehouse, such as the one Robert Bruce reports on at page 8? If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', and you would be willing to write about it for the website or for *Wooster Sauce*, please let us know! It's not just a matter of volunteering for something ahead of time; we'd

like to know if you're willing to be contacted to see if you're available to report on an event or write a review.

Society Tie News

Gentleman members may be wondering whether they will ever see the new Society tie that some have been demanding for quite a while now.

A fair question. It has been a while, to be sure.

We've found it's actually quite difficult to come up with a design that sums up the very essence of our Society, and which hasn't already been bagged by one of the overseas PGW societies. Opinions were divided, ideas were kicked around, some kicked into touch, other thoughts were floated, and quotes were obtained.

And then we sat back and looked at what we'd come up with, and decided that, frankly, it was a complete dog's breakfast; it was unlikely that any member, however well-disposed, would ever actually wear it. You might just possibly buy one, but it could never, truly, be worn with pride. Our judgement was fully justified when we canvassed opinion at the last Society meeting. Club ties are rarely things of beauty (think of the MCC tie, expensively crafted in hues which no shirt on earth could ever complement), but our effort really was a bit of a stinker.

And so we have gone back to the drawing board. Something that may well be a viable design did emerge from the necessarily brief poll at the Savoy Tup. There is another idea floating in the committee's mind, too, so, soon, something will emerge that we very much hope might be considered reasonably wearable.

Roll on, that day!

– HILARY BRUCE

A Great Life on Radio 4

What a pleasure it was to tune into the BBC Radio 4 programme *Great Lives* on the 8th August (and subsequently on the 11th) and hear Society Patron Stephen Fry hold forth on the greatness of P. G. Wodehouse. Stephen was joined by Sophie Ratcliffe, editor of *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*, who served as the programme's expert witness. In conversation with host Matthew Parris, the two guests provided familiar and fascinating background on Wodehouse's family, education, career, letters, devotion to the craft of writing, and reputation among other writers. Much was covered in the half-hour discussion, including, of course, the episode of the Berlin broadcasts, which was neatly handled. Asked to summarise what made Wodehouse great, Stephen said: "He means, I suppose, above all, benevolence – a sunniness of spirit, a refusal, which some might regard as absurd, to look at the dark side of life, but to bring out the sunniness of everything – the good nature. And it's an eternal pleasure to read



him because he just cheers you up like no one else." The programme can be heard on the BBC's iPlayer at: <http://bbc.in/2vifEME>.

Society Confounds the Stuffed Eel Skin with Progressive Quiz Night

by Jen Scheppers

The July 2017 meeting of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) will, I suspect, be long remembered by an intimate circle of attendees. In years to come, we shall hail each other with hearty “What Ho’s” and say:

“Do you remember that bit when the gang of fiends in human shape burst into the room and tried to take it by force?”

“Rather! Remember how marvellously the Chair stared them down, without even a lorgnette?”

“And do you remember when a certain lady member claimed it was the first time she’d been evicted from a pub, and how everyone politely shuffled their feet and pretended to believe her.?”

“I shall tell my grandchildren about it.”

But I’m getting ahead of myself.

I attended my first meeting of the Wodehouse social on 12 July 2017, along with several other newcomers and international guests. We, along with a cast of regulars, were treated to the Society’s first progressive quiz night.

It began along traditional lines at the Savoy Tup. Chairman Hilary Bruce opened the meeting with parish notes that included information on *Wooster Sauce* now being produced in colour, encouragement to renew our membership of the Society now, an update on the status of the Society’s new tie, and the news that the Society now has over 500 followers on Twitter. I was

introduced as the new Chair of the International Wodehouse Association, and I spoke briefly about what the IWA has been and will be up to in its mission to use social media as a means of reaching out to younger people. (See also pages 3 and 12.)

Then Entertainment Impresario Paul Kent took over and commenced the quiz, which began innocently enough. My team had confidently scribbled a Pshrimp and Ptarmigan alongside Question 1, and the feast of reason and flow of soul were in full swing. But . . .

It has been well said that in this world there is always something. A moment before, Lady Wetherby had been feeling completely contented, without a care on her horizon. It was foolish of her to have expected such a state of things to last, for what is life but a series of sharp corners, round each of which Fate lies in wait for us with a stuffed eel-skin?

(Uneasy Money)

The Savoy Tup is a modern pub and, like other modern pubs, its proprietors no doubt feel the pressure to be innovative. The Tup’s latest innovation, if the events of 12 July are any indication, is to tickle things up with a bit of free entertainment.

The quiz was just reaching a critical stage, involving pale parabolas and fretful porpentines. The air was tense – practically a pea-souper – of members biting pencils and exchanging meaningful looks. It was into this atmosphere of intellectual fervour that a certain anonymous group arrived with the claim that they had booked the room.

To say that the Society members present were unappreciative of this departure from the original bill of entertainment would be unfair. We watched and listened with rapt attention. Personally, I was inclined to be sympathetic. Other groups are entitled to their leisure pursuits, like the rest of us. Although their art tended to stress the dramatic, with the lead character rather overplaying his part, we were a model audience displaying great suavity and tact. You can’t beat suavity!

Much like Poppy Kegley-Bassington of Kings Deverill (“one of those girls who do rhythmic dances at the drop of a hat and can be dissuaded from doing them only with a meat-axe”), the central character was disinclined to cease performing. His work had a message, and he wanted us to get it. He put the full weight of his personality into the thing, demonstrating excellent grounding in the



Just some of the gang outside the Savoy Tup
(Photo by Jen Scheppers)

Three Ps of Performance: Pitch, Projection, and Pestiferosity.

This led to some polite disagreement between the central artiste and his audience, who were only interested in his message if it contained hints as to the name of Angus McAllister's predecessor as head gardener at Blandings Castle, or whether Frankenstein had been a Harrow man.

A polite appeal was made to the proprietor of the Tup, who decided in favour of the artiste's right to self-expression, so we took our beverages and half chewed pencils, and made a dignified exit to the historic, very Wodehousian, surroundings of Savoy Street, just off The Strand. Fortunately, the sprightly membership of The P G Wodehouse Society is equally able to innovate and adapt. It was a fine evening and the answer to question number 14 (Charlotte Mulliner in 'The Unpleasantness at Bludleigh Court', if you missed it) could be appreciated just as readily in the fine outdoors.

This sort of discombobulation might have thrown a lesser society off its stride. The Florence Craye Society is well known for creating disturbances in venues across the city. Members of the Rodney Spelvin Society, a jittery lot, scatter home to their padded cells at the slightest provocation. But The P G Wodehouse Society bats on! A successful second innings was conducted around the corner at the Coal Hole.

I can't wait to do it again!

Postscript from the Chairman

I'm so grateful to Jen for putting the events of the evening in perspective. The right thing to do with self-important bullies is to laugh at them.

Nonetheless, I would like to say a couple of things about the, er, unusual occurrence which was, in truth, extremely upsetting and unpleasant.



The winning team, with prizes (l-r): Elin Murphy, Oliver Wise, Patricia O'Sullivan, and Lesley Tapson, backed by Impresario Paul Kent (Photo by Peter Read)

First, for the avoidance of doubt, the Society had a proper booking at the Tup, for the whole evening. Exactly as usual. In sharp contradistinction, the invaders did *not* have a booking for that evening or any part of it. They did have one for the following evening, however. The staff showed us the bookings diary after the event.

The invaders were very abusive to the young bar staff, who, quite understandably, could not stand up to them. There was no manager present that evening; the following day, having viewed the CCTV, he said the abusers' behaviour was absolutely unacceptable.

What the management does about the perpetrators is their affair, not ours. We won't be going back to the Tup. The incident wasn't their fault, but it did remind us rather forcefully that, for many reasons, the Tup was far from the ideal venue for our Society's meetings.

The good news is that a magnificent new venue has been found! For more, see Society News on page 2.

– HILARY BRUCE

And the Winner Is ...

Those readers who, like the Editor, have been enjoying Murray Hedgcock's continuing entries in an imaginary handicap of priests' benefices may find a recent communication from Fr John Thackray of interest: "Having read in a recent *Church Times* of a Norfolk priest with twenty parishes in her benefice, and a Yorkshire priest with seventeen, I fear Mr Hedgcock's nominees for the Great Sermon Handicap may have been outclassed. But don't tell Rupert Steggs!"

As seen in the photo, Fr Thackray has scored The Revd Heather Butcher in first place, The Revd Elizabeth Hassall in second place, and The Revd Trevor Gant in third place. All well and good, but another contribution to the series from Murray also mentions The Revd Gant in a context that is mind-boggling. See Murray's latest on page 23.

1st: Butcher 2nd: Hassall 3rd: Gant

"Church Times" 2nd June 2017

be also Acting Rural Dean of Barrow (Carlisle).

BEANE, The Revd Andrew Beane, Priest-in-Charge of Aylsham, and of Caston with Boston and Brandstons, Haveringham and Heydon, and of Oulton and Mickleham, and of the Bure Valley Team Rectory, Dean of the Bure Valley and District Team Ministry, Rural Dean of Sparham, and Acting Rural Dean of Sparham, and Hon. Canon of Norwich Cathedral, to be also Priest-in-Charge (Team Rectory Designate) of Little Barningham, Barningham with Mannington, Saxthorpe with Copursty and Wickmere with Wotterton (Norwich).

BERRY, The Revd Eleanor Berry, formerly NSM of Spodden, to be Diocesan Chaplain to the Mothers' Union (Derby).

BUTCHER, The Revd Heather Butcher, Priest-in-Charge of Litcham with Kempston, East and West Leatham, Mileham, Repton-Near-Mileham, Stanfield, Tittleshall and Godwick, of Gressenhall with Longham with Wensley and Bittering Parva, of Great and Little Fransham and Great and Little Fransham, of Rougham and Wessham in Wellingham, Rougham and Wessham, Team Rectory Designate in the proposed Lanchinck and Upper Nar Team Ministry, Bishop's Adviser for Women's Ministry, and Hon. Canon of Norwich Cathedral, now also Priest-in-Charge of Wellingham in Wellingham, Rougham and Wessham (Norwich).

CARR, The Revd John Carr, NS Assistant Curate of Holy Trinity, Jearendon, and St Barnabas and St Jude, Newcastle, to be house-fellow Assistant Curate of Cornhill with Garsdon, and of Winton (Newcastle).

COOK, The Revd Matthew Cook, formerly Vicar of St Stephen's, Preston, to be Assistant Curate (Associate Vicar) of St Andrew, Leyland (Blackburn).

CRANFIELD, The Revd Charlotte Cranfield, NS Assistant Curate of Eastwold with Raskelf, to be also Braterton with Pilmoor, Myton-on-Swale and Thormanby, of Coxwold and Huthwaite, of Crayke with Brandyby and Yearley, of Eastwold with Raskelf, of Skelton with Sipton and Newton on Ouse, of Strensall and of the Forest of Galtes (York).

DAVIES, The Revd Belinda Davies, Vicar of St George's, Purton, and Acting Diocesan Director of Ordinands, to be Diocesan Director of Ordinands (Portsmouth).

DAVIS, The Revd Judith Davis, Priest-in-Charge of Hatherage with Bunsford and Derwent, and Grinsteadford, to be Rector (Derby).

DOBBIN, The Revd Penelope Dobbin, formerly Vicar of Minehead (Bath & Wells), to be Rural Dean of Hartland (Exeter).

DOYE, The Revd Andrew Doye, formerly Rector of Wheatthorpe (St Albans), now Rector of Westbourne (Chichester).

DUNLOP, The Revd Anne Dunlop, NSM of St Thomas the Apostle, Emmanuel Church, St Andrew, and St Philip, Exeter, now Priest Vicar of **EDWARDS**, The Revd Peter Edwards, Priest-in-Charge of Bathwick, Bath, to be Rector (Bath & Wells).

ELLIOTT, The Revd Richard Elliott, NS Assistant Curate (Assistant Curate) of Sway, to be NS Assistant Curate (Assistant Priest), of St John the Baptist, Boldre, and South Baddesley, with responsibility for South Baddesley (Winchester).

EVANS, The Revd Andrew Evans, Team Rector in the Bridport Team Ministry (Salisbury), to be half-time Vicar of St Michael, of Strensall, and of St Mark's, Preston (Blackburn).

GANT, The Revd Trevor Gant, NS Assistant Curate of Skelton with Sipton and Newton on Ouse, to be also NS Assistant Curate of Aine, of Braterton with Pilmoor, Myton-on-Swale and Thormanby, of Coxwold and Huthwaite, of Crayke with Brandyby and Yearley, of Eastwold with Raskelf, of Skelton with Sipton and Newton on Ouse, of Strensall and of the Forest of Galtes (York).

GREEN, The Revd Ryan Green, formerly Rector of the Resurrection, Swenbourne, with Mount Claremount, Australia (Perth, Western Australia), now Vicar of All Saints,

Braterton with Pilmoor, Myton-on-Swale and Thormanby, of Coxwold and Huthwaite, of Crayke with Brandyby and Yearley, of Eastwold with Raskelf, of Skelton with Sipton and Newton on Ouse, and of the Forest of Galtes (York).

HASSALL, The Revd Elizabeth Hassall, Rector of Coxwold and Huthwaite, and of Crayke with Brandyby and Yearley, and Rural Dean of Eastwold, to be also Assistant Curate of Aine, of Braterton with Pilmoor, Myton-on-Swale and Thormanby, of Coxwold with Raskelf, of Skelton with Sipton and Newton on Ouse, of Strensall and of the Forest of Galtes (York).

HOCKNELL, The Revd Dr Mark Hocknell, Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral, now Principal Lecturer in Philosophy and Programme Leader of the University of Lincoln, remaining Canon of Lincoln Cathedral (York).

HONOUR, The Revd Jonathan Honour, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Guernsey, now Vicar-Dean of Guernsey (Canterbury and Winchester).

JAMES, The Revd Richard James, Vicar of Christ Church, Trent Park, Enfield, and Assistant Director of Ordinands for the Edmonton Area (London), to be Rector of Holy Trinity, Heigham (Norwich).

JONES, The Revd Richard Jones, formerly Assistant Curate of Holy Trinity with St Peter, Clapham (Southwark), now NS Assistant Curate (Associate Priest) of St Giles's, Goodrich, Marston, Welsh Ricknor, Langarston, Langrove and Welsh Newton with Llanrothal (Hereford).

LAWRENCE-MARCH, The Revd David Lawrence-March, Chaplain of Ardingly College (Chichester), to be Priest-in-Charge of St Saviour-on-the-Cliff, Shanklin, and of Lake (Poolemouth).

LUCAS, The Revd Jane Lucas, Rector of Astwaster, Hasell, Beworthy, Clawton and Tetcot with Luffincott, to be also Rural Dean of Holsworthy (Exeter).

LUCAS, The Revd Pauline Lucas, Assistant Curate of St Leonard's,

OLIVER, The Revd John Oliver, Vicar of Penastone, now Canon Warden of Easton (Derby).

PARKINSON, The Revd Robert Parkinson, Rector of Chesham and Chaplain to Chesham College, to be also Vicar of Beverley (York).

POLLARD, The Revd Robert Pollard, Rector of St Martin, Brixlington, to be also Vicar of Brixlington (York).

POPE, The Revd Dr Stephen Pope, Assistant Curate of Crayke with Brandyby and Yearley, and of Eastwold with Raskelf, of Skelton with Sipton and Newton on Ouse, of Strensall and of the Forest of Galtes (York).

ROBSON, The Revd Robert Robson, Priest-in-Charge of St Stephen and Wick (Chichester) Vicar.

TOASE, The Revd Anthony Toase, Vicar of St Stephen on the Blackpool, and Hon. Canon of Blackburn Cathedral, now Priest-in-Charge of St Stephen's, Haves Side, Nicholas's, Marton Moss, St Nicholas (Blackburn).

SMITH, The Revd Valerie Smith, NS Assistant Curate (Assistant Priest) of Highbly with Longley, Glazley and Dunsell Church, now also Vicar Parish Giving Advisor (Hereford).

SUEKARRAN, The Revd Suekarran, Assistant Curate of Strensall, to be also Assistant of Aine, of Braterton with Pilmoor, Myton-on-Swale and Thormanby, of Coxwold and Huthwaite, of Crayke with Brandyby and Yearley, of Eastwold with Raskelf, of Skelton with Sipton and Newton on Ouse, and of the Forest of Galtes (York).

TOASE, The Revd Anthony Toase, NS Assistant Curate of Eastwold with Raskelf, now also NS Assistant Curate of Aine, of Braterton with Pilmoor, Myton-on-Swale,

The Gold Bats vs the Sherlockians 2017

by Arunabha Sengupta



June 18, West Wycombe

Even as the summer day dawned in full cheer and the sun beamed in excellent humour, the little village of West Wycombe, nestling in Buckinghamshire along the A40, found its cricket ground abuzz from ungodly hours.

The heady smell of freshly cut grass, the endearingly unconvincing sound of the rusty willow desperately trying to middle the wayward leather, the frenzied sight of men – and quite a few women – getting into their whites for the all-important annual fixture . . . In short, the very essence of village cricket that makes its way into pages of literature; not surprising since it was literature’s annual day out on the cricket field.

It was the 2017 edition of the encounter between the Gold Bats and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, held as usual in the charming ground a stone’s throw from the Hellfire Caves, the Dashwood Mausoleum in view across the hilly backdrop. The atmosphere was further enlivened by a sprightly foal and his elegant mom prancing about at the far end, both with enough sense (horse and cricketing) not to gallop behind the bowler’s arm.



Visit of ‘Captain Biggar’
(Photos by Arunabha Sengupta)

In short, just about the perfect day for cricket but for two substantial glitches.

First, the ICC. With startling ineptitude, this bungling body had scheduled the Champions Trophy Final at The Oval on that very same day. So Julian Hill (Gold Bats) and Virat Kohli (India) walked out to toss almost simultaneously. Heavy-hearted spectators had to choose between these two extremely important matches.

Second, the sun, which had started out with good-natured beaming, became too caught up in the brightness of things. It spread light with a vengeance, but came up rather short on the sweetness front. The beam fast metamorphosed into a loud cackle attached to an evil grin. Soon flannels were dripping with sweat worth a year of serious work on the treadmill. Charlie Miller, the gallant lob-bowler of the Sherlockian side, could be seen getting redder and redder with every passing over.

The Gold Bats, going in first, posted a formidable 225 for 4. Two more batsmen sportingly retired after getting sizable scores. Martin Southwell, perhaps the first Gold Bat to take guard in a helmet, stroked his way to an elegant 65. The skipper himself contributed 51. G. Stokes slogged his way to the first ever 50 of his career.

And not to be forgotten was a sparkling knock by the future barrister Rachel Godschalk, full of delectable drives off the backfoot, the innings unfortunately coming to a hasty end through an ill-judged call for a single.

All the while, young Gabi Hill, the daughter of the skipper, diligently kept score. Even a constraining unfamiliarity with the names of the Sherlockians could not dampen her enthusiasm. Every ball was jotted down, even if that amounted to the opening bowler, Poxon, going down in the scorebook as ‘Moriarty’ for much of the innings.

The Gold Bats thrived before lunch, and the interval was lit up by the appearance of an almost spitting image of Captain Biggar. The Sherlockian knock got underway shortly after the break. However, by 4.30 most chances of a result had evaporated in the



A cartoon of the day's match. Illustration by *Blinders* (concept: Arunabha; artwork: Maha)

heat and the remainder had been digested with the tea-time cakes.

Yet the post-tea session had its moments. Young Hamill, who had opened the bowling for the Sherlockians, and had sent down 13 overs of brisk medium pace on the trot under that relentless sun, led the response with an unbeaten 62. A 72-year-old retired accountant, who had driven down from Shropshire, kept wickets with plenty of skill and dexterity. A 70-year-old retired judge fielded with the enthusiasm and energy of a small boy. Gabi Hill bowled a few spirited overs, mixing her generally accurate length with the occasional Spedegue.

An Oxford University boy bowled in shorts and espadrilles. The umpire, a Harold Macmillan look-alike who had driven down from Staffordshire and had refused to take off his jacket and tie in spite of the heat, looked on with a degree of disapproval that rivalled the

sentiments of Jeeves when in the proximity of an alpine hat. Rachel Godschalk bowled a hostile spell of fast stuff, crouched aggressively in the slips and sent in sharp returns from the deep; her athleticism strongly reminiscent of Honoria Glossop. Towards the end of the day, Julian Hill attacked with five slips, a gully, and a short leg. Another few overs, and a fully-fledged umbrella field could have opened up.

At 6 o'clock, with the Sherlockians poised at 141 for 2, the teams agreed to call it a draw.

Upholding traditions somewhat more important than the 1895 rules according to which the fixture is played, the players immediately bounded for the local pub. There Keith Hornby, the retired judge, delighted with the proceedings of the day, bought the first round.

By the end of it, however, no one quite remembered what they had ordered. But that is precisely what P. G. Wodehouse is all about.

Blowers and Wodehouse

News that Henry Blofeld, known to his fans as 'Blowers', was retiring from *Test Match Special* this September after 45 years of joyous and eccentric service, prompted a flood of tributes to the cricketing commentating icon. The *Financial Times* summed it up by saying that "Mr Blofeld was part of a golden broadcasting era, in which the BBC's coverage established radio as the most stylish and enjoyable way to follow the most English of all sports".

The *FT* also referenced his unique and endearing style: "It has never been entirely clear, even to those around him, where the genuine twittishness ends and the impersonation [of a bumbling upper-class twit] begins. It may be relevant that he was a great fan of Bertie Wooster and used to own a valuable collection of P G Wodehouse first editions." Jonathan Agnew, tweeting for *BBC Sport*, commented that "HB brings a touch of P G Wodehouse to *Test Match Special*". Amit Roy, in *The Telegraph India*, noted that when Mr



Blofeld was on *Desert Island Discs* in 2003, his chosen favourite book was *A Pelican at Blandings*.

These and other Wodehousean references should not be at all surprising to members since Mr Blofeld is also a Patron of our Society, and he has written about

his affection for Wodehouse often. Indeed, his latest observations can be found in the September edition of *The Oldie*. In 'From Lord's to Lord Emsworth', he writes of his preference for the Blandings series: "Blandings and its messages, usually full of impostors, had a habit of sleeping in the afternoon sun – 'when Nature seems to unbutton its waistcoat and put its feet up'. Now that my time is up in the commentary box, I hope I shall

be doing a little bit of that, too. It is time to read Wodehouse again – and the Blandings books will be at the top of the pile."

We wish our esteemed Patron much happy reading in the months ahead. Well, given that it's Wodehouse, happy reading is guaranteed, isn't it?

Wodehouse at the Jaipur Literary Festival

by Robert Bruce

If you ever needed evidence of how a drop or two of Wodehouse calms even the most stormy of waters, then a visit to the Jaipur Literature Festival in August would have convinced. Fortunately, you didn't have to go any further than the British Library. The Festival had taken up temporary residence to provide what it described as 'snippets' of what the real Festival back in Jaipur did. And over what could have been a fraught Sunday lunch-time it turned its attention to 'The Wodehouse Effect: Why India Loves Jeeves'.

Two determinedly opposed Indian politicians were to square up over the discussions. Shashi Tharoor, whose most recent book is *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*, was on the platform with Swapan Dasgupta, equally furious. But first, and to calm everyone down, came Tony Ring of our own P G Wodehouse Society, of which Tharoor is also a Patron. Tony opened the batting from the English standpoint and carefully quoted the great man's own view that his books were musical comedy without the music – and then went on to stress that he had been against authority. Judges and policemen were given short shrift in the books.

Then the arguments started. Or should have done. Dasgupta argued that traditionally Wodehouse had been read to reassure a certain class of Indians that they lived

in a comfortable and insulated world. "To speak English was your greatest calling card," he said. His anecdotal researches suggested that the books were little read amongst the young in India these days. At this point the cracks in what could have been a fiery dispute appeared. Both Tharoor and Dasgupta had been to the same school, St Stephen's College in Delhi. Tharoor had founded the St Stephen's Wodehouse Society that had become, he told us, the most popular society in the college – until it was banned for a practical joke of a fine Wodehouse nature that involved women's underwear flying from the cross of the chapel. His view was that "Wodehouse is entirely compatible with anti-Imperialism". Wodehouse was, he pointed out, "not tied to any ideology whatsoever". There were "no politics, just a brilliant prose

style". He had created "a world of enchantment without any of the political". Tharoor concluded that it was perfectly possible to "detest the Raj and all its works while respecting Wodehouse".

At this point the game was up. The panelists might be daggers-drawn over politics but they all loved Wodehouse's works. The rest of the event was more or less given over to that most amiable of Wodehousean pursuits, the trading of favourite Wodehouse quotes with the audience clamouring to join in.



L-R: Mihir S. Sharma, Tony Ring, Shashi Tharoor, Swapan Dasgupta

Cosy Moments

The Private World of Georgette Heyer, by Jan Aiken Hodge (1984) (from Roger Bowen)

Roger's wife, Gwen, noticed this interesting Wodehouse allusion:

She [Heyer] was not the only author of her day to create a private world as an escape from moral chaos. P.G. Wodehouse, C.S. Lewis, C.S. Forester and Angela Thirkell did it too; Dick Francis still does, creating a small world at a time, as do writers of science fiction.

Brief Candle In the Dark: My Life in Science, by Richard Dawkins (2015) (from Charles Gould)

In this autobiographical work, Dawkins includes the parody of PGW that he wrote for a Christmas anthology in 2009. For copyright reasons he had to call Jeeves Jarvis, Wooster Woofter, and The Rev. Aubrey Upjohn Upcock. Charles (who died recently; see page 9), wrote: "It's clever and amusing, but it's not really a parody. It's more a satirical denunciation of what RD calls 'the core

myth of the New Testament' which 'shares the obnoxiousness of the Genesis myth of Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac'. A bit on the heavy side but, to me at least, very interesting, astute, and quite compelling."

Sinister Twilight: The Fall of Singapore by Noel Barber (1968) (from James Hogg)

Proving that references to Wodehouse can be found in a variety of reading material, this book includes the following:

After the British surrender to the Japanese in 1942, a former Singapore official called Christopher Dawson managed to grab some books from his shelves before being interned. The Japanese officer whose job it was to vet all reading matter for subversive content let everything through bar one volume. He knew the secret service implications of a certain word on the title page and impounded the offending work. It was *The Code of the Woosters*.

We Remember

Charles E. Gould, Jr

Wodehouseans everywhere were saddened to learn of the unexpected death of Charles E. Gould, Jr, on the 28th June, following surgery for a fractured leg. A charming and exceptionally witty man, Charles possessed a wide-ranging fund of knowledge on a variety of subjects, and was a respected authority on P. G. Wodehouse. His books included *What's in Wodehouse*, a collection of puzzles, quizzes, and facts about Wodehouse and his works; and *The Toad at Harrow: P. G. Wodehouse in Perspective*. He was also a book dealer with a specialist line in Wodehouse's works.

Born on 3 May 1944 in Kennebunkport, Maine, Charles graduated from Bowdoin College in 1967 and earned his MA in English Literature at the University of Connecticut in 1968. After teaching for two years at his alma mater of Hebron Academy, he spent 35 years teaching English literature and composition at Kent School in Kent, Connecticut. Over the years, in addition to his book-dealing business, he wrote columns for *Book Source Monthly* (a professional journal devoted to antiquarian and rare books) as well as verses for the journal *Light Quarterly*. He was a member of both the US and UK Wodehouse societies and, despite his claim of being an indifferent scholar, wrote numerous articles for *Plum Lines* and *Wooster Sauce* that were both scholarly and humorous.

Charles spoke at three conventions of the U.S. society, in 1991, 1995, and 2007. His presentation of 'P. G. Wodehouse: The Last of the Great Russians' is considered by many to be an all-time classic, filled to the brim with both wit and wisdom. To get a taste of his distinctive style – and proof that when it came to stringing words together, Charles could give Wodehouse a good run for his money – I have only to quote from his introduction:

Of course, it goes without saying that I, a teacher of English lit. and comp., don't know enough about the Great Russians to join a food line in Omsk. I wonder about the not-so-great lesser Russians, of whom I know even less. But I am here to tell you this: Wodehouse wrote one novel so sociological in its overtone, undertone and half-tones, so bad-tempered in its plot and rhetoric, that a copy of it left beneath the bough of the Cherry Orchard,



Charles Gould at the 2007 TWS convention
(Photo by Barbara Combs)

with or without the proverbial jug of wine, would put him in the mainstream of the Sorry-to-Intrude-but-Grandfather-Has-Just-Hanged-Himself-in-the-Barn-Again school of fiction. That novel is *If I Were You*, and for the next three hours it is my modest plan to discuss it.

After retiring from teaching, Charles moved back full-time to his home in Kennebunkport, where, in addition to pursuing his various interests in literature, poetry, and opera, he worked on his model railroad and restored reed organs and antique furniture. His wife, Carolyn Skidmore, predeceased him in 1986, and he is survived by his long-time partner, Jane E. Duncan, as well as a sister, Susan Hennessey, and brother-in-law, Richard Hennessey.

Opportunities to meet and converse with Charles were few, alas, but Norman and I enjoyed a long correspondence with him over many years. His cards and letters were always an occasion to rejoice as they were guaranteed to bring smiles to our faces. In recent years he had embraced email, and if a message from him came with an article for *Wooster Sauce* attached, I had all the more cause for celebration.

Knowledgeable, thoughtful, clever, and kind, Charles Gould was the epitome of a gentleman. I – along with the rest of the Wodehouse world – will miss him very much.

– ELIN WOODGER MURPHY

For more on Charles Gould as a Wodehouse expert and collector, see Nick Townend's column on page 24.

Syd Price advanced into the room, and Freddie Chalk-Marshall, himself a model of polished calm, eyed his nearest and dearest with silent reproach. The attitude of the Family Council at this terrifically critical moment in their affairs was, in his opinion, all wrong. No good. Rotten. Not a bit like it. With all the emphasis at his command he had urged upon them the vital necessity of being casual and nonchalant. And were they? Not by a jugfull. His Uncle Herbert was twitching like one afflicted by a sort of gentlemanly palsy. His Aunt Lydia looked like Lady Macbeth. And, as for his brother Tony—he still preferred to think of him as his brother—a child, and an astigmatic child at that, could have told that he had just received disturbing and distressing news.

A more jumpy, guilty-looking aggregation of blighters the Hon. Freddie had never seen in his puff, and he turned from them with a sigh to inspect Syd.

Well, Syd looked all right, thanks goodness. At least, he didn't look all right, because he had always been an ugly sort of Gawd-help-us, and he was an ugly sort of Gawd-help-us now; but what Freddie meant was that Syd looked much as usual. . . . If he had really been talking to old Ma Price, the latter, Freddie felt, must have confined her conversation to the weather, the crops, and the chances at the next General Election.

(From *If I Were You*, 1931)



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From C J P Langan

The other morning I simultaneously tucked in to my breakfast and the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, which of course prepared body and soul for the day ahead splendidly. Upon finishing my eggs and the second part of the piece on the Society's history, I closed the journal and was stuck with inspiration upon seeing the front cover next to the jam pot: was any other name for the journal discussed in those early days? Particularly, *Plum Pudding*, perhaps? I thought this might pleasantly reflect the whole gamut of PGW's work by focusing upon the man, as well as the delicious, indulgent, and wholesome dessert which he is to the dinner table of so many of our lives. Equally, however, *Wooster Sauce* is a very sound name, and conveys the unmistakable zing and concentrated flavour which characterises PGW's excellent oeuvre (and pleasantly reminds one of Jeeves's potent morning tonic). I have found revelling in a consideration of which foodstuff (or indeed drinkstuff) might best represent Plum's singular work to be quite diverting, and I thought other readers might enjoy spending such a moment, too.

From Michael Lydon

The June issue of *Wooster Sauce* mentioned two covert operations in WWII, UKRIDGE and BLANDINGS. This reminded me of the following lines from the book

Patience, Please!

In the previous issue of *Wooster Sauce*, the featured poem in Poet's Corner was PGW's 1905 verse 'The Road to Success'. Three of our eagle-eyed – or should we say eagle-eared? – readers wrote to point out what made this particular poem rather special. BOB RAINS kept it short but sweet: "Ought one not be singing 'The Road to Success' to the tune of 'If You're Anxious for to Shine' from *Patience* by Gilbert & Sullivan?" Well – yes, as our next two members explain (with one offering a welcome suggestion for future improvement). (*Note*: Both letters have been edited due to space constraints.)

From Graham Johnson

I wonder how many others reading the lilting ditty 'The Road to Success' in Poet's Corner found themselves, like me, bursting into song by the time they reached halfway? Plum was a fan of W. S. Gilbert's light verse and lyrics, and he clearly took inspiration for the verse form and rhythm of his piece from Reginald Bunthorne's engaging self-confessional solo 'If you're anxious for to shine / In the high aesthetic line' in the 1881 G&S operetta *Patience*.

I initially thought I would do mankind a bit of a favour by writing to point this out, but I now find that Tony Ring (curse him) got there before me, as he mentions it in his introduction to this example of Plum's verse in his collection *What Goes Around Comes Around*.

Deception in World War II by Charles Cruickshank: "In 1944 naval radio played an important part in a trio of strategic deception plans, UKRIDGE, BLANDINGS and MULLINER ('D' Division failed to deceive as to their literary taste)." Cruickshank writes that there is no evidence the plans worked, but the plotting seems worthy of PGW himself.

From Glyn Lewis

This is a story told to me by a local physician. There was a resident of Sidmouth by the name of Joyce Jeeves. The story is that her late father, whose name was Jack Jeeves, was butler to a family which was visited by P G Wodehouse during a stay when he was seeking a name for the butler in his stories – hence the name Jeeves in the Wooster stories. I don't know if this corresponds with any version that the Society holds regarding the choice of the name Jeeves, but I offer it in case it is of interest.

The Editor replies: This is certainly interesting, but highly doubtful and possibly the result of wishful thinking on the part of the family. Aside from the fact that there is no indication Wodehouse was in Devon around the time that he wrote 'Extricating Young Gussie', we know for certain that he took the name of Jeeves from the cricketer Percy Jeeves after seeing him play at Cheltenham in August 1913, some two years before his short story was published.

Readers not familiar with the G&S song are missing a treat, but all is not lost. The words from the libretto are attractively set out with period illustrations by the GS Archive at bit.ly/2wA13C3, and YouTube has various audio clips. There is quite a lengthy lead-in while Bunthorne explains that his enthusiasm for all things poetic and medieval, which has endeared him to many swooning maidens, is a sham, and then the tune gets going.

So rescue your copy of number 82 from the recycling bin (as if . . .), turn to page 29, and sing along with Plum, thereby transporting yourself into the highly polished size twelves of our hero humming the tune during the act of composition back in January 1905.

From David Mackie

I recognised this immediately as a parody of Bunthorne's song in Act 1 of *Patience* – "If you're anxious for to shine in the high aesthetic line as a man of culture rare" – but I'm not writing just to say "Aren't I clever, spotting that?" I recognised it immediately as I worked for the old D'Oyly Carte Opera Company for seven years; we did nothing but G&S and Gilbert's words became ingrained in us.

No, what I'm writing about is to say that there was no provenance given in Poet's Corner, and I think I'm right in saying that there never is any provenance given (other than the magazine in which the verses appeared) – i.e. if indeed

all, or even some, of the others are themselves parodies of what might have been equally well-known verses in PGW's day. Sometimes I think it is simply the metre of a particular set of verses that reminds me of something – the one in issue 77, for instance, reminded me of 'You are old, Father William'. But, where there is a clear model, as in Bunthorne's song, would it be possible, in future issues, to state this? I know that PGW was much influenced by many others, and if a clear connection is established (as with Bunthorne's song), it would be useful to have this extra information.

The Editor replies: David makes a very good point, and I apologise for failing to include this information, which, as Graham points out, is contained in Tony Ring's excellent book What Goes Around Comes Around. The provenance of many of PGW's poems makes for fascinating reading, as the notes in Tony's book, as well as in The Parrot and Other Poems, demonstrate. Because of limits on my time, I am not always able to research the background of the poems, but I will at least endeavour to consult these two sources in the future. In the meantime, I always welcome letters such as the ones above!

Further Confessions of a Red-Faced Editor

Well, if ever there was any thought that readers simply skip lightly over our 'Recent Press Comment' column, your Editor may now dismiss it. There was a lulu of a boo-boo in the June edition; the particular item read as follows: "In a book club review of Evelyn Waugh's *England, Their England*, Robert Eustace commented that a particular passage in the book describing a game of village cricket 'surpass[es] even Wodehouse in polished perfection'." Well! A veritable avalanche of 'Hoy!'s followed from readers, though what follows is an edited selection:

From Alan Hall: Who's taking the 'Mickey' out of whom? Come along now, everyone knows that *England, Their England* was written by A. G. Macdonell, a Scot, and it's one of my favourites. The whole book is a gem of English literature, a delightful, satirical jaunt into English life. The 'Cricket Match' chapter is hilarious and could well rate with Plum at his best.

From Donald Davison: Jeeves would not have been amused to read that one of the most sublimely gentle, funny books in the English language (other than by you know who) had been ascribed, on page 30 of *Wooster Sauce* – top left – to Evelyn Waugh. *England, Their England* was written by a near contemporary of PGW, A. G. Macdonell.

From Penelope Forrest: Whether or not the memorable description of the cricket match in *England, Their England* can aspire to the "polished perfection of Wodehouse", it was written by A. G. Macdonell, not Evelyn Waugh as attributed in Recent Press Comment. Someone has his wires crossed.

From Terry Taylor: Although the blame for the mistake must be down to the original publication, *The Sunday Telegraph*, I am not sure that every Society member would totally agree with the assumption that the book does not bear

comparison with Wodehouse. The cricket chapter in particular is an acknowledged classic and is as funny today, especially to anybody who has played village cricket (or indeed for the Gold Bats), as it was when it was first written in 1933. It is indeed so famous that I cannot believe that Wodehouse himself wouldn't have read and admired it. Of course, to say that it "surpasses Wodehouse in polished perfection" is too strong, but let's just say that, had he written it, I am pretty sure Wodehouse would have been pretty pleased with himself.

From Rory O'Brien: The book is a period gem and a delight; quite as restful as the Master himself. Whilst I love Plum and his works, I have to say that no one has written a better comic chapter about a village cricket match than Macdonell. I can remember laughing aloud at the descriptions of the Blacksmith Bowler "breasting the slope superbly like a mettlesome combination of Vulcan and Venus Anadyomene" and still smile as I re-read it for the umpteenth time this morning before penning this counterblast. A. G. Macdonell did not write much, died young, and has no society to remember him. Let the Wodehouse Society be charitable and grant him the respect he is due.

Your red-faced editor is at least glad that nobody blamed the column's editor, Lesley Tapson, for this howler, as it is entirely my fault; I inserted the item after

Lesley sent the column to me, having received it from a reader who had failed to identify himself or herself. I think, but can't say for sure, that the original error was made by the *Telegraph*, but ultimately, well, I should have known better. I must be one of the few people in the country who has not read *England, Their England*. My apologies to all readers, and I'm going out to purchase a copy right now, as it sounds like an absolutely cracking book!

– ELIN MURPHY



Definitely not by Waugh!

"I love her, I love her, I love her, I love her," said Ambrose Gussett, getting down to it without preamble. "When in her presence I note a marked cachexia. My temperature goes up, and a curious burning is accompanied by a well-marked yearning. There are floating spots before my eyes, and I am conscious of an over-powering urge to clasp her in my arms and cry 'My mate!'"

(From 'Up From the Depths', 1950)

The International Wodehouse Association

by Jen Scheppers

The International Wodehouse Association (IWA) was established in 1998 as a means for member Wodehouse societies in the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, USA, and UK to collaborate on projects of international interest. Tony Ring, as President of the IWA since its inception, has laid the groundwork for a new project to promote Wodehouse's work via social media, with a particular emphasis on reaching new readers (and potential society members). The project was endorsed by the various member societies, and I was invited to take over the role of IWA President to take the project forward.

It is a tremendous honour to follow in Tony's footsteps. I'd like to thank him, as well as Hilary Bruce and the other Wodehouse societies, for entrusting me with Tony's vision. I'm also thrilled to have Mike Swaddling's support as the UK Society's representative on the project.

Wodehouse enthusiasts have been inhabiting the online world and using it to connect with each other from the early days of the internet. My own 'discovery' of an online Wodehouse community (the Yahoo Group called Blandings) in the early 2000s was transformative. Until then, I had been gallivanting about my native Australia under the impression that I was Wodehouse's only living reader.

The ever-increasing number of social media sites have made it even easier for readers to connect online and forge new friendships based on a mutual love of Wodehouse. There are now many communities where Wodehouse enthusiasts gather online. The largest of these is the Fans of PG Wodehouse Facebook group, which has over 12,000 members and is truly international.

Put simply, we Wodehouse lovers are out there, 'What Ho'-ing to each other like mastodons bellowing across primeval swamps in substantial numbers. However, while we're excellent at talking to each other, there isn't a great deal of activity aimed at promoting Wodehouse to a wider audience. And when you step outside the Wodehouse community and take a look at how the rest of the world is feeling and behaving online, recommending Wodehouse doesn't seem like such a bad thing to be doing.

Encouraging new readers to take an interest in Wodehouse-related content online, and to act on it by reading Wodehouse, will be a challenge. The internet has become a competitive marketing 'space' with a great deal of paid content vying for the attention of consumers. The IWA has neither the resources nor the inclination for this kind of campaign. Our strength lies in the passion of Wodehouse enthusiasts, and for the project to be successful we'll be relying on your support to reach the widest audience possible.

If you are active online, I would encourage you to follow The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)'s Twitter feed @PGWodehouseUK, and to share Wodehouse-related content within your own social media networks. Of course, social media is just one approach to reaching new readers, but its capacity to reach an international audience of all ages is one we can't afford to overlook if Wodehouse is to remain known and loved by future generations.

A Cosy Moment

Accidence Will Happen: The Non-Pedantic Guide to English Usage, by Oliver Kamm (2015)

(from Mike Swaddling)

Wodehouse is quoted at length in this book by Times reporter Oliver Kamm. Under the heading of 'Style', he encourages an aversion to cliché, writing:

[A] highly enjoyable way of . . . inuring oneself to cliché is to read the comic novels of P G Wodehouse, and especially his stories about Jeeves. This is a lesson in how to improve your own prose, in the strictly negative sense of knowing what's a fresh use of language.

Bertie Wooster, the young master, is mentally negligible (the description is Jeeves's) but his use of language is always careful. When he uses cliché, he signals that he is aware of it. Take this passage from *The Mating Season*:

'Jeeves, in speaking of Fink-Nottle, had, if you remember, described him as disgruntled, and it was plain at a glance that the passage of time had done nothing to gruntle him. The eyes behind their horn-rimmed spectacles were burning with fury, and all that sort of thing. He looked like a peevish halibut.'

What makes this passage work so well is not only the description of Fink-Nottle's fishy countenance, or the neologism 'gruntle'. It is the phrase 'and all that sort of thing'. Bertie is using a cliché 'eyes burning with fury' for effect, which he then easily betters with his reference to a peevish halibut. That is the way to write. It can't be replicated, and that's not the point of observing its style. It tells you what a voice is.

(Mike adds: "I think the stand-out point for me here is about Bertie's use of language being careful. How clever Wodehouse is to make him sound bright and dim at the same time!")

The Plum Tree

by Martin Breit

Late in June 1941, after being interned for ten months in a former lunatic asylum in Upper Silesia along with 60 other men, and subsequently staying in Berlin, P. G. Wodehouse was brought to Degenershausen, a rural estate in what is today Saxony-Anhalt. If you go there now, you immediately understand why this was the perfect haven for the author: located at the foot of the Harz mountains and very isolated, you hear nothing but the birds and the bees in the wonderful flowery meadows of the English-style landscape park.

The manor house where Plum and Ethel spent the summers of 1941 and 1942 as guests of the Baroness of Bodenhausen was demolished decades ago, but the beautiful park has been recreated and is now run and maintained by volunteers. One of them, Dr. Kunert, a confirmed tree enthusiast, had the brilliant idea to honour the illustrious guest by baptising a lime tree, at one of Plum's favourite spots, with his name.

After a long period of planning by a small committee, the event took place on May 20, a sunny day, and saw a gathering of about 20 Wodehousians, Degenershausians, and others. Not a huge crowd, you might say, but nevertheless a good start to promoting an author still relatively unknown in Germany and his unique connection to a hidden rural gem. The barn at the park entrance, which serves as the visitors' centre, now offers plenty of pictures and information on Plum and his stay at Degenershausen.

The event began with a screening of rare video footage of Plum, Ethel, the inhabitants of Degenershausen, and numerous dogs shot in the summer of 1942 – six truly touching minutes that really brought the past back to life. A few minutes later, an information board was unveiled outdoors, showing a quotation from one of Plum's letters to the Baroness:



Maria and Martin 'baptise' the Wodehouse-Linde

"I suppose you will get this at lunch time when you are out on the verandah looking at my lime tree."

Then followed the main event of the afternoon: the baptism of the lime tree itself. As Wodehouse's German biographer, I had the honour of officiating at the ceremony along with Maria von Katte, who had lived on the estate herself long ago. As a champagne bottle would have damaged the tree's (and the event's budget), we used watering cans to fulfil our duty. With them, we circled the tree and some geocachers, who at that moment were busy fumbling around in the tree trunk and took no notice of the important and historical event going on.

Although the 'P. G. Wodehouse-Linde', as it is called, is already past its prime, it has taken precautions to ensure its own longevity: a few days prior, it was discovered that one branch had not only managed to touch the ground, but also to put down its own roots. And the gardeners had done their bit by taking cuttings of the Wodehouse-Linde; a small number of descendants already exist.

Right after the baptism, a park tour was held; full of information on trees and the past, it was coloured by the occasional Wodehouse anecdote. A coffee break was welcomed by all the guests and, in the afternoon atmosphere, Maria gave an energetic reading of a freshly published German translation of the famous Market Snodsbury prize-giving. This was the perfect moment to remember that, 100 years ago, the first German Wodehouse book was published – one more reason to celebrate.

Plum now has a permanent presence in Degenershausen, and for me it was a rare opportunity to meet other German society members. Hopefully, this was not the last time.



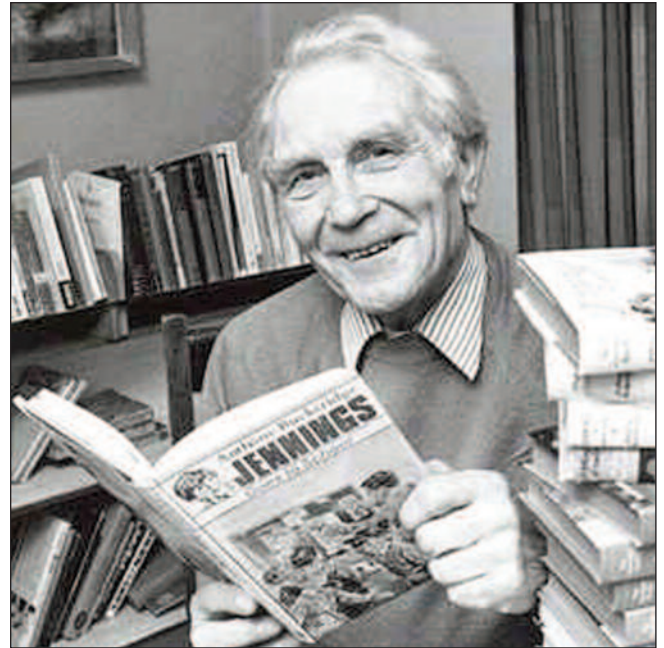
Ethel and Plum with their dogs at Degenershausen in 1942

On Jennings and Darbishire

by Jonathan Coe

When reviewing David Nobbs's fine novel *The Cucumber Man* for the *Sunday Times* way back in 1994, I ventured the opinion that David was "probably our finest postwar comic novelist". It was one of those sweeping, slightly fatuous statements with which critics sometimes conclude their reviews, wanting to finish things off with a resounding major chord. Over the years the phrase has come back to haunt me, and I've wondered who else might have a claim to the crown that I so extravagantly awarded to David. Kingsley Amis, perhaps? (But I was never really a fan.) David Lodge? Michael Frayn? Or perhaps there is another, less obvious candidate. Less obvious because he is not thought of as a writer for adults at all, and because many of us haven't read him since we were children. But if you want to find the pure, Wodehousean spirit in British comic writing – unfettered by moralising, unrelated to satire – perhaps the first place you should look is the Jennings novels of Anthony Buckeridge.

I'm sure I don't need to summarise the world of Jennings for the readers of this journal. Although they are sinking out of the collective memory now (currently only 13 of the 23 titles are in print, from an independent publisher called House of Stratus), when I discovered them in the late 1960s these books were still considered classics, required reading for any boy or girl of a certain age. I must have been about eight or nine when I bought my first one – perhaps my very first memory of book-buying, in fact, an Armada paperback of *Jennings' Diary*, purchased on a visit to Shrewsbury market with my grandfather. For the next few years, I immersed myself in the world of Linbury Court Preparatory School, a comic universe as self-contained and as isolated from reality as Blandings Castle or Slade Prison. Indeed, it was precisely because the world of a boys' boarding school on the South Downs was as far from my suburban Midlands upbringing as could be, that I found this milieu so alluring. I doubt I would have been especially happy to have found myself in such an institution, but for a while the Jennings books made me dream of being sent away to Linbury Court just as much as *Porridge* made me want to be locked up in a prison cell with Ronnie Barker and Richard Beckinsale for company.

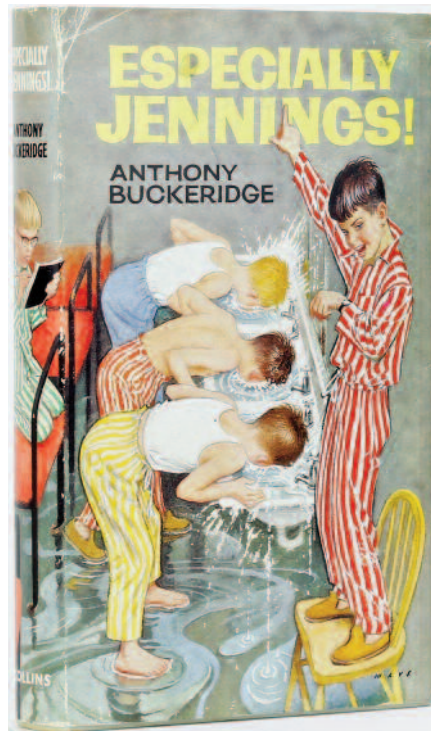


Anthony Buckeridge

Like Wodehouse, Buckeridge created a classic comedy double act in Jennings and his best friend Darbishire. Jennings's goodhearted but impulsive nature finds its perfect counterbalance in the timid, look-before-you-leap approach of Darbishire, who is always worried that their latest scheme is going to cause "the most frantic hoo-hah" and tends to preface his cautionary words with the ominous phrase "My father says that . . .". If you are one of those people who thinks that the world can be

divided into two kinds of people (fans of the Beatles v. the Rolling Stones, those who prefer Laurel and Hardy to the Marx Brothers) you will also want to divide the world up into those who are Jennings and those who are Darbishire. I definitely fall into the latter category, and he remains one of my favourite characters in all fiction. In fact, while Jennings is the nominal hero of the series, Darbishire has all the best comedy moments.

A random dip into a random title – *Especially Jennings!*, published in 1965 – throws up a treasurable episode when the hapless boys find themselves locked out of the school after lights-out on a chilly February evening. This gives Buckeridge the chance to roll out some of his trademark similes, which, if not as



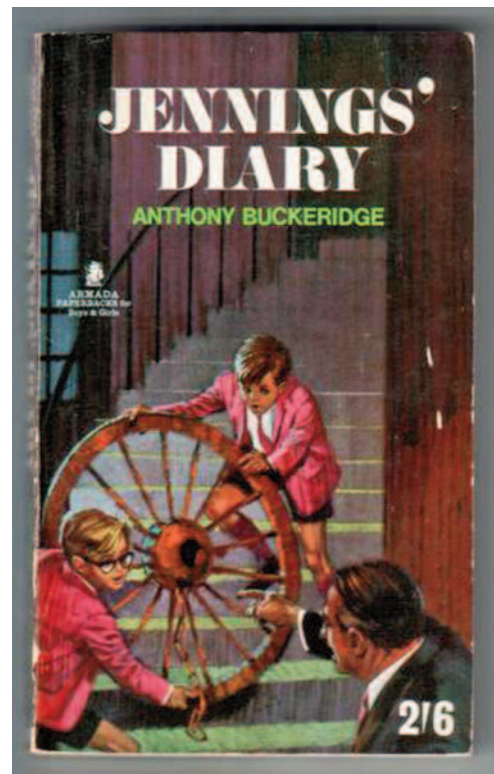
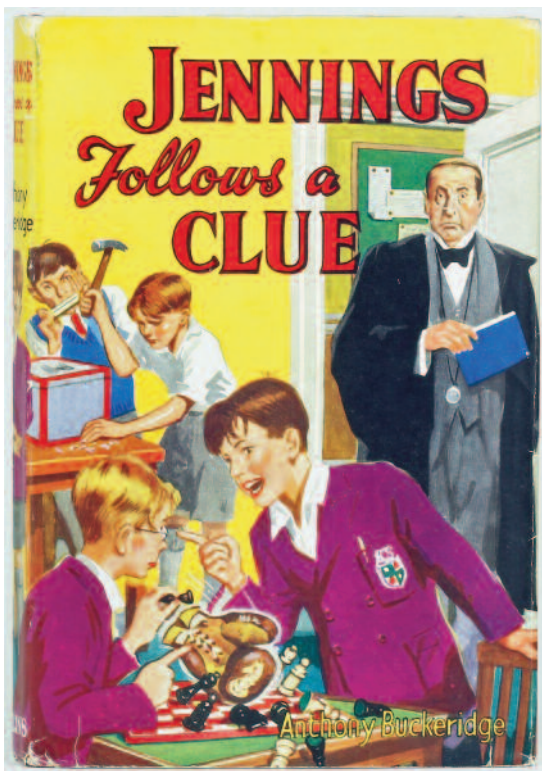
gloriously inventive as Wodehouse's, are still to be treasured. Darbishire becomes "so frightened that his knees trembled like blancmange in a railway dining car"; his nerves are soon "twanging like guitar strings" and before long Jennings can hear "his teeth chattering like a Geiger counter stuttering over a deposit of uranium".

A celebrated episode in the second book, *Jennings Follows a Clue*, finds both Darbishire and Buckeridge at their best. Instructed to "look natural" while walking past a shop front which the boys suspect of criminal associations, Darbishire finds himself completely unable to comply with this simple instruction.

He started off down the street with huge, slow strides, as though he were measuring out a cricket pitch. He felt this to be wrong and changed to quick, mincing steps, like a cat on spiked railings: he was conscious of his arms swinging like pendulums from his shoulders, and he had a feeling that his hands were swelling to the size of boxing-gloves.

After that, he tried marching with head erect, but people were beginning to cast suspicious glances, and he found himself lunging forward, left arm with left leg – right arm with right leg. What on earth was the matter with him? After a very artificial journey he reached the horse-trough, and suddenly remembered that he had been too flustered to notice the jeweller's shop at all.

Jennings joined him a few moments later. "What on earth's the matter, Darbi?" he demanded. "You went prancing down the street like a crab with chilblains. You couldn't have drawn more attention to yourself if you'd hopped like a kangaroo!"



Jennings Follows a Clue is considered by connoisseurs to be the finest of the series. It is the only one of the books with a single, continuous plot, and apart from anything else it is a rather a good detective story. But besides that, it is only the second of the Jennings books, and further down the line – as was only to be expected – a certain repetition and weariness would set in. Buckeridge took the decision that his hero would never grow old: Jennings experiences his eleventh birthday in one of the early novels, and after that is permanently frozen at that age, despite the fact that the world around him, as the books move into the 1970s, changes in small but perceptible ways. An understandable decision, again, but one which locks the author into a formula and imposes a kind of stasis on the narrative.

By 1977 the series was beginning to feel worn out, and his publishers persuaded him to set a novel during the Linbury Court school holidays, with the peculiar consequence that we find Jennings not just having adventures with a girl (his aunt's neighbour) but doing so in a high-rise council block in southeast London. After that, it was probably wise for Buckeridge to take a break, but the two comeback novels from the 1990s (*Jennings Again!* and *That's Jennings*) revert to the original formula and, although short, are surprisingly funny and sprightly.

The truth is that Anthony Buckeridge was rarely off form, and the Jennings novels rarely disappoint. This lifelong socialist and CND supporter's novels of middle-class prep school life have stood the test of time, and will continue to do so.

From the outset it was clear that the journey would be a noisy one. Jennings' bicycle had a loose mudguard-stay which caught in the spokes every time the wheel went round. At slow speeds it emitted a deep musical *doyng-a-doyng* like the G string of a cello; and as the machine went faster the note rose up the scale and wailed like a siren. There was also a soft, rhythmic *plonk* which was caused by the fact that the wheel was no longer the perfect circle it had been twenty years before.

(From *Jennings' Diary*, 1953)

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Phil Bowen

My first PGW experience was in 1962 at the Holt High School in Liverpool. Our English teacher, Mr Hilken, started a book club and I ordered – without any prior knowledge – *Don Camillo's Dilemma*, by Giovanni Guareschi, and *The Inimitable Jeeves*, by P. G. Wodehouse. I can't remember much about the first but was captivated by the latter and very soon acquired another collection of Jeeves short stories. I think once you become immersed in the Wodehouse world, you never fully re-emerge.

In the summer of 1964 (which I remember as Geoff Boycott's first test series for England), my mother, father, and I visited the village of Feltham in Northumbria, where Jim Anderson, our former minister at St Stephen's Church, had re-located. He had an enormous library and, knowing my interest, gave me five Wodehouse titles that included *Summer Lightning*, *Right Ho, Jeeves*, and *The Code of the Woosters*. I still think the best way to read Plum is within the covers of those lovely old Herbert Jenkins hardbacks.

Later at college in the late 1960s and early '70s – when it was all about rites-of-passage stuff such as *The Catcher in the Rye*, *On the Road*, *The Ginger Man*, *Catch 22*, and *Portnoy's Complaint* – PGW somehow didn't seem to fit, but never quite went away. Every so often, I

would buy another Jeeves book or other Wodehouse title, and during a much more recent spell in hospital, despite having lots of books, I found that his were the only ones I felt like reading or, in some cases, re-reading.



Much more recently, I decided to read *all* the Jeeves and Blandings books, and all in order. You can dip into any of them at any given time, but they do form a sort of wondrous timeless sequence.

Since joining The P G Wodehouse Society I have discovered titles that I hadn't come across before. The Uncle Fred stories are particularly good, but the brilliantly reliable narrative voice of Bertie Wooster still sustains as my favourite way of reading The Master.

As the columnist Marcus Gee has said, Wodehouse had 'perfect pitch', which makes him not only our best comic writer but, arguably, our greatest stylist. I think this is best exemplified during that golden period from *Summer Lightning* in 1929

to *Joy in the Morning* in 1947, when he is at his most 'Shakespearean'.

In conclusion, I share Eliza Easton's view (*Wooster Sauce* no. 80) regarding his sheer companionability. Who better to read at the end of a very long day accompanied by a little something in a glass?

The Word Around the Clubs

Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize

Just after the last issue of *Wooster Sauce* went to press, the winner of the 2017 Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize was announced – and it's Helen Fielding, author of *Bridget Jones's Baby: The Diaries*. The prize, which was presented to Fielding at the Hay Festival in May, included a case of Bollinger champagne, a complete set of Everyman Wodehouse books, and a Gloucestershire Old Spot pig to be named 'Bridget Jones's Baby'. This was Fielding's third nomination for the prize, and it was certainly the charm, which delighted her: "At last the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse pig is mine. I'm very proud and intend to boast about it for as long as possible to anyone who will listen."

Enigmatically Lost

A review of the *Enigma Variations* in the *Elgar Society Journal* of December 2016 started this way:

Not so long ago I was talking with a friend about the novels of P. G. Wodehouse and he asked if I had read *The Mating Season*. As he talked he laughed, recollecting the adventures of Bertie Wooster and

Gussie Fink-Nottle, but I could not recall whether I had read this particular story. On returning home there it was on a top bookshelf. I took it down and, immediately, I was lost in Wodehouse's world and reluctantly returned to reality.

(Thanks to MICHAEL GODBEE)

Newts in Peril

The protection and relocation of newts – especially the great crested variety – has held up many a building project, as Simon Barnes wrote in *The Spectator* for 3 June. Noting that they are "ridiculous and obstructive" to developers, the writer pointed out that "P. G. Wodehouse never tired of the fact that Gussie Fink-Nottle – the one who, being a 'glutton for punishment', stared at himself in the mirror – kept newts. The newt-keeping was almost as absurd as his taste for orange juice and Madeline Bassett." (Gussie would be relieved to know that Mr Barnes ultimately advocated continuing to protect the newts, for "as we impoverish the wild world, so we impoverish ourselves".

(Thanks to HILARY BRUCE)

The History of the December Supplement to *Wooster Sauce*

by Tony Ring

In this article, which follows on from a history of the *By The Way* Supplement in the June issue, I am expanding on the brief comment made therein on the development of the separate supplement included with the December issues of *Wooster Sauce*.

When the Society was founded, the Committee decided there should be a special Christmas Present that would consist of PGW writing which was very difficult to find, always subject to the approval of the Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate. We wanted to try to incentivise members to renew their membership each year, so we adopted the unorthodox, and eventually unworkable, idea of starting each new member with the first item in the series. Our initial choice was to publish the seven Kid Brady stories in this way; they had only previously appeared in an American magazine between 1905 and 1907, although Kid Brady himself would reappear in *Psmith, Journalist*, and again in *A Gentleman of Leisure*. We began distribution of the seven stories in the years 1998 to 2004, inclusive, and they were followed in 2005 by the original text of part 4 of chapter 13 of *Leave It to Psmith* from *The Saturday Evening Post*. (Because of numerous complaints by readers of the *SEP* about the original ending, which saw the comic criminals getting away with the swag, Wodehouse decided to revise it before the book was published in either the UK or the USA.)

Ambitiously, we decided to continue the policy by starting to serialise *The Swoop!*, little knowing that there would be an Everyman Collectors edition forthcoming in which it would feature. The first four instalments (out of a planned seven) started being distributed between 2006 and 2009, by which time, as sharp-eyed readers will have realised, the members' circulation for December 2009 had to be separated into 12 different categories, depending on which Supplement members were due to receive! Common sense took over from romance: all the remaining instalments of *The Swoop!* were pre-printed and made available to members, and that form of the experiment ceased.

Instead, there was now to be a fourth issue of *By The Way*, circulated with the December *Wooster Sauce*, and it would generally still be a piece of hard-to-obtain Wodehouse writing. But from now on, it would be self-contained – and all members would receive the same publication. It was further agreed that special circumstances might warrant a slight relaxation in the Wodehouse-only policy, a flexibility that was utilised in 2014.

Since the revised policy was initiated, the titles of the items which have been circulated are as follows:

- 2010 *The Old Cricketer's Story* (poem)
- 2011 *Aubrey's Arrested Individuality*
- 2012 *The Dramatic Fixer*
- 2013 Review of *The Moulding of Britain's Youth in the Forge of the Preparatory School System*, Aubrey Upjohn's book, for the *Thursday Review*, by Kipper Herring, as discovered by Simon Brett
- 2014 *For Love or Honour*
- 2015 *Dancing Mad*
- 2016 *Capital Recollections*



The first and most recent editions of the Society's Christmas bonuses



The Ghastly Affair at Rosherville Gardens

by Christopher Bellew

Rosherville Gardens was a 17-acre site on the Thames not far from Gravesend in Kent. It opened in 1837 to provide a day out for Londoners. At first it consisted of pleasure gardens adorned with statues, follies, and more than 8,000 specimen trees. Visitors came by paddle-steamer and new attractions were added, including bands, jugglers, sword swallowers, an archery lawn, gipsy fortune tellers, a maze, and a large Italianate hotel, the Rosherville Hotel. Initially it was patronised by middle-class workers, but with the advent of railways it served a more diverse clientele. In 1857, 20,000 visitors came in one week. The Prince of Wales and his friends apparently spent days at the gardens incognito.

In 'Jeeves Takes Charge', Bertie's Uncle Willoughby pens his *Recollections of a Long Life* to the horror of Florence Craye. She tells Bertie that there is "a story about Sir Stanley Gervase-Gervase at Rosherville Gardens, which is ghastly in its perfection of detail. It seems that Sir Stanley – but I can't tell you!"

What can Wodehouse have been thinking of? As Norman Murphy was fond of reminding us, PGW never invented something if he didn't have to. The *London Gazette* dated 1 February 1884 may provide the answer.

The Bankruptcy Act, 1869.

In the County Court of Kent, holden at Rochester. In the Matter of a Special Resolution for Liquidation by Arrangement of the affairs of Edward Joseph, Baron Bellew,, of Barmeth, county Louth, in the peerage of Ireland, Baron of that part of the United Kingdom, and of Rosherville Hotel, Gravesend, in the county of Kent, trading as Edward Joseph Bellew, Hotel Proprietor.

The creditors of the above-named Edward Joseph, Baron Bellew, who have not already proved their debts, are required, on or before the 8th day of February, 1884, to send their names and addresses and the particulars of their debts or claims, to me, the undersigned, Thomas Lyte Willis, of No. 17 Fenchurch-street, in the city of London, Wine Merchant, the trustee under the liquidation, or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of the Dividend proposed to be declared

Dated this 1st day of February, 1884.

T. L. WILLIS, Trustee.

My great-great grandfather, Edward Joseph, was born in Ireland in 1830. His father was a Member of Parliament and owned extensive lands in County Louth. His mother, Anna Fermina Mendoza, was an Anglo-Spanish heiress. In 1853 Edward married Augusta Bryan, another heiress, whose family owned land in County Kilkenny and were said to be the richest commoners in Ireland. He was High Sheriff of county Louth and a major in the Louth Militia. He succeeded his father as 2nd Baron Bellew in 1866.

How can he possibly have ended up owning a hotel in Gravesend and going bankrupt owing money to a wine merchant? It is a sad tale. He left his wife and went to England with his mistress. The family was successful in disinheriting him and cutting off his access to Bellew and Bryan funds. After his bankruptcy he went to live on the Continent and died in Bad Mannheim in Germany in 1895, aged 65.

Until now my family has been as reticent as Florence Craye about this fall from favour of this especially black sheep in the Bellew flock.



A view of the Rosherville Hotel in Gravesend

An Eggy Education

National Public Radio (NPR) is a non-profit-making radio network in the United States. In March this year, the NPR website published an article by Bret Stetka entitled 'Unscrambling the Nutrition Science on Eggs'. Of interest to us is that Stetka found inspiration in an unlikely source:

We've pilfered the ova of countless creatures since Neolithic times. But it is the nutritive and symbolic capacities of the humble bird egg, primarily that of the chicken, that we have most consistently championed: reliable nourishment, a hangover cure, an emblem of rebirth — when necessary, a supreme projectile.

As P. G. Wodehouse asked in his 1906 novel, *Love Among the Chickens*, "Have you ever seen a

man, woman, or child who wasn't eating an egg or just going to eat an egg or just coming away from eating an egg? I tell you, the good old egg is the foundation of daily life."

Surprisingly, the author did not quote Lord Worplesdon, who, one year, "came down to breakfast one morning, lifted the first cover he saw, said 'Eggs! Eggs! Damn all eggs!' in an overwrought sort of voice, and instantly legged it for France, never to return to the bosom of the family. This, mind you, being a bit of luck for the bosom of the family, for old Worplesdon had the worst temper in the county."

The full report by Bret Stetka can be found on NPR's website: <http://n.pr/2IOOIxF>

P. G. Wodehouse's Percyphobia

by Percy Kemp

As someone whose first name is Percy, I was delighted to read the news in *Wooster Sauce* last year of the unveiling of a plaque commemorating Percy Jeeves (1888–1916), after whom Wodehouse named his inimitable and unsurpassable manservant character. Brian Halford, who has researched this dapper cricketer's life thoroughly, depicts Jeeves as "a man who, alongside all his considerable merits, belongs to one of the smallest categories of the human race: that of whom nobody had a bad word to say".

Overjoyed as I was, though, at the news that a namesake of mine (or, rather, half a namesake) was the inspiration for PGW's Jeeves, I was also bewildered – for I had long suspected Wodehouse of Percyphobia. I may be wrong, of course (and I readily confess that my knowledge of Wodehouse's writings is sketchy), but it does seem to me that none of his characters answering to the name of Percy (and there are quite a few of them) comes across as being particularly likeable.

The first unsavoury Percy that comes to mind is Percy Pilbeam, the slimy private investigator with the foul moustache and the loud check suits. Then there is Percy Gorringer, Florence Craye's soupy, side-whiskered suitor, and Florence's father, Percy Craye, the freshly elevated earl and shipping magnate who sails close to the wind and who once chased the young Bertie for five miles across country with a hunting crop after finding him smoking one of his cigars. There is also Percy, Lord Belpher, the stuffed killjoy in *A Damsel in Distress*, and Percy, the rude and cheeky office boy in *The Girl in Blue*. Not to mention Percy, Lord Stockheath, who would win any Upper Class Twit of the Year competition with flying colours.

The only two exceptions I can recall to this "foul Percy rule" are Percy the bulldog, in *Indiscretions of Archie*, and Percy Bulstrode, the chemist in the Blandings stories. Yet even then, neither can be said to be in any way likeable. In truth, all the Percys that figure in Wodehouse's stories come across as being either plain stupid or simply foul, Wodehouse having not seen fit to endow any of them with a single redeeming feature or saving grace that might endear him to the reader.

Which begs the question of whether Wodehouse did so by accident, or by design. The answer to this question is given to us in 'The Custody of the Pumpkin', where we are told that Lord Emsworth's prize pumpkin, Blandings Hope, is cruelly nicknamed Percy by his son Freddie.

I rather suspect, then, that the name Percy must have conjured up in Wodehouse's mind unnerving and irritating images of some obnoxious Percy he may have known – a school bully, possibly, or else a squealer or whipping boy, if not a loathed neighbour or relative, a shady businessman or a crooked publisher – and that this, in turn, induced him to give the name of Percy to those of his characters for whom he felt no sympathy.

If I'm right in assuming that Wodehouse associated this name with unpleasant memories, then *Wooster Sauce* would be well advised to refrain from calling the gallant Percy Jeeves by his first name, and to refer to him instead as PJeeves. As for me, I should probably cast aside my full name, and henceforth go under the name of PKemp.

Vodehouse

*Or, the Art of Buying
Wodehouse in Foreign Places*

by Alexander Dainty

In the June 2016 edition of *Wooster Sauce*, I read with interest Mike Swaddling's article on visiting a bookshop in Budapest, Hungary, and enquiring whether or not they kept P. G. Wodehouse's books in Hungarian. I was also interested to read that at the Society meeting at the Savoy Tup in November, the members present heard all about translating Wodehouse in Italian.

Over the past 20–30 years, whenever travelling through Europe, I have often made a point of going into local bookshops and asking if they stock any P. G. Wodehouse. Sometimes my enquiry is met with a look of blank amazement or much puzzlement. I haven't yet had the experience that Bertie encountered in Sotheran's when making enquiries about a book on Spinoza.

Depending on the size of the bookshop, the stock of Wodehouse varies from small and limited to reasonably good. I now have quite a collection of Wodehouse books in German and Italian, and often find that the English title is mentioned inside the front cover of the book, so if you have problems with the language, you know what you are buying.

Unfortunately, due to a somewhat limited knowledge of both German and Italian, I am not able to read the books in their entirety. However, during The Wodehouse Society convention in Philadelphia in October 2001, I managed to buy the American versions of several Wodehouse books, and those I *can* read. Following is my collection in the various editions with the foreign and English titles.

Italian:

La Mosca del Verona (Meet Mr Mulliner)

German:

Der Junggesellen Club

(*Bachelors Anonymous*)

Barmy im Wunderland

(*Barmy in Wonderland*)

Langenscheidt Short Stories

(English translation):

'The Fiery Wooing of Mordred'

'The Knightly Quest of Mervyn'

American:

Jeeves and the Tie That Binds

(UK: *Much Obligated, Jeeves*)

How Right You Are, Jeeves

(UK: *Jeeves in the Offing*)

Bertie Wooster Sees It Through

(UK: *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*)

The Uncollected Jeeves

The Great Sermon Handicap

Introduction to Volume VI of the multi-lingual edition, Heineman 1993

by James Hogg

Editor's note: In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Jimmy Heineman published translations of PGW's epic short story 'The Great Sermon Handicap'. The story was depicted in 57 languages over six volumes, each with an introduction by an eminent Wodehousean. In 1993 James had the honour of introducing the last volume in the series, and he thought it might be of interest to members not familiar with this wonderful project. Enjoy!

Many have asked the question: how did P. G. Wodehouse do it? What combination of native genius and *Weltanschauung* shaped his comic Elysium, which has kept people laughing (and wondering how he did it) ever since?

Of one thing we can be sure – the *milieu* in which Bertie Wooster moved was no place for words like *Weltanschauung*; or *milieu*, for that matter; or even Elysium. He did introduce the occasional *nolle prosequi* and *rem acu tetigisti* into his patter, but strictly under Jeeves's supervision. As a linguist Bertie was right there with Monty Bodkin, of whom it was said in *The Luck of the Bodkins*:

Into the face of the young man who sat on the terrace of the Hotel Magnifique at Cannes there had crept a look of furtive shame, the shifty, hangdog look which announces that an Englishman is about to talk French.

Given Bertie's limitations, it is clear that leaving the narration to him was the most daring of all Wodehouse's achievements. With miraculous *legerdemain* (another one seldom heard at the Drones Club) he made it credible that a complete chump could yet write exquisite comic prose.

The present volume and its five predecessors would have given Bertie much the same trouble as *Types of Ethical Theory*, forced on him by Florence Craye in *Joy in the Morning*. They would have been classed as not the sort of thing to spring on a lad with a morning head (or indeed under any circumstances whatever). But just because Bertie is one of the best-loved characters in literature, whom we would not want changed in the merest detail, does not mean he was invariably an example to us all. In matters of intellect he frankly lacked the spirit of adventure. Confronted with a translation of *The Great Sermon Handicap* in Slovak or Bulgarian, he would have sneaked back to *Blood on the Banisters* or equivalent at the earliest opportunity.

We – and I'm sure I speak for all of us – are made of sterner stuff. Confronted with *The Great Sermon Handicap* in Slovak or Bulgarian, or any of the fifty-six (so far) other translations in this magnificent series, we like to think we can rise to the challenge. Armed with the original version (and what a pearl it is) at the

beginning of each volume, we can hardly wait to survey the wondrous sweep of the world's languages in the congenial company of Jeeves and Wooster.

If it is the idioms of the great nations we wish to explore, here they are in full measure. If we feel more enterprising, we may wander at will down the less travelled paths of human communication. Volume I tempts us with Catalan and Rhaetoromansch; Volume II with Yiddish and Afrikaans; in Volume III we can brush up on Faroese and Old Norse; Volume IV enables those who are unacquainted with Basque and Romany to remain in ignorance no longer; while in Volume V, certainly one for the bolder spirit, comes the opportunity to read about the Rev. Francis Heppenstall's interminable sermon on Brotherly Love in both Coptic and Somali.

The man we must thank for this most original contribution to the study of language, Jimmy Heineman, has been careful to choose translators who are up to their task. Not for him the kind of professional linguist whose normal brief runs no further than bills of lading or U.N. resolutions. The pitfalls were exposed some years ago in a French version of a Wodehouse story, which rendered "you betcher!" as "poupée de mon coeur!"

It is fascinating to see how well Mr Heineman's translators have coped with the patois of the young Mayfair clubman (early 20th C.). Take the following sentence from Bertie's narration: "I think she's a topper, and she thinks me next door to a looney, so everything's nice and matey."

What an agreeable surprise it is to find Afrikaans, the language of a people often thought of as dour in the extreme, getting so close to the pep and informality of the original: "Ek dink s'ys van die boonste plank en sy beskou my as effens getik, dus alles is in die haak."

And who would have thought that Breton, with its roots in the wild Celtic past, would be able to catch the spirit of the Wooster vernacular? Yet it does so triumphantly: "Me 'gav din eo ur plac'h eus ar c'hentan, ha hi 'gav dezhi on 'gozik sot-pik, setu ema mat ar jeu, ha beuz etrezomp zoken."

Given the wave of irredentism which has transformed Eastern Europe in recent years, this volume is most timely. The Slavic languages will assume greater importance now that those who speak them have achieved independent statehood. The mere thought of tangling with Slavic languages would have put Bertie Wooster in need of a couple of strong ones. But, ever the *preux chevalier*, he would be pleased that his great partnership with Jeeves continues to benefit humanity by spreading the *lingua franca* we all understand – the language of laughter.

Wodehouse Quiz 24

Hollywood

by David Buckle

1. Cora Starr was “constructed on the lines of Gertrude Lawrence”. What is the real name of this Hollywood actress and friend of Bertie Wooster?
2. Reginald ‘Reggie’ Swithin and Hollywood child star Joey Cooley take part in a body swap in which Wodehouse novel?
3. Appearing in *The Luck of the Bodkins*, *Pearls, Girls and Monty Bodkin*, and *Bachelors Anonymous*, which movie mogul is the head of the Superba-Llewellyn film studio?
4. With which real-life film star does 14-year-old Thomas (Thos.) Gregson, son of Aunt Agatha, become infatuated in ‘The Love That Purifies’?
5. An identical twin of Alfred, which of Mr Mulliner’s nephews becomes a screen-writer in Hollywood?
6. In which Blandings short story does Freddie Threepwood successfully have a screenplay – which he had written for his wife, Aggie – accepted by a Hollywood studio?
7. In ‘Ukridge’s Accident Syndicate’, which struggling actor, who later becomes a major Hollywood star, is persuaded by Ukridge to feign an accident in order to claim on insurance?
8. In 1929 Wodehouse wrote ‘Slaves of Hollywood’, which was published in the *Saturday Evening Post* of December 7, 1929. It was later modified and published as ‘The Hollywood Scandal’ in which 1932 collection of essays and other works?
9. Stanwood Cobbold is sent by his millionaire father to England to get him away from Hollywood starlet Eileen Stoker in which Wodehouse novel?
10. Which young man falls for movie actress Pauline Petite, star of such films as *Passion’s Slaves*, *Seduction*, *Bonds of Gold*, *Silken Fetters*, and *Purple Passion*?

(Answers on page 23)

Poet’s Corner

The Lost Repartee

Oh! bitter the grief that it causes to me,
The thought of that wonderful, lost repartee.
In its youth and its beauty it fled from my brain
And never, I fear me, ah! never again,
If I wait all my life, from to-day till I die,
Shall I find such a chance for a crushing reply.

Its wording was mild, but that rendered it worse.
It was crisply satirical, bitinglly terse.
And it fled! Yes, it fled! In my hour of need
From my agonised brain did it coyly recede,
Returning no more with its luminous ray
Till the critical moment had perished for aye.

Oh! let lovers lament of love’s terrible pangs,
Let hunters talk darkly of tigers and fangs,
Let the gambler repine o’er the loss of his cash,
Let the banker hold forth on the woes of a smash,
Let the penniless debtor dilate on how ill
He feels, when a dun ambles in with a bill.

Let the footpad explain all the feelings that gnaw
His heart, when he’s safe in the hands of the Law,
Let ministers prate of the worries of state,
But none of these woes – though they’re all of them
great –
Can compare with the grief that is harassing me
For the loss of that priceless, superb repartee.

From *Fun*, 5 January 1901

Not So Manly

In *The Spectator* of 10 June, one of the winners of a competition to supply an extract from tomes on ‘Manly Health and Training’ was one G. M. Davis, who channelled PGW:

A chap can feel considerably put out if the word is he’s not up to it physically. When a nameless worm revealed that Tuppy Glossop had told Bobby [*sic*] Wickham that I am ‘weedy’, with supplementary uncalled-for mentions of rice puddings and paper bags, there was no comfort in cocktails. It was a case for Jeeves, and he responded with admirable promptness.

“If what sir wishes is the body of Hercules, the answer is a chest expander. Available for less than a guinea at Selfridges.”

“Excellent, Jeeves. I knew I could count on you. A pill, is it?”

A pill it was not. As Jeeves explained it, it entailed miming a bear ripping apart the body of an immiserated peasant on the Russian steppes.

I sat down, flummoxed.

“I can’t do that.”

“I fear it’s that or nothing.”

“Then dash it, it’s nothing.”

“As you so wisely say, sir.”

A Favourable Review for Our Hero

A few months before his death last year, Norman Murphy posted the following to the listserv PGWnet: “I was going through the papers Richard Osborne was kind enough to give me when clearing out his stuff and came across a cutting from *Punch*, dated 25 February 1914. It is clearly from the book review section, and I was slightly surprised how highly PG was already regarded, though still a ‘young writer’, and even more surprised that his frequent trips to America were already a source of comment.” Here is the review in its entirety.

Amongst the makers of what might be called, without in this case any disparagement, the commercial short story, I think I should place Mr. P. G. Wodehouse as easily my favourite. The comfortable anticipation that is always mine on observing his name on the contents page of a popular magazine has been renewed by the sight of it attached to a collection of tales in volume form and called, after the first of them, *The Man Upstairs* (Methuen). You must not expect a detailed criticism. All I can promise you is that, if you are a Wodehouseite, you will find here the author at his delightful best. He is winged and doth range. The heroes of these tales

include (I quote from the cover) “a barber, a gardener, a play-writer, a tramp, a waiter, a golfer, a stockbroker, a butler, a bank clerk, an assistant master at a private school, a Peer’s son and a Knight of the Round Table.” So there you are; and, if you don’t see what you want in the window, you must be hard to please. Personally, I fancy I would give my vote for the play-writing stories. “*Experientia*,” as Mrs. Micawber’s late father used to observe, “*does it*”; and here I have the feeling the author is upon tried ground. But not one of the collection will bore you; there is about them all too nice a deftness, too happy a gift of phrase. I am told by the publishers that the American public fully shares my approval of this engaging craftsman. It shows their sense. But, if there is any threat of removing Mr Wodehouse permanently to the other side of the Atlantic, where already he goes far too much, my guinea shall head any public subscription to retain him.

Punch, February 25, 1914

The page from *Punch* in which this review appears has been posted on the *Madame Eulalie* website and can be viewed at: bit.ly/2vuwM02

The Word in Season by Dan Kaszeta

Stinko

Your loyal correspondent returns after a hiatus to get back to the grindstone. Work must go on. The truth is, the well is running dry here at Kaszeta Towers. I had considered an excursion into the ‘fretful porpentine’, but as everyone already knows, that’s from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, so one cannot add any value there, other than to add that ‘porpentine’ is also used in Bill’s earlier *Comedy of Errors*. I had even considered an exegesis of the auditory porcine descriptors ‘plobby’ and ‘wofflesome’ – famously used in the Wodehouse canon in ‘Pig-hoo-o-o-o-ey’. These are simple onomatopoeia, but indeed appear to be Wodehouse coinages. As I am no Psmith, I just cannot fill the column inches with pig noises, however much I may wish to. Given the high standard I have set for myself, a descent into wofflesomeness is pure laziness. One must not go there.

Which leads me to drink – as in, back to the rich vocabulary of inebriation and squiffiness bequeathed to us. ‘Stinko’ is the word. In *Joy in the Morning* (1946), Boko Fittleworth declares, “I am stinko.” The word is also used in *Uncle Dynamite* (1948). In *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* (1963) we learn that ‘stinko’ is a degree of drunkenness more serious than ‘effervescent’.

Is it a Wodehouse coinage? Back to the British Library.

The *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang* gives us ‘stinko’ as short for stinking, credits it with being American in origin, and cites an example much more

recent (1974) than the Wodehouse uses. Eric Partridge’s venerable *New Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, Volume 2 (J-Z), gives us a precise date of birth of 1927 in the US. He cites uses by Evelyn Waugh (1942) and Raymond Chandler (1943), without even a nod to Wodehouse. Partridge also tells us that ‘stinko’ is used as early as 1958 in Australia as a slang term for wine, likely at the plonky end of the quality. By the way, ‘stinko’ also seems to work in Polish as a euphemism for ‘drunk’.

‘Stinko’ was used as a euphemism for smelly things rather a lot in the 19th century, including various industrial chemicals and at least one body of water. The similar word ‘stingo’ means a particularly strong style of beer not now often brewed, although Samuel Smith’s brews a Yorkshire stingo sporadically.

However, scholarship has its rewards. Digging around in the stinkos and stingos, I struck gold. If one digs long enough, one finds a book called *Viva Mexico!* written by Charles Macomb Flandrau (1871–1938), an American essayist. In this book, written in 1908 after an extended stay on his brother’s Mexican coffee plantation, we find the words “stayed until half past four and was carried home stinko”. This is in reference to a woman who was clearly worse for wear after too much drink.

So there we have it: a free-range example from 1908, well before Wodehouse, Waugh, and Chandler.

Appointments in the Clergy

*From the ever-vigilant
Murray Hedgcock*

Recorded by The Daily Telegraph on May 15:

The Rev. Charlotte Cranfield, assistant curate Easingwold with Raskelf (Diocese of York), to be also assistant curate Alne, Brafferton with Pilmoor, Myton-on-Swale and Thormanby, Coxwold and Husthwaite, Crayke with Brandsby and Yearsley, Skelton with Shipton and Newton on Ouse, Strensall, and the Forest of Galtres (same diocese).

A May 17 postscript recorded a further appointment:

The Rev. Trevor Gant, assistant curate, Skelton with Shipton and Newton on Ouse (York), to be also assistant curate, Alne, Brafferton with Pilmoor, Myton-on-Swale and Thormanby etc etc.

(At least the Reverend Charlotte will have help.)

The saga of Alne to the Forest of Galtres continued to be strung out in May. On the 19th, the same parishes scored two more curates: The Rev. Catherine Toase, "currently assistant curate of Easingwold with Raskelf (York)", and The Rev. Malcolm Wainwright, "priest in charge of Skelton with Shipton and Newton on Ouse (York)". And if that is not sufficient, there are further appointments:

The Rev. Bryony Wood, vicar of St John of Beverley, Whatton, with Aslockton, Hawskworth, Scarrington, Orston and Thoroton, known as The Cranmer Group of Parishes, and deanery missionary for East Bingham (Southwell and Nottingham) to be team vicar-designate, part-time, with special responsibility for St Peter and St Paul, Great Bowden, Market Harborough Resource Church Team (Leicester); Stephen Whiting, priest-in-charge, The Forest of Gaitres (York) to be also assistant curate Alne, Brafferton with Pilmoor etc; Margaret Young, vicar of Easingwold with Raskelf (York) to be also assistant curate Alne, Brafferton with Pilmoor etc, and The Forest of Galtres (same diocese).

Someone in the C of E must be having a lot of fun.

"It would take more than long-stemmed roses to change my view that you're a despicable cowardly custard and a disgrace to a proud family. Your ancestors fought in the Crusades and were often mentioned in despatches, and you cringe like a salted snail at the thought of appearing as Santa Claus before an audience of charming children who wouldn't hurt a fly. It's enough to make an aunt turn her face to the wall and give up the struggle.

(from 'Jeeves and the Greasy Bird', 1965)

The Wooster Source

by Graeme Davidson

*This is the real Tabasco,
It's the word from Bertie Wooster,
That Arsene Lupin-esque Drone who
innocently sees it not as not cricket
To guest at Totleigh Towers, which houses a
cow creamer, and, when there, try to nick it.*



It was a silver cow. But when I say 'cow', don't go running away with the idea of some decent self-respecting cudster such as you may observe loading grass into itself in the nearest meadow. This was a sinister, leering, Underworld sort of animal, the kind that would spit out the side of its mouth for twopence.

The Code of the Woosters (1938)

"Bertie, it is imperative that you marry."

"But, dash it all,..."

"Yes! You should be breeding children to..."

"No, really, I say, please!" I said, blushing richly. Aunt Agatha belongs to two or three of these women's clubs, and she keeps forgetting she isn't in the smoking-room.

'Aunt Agatha Speaks Her Mind', *The Inimitable Jeeves (1924)*

"Are you afraid of a tiny little dog, Jeeves?"

He corrected me respectfully, giving it as his opinion that the undersigned was not a tiny little dog, but well above the average in muscular development. In particular, he drew my attention to the animal's teeth.

I reassured him.

"I think you would find that if you were to make a sudden spring, his teeth would not enter into the matter. You could leap onto the bed, snatch up a sheet, roll him up in it before he knew what was happening and there we would be."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, are you going to make a sudden spring?"

"No, sir."

A rather stiff silence ensued, during which the dog Bartholomew continued to gaze at me unwinkingly.

The Code of the Woosters (1938)

Answers to Wodehouse Quiz (Page 21)

1. Cora 'Corky' Potter-Pirbright
2. *Laughing Gas*
3. Ivor Llewellyn
4. Greta Garbo
5. George Mulliner (one of three Mulliner nephews named George)
6. 'Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best'
7. Teddy Weeks
8. *Louder and Funnier*
9. *Spring Fever*
10. Freddie Threepwood

The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

Charles E. Gould, Jr

The untimely death of Charles Gould, reported on page 9, has deprived us of a major figure in the world of Wodehouse bibliography and scholarship.

Charles's interest in Wodehouse bibliography arose, as is so often the case, from an interest in collecting Wodehouse. In 1981 he contributed an essay, 'On Collecting P. G. Wodehouse' (McIlvaine, H67), to *P. G. Wodehouse: A Centenary Celebration 1881–1981* (H33), the book which accompanied the major Wodehouse exhibition at the Pierpont Morgan Library. Any collectors who read that essay will recognise a kindred spirit. In it, Charles explained how he got started in earnest down the collecting route:

It was my wife, to her yet undiminished pecuniary regret, who really started the trouble. Seeing my glassy stare as in the dusty recesses of some church basement sale I fondled a Wodehouse book trying to remember whether I had a copy or not, she began to say, "Oh, go ahead and buy it." From there it was but a step to noticing editions, cataloguing what I had, keeping with me a list, producing a wants list . . . and the rest can be imagined readily enough by any collector. You tell yourself you can take it or leave it alone, but one day you find you're hooked, and that's that.

It was also in 1981 that Charles started to recycle some of the surplus items from his own collection, issuing, on the centenary of Wodehouse's birthday, his own catalogue of Wodehouse books for sale. Henceforth Charles issued these annually on 15 October. What proved to be his final catalogue was described as the "135th Birthday Catalogue" and was also Charles's 35th annual catalogue.

However, 1981 was not the year of Charles's earliest published writings on Wodehouse. He had already had three pieces published in magazines. These were 'The World of Wodehouse' in *Spectator*, 227, 16 October 1971 (H156), a piece which marked Wodehouse's ninetieth birthday; 'It Is Only 50 Years or So' in *Bookseller*, 21 December 1974 (H154); and 'The Truth Behind the Fiction' in *Spectator*, 234, 1 March 1975 (H155), a piece which marked Wodehouse's death.

In 1982 Charles's *The Toad at Harrow: P. G. Wodehouse in Perspective*, which was volume 3 in the

Heineman Monograph series, was published in a limited edition of 500, of which the first 100 were numbered and signed by Charles. This was a "slim volume" with the text of Charles's monograph covering less than six sides. It had first been published in the Fall 1981 issue of *Kent Magazine* (H153).

The year 1987 saw the appearance of *A Prawn at Ascot* (L9), which Charles had "Reconstructed from the True and Original Copy of a Journal by the Hon. Galahad Threepwood", and which finally revealed to the world the story of Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe and the prawns. This was another "slim volume" with the text again covering less than six sides. It was published by Lamb Printing Co., Massachusetts, in a limited edition of 200, all of which were numbered and signed by Charles.

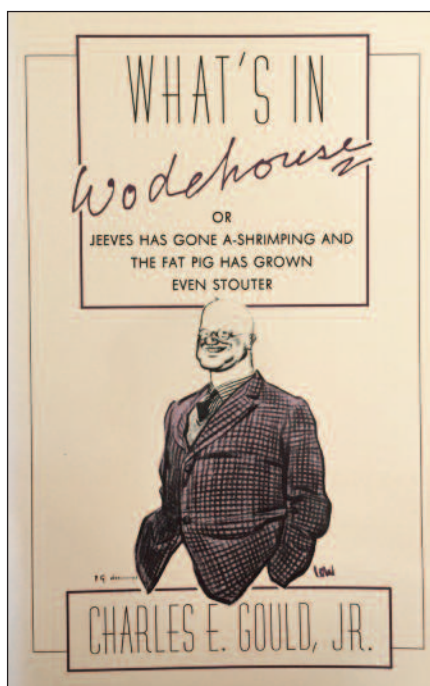
In 1989 Heineman published Charles's quiz book *What's in Wodehouse* (H500.1), which was published in the UK in 1990 by Hutchinson under the title *The Wodehouse Quiz Book* (H501.2 [sic – clearly a misprint for H500.2]). Charles's own description of the books from his 2016 catalogue states that the US edition contains "mistakes, not all mine, sometimes more puzzling than the puzzles themselves. Jimmy Heineman was so eager to go to press with this that I never saw a proof copy, if indeed there was one." For

the UK edition "Hutchinson got an anonymous Norman Murphy to review my work, and I received two single-spaced typed pages of rather scathing corrections. But Hutchinson ignored all of that and published exactly what they had bought from Heineman."

Charles's 'Wodehouse A La Carte' appeared in *Firsts Magazine*, Vol. 1 No. 8, in August 1991. It was a general discussion on collecting Wodehouse: "Where to begin and when to consider stopping are questions which come to us all; the question 'Why?' does not emerge until one is well into the later stages, if it emerges ever; and then it is likely to be from the lips of a beloved spouse." (My experience differed from Charles's in this area, in that

my beloved spouse asked the question "Why?" much sooner than the later stages, swiftly followed by the question "How much!?!")

Charles played a large part in the compilation of the McIlvaine bibliography, published in 1992. In



James Heineman's Acknowledgements, in the "list of men and women who have freely come forward to give of themselves and of their knowledge to add scholarship and piquancy to this work", Charles was included as follows: "Pipe-smoking, two-legged Wodehouse bibliography. Ever present with sound advice and 'les mots justes.'"

Charles also frequently wrote articles for *Book Source Monthly*, a US magazine. The Wodehouse-related ones are considered below.

'In the Wodehouse' (Vol. 8, No. 11, February 1993) saw Charles reflecting on ten years of producing a Wodehouse catalogue. The article subsequently appeared in *Plum Lines*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Summer 1993.

'Bibliography Among the Chickens' (Vol 10., No. 5, August 1994) was a detailed analysis of the UK publication history of *Love Among the Chickens* from 1906 to 1921, and remains essential reading for anyone with an interest in that subject. Admittedly, the first paragraph does contain a howler from Charles (even Homer nods): "the narrative voice, as in later Ukridge stories, is Jeremy Garnet". Of course, the later Ukridge stories were narrated by James "Corky" Corcoran.

'P. J. Who?' (Vol. 11, No. 1, April 1995) dealt with printers' errors in Wodehouse editions, while 'And to Dust Wrappers Shall We Return' (Vol. 11, No. 5, August 1995) dealt, in case one had any doubt, with dust wrappers.

'The Wodehouse Golf Course' was originally published in Vol. 11, No. 11, February 1996, but with "a large portion" inadvertently deleted by the typesetter. It was republished with the missing portion reinstated the next month, under the title 'The Complete Wodehouse Golf Course' (Vol. 11, No. 12, March 1996). The article examined Wodehouse's golf books and subsequently appeared in *Plum Lines*, Vol. 17, No. 2, Summer 1996.

'Apollo and the Liar' (Vol. 13, No. 1, April 1997) contained observations on Wodehouse's lyrics in the company of W. S. Gilbert and Alan Ayckbourn.

'Passing GO and Collecting' (Vol. 14, No. 5, August 1998) saw Charles reflecting on collections in general and on the James Heineman collection in particular, prompted by its sale at Sotheby's.

As I travelled to Sotheby's, I expected to feel sad, dismayed even, at seeing such a large part of [Heineman's] life split up and disposed of in

"He is ambitious. It won't be long," said the girl, "before Wilberforce suddenly rises in the world."

She never spoke a truer word. At this very moment up he came from behind the settee like a leaping salmon.

"Julia!" he cried.

"Wilby!" yipped the girl.

And Pongo says he never saw anything more sickening in his life the way she flung herself into the blighter's arms and clung there like the ivy on the old garden wall.

(from 'Uncle Fred Flits By', 1935)

a couple of hours. But the more I thought about the kind of collection it was, and the kind of man Jimmy was, the less I felt inclined toward sadness. Jimmy once remarked, "We don't collect Wodehouse: he collects us," and one of the things he meant by that is that it is the spirit of the author that gives life to a collection of his works. And so does the spirit of the collector. . . . Though perhaps at one time Jimmy hoped that his collection might be preserved somewhere complete, he was such a vibrant man himself that at some point he would have come to view that as a kind of stagnation. . . . I think he'd be pleased to know, as he surely did, that if his Collection didn't sit on shelves by itself, it would enliven numerous other collections and collectors and, by so doing, take on a new life of its own . . . and his.

'Plagiarise, Publish and Perish' appeared in Vol. 19, No. 4, May/June 2003 (by this date *Book Source Monthly*, no doubt feeling the pressure from the internet, had changed from being a monthly to a bimonthly publication, prompting a name change to *Book Source Magazine*). The article dealt with literary allusions in Wodehouse, and a version subsequently appeared in *Plum Lines* (Vol. 25, No. 1, Spring 2004) under the title 'Plum Plagiarist? Of Course Not!'

'What Great Writers Read Is Wodehouse' appeared in November 2010 and focussed on comments about Wodehouse by authors who were his contemporaries. Unusually, part of the article had already first appeared in *Plum Lines*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Summer 2010.

Charles's 'Cracking the Code of the Woosters' was published in *Kent Quarterly* (the magazine of Kent School, where Charles was both a teacher and an Associate Editor of the magazine), in Vol. XIII, No. 2, Summer 1996. Charles's 1999 catalogue described the article as "an oddly fulsome and hypertensive, quasi scholarly address to the Convention of the Wodehouse Society in Boston, October 1995". The article subsequently appeared in *Plum Lines*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Spring 1996.

As can be seen from the above, Charles was a regular contributor to *Plum Lines*; in fact, he had 25 articles to his name, the first being in Vol. 9 No. 4 (November 1988) and the 25th in Vol. 35 No. 1 (Spring 2014). Charles was also a regular contributor to *Wooster Sauce* with ten articles to his name, the first being in issue No. 4 (December 1997) and the tenth in issue No. 78 (June 2016).

Percy gasped.

"You aren't suggesting this hat doesn't fit me?"

"It doesn't fit you by a mile."

"But it's a Bodmin."

"Call it that if you like. I call it a public outrage."

Percy was appalled. I mean, naturally. A nice thing for a chap to give his heart to a girl and then find her talking in this hideous, flippant way of sacred objects.

Then it occurred to him that, living all the time in the country, she might not have learned to appreciate the holy significance of the name Bodmin.

(from 'The Amazing Hat Mystery', 1933)

Recent Press Comment

Daily Mail, May 17 (from Stephen Payne)

In response to the question “Is it incorrect to call the P. G. Wodehouse character Jeeves a butler?” David Albury set out the distinctions between the responsibilities of a butler and valet before pointing out that Jeeves is, of course, the latter.

The Spectator, May 27 (from Christopher Bellew)

The ‘Mind Your Language’ column, by Dot Wordsworth, dealt with Americanisms. “Who put this in the mouth of a hero (or anti -hero): ‘In a word, am I hep?? Why, P.G Wodehouse, in *Piccadilly Jim* (1918). We might think Wodehouse penned the best prose since the Authorised Version, but he lived in America, loved it and played with its language. Take goof. Bingo Little was in a London club when found ‘with his mouth open and a sort of goofy expression in his eyes’. But he might have been in New York. In ‘The Heart of a Goof’, the Oldest Member explains that a golfing goof is one morbidly affected by the game until his ‘goofery unfits him for the battles of life’.”

The Guardian, May 27 (from Terry Taylor)

In an article about football novels, D. J. Taylor quoted *Psmith in the City* (1910), “which hinges on the efforts of two bank clerk heroes to worm their way into the affections of a superior by feigning an interest in the prospects of Manchester United”.

The Guardian, May 27 (from Terry Taylor)

Martina Hyde on Katie Hopkins: “Katie’s spiritual analogue is Roderick Spode, P. G. Wodehouse’s piss take of Oswald Mosley.” She then quoted possibly the most repeated PGW quotation in recent times, ending with: “Did you ever in your puff see such a perfect perisher?”

The Guardian, June 18

In ‘Stop the world, I need a break’, Victoria Coren Mitchell listed good things in the world, including: “Opening a P G Wodehouse novel on a rainy afternoon and starting to read. (‘Jeeves placed the sizzling eggs and b on the breakfast table and Reginald “Kipper” Herring and I, licking the lips, squared our elbows and got down to it . . .’).”

Daijiworld.com, June 25

Vikas Datta looked at ‘Wodehouse’s women and their most liberated flagbearer’, one Bobbie Wickham, describing her as “possibly one of Wodehouse’s most under-rated characters . . . most of the Wodehousian characters belong to a bygone era, but if any of them could fit in and flourish in our world, it would be Bobbie indubitably.”

The Daily Telegraph, June 26

PGW has been quoted in relation to Formula One – no mean feat! Dealing with a contretemps between Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel during the Azerbaijan

Grand Prix, Oliver Brown wrote: “If you want to find out a man’s true character, P G Wodehouse argued, play golf with him. In Formula One, it turns out, you just need to put him behind a safety car on a devilish street circuit by the Caspian Sea.”

Star2.com, July 2

In ‘When a book is more than just a book’, Sharmilla Ganesan wrote of the Jeeves series: “I had dipped in and out of Wodehouse’s brilliant stories of Jeeves and Bertie Wooster before but never did they help me as much as when I was going through my divorce. . . . With my life in general upheaval, I found it very difficult to lose myself in most books . . . but something about Wodehouse’s sly stories and witty prose proved to be exactly what I needed.”

The Times, July 3 (from June Arnold)

In the letters page, Frank Greaney wrote of the debate about ties in the House of Commons: “Tieless MPs in the Commons? What next? The wearing of bandanas? This proposal by the Speaker puts me in mind of Bertie Wooster berating Jeeves for questioning the need for ties to be worn ‘at a time like this’. ‘Sir,’ replies Jeeves, ‘there is no time when ties do not matter’.” The same quotation appeared in a letter from Bryan Oates in the *Daily Telegraph* letter page on July 4.

The Oldie, July 2017 (from Mike Swaddling)

Stephen Glover, in announcing the publication of his new novel about journalism, said that *Psmith, Journalist* is one of his favourites of that ilk. In the ‘Home Truths’ column, Sophia Waugh talked about making friends in later life, saying that one of the two simple questions to ask a new acquaintance in order to sort out “the sheep from the goats is ‘do you laugh at P.G. Wodehouse?’”

Daily Mail, July 11 (from Stephen Payne)

Ephraim Hardcastle wrote of Paul Burrell – Diana, Princess of Wales’s butler – that “He’s a far cry from P G Wodehouse’s discreet valet to idle, well-to-do gentleman Bertie Wooster, isn’t he?”

The Statesman, July 14

In singing the praises of PGW, Deepak Rikhye wrote: “His writing is manifest with wit and language which could, without difficulty, fit into a classical mould... [he] adored similes which were characterised by rare humour. One of the scores he wrote was, ‘She uttered a sound rather like an elephant taking its foot out of a mud hole in a Burmese teak forest’. His prose gushed out like a fountain.”

The Deccan Chronicle, July 17

Suresh Subrahmanyam wrote: “Among my circle of friends and relatives, it is no secret that my favourite author, by some distance, is P. G. Wodehouse. I wouldn’t be far wrong in saying he was the family favourite. . . . If you can get hold of a copy of Wodehouse’s *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* or any of the

Jeeves/Wooster and Blandings Castle stories, ‘grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel’.”

The Guardian, July 16

In a piece relating to Jane Austen appearing on the new £10 note, reference was made to an exhibition at the Bank of England’s museum that will feature PGW, who “lasted just two years at the nearby Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank”.

The Harrogate Advertiser, July 17

Comedian Tom Taylor’s show, *Charlie Montague Mysteries*, was described as being “designed for anyone who wished Bertie Wooster was a detective . . . and sees the gloriously inept love child of Agatha Christie and P G Wodehouse determined to prevent a murder”.

Cricket Country, July 18

In considering the joys of test cricket, Arunabha Sengupta wrote: “In *The Swoop! or How Clarence Saved England*, published in 1909, P G Wodehouse talks about the giant headline in a newspaper placard announcing **Surrey doing badly** with a smaller print noting the less important news, **German army lands in England**. Well, things are really not that cricket-centric now.”

Daily Mail, July 21 (from Terry Taylor)

Now, here’s one to discuss! Under the heading ‘OK you hate Americanisms. Blame Kipling and Wodehouse’, Marcus Berkman reviewed *That’s the Way It Crumbles* by Matthew Engels, who deplores the influence American slang has had on the English language. P G Wodehouse is reported as the author who above all was responsible for importing Americanisms, with several hundred blamed on him, including ‘call it a day’ (1919), ‘fifty-fifty’ (1913), and ‘on the blink’ (1912).

The Courier, July 22

House sitting is stressful, wrote Robert Mitchell. While looking after another’s chickens, “I felt like George Wellbeloved, the slightly unreliable pig-keeper employed by Lord Emsworth to look after his prize porker, The Empress of Blandings, in the P G Wodehouse books (a little of which I read every day, as did the late Queen Mother)”.

The New York Times, July 24 (from Tony Ring)

Perri Klass, in writing about his late father, said that “he read aloud an astonishing number of the works of P. G. Wodehouse, explaining the jokes, however inappropriate. . . . The Wodehouse stories involve explicating plots far from the experience of a child growing up in the 1960s in Manhattan and Northern New Jersey, but my father was undaunted. The Great Sermon Handicap . . . took a fair bit of explaining but my father loved explaining and I cannot reread the story (and I do reread the story) without hearing his voice, full of delight in every aspect of the setup.”

The Real Deal, July 25.

A report of the Real Deal’s seventh annual golf event teed off with: “‘Golf, my dear fellow, is the infallible test,’ P.G Wodehouse once wrote. ‘The man who can go into a patch of rough alone, with the knowledge that only God is watching him, and play his ball where it lies, is the man who will serve you faithfully and well.’”

The Guardian, July 25

In ‘Less landscape, more dialogue: Jane Austen’s lessons for creative writing students’, Sam Jordison wrote: “Like P G Wodehouse after her, Austen gets to dialogue as quickly as possible – and makes it sharp and lively.”

The Guardian, July 28 (from Hilary Bruce & Terry Taylor)

In ‘Where are all the great books about women in sport?!’, Emma John wrote: “Even P G Wodehouse, who captured cricket and golf with fun and flair, understood that women could be as sport-obsessed as men. In his short story ‘Jane Gets off the Fairway’, a wayward wife is shocked back into marital fidelity when she realises that her young son, whose grip she has been neglecting, is holding his club incorrectly: ‘Now there he was, grasping the club as if it had been a spade. . . . She shuddered to the very depths of her soul.’”

Ifpress.com, August 4

Yet more golf. George Clark, saying he was “teed off by the noisy sounds of distraction”, wrote: “I wouldn’t want you to think of me in the way . . . P. G. Wodehouse described an acquaintance. ‘The least thing upset him on the links. He missed short putts because of the uproar of the butterflies in the adjoining meadows.’”

The Spectator, August 5 (from Christopher Bellew)

In ‘The Surrey Hills’ Christopher Winn wrote: “Surrey is England’s most wooded county and if you drive east from Guildford, birthplace of P G Wodehouse . . . you enter a magical land.” Also, in the ‘Mind Your Language’ column, Dot Wordsworth wrote: “‘Remember what the fellow said – it’s not a bally bit of use every bally prospect pleasing if man is vile,’ Bertie Wooster remarked. (In this case, the man was Aunt Agatha’s second husband.) Now Bertram was quite widely, if not exactly, versed in the gems of English literature and older readers will, like Wodehouse, recognise the most quotable line from Bishop Heber’s celebrated hymn, From Greenland’s Icy Mountains.”

The Tribune, August 7

In ‘The day of the “nodder”’, Vivek Atray wrote: “P G Wodehouse was always ahead of his time. And when he introduced the breed of ‘nodders’ in a classic short story based on Hollywood’s goings-on in the 1920s, he broke the mould. The very concept of engaging a man who would nod vigorously at the exact moment when the engager needed him to nod was innovative to say the least.”

Jersey Evening Post, August 17

A brief but right-minded article by an unidentified writer declared that “Wodehouse is the perfect antidote to today’s misery”. After providing a selection of nifty quotes to back up this contention, the author went on to describe Wodehouse’s working methods and explain the wartime episode. “When asked if he didn’t hate the Nazis, . . . he replied that he found it impossible to ‘hate in the plural’ . . . Both the news and the world would be an easier place, if like Wodehouse, we absolutely refused to ‘hate in the plural’.” Hear! Hear!

Future Events for Your Diary

September 25, 2017 Society Meeting & AGM NEW DATE! NEW VENUE!

Hip hip hurrah! The Society has a new home for our thrice-yearly meetings! Not only that, we are changing the dates of our meetings to Mondays henceforward. Full details can be found in Society News on page 2, but herewith the gist: Our autumn meeting, complete with AGM, will be held on Monday September 25, at the Savile Club in Mayfair; the address is 69 Brook Street, London W1K 4ER. *Please note there is a dress code:* no jeans or trainers, please, and gentlemen must wear a jacket (tie not required). We look forward to seeing members, old and new, on the 25th! (And if you're curious about meeting dates in 2018, keep an eye on our website and the December issue of *WS*.)

October 6–November 4, 2017

By Jeeves at the Old Laundry Theatre

If you're headed to the Lake District this autumn, then schedule a visit to the Old Laundry Theatre in Bowness-on-Windermere to *By Jeeves* as directed by Alan Ayckbourn, also its writer (with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber).

October 19–22, 2017

TWS Convention in Washington, D.C.

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

October 29, 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.

January 14, 2018 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Take a walk with Richard Burnip and enjoy a lot about and by Wodehouse along the way! See October 29, above, for details on when and where.

January 24–February 18, 2018 *Jeeves Takes a Bow* at the North Carolina Stage Company

This play adapted from PGW by Margaret Raether has received excellent reviews wherever it has played. So if you're planning a visit to the states during the winter, a trip to Asheville, North Carolina, may be in order. For details and tickets, see the NC Stage Company's website at www.ncstage.org.

April 8, 2018 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Take a walk with Richard Burnip and enjoy a lot about and by Wodehouse along the way! See October 29.

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