

# WOOSTER SAUCE

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## Jeeves and Wooster Go to *Neo Yokio*

by Constance Walker

*Dr. Constance Walker is Professor of English and the Liberal Arts at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, USA. This past October she gave a delightful talk at The Wodehouse Society convention, 'Plum Among the Undergraduates', which will be published in a forthcoming Plum Lines as 'Jeeves Among the Hipsters'. This paper is an extension of part of that talk.*



For several years now my love of Wodehouse and my professional duties as a professor of English literature have happily coincided in a course I designed for undergraduates, entitled 'Introduction to British Comedy'. The syllabus ranges from Shakespeare to sitcoms, and includes works by the writers indispensable to the British comic tradition – i.e. Austen, Wilde – as well as those by writers my students are less likely to have encountered, such as Wodehouse. In constructing the course, I saw it as a perfect opportunity for them to make his acquaintance. Yet I couldn't help but wonder whether the millennial generation would, in fact, enjoy Wodehouse: would they find his fictional world and his humour trivial or dated or, worse still, unappealing?

As it turns out, I need not have worried: every time I've taught Wodehouse, students have responded with enthusiastic delight. Moreover, I've come to believe that as millennials they are, in fact, particularly well situated to appreciate Wodehouse. I have suggested elsewhere that there are three major similarities between millennial and Wodehousian humour: both share a creative engagement with irony, with style, and with language. What I would like to do in this essay is to consider how millennial attitudes towards fashion inform their enjoyment of the Wodehouse stories, and also how those attitudes towards fashion in turn inform a new semi-adaptation of Wodehouse.

The interest of the millennial generation in fashion is apparent to anyone who has spent any time observing its members' distinctive and highly varied sartorial choices. Hipster garb is perhaps the most flamboyant manifestation of such interest: with its iconic oversized plaid shirts, combat boots, and sleeve tattoos, it deliberately challenges and critiques conventional mainstream taste. And many of those millennials who eschew the urban bohemian look nevertheless present carefully curated images of themselves on Snapchat and Instagram, choosing clothes as an exercise in self-expression. For a fee, services such as Bombfell, Stitchfix, and Rent the Runway will minimise the risk of fashion mistakes by providing entire coordinated wardrobes, arriving in monthly boxes. Interest in designer clothes still runs high among the millennials, who patronise both preferred established brands (Burberry, Louis Vuitton) and the newer high-end street wear of pop-culture-icons-turned-designer such as Rihanna and Kanye West. Their consciously playful mixing of high and low, casual and upscale, is a means towards the paradoxical ideal of individual style.

Fashion is, of course, one of Bertie Wooster's abiding interests as well, even inspiring him once to produce 'a few words' on the topic, 'What the Well-Dressed Man is Wearing', for his Aunt Dahlia's paper, *Milady's Boudoir*. Bertie naively prides himself on his fashion sense, often acquiring flashy articles of clothing that fail to meet Jeeves's impeccable standards of taste. The quiet battles waged between the two over such offending items as crimson cummerbunds, purple socks, and short white dinner jackets become a running joke in the series, with Jeeves extricating Bertie from difficulties at the price of extricating the offending articles of clothing from his wardrobe. The trope provides the stories with both structure and humour: we know that Jeeves, who cannot outright forbid Bertie to wear the despised item, will nevertheless manoeuvre his way

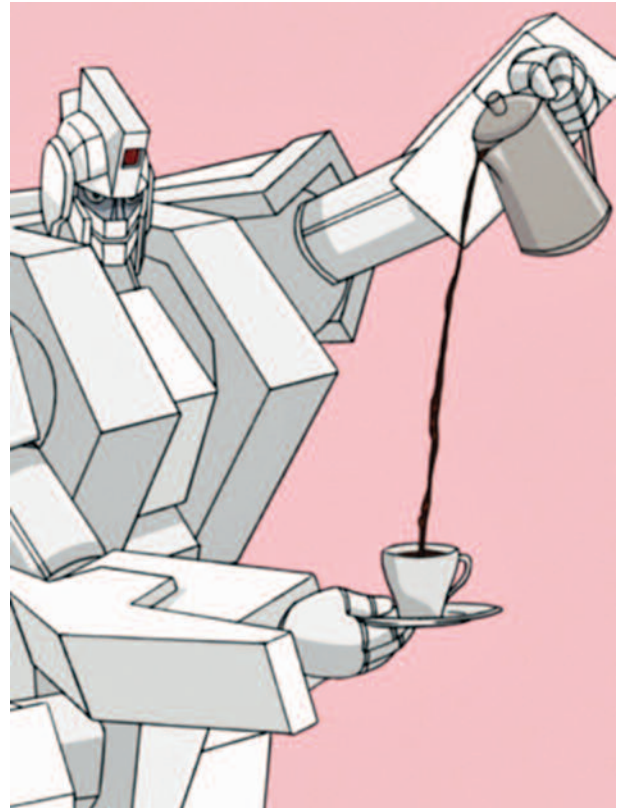
into a position of control so as to dispose of the offending article by story's end (adding insult to injury, it's normally donated to someone far beneath Bertie's social status). And we relish the ironic contrast between the aristocrat Bertie's blithe, confident assertions of his good taste and independence and the valet Jeeves's far superior discernment and skill at manipulating his employer.

In fact, Bertie's comic plight resonates particularly strongly with my millennial students, who have both more freedom and more latitude for error in choosing their clothes than he does, and who face considerable peer pressure to dress stylishly. The 'What Are Those?!' meme, for example, mocking unfashionable shoes, reveals the potential for social humiliation over making the wrong choice. My students are both amused by Bertie's fashion mistakes and perhaps a little envious of Jeeves as a built-in failsafe against wardrobe malfunctions.

*Neo Yokio*, a recent animated television series that alludes directly to characters from the Jeeves and Wooster stories, keeps fashion as a theme but updates it to more closely reflect its importance in millennial culture. A blend of science fiction and anime, *Neo Yokio* takes place in a futuristic version of New York City, where eligible bachelor Kaz Khan (voiced by Jaden Smith) is served by his mecha butler Charles (Jude Law), complete with English RP accent. (Since Jeeves already seems almost superhuman in the Wodehouse stories, how better to create his science-fiction avatar than by making him literally so?) Bertie is an aristocrat; Kaz is a magistocrat, with powers of exorcising the demons that haunt the city. Both are plagued with a domineering Aunt Agatha (Susan Sarandon), reluctantly doing her bidding when they'd much rather be hanging out at Instagrammable clubs and cafés with their friends.

*Neo Yokio* also alludes to several scenes from the *Jeeves and Wooster* Granada television series: Charles packing for a journey, Kaz in a rubber-duck-filled tub, and Kaz's over-the-top physical reaction to an incendiary martini. And it even commandeers Stephen Fry, who provides the voice of a headmaster in episode 3—and who manages to steal a scene in episode 6 merely by announcing departing trains.

Clothes figure even more prominently as part of



Charles pours coffee.

the plot and as the subject of dialogue in *Neo Yokio* than in the Wodehouse stories. The first three episodes revolve around a Chanel suit, a tuxedo “the darkest shade of midnight blue,” and high school uniforms that are “the pinnacle of teen fashion”. Luxury name brands are sprinkled liberally throughout the series: a 1919 Cartier Tank watch, a Céline handbag, a pair of Alexander Wang bathing trunks, an Alaïa gown. And the characters share the strong millennial interest in fashion: running into his arch-rival Arcangelo Corelli twice at Bergdorf Goodman, Kaz asks, “What, do you live here?” “I wish I lived here,” sighs Arcangelo. “So do I,” admits Kaz. When Aunt Agatha demands that they meet at a café, he complains, “Do we have to? I just got some seriously distressing news about my outfit.” His friend, the fashion blogger Helena St. Tessoro, is worshipped by her followers, the ‘Helenists’: when she leaves her sickbed to appear at the Black and White Ball wearing only a hospital gown, they breathe reverentially, “Next. Level!!!” – and appear sporting hospital gowns of their own in the next episode. While Helena herself becomes disenchanted with fashion, proclaiming, “I’m done searching for meaning in the aesthetic cycles of commodities”, we’re meant to be amused by the earnestness of both devotees and detractors alike.

And it is amusement with a satiric yet not unsympathetic edge. Wodehouse invites us to laugh indulgently at the tug of war over Bertie's wardrobe in a world with clear sartorial standards, upheld rigorously by Jeeves. *Neo Yokio*, however, imagines the familiar Wodehouse characters in a world more like ours, less bound by the homogenous fashion



The fashion-conscious Kaz with his mecha butler, Charles

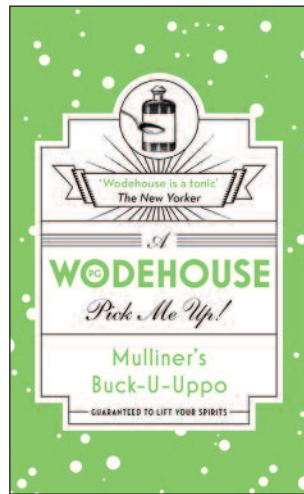
standards of the past. The new “rules” are hardly rules at all: they are fluid, continuously reinvented and replaced almost daily on social media. A Jeeves in a postmodern world without Jeeves’s standards, Charles defers to Kaz’s fashion savvy. As Kaz rifles blindfolded through a rack of suit jackets at Bergdorf (to better judge the quality of the fabric), Charles admiringly tells him, “You are a true master, sir. Watching you shop merely by touch is . . . inspiring.” But without the safety net of a Jeeves, even a devotee of fashion like Kaz is vulnerable when sartorial rules are continuously shifting and one’s appearance is also continuously judged. In episode 2, Arcangelo outwits Kaz, shaming him into abandoning a midnight-blue tuxedo only to show up at the ball in one himself, winning plaudits for his “fashion-forward” choice: “Midnight blue is the new wave—and I alone will take credit for it.” Worse yet, the tuxedo debacle is enough to bump Kaz from the top position on the Ranking of Bachelors Board, prominently displayed high above Times Square.

It isn’t difficult to see the characters’ obsession with style and status as a lightly exaggerated version of millennial preoccupations. *Neo Yokio* satirises millennials anxiously seeking an edge in social interactions, explicitly incorporating former fashionista Helena’s critique of fashion as shallow, materialistic, and narcissistic. Yet it also recognizes and captures the genuine pleasure in fashion for its own sake, the pleasures of shopping and of photo shoots with friends, of wearing perfectly fitting, elegant clothes, suggesting that it is more than simply a trivial pursuit. It invites us to laugh at the characters (and perhaps at our own self-absorption), but also to find their enjoyment endearing. Just as hope springs eternal for Bertie with every new fashion find, Kaz too remains optimistic, calling fashion “a glimmer of hope in a cruel world.” Despite the difference in their sartorial cultures and circumstances, in their comic resilience both old and new versions of the Wodehouse character are cut from the same cloth.

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## The Random House ‘Pick-Me-Up’ Competition

In the December 2017 issue of *Wooster Sauce*, we provided details of a competition for which Random House provided sets of their recently published Wodehouse ‘Pick-Me-Up’ books, each containing three PGW short stories, as prizes. Entries were received from members in five countries: Australia, India, the Netherlands, the United States, and (of course) the UK. Entrants had been invited to suggest titles of the three short stories that they would choose to include in a similar book, together with a short comment of not more than 50 words about why these stories would have a ‘pick-me-up’ effect on the reader. Following are the winners selected by the judges, along with their entries.



**Overall Winner: Ken Clevenger, USA**

‘Came the Dawn’

‘Jeeves and the Impending Doom’

‘Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best’

*This cross-section of Wodehouse is the perfect anodyne for gloominess. The titles alone offer consolation and hope. The stories showcase Plum’s happiest endings to life’s besetting turmoils. They each put a character’s apparent dilemma in a positive perspective with a winning outcome. And they are funny, witty, and wise.*

**Runner-Up: Ashok Kumar Bhatia, India**

‘Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend’

‘Indian Summer of an Uncle’

‘The Juice of an Orange’

*As long as income disparities exist, an act of taking care of the poor would touch a chord. Health challenges can always bring together two hearts torn asunder by the class divisions in our society. Depriving one of the necessary vitamins can lead to an astonishing transformation in one’s character. These are the universal messages which these stories convey.*

**Runner-Up: Jennifer Scheppers, UK**

‘The Reverent Wooing of Archibald’

‘The Clicking of Cuthbert’

‘Tried in the Furnace’

*Each story has caused me to laugh out loud, uncontrollably and from the belly, to the point of tears. And I’ve been unable to compose myself sufficiently to read them aloud to others. The joy of each remains undiminished after multiple readings – they continue to induce beaming and general contentment.*

Not surprisingly, our winners from the USA and India were not able to come to the Savile Club on 26 February to collect their prizes. We were very pleased that Jen Scheppers was able to be there.

We give sincere thanks to Random House for providing the prizes for the competition. As a point of interest, ‘Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend’ was the single story most frequently nominated in the competition entries.

## Society News

### Cricket Season

It's that time of the year when the Gold Bats start practising their stances, strokes, and googlies as a new cricket season looms. Last year, appalling weather caused the cancellation of both our official matches, but fingers are crossed that all will be well this year and we will enjoy a sparkling season.

On Friday, 25 May, the Gold Bats will meet the Dulwich Dusters at Dulwich College. The start time is 4:15 pm, and the game will be followed by a barbecue. (Yes, that's right, the Society's cricket tea is no more, but the barbecue has proved to be a popular replacement, and there is a bar in the pavilion.) This is a ground that PGW knew and loved, and it is always enjoyable returning to Dulwich.

The next month, the Gold Bats will play the Sherlock Holmes Society of London at the West Wycombe Cricket Club (HP14 3AE). The date is Sunday, 24 June, and the start time, as usual, is 11 am. If you decide to attend, be sure to bring along a picnic lunch to enjoy in bucolic surroundings. There is also a possibility of an after-match drink in a pub near the cricket ground.

As ever, members are encouraged to attend these two official Society games, as well as others in which our team takes part.

### Sharpen Your Grey Cells

Our next Society meeting will be held on Monday, 16 July, at the Savile Club; we gather from 6 pm onwards. Please remember the dress code: jackets for men, no jeans or trainers.

With two meetings at the Savile now behind us, it is clear we have settled in very nicely at our new venue. The comfortable surroundings there will make it all the more conducive to the merriment that always takes place when we engage in the now-traditional PGWSUK pub quiz. (Perhaps we should call it a club quiz?) Our Entertainments Impresario and Quizmaster, Paul Kent, is even now working on devising fiendishly difficult and downright enjoyable questions to both challenge and tickle us. Do come along and join in the fun!

## We Remember

### Godfrey Smith, 1926–2017

Members of the Society were saddened to learn of the death of our long-time Patron, Godfrey Smith, on 22 December 2017 at the age of 91. A respected journalist also known for his gastronomic proclivities, he was lauded for turning *The Sunday Times Magazine* into a widely admired, photograph-filled supplement that covered an array of subjects reported on by many of the greatest names in journalism and literature. Though he worked for other newspapers in the 1950s and early 1960s, Godfrey's longest association was with *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*; he took over editorship of the magazine in 1965. In the course of his career, he also wrote several novels and nonfiction books. His obituary in *The Times* (23 December) noted that "his passions were cricket, rugby football, Beethoven and traditional jazz." Those who knew him were well aware that another passion was P. G. Wodehouse: Godfrey was a



member of the Drones (see Recent Press Comment, December 29, page 23) as well as being a Patron of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK). Until recent years he was a regular attendee at the Society's biennial formal dinners, even reporting on two of them for *Wooster Sauce*. His interests were widespread and included membership of the Penguin

Collectors Society, whose ranks swelled by 107 after he wrote about it in *The Sunday Times* in February 1982. (He described the society as "a club for the nicest bunch of nutters".) He was renowned for his devotion to his friends; his *Who's Who* entry gives "chums" as his recreations. We last had the pleasure of

seeing Godfrey in July 2016 at the tree planting to celebrate the life of Percy Jeeves in Cheltenham. He was, as ever, larger than life and a joy to talk to. He will be sorely missed.

– ELIN WOODGER MURPHY

# Our Formal London Dinner

## Thursday, October 11, 2018

The Society's 11th formal London dinner is to be held on Thursday, 11 October 2018. As usual, it will be held at The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, London WC1. Dinner will be 7.00 pm for 7.30; dress code is black tie.

We have once again been lucky to be offered very generous sponsorship, which means we have been able to keep the cost at £95 per head for the fourth occasion running. For this, those who attend will enjoy a champagne reception and a splendid four-course dinner, including wine, followed by the customary brilliant after-dinner entertainment. All this

in the stunning surroundings of the Gray's Inn Hall in the company of many of our patrons.

Further details of how to apply and application forms will be included with the June edition of *Wooster Sauce*. Members who have attended previous dinners will be aware how quickly the places are booked and, as usual, places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. It is therefore strongly recommended that members look out for the application form in the next edition of *Wooster Sauce* and apply for tickets by return.

– TIM ANDREW



## Letters to the Editor

*Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers*

### *From Alan Hall*

Congratulations on another entertaining edition of *Wooster Sauce* (No. 84). I particularly enjoyed the delightfully droll article by David Hoare and how very apposite is his writing. However, although his idea is sound in principle, I think it does need some modification – if modification is the word I want. Come on, David – dash it all! I mean to say, six Wodehouse novels each year for the godchild from the age of one means that by the time the little perisher is eight years old and, presumably, reading, he or she is going to have 48 Wodehouse volumes to get through before the next three arrive. What with school work, games and sports, Scouts, music lessons and, now, the additional burden of trying to work out their preferred sex, the young rascal is hardly going to have the time enjoy a surfeit of the Master.

### *From Peter Thompson*

Re. 'What the Well Dressed Godfather buys his Godchildren' by David Hoare –

What a beautifully written and amusing article in the December 2017 *Wooster Sauce*. I have to admit to a pang of jealousy at reading of the good fortune of David Hoare's godchildren, Sarah and Hugo. Rather like P. G. Wodehouse himself, I too had received from my godfather nothing but a beer glass the size of a large egg-cup, with a silver top. I know it was wartime, but only for the first three years. I was not saddled with the godfather's name, so to that end, I came out ahead after the Christening.

But the thought of acquiring over the years a complete catalogue of Wodehouse books, a dinner every two years, and membership of the Society for ten years, I think we have a candidate for the Godfather of the Year Award. Who knows, by then there may even be a tie to wear to brag to less fortunate people to which club you belong. Hugo, Sarah, you are indeed the godchildren who, in the haystack of life, have drawn the long straw and then some. Enjoy! A lifetime of literary pleasure is on its way. I must start my grandchildren on the path to a lifetime love. Thank you for inspiring me, Mr. Hoare.

### *From Mark Taylor*

As a lifelong Billy Bunter fan – although born long after the Magnet ended – I read Mike Wilton's 'My First Wodehouse Experience' article (December 2017) with interest. My own first Wodehouse experience was *Mike at Wrykyn*. A fellow Bunter fan at school said he'd read *Mike and Psmith*, and Psmith was a bit like Lord Mauleverer of the remove. I then read *The World of Psmith* and was pretty well hooked.

Regarding Jonathan Bacchus's *Wooster* mysteries, I always assumed that Bingo and Rosie did marry in a hurry. Since Bertie's Uncle Willoughby was an old friend of Lord Emsworth, perhaps they'd met that way? Bertie at Blandings: Aunt Agatha meets Aunt Constance? Galahad meets Aunt Dahlia?

### *From Alan Hall*

I was interested to read Tony Ring's comment at the end of his report on the banquet at The Wodehouse Society's convention (December 2017): "[S]pend a moment marvelling at the sheer awareness that Wodehouse fans have of the detail of their favourite author's writing." Well, that may be so, but I bet, despite their awareness, none of them knew the answer to Paul Kent's quiz question at the last Society meeting. I'd even offer 100/8! The question he posed was: "At the Drones Club outing to Le Touquet as described at the opening of *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, how many members of the Drones attempt the channel crossing?" Now, I know Paul is generally a good egg, but I ask you, is this a fair question? This is just a passing comment on page 14 of *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* – not even a quote in inverted commas. Come on, Paul, play the game, old chap. I dare say Jeeves might have known the answer, but I suspect it is well beyond the ken of most of us mere mortals, even after a good fish supper.

# Peter van Straaten in Blandings Heaven

by Peter Nieuwenhuizen

On December 8, 2016, the Dutch artist and cartoonist Peter van Straaten passed away in his hometown, Amsterdam, at the age of 81. Van Straaten was a famous cartoonist who won various prizes for his political cartoons and received an honorary doctorate at Leiden University in 2011. For more than 50 years he drew daily comic strips for Dutch newspapers like *Parool*, *Volkskrant*, and *NRC Handelsblad*, and he also made annual tear-off calendars. His *Vader & Zoon* cartoons (about a conservative father and left-wing son) were famous. He also wrote several books and received the Jacobus van Looy Prize for his unique talents. He drew with a sharp pen and brilliant observation.

Van Straaten was inspired by the American artist Charles Dana Gibson (1867–1944); by his brother Gerard (1924–2011), also an artist; and by his fellow Dutch cartoonists Leo Jordaan (1885–1980) and Jo Spier (1900–1978), the latter of whom, like Wodehouse, immigrated to the United States. From 1976 to 1983, van Straaten drew the front covers for Dutch translations of many Wodehouse novels. In total he produced 23 different covers for Spectrum publishers in Utrecht (NL).

On the basis of this work, James Heineman asked van Straaten to create a ‘Bayeux Tapestry’ of 12 Wodehouse scenes that Mr Heineman had selected. The scenes would form one elongated representation of the Wodehouse world for the 1981 centenary Wodehouse exhibition at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. Van Straaten accepted the assignment and presented the result of his efforts when he met Heineman in the Amsterdam Okura hotel. Heineman subsequently invited him to be present at the exhibition’s festive opening night. There van Straaten met Lady Wodehouse, and according to him she was carried around by two men and enthusiastically kissed by all the men present at the gala dinner.



When Dan Garrison was looking for illustrations for his book *Who’s Who in Wodehouse*, he contacted James Heineman, who revealed “a whole trove” of van Straaten’s work. The pictures were reproduced in Garrison’s volume with Heineman’s permission. In the book’s second edition, Garrison published the reply he had received from Heineman during their original correspondence:

It was one of those depressing, grey, damp, dreary and rainy days in Amsterdam when it made little difference whether or not you had fallen into a canal. In the gloom I tripped over some steps and fell through a creaky door into a basement bookstore lit by a sombre bulb hanging alone on a cord. I was cursed at in Dutch. As I got to my feet life changed. There before me was a large table covered by Dutch translations of P. G. Wodehouse, all with covers illustrated by Peter van Straaten, a real master of his craft. Each illustration depicted not only the theme of the book, but also captured the scenes and characters of the story in a few deceptively simple lines. It was an illustrated digest of Wodehouse, and I bought them all.

The search for the illustrator was not an easy task as Van Straaten is somewhat reclusive and lives in a tiny town known but to himself, his family, the postmistress and a couple of other natives. Outside of his hamlet van Straaten’s work is widely known in Holland.

... He draws his Wodehouse characters as they are visualized by several generations of Wodehouse fans.

In those days van Straaten lived in the small town of Giethoorn, also known as ‘the Venice of the North’. Later he moved to Amsterdam and also had a second residence in Airole (Italy).

Van Straaten’s Wodehouse illustrations can be found in numerous publications, including *P. G. Wodehouse: A Centenary Celebration 1881–1981* (Heineman and Bensen, 1981); *The Penguin Wodehouse Companion* (Usborne, 1988); *Who’s Who in Wodehouse* (Garrison, 1989); and *What’s in Wodehouse* (Gould, 1989). More information about Peter van Straaten can be found (in Dutch) at [www.petervanstraaten.nl/](http://www.petervanstraaten.nl/).



One of 23 van Straaten book covers

# My First Wodehouse Experience

by Roger Bowen

A silly story with daft characters was my immature verdict on *The Inimitable Jeeves*. At age eight, my brother Malcolm had presented me with the Penguin version of the 1923 work. I was just too young to appreciate the writing of the comic genius. What does a child know?

Twenty years later, at a time when I was feeling very low, my wife Gwen bought me *Right Ho, Jeeves*. My mood and my view of Wodehouse were transformed at a stroke. That classic description of Gussie Fink-Nottle's speech at Market Snodsbury Grammar School left me in tears of laughter – a feat which subsequent re-readings never fail to achieve.

The Jeeves and Wooster stories captivated me first; the Blandings works took a little time. It was the wonderful Galahad and his loveable brother Clarence who won me over in the end. Then I went on to the school books, Ukridge, Mulliner, and, finally, the earliest adult stories.



It's hard to pin down why Wodehouse appeals so much to me. Perhaps it's his remarkable command of, and playful toying with, the English language, resulting in an unfailing 'talent to amuse'. When I

first read Plum's works, it was usually with my *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* or *Chambers* to hand to verify his more obscure references. But can anyone explain to me, please, what on earth an Ouled Nail Dancer was, or why one can be disgruntled but rarely grunted?

Best of all, to be seen reading a Wodehouse in a public place is the passport to meeting some charming people. "Oh, I love his books!" is the standard response. And I can say

quite honestly that to meet a fellow Wodehouse lover is to make a new friend.

With 100-plus Wodehouse-related volumes on our shelves, I think Gwen and I can be classed as addicts of his work. As my doctor once put it, "Plum's books are the best antidepressants known to the medical profession, and with no side effects other than laughter." I could not agree more.

## Cosy Moments

*Shaggy Dogs and Black Sheep*, by Albert Jack (2005)  
(from Roger Bowen)

This book is a guide to the derivation of common phrases. For 'Run Amuck' or 'Amock', Albert Jack cites *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, in which he found this sentence: "So that when the policeman arrived and found me running amuck with an assegai, apparently without provocation, it was rather difficult to convince him that I was not drunk." Jack goes on to say: "I doubt Wodehouse was high on opium either when he wrote this."

Jack also addresses the term 'Billio', noting it became popular thanks to – you guessed it – P. G. Wodehouse. As an example, he cites this passage from *The Code of the Woosters*:

"But, Bertie, this sounds as if you were not going to sit in."

"It was how I meant it to sound."

"You wouldn't fail me, would you?"

"I would. I'd fail you like Billio."

(It should be noted that many editions have it as 'Billy-o', and sources vary as to the term's origins.)

*Evelyn Waugh: A Life*, by Philip Eade (2016)  
(from R. G. Taylor)

In chapter 11 there is an extract from a 1928 letter written to Waugh by Naomi Mitchison: "I adore funny books, but when one looks for them one never finds anything but P. G. Wodehouse, and after all one is a highbrow." (Actually, not a very comforting thought!)

*Our Kind of Traitor*, by John le Carré (2010)  
(from Christopher Bellew and Martin Cole)

A delightful exchange appears fairly early in this novel:

"If we'd been playing tennis next morning, I'll bet he'd have played his usual game. He's got a huge engine and it runs on alcohol. He's proud of that."

Perry sounded as if he was proud too.

"Or if we misquote the Master" – Hector, it turned out, was a fellow devotee of P. G. Wodehouse – "the kind of chap who was born a couple of drinks below par?"

"Precisely, Bertie," Perry agreed in his best Wodehousian.

# Anything Goes at Oxted School

by Sam Oxlade, Year 9

*Sam wrote this review for his school's newspaper in Oxted, Surrey, and it was the work of a moment for Hal Cazalet to snatch it up and pass it on to Wooster Sauce. The students of Oxted performed Anything Goes for five nights, December 5–9, 2017. As Hal wrote, "It is interesting how the kids related to this 'vintage' musical, as it seems reassuring that quality never dates." Thanks to Philip Harmer for providing Sam's review plus the photos.*



Once again, it was time for Oxted School to pick our annual production, and after much excited anticipation among the students, the production team of teachers finally announced it was to be *Anything Goes*. Set in the 1920s, it follows the story of Wall Street broker Billy Crocker, who stows away on the SS *American* to be near his lost love, Hope Harcourt, who is engaged to the wealthy Englishman Lord Evelyn Oakleigh. It's a story of passion, perseverance, and love, and it was a huge delight to many students. The production team had thought carefully about how to relate the historical nuances to the customs of modern life and focused their direction of the play to suit both the setting of the production and the 21st century audience. Much to the surprise of many teachers, more people showed up to the auditions than ever, and although not everyone stayed the course, everyone had fun!

There was certainly a very ecstatic cast, especially in the pair of pupils sharing the part of Evelyn Oakleigh. "I love my part!" said Alex Maynard, 17. "It's really fun working with the comedy timing – he's such a posh character!" The other Oakleigh, Joel Wall, told us that the play was "good fun, with a great cast to work with!" Teddy Stevenson, 18, who played the principal role three

times in a row in our school productions, had now come back for his last performance. He admitted that this last show was "the best". He described his character of Billy Crocker as "obsessed with Hope, and with great lines".



In the play, Crocker has an evangelist friend who helps him out along the way. She was played by the sixth-former Sophie Green, who described her experience quite positively: "I love my character; she's so relatable!"

After recruiting such an eager cast, rehearsals began promptly. Everyone began frantically learning lines and perfecting their performances. For our teacher, Lucy Seymour, Head of the Creative Arts faculty at Oxted School, this was her third production with us. This year she had taken a slightly different approach to the casting: a split cast. This meant that all principal roles were divided between two students to perform on individual nights. "There are so many talented students," explained Mrs Seymour, "it would be a shame not to include them as much as I could in this wonderful play!"

Then, something incredible happened on opening night.

We got an email from the great-grandson of P. G. Wodehouse, Hal Cazalet. But it wasn't only a message. Hal had written us a new version of the song 'Anything Goes' and recorded himself singing it. None of us could contain our excitement! He had even included some of the names of our cast and production team, such as Teddy, Luke, and Mrs

Seymour! This inspirational song gave us huge motivation for the big performance, and none of us could wait to go out and show the audience what we had!

One of the youngest members of the main cast, Jonah Rumsey, 14, who was playing the gangster Moonface Martin, was afraid that his older partner, Luke, was doing a much better job than he was. As it turned out, he



was greeted by rapturous applause, and he was more encouraged than ever.





The audience adored the show; we got plenty of amazing feedback from friends and family who had come to see it. They were dazzled by the lights, the costumes, and our incredible ship-like set. And although people laughed at different jokes on different nights, everyone found comedy somewhere, even the little ones, who might not have understood some of the more adult jokes.



All in all it was a spectacular performance, and even though some students were pushed out of their comfort zones, I'm sure they'd all be tempted to give it another try. Mrs Euridge, the head teacher, described it as one of the "best opening nights I've ever seen".

So it turned out that Wodehouse's musical was a success at Oxted, which leads me to wonder: what will we be doing next year . . . ?



## *A Classic Letter*

Periodically *The Times* produces a book reprinting letters to the editor that have appeared in its pages over the years. The latest version, *Great Letters: A Century of Notable Correspondence*, edited by James Owen, was published in October 2017 and, as in many past editions, includes one of P. G. Wodehouse's most famous letters. Inevitably, magazines reproducing selections from the book have chosen PGW's missive. Thanks to ALEXANDER DAINTY and LESLEY TAPSON for bringing them to this Editor's attention.

30 November 1937

*Sir*, Your correspondent Mr John Hayward is to a great extent right in his statement that Bertie Wooster has a receding chin. A fishlike face has always been hereditary in the Wooster family. Froissart, speaking of the Sieur de Wooster who did so well in the Crusades – his record of 11 paynim with 12 whacks of the battleaxe still stands, I believe – mentions that, if he had not had the forethought to conceal himself behind a beard like a burst horsehair sofa, more than one of King Richard's men – who, like all of us, were fond of a good laugh – would have offered him an ant's egg.

On the other hand, everything is relative. Compared with Sir Roderick Glossop, Tuppy Glossop, old Pop Stoker, Mr Blumenfeld, and even Jeeves, Bertie is undoubtedly opisthognathous. But go to the Drones and observe him in the company of Freddie Widgeon, Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright, and – particularly – of Augustus Fink-Nottle, and his chin will seem to stick out like the ram of a battleship.

*Your obedient servant, P. G. Wodehouse*

# Plum at the Nobel Prize Ceremony

by Tomas Prenkert

When the Nobel Prize in Literature was presented to Kazuo Ishiguro on 10 December 2017, he was lauded by the Permanent Secretary of the Royal Swedish Academy, Professor Sara Danius (Södertörn University and Uppsala University). Mrs Danius's speech, given in Swedish, mentioned Wodehouse (my translation):

*The Remains of the Day* is probably his most famous novel. It starts out like a book by P. G. Wodehouse and tells us about a British butler on his way to an old friend. Before we know it, we are also on our way, right down into the abyss of existence.

There are two things to notice here: (1) the references Mr Ishiguro made to Wodehouse in his work, and (2) the fact that Mrs Danius noticed these references and pointed them out in her speech. It's encouraging that she mentioned Wodehouse in a ceremony that was televised worldwide. She clearly thought that Wodehouse was so well known that she could refer to him outright, even if her speech was directed mostly to a literary elite, not to the general public.

The other authors Mrs Danius mentioned in her speech were Jane Austen, Franz Kafka, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Marcel Proust, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf. All are literary titans, and although perhaps today's readers are not so familiar with many of them, Plum is in very distinguished company when mentioned together with such authors. It indicates that they all belong in a literary world with which everyone ought to be familiar, in the eyes of the Swedish Academy.

Mrs Danius did not refer to any specific book by Wodehouse. Rather, she was talking generally of Wodehouse's books — of Jeeves with his eloquent language, and of his young master, Bertie, whose own language mixes high with low and sometimes uses slang.

In the first chapter of *The Remains of the Day*, the most obvious parallel with Wodehouse is the relationship between the butler and his master, in this case an American, Mr. Farraday. The butler, Mr Stevens, dwells on the greatness and nobility of the past, in the time of his previous employer, Lord Darlington. He is very anxious about manners, style, and dignity and he knows, and is proud of, his feudal position; we can see this from his speech and attitude. His new master, on the contrary, is a rich American who doesn't fully grasp the language and behavioural codes of the British aristocracy. There are contrasts between Mr Farraday's sometimes vulgar way of expressing himself and his butler's dignified way. I think this is what Mrs Danius was referring to primarily.

In the novel's second chapter, Mr. Stevens gives us his views on what constitutes a great butler; he refers to the Hayes Society, an Ishiguro invention. One passage in this chapter gave me a start: Mr Stevens is reflecting about the attributes that could be expected from a great butler: "I refer to things such as good accent and command of language, general knowledge on wide-ranging topics such as falconry or newt-mating." It is obvious that Ishiguro has read Plum and is referring to Jeeves and his in-depth knowledge of "the aquatic members of the family Salamandridae which constitute the genus *Molge*".

Mr Stevens opposes the ideal that the butler ought to know everything: "In one regrettable case, which I myself witnessed, it had become an established sport in the house for guests to ring for the butler and put to him random questions of the order of, say, who had won the Derby in such and such a year, rather as one might to a Memory Man at the music hall." Here, also, the allusion to Jeeves is obvious, even if the event described doesn't occur in any Jeeves book.

Mrs Danius might have noticed these last two references in *The Remains of the Day*. If so, she is very familiar with Plum, which is praiseworthy. In her speech, she also talked about the human memory. She argued that Proust and Woolf tried to "salvage the past", compared to Ishiguro, who instead sends down a diving bell to make "discoveries in the sea of forgetfulness". He shows us how we may handle the past. Perhaps one could add that Wodehouse also dwelt in the past – a fictive past, a departed world, that maybe never even existed. His purpose was to amuse, to make us laugh at all the foibles and nonsense of the characters in his world, but at the same time to embrace them with warmth and sympathy, in spite of their weaknesses.

For many years the Wodehouse Society in Sweden has written to the Swedish Academy suggesting that they posthumously award Wodehouse the Nobel Prize, but the Academy will only give the award to living authors. Our Society has suggested that they consider giving an honorary prize (without money) to dead authors who never received the Nobel Prize. We think that Wodehouse would be a suitable starter. Plum always makes us smile, never makes us worry. And even if his characters appear in a lost world, they appear to readers as living characters, even today. In them we can recognize ourselves and others. The world has changed a lot, but humans are mostly the same deep down, and it is easier to live with some mirth in the midst of all our worries. Wodehouse is really worthy of being acknowledged by the Swedish Academy!

# The Wodehouse Advice — “Give it a happy ending!”

by James Hogg

The success of *War Horse*, whether the book, the play, or the Spielberg film, grew from an original idea by the children’s writer Michael Morpurgo. The theme of a boy and his beloved horse, first in peacetime, then through the First World War and beyond, was an obvious winner which it seemed no one had thought of before.

But that wasn’t so. A very similar story had been written many years earlier, and was also turned into a film. It was called *A Couple of Down-and-Outs*, which I saw a while ago at the National Film Theatre with my friend Michael Pointon. When not blowing the trombone for a living, Michael busies himself adding to his vast store of knowledge about literature and the whole spectrum of entertainment. It was he who pointed out to me that the original story from which the film derived had been written by none other than P. G. Wodehouse’s school contemporary and lifelong friend, Bill Townend.

In a letter dated 28 May 1923, Wodehouse wrote to Townend: “I have at last got the *Strand* with *A Couple of Down-and-Outs* in it. I think the illustrations are good and the story reads fine. It has given me an illuminating idea about your work – to wit, that you make all your characters so real that you can’t afford a grey ending. You simply must make a point of having them all right in the end, or the reader feels miserable. And you have got to make the happy ending definite, too, as in this story. . . . In *A Couple of Down-and-Outs* the story jumps from one vivid scene to another.”

That vivid quality in Townend’s story soon attracted G. B. Samuelson, founder of the Samuelson dynasty, which has played a part in many areas of

the British film industry. Samuelson bought the rights, appointed himself as producer, and went into production at Isleworth Studios. The resulting film has two other participants who went on to make names for themselves: the director Walter Summers, whose career in silent movies and then talkies went on till 1940, and the actress Edna Best, whose last screen credit was in 1959.

The drama unfolds as a down-and-out ex-soldier, Danny Creath, sees Jack, the horse that had served with him in France, being herded off to the knackers’ yard. In a series of adventures, he first rescues Jack, then gets into various scrapes as he battles to keep him hidden with the police in hot pursuit. Edna Best plays the young woman who helps him, and – which pleased Wodehouse – it all ends happily.

The film can be seen online in a Dutch version. Access the European Film Gateway site ([www.europeanfilmgateway.eu/search-efg/detail](http://www.europeanfilmgateway.eu/search-efg/detail)) and enter “A Couple Of Down-And-Outs” in the Search box. Dutch-speaking viewers will see that the credits promote Bill Townend from writer to director and eliminate the actual director, Walter Summers, altogether.

But for the British enthusiast, neither that nor the Dutch story titles detract from the charm of this period piece with a Wodehouse link. The vividness which he highlighted keeps the plot from sagging, and one would have to be stonyhearted not to be touched by the sentiment.

As Townend, then Morpurgo, and finally Steven Spielberg discovered all those years later, a rattling good adventure starring man and horse will always be irresistible.

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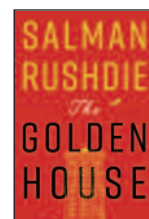
## Another Cosy Moment

***The Golden House*, by Salman Rushdie (2017)**

(from Sushmita Sen Gupta)

At one point in Rushdie’s latest novel, the protagonist is describing road journeys taken with his parents:

Great Neck, Little Neck, raised thoughts of *Gatsby* in us all, and though we did not drive by Remsenburg, where P. G. Wodehouse had lived for so many years during his post-war exile from England, we often imagined, as we drove, a fictional universe in which Fitzgerald’s and Wodehouse’s creations might visit one another. Bertie Wooster and Jeeves might have intruded on the rarefied world of the Eggs, silly-ass Bertie stepping into sensible Nick Carraway’s shoes, and Reginald Jeeves the fish-eating, Spinoza-loving gentleman’s gentleman and genius finding a way to give Jay Gatsby the happy-ever-after ending with Daisy Buchanan for which he so profoundly longed.



*Sushmita writes:* Jeeves bringing Gatsby and Daisy together? What a delicious idea! Rushdie has described his love for Wodehouse’s works in many interviews, but this reveals him to be a pretty knowledgeable Plummie!

# A Blandings Scarabesque

by Graeme W. I. Davidson

A couple of years ago I was involved in working on notes on a small archive of material chiefly comprising artwork by British artist-illustrator Bill Payne. They were a progression towards his final design/image for the dust jacket (spine and front cover) for the UK First Edition of *Galahad at Blandings* (Herbert Jenkins, London, 1965). The progression includes an early design showing Gally looking intriguingly more like US President Franklin D. Roosevelt than my idea of the raffish younger brother of Clarence, the 9th Earl of Emsworth. The final version shows Gally looking very different from that early iteration.

Interest in the development of the image prompted checks by me into the eventual artwork for purposes of writing up notes on the artwork archive. Those checks threw up the following, which might interest *Wooster Sauce* readers.

The invaluable *P. G. Wodehouse, A Comprehensive Bibliography and Checklist* by Eileen McIlvaine, Louise S. Sherby, and James H. Heineman (James H. Heineman, Inc., New York/Omnigraphics, Detroit, 1990) indicates (per McIlvaine N55.1) that in a letter from Plum to Frank Sullivan dated 22 March 1965, in which he apparently mentions *Galahad at Blandings*, Plum stated that the jacket “makes Gally look like a Beatle”.

Wodehouse was seemingly not an enthusiast of the book jacket, judging from another comment mentioned at McIlvaine N55.1, and this, in addition to considering the image on the jacket makes Gally look like a Beatle, slightly surprised me. I quite like the jacket and its not unpleasing theatricality, and cannot see much in the rendering of Gally on it that might be considered coleopteran.

I investigated and have concluded that the entry on the matter in McIlvaine might be judged misleading. I set out below the key points leading me to that conclusion.

(1) At the time of the letter to Sullivan, *Galahad at Blandings* was not yet published (not being published by Herbert Jenkins, London until 26 August 1965), though *The Brinkmanship of Galahad Threepwood* (the US iteration of *Galahad at Blandings*) had by then been published (having been published by Simon and Schuster, New York, on 31 December 1964 (per McIlvaine A88a)).

(2) The artwork eventually used for the *Galahad at Blandings* dust jacket seems unlikely to have even been determined/finalised by the date of Wodehouse’s letter to Sullivan, judging from a letter (forming part of the artwork archive relating to the progression of the design for the *Galahad at Blandings* dust jacket) from the illustrator, Bill

Payne, dated 24 February 1965, which indicates that finalisation of the eventual artwork for the *Galahad at Blandings* dust jacket was not then on the immediate horizon.

(3) The image of Gally on the *Galahad at Blandings* dust jacket is that of a man who is either of advanced years or is at least middle-aged, rather than a person of an age which a Beatle would have been at the time of Wodehouse’s letter.

(4) The image of Galahad on the dust jacket for *The Brinkmanship of Galahad Threepwood* (the artwork used on that dust jacket being by John Alcorn (1935–1992), the award-winning American artist-illustrator) is that of a clearly younger man than Payne’s rendering of Gally and (the monocle aside) is portrayed in garb that is, if not coleopteran, at least somewhat more consistent with the garb of a Beatle than that shown in the Payne illustration.

It is those points which underpin my argument and conclusion that the image which Wodehouse was referring to in his letter to Frank Sullivan is the Alcorn rendering of Gally (on the dust jacket for *The Brinkmanship of Galahad Threepwood*) and not the Payne rendering (on the *Galahad at Blandings* dust jacket).

Admittedly, I have not seen the letter to Sullivan, and so do not know definitively what Wodehouse wrote in it (and if anyone knows its whereabouts, please pipe up). There is some dependency, therefore, on data gleaned from the entry at McIlvaine N55.1. I accordingly acknowledge the possibility that Wodehouse’s letter may have made mention of *Galahad at Blandings*.

However, even if PGW did make mention of *Galahad at Blandings* in the letter, I suggest (again in reliance on the above points numbered (1) to (4), or at least several of them) that the artwork that Wodehouse had in mind when making his Beatle comment was the Alcorn artwork for *The Brinkmanship of Galahad Threepwood*, not the Payne artwork for *Galahad at Blandings*; and the book he presumably intended to refer to is *Brinkmanship*, regardless of which title he attributed in his head to the book in question (and which title he may accordingly have used in his letter).

Perhaps in Wodehouse’s head, the name of the book, irrespective of whether it was the American iteration of the book or the English iteration, was *Galahad at Blandings* and therefore he used that title in his letter. Also, a random sample review by me of references by Wodehouse to his books in his letters points to a tendency to use the UK titles rather than the US titles, even before the days of Peter Schwed’s intervention in titling American editions.

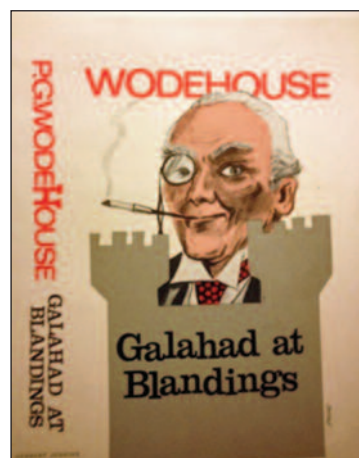
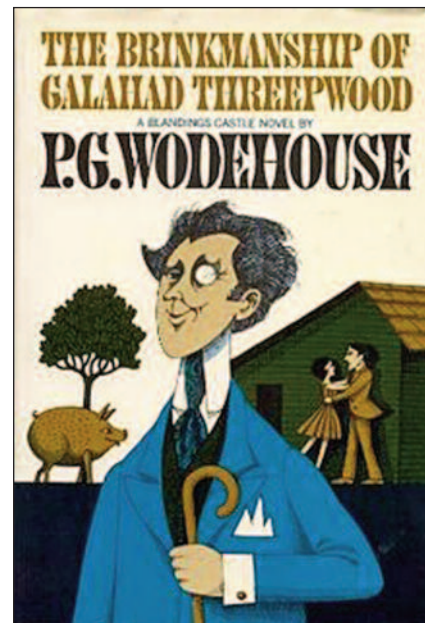
In any event, a letter of 27 November 1964 from Plum to J. D. Grimsdick (of Herbert Jenkins), published in the ever-helpful *P. G. Wodehouse, A Life in Letters* by Sophie Ratcliffe (Hutchinson, 2011, page 518), appears to put it beyond any doubt that the Beatle-esque image to which Plum took exception was the Alcorn one on *The Brinkmanship of Galahad Threepwood* dust jacket and that the entry at McIlvaine N55.1 misleads. (Thank you, Sophie.)

However, so that you might judge for yourself, independently of the above, which artwork you think Wodehouse had in mind when he made his Beatle comment to Sullivan, set out below (left and right, top row) are the two different images from the dust jackets for *Galahad at Blandings* and *The Brinkmanship of Galahad Threepwood*. Underneath,

shown for interest are an early iteration of the dust-jacket design for *Galahad at Blandings* showing a Gally perhaps more inspired by the New Deal than by ways to help young star-crossed lovers, plus another early iteration of Gally for the *Galahad at Blandings* dust jacket, which has an air of perhaps being inspired by the dust-jacket image by Roberts (?) for the UK First Edition of *Summer Lightning* (Herbert Jenkins, 1929; far right, bottom row).

To my eye, the image on the right of the top row might just possibly be thought to be that of a Beatle-type figure, whereas the one on the left of the top row looks more like that of a fellow who might (in an ideal world) be a Beatle's godfather but not actually be, or look like, a Beatle himself.

Case closed.



“Willie Allsop was speaking to me of you not long ago.”

“Oh, was he?”

“And in the highest terms, I don’t mind telling you. He gave you a rave notice. He couldn’t have gone overboard more completely if you had been the current Miss America.”

When it came to blushing, Monica Simmons was handicapped by the fact that her face was obscured by the mud inseperable from her chosen walk in life. It is virtually impossible to retain that schoolgirl complexion unimpaired if you are looking after pigs all the time. Even more closely than Sandy Callender when tidying up Lord Emsworth’s study she resembled one of those sons of toil buried beneath tons of soil of whom Gally had spoken. Nevertheless, probing beyond the geological strata Tipton thought he could discern a pinkness.

(From *Galahad at Blandings*, 1965)

# A Very Belated Admission of My Sin of Plagiarism

by Alan Nuttall

I was very fortunate in that I found myself born into a household that had a pretty extensive – well, I cannot quite say library, but plenty of books, including a good selection of PGW volumes. Many of those were, as Phil Bowen rightly states in his ‘My First Wodehouse Experience’ (*Wooster Sauce*, September 2017), in the “covers of lovely old Herbert Jenkins hardbacks”.

In the spring of 1942, at the age of 11, I was at home reading, when suddenly my mother came rushing down the stairs, burst into the room, and demanded to know what was wrong with me, as the noises she had heard had convinced her that I was either having a fit or choking to death. She seemed pleased to hear that it was only that I had stumbled upon *Three Men in a Boat* and was now lying on the floor, collapsed with hysterical mirth, having just read about the episode of the railway carriage and the cheeses which Jerome’s character, J, was carrying home. She was then in the posish to be able to introduce me to the wonderful world of Wodehouse, and ever since I have never been without one of his books on my bedside table.

I proceeded to devour the Blandings Castle saga and the Mr Mulliner stories, and, as it was the last book available without going to the local library, found myself reading, (and loving), *Louder and Funnier*. It so happened that one day we were invited by our English Mistress to write a composition on any subject we would like to choose. Having read Plum’s chapter on amusement parks the previous night, it seemed to me that I had a ready-made, wonderful example encompassing fun fairs, and I duly copied it out.

This turned out to be the one and only time that my English teacher gave me an alpha for any of my work, and insisted on me reading out my masterpiece as an example to the class. It caused me no end of anxiety during the time before the next English lesson, in case, by any chance, anyone else had read *Louder and Funnier*.

I have borne this burden of sin for some 75 years, and I am glad (thanks to the Society) that I am now in the posish of being able to make a full and complete confession, and present my apologies to whomsoever might have the slightest interest in receiving the same.

# The Word Around the Clubs

## *A Mystery Sauce*

On page 9 we have reprinted a letter written to *The Times* by P. G. Wodehouse and now included in a book of their classic letters received over a century. Perhaps the following one will also become a classic? Time will tell. But first a little background: In December 2017 *The Times* published a review on how to recover from hangovers, which was followed by a letter printed on the 21st in which a Mr Nunneley wrote of the pick-me-up known as the Prairie Oyster. He pointed out that it would be a mistake to order one in Canada as there the Prairie Oyster is a dish involving bulls’ testicles and should not be mistaken for the hangover cure. This inspired TONY RING to send his own letter, which was published on 23 December:

Sir,

Mr Nunneley’s suggestion (that in Canada the ‘prairie oyster’ is a dish involving bulls’ testicles) may help to solve the mystery of the unknown ingredient in Jeeves’s magical pick-me-up which he was unwilling to disclose to Bertie Wooster. Raw egg, red pepper and Worcester Sauce were its staple ingredients, but when first described in an America journal, ‘dark meat sauce’ was used to enhance its colour. A reluctance on Jeeves’s part to embarrass his very new employer by being more specific would be understandable.

Tony Ring

It should be pointed out that Tony is referring to the Jeeves recipe as it appeared in the first publication of the story ‘Jeeves Takes Charge’, which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1916. In that incarnation of the story, as he points out, the key ingredient was the mysterious ‘dark meat sauce’, instead of the Worcester Sauce that it became in subsequent versions. Prairie oyster? Well, maybe . . .

## *Banks, Literature, and PGW*

Thanks to CHARLES FRANKLYN for sending the December 2017 edition of *Money and Medals*, a newsletter devoted to numismatism (and, um, medals). This contained a review of the London exhibition *Stories from the City: The Bank of England in Literature* (19 July 2017–19 July 2018 at the Bank of England museum). The exhibition provides “a number of wonderful examples of how the worlds of banking and literature have crossed paths over the centuries. Many of the relationships can be broadly divided into two groups: the direct, . . . to the more tangential as evidenced by the display of *Psmith in the City* by P G Wodehouse, the author having worked just up the road for the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation at the turn of the twentieth century.” The exhibition sounds jolly good; see <https://goo.gl/b4sfNa>.

# The Great Sermon Handicap

Introduction to Volume V of the  
multi-lingual edition, Heineman 1994

by N.T.P. Murphy

*Editor's note: In the September 2017 edition of Wooster Sauce, we published James Hogg's introduction to Volume VI of Jimmy Heineman's series of translations of PGW's epic short story 'The Great Sermon Handicap'. Herewith the introduction that the late Norman Murphy wrote for Volume V, which covered translations in Sanskrit, Armenian, Arabic, Maltese, Ancient Hebrew, Modern Hebrew, Aramaic, Amharic, Somali, and Coptic.*

In his foreword James Heineman reminds us how world-shaking events have been decided by such apparent trifles as the mist obscuring the sunken road at Waterloo. In agreeing with him, that unlikely strategist, Bertie Wooster, expressed himself more bluntly:

"Not know the terrain and where are you? Look at Napoleon and that sunken road to Waterloo. Silly ass!"

One wonders at the possible repercussions of this volume upon the world. The Reverend Mr. Heppenstall's epic sermon on Brotherly Love includes "a rather exhaustive excursus into the family life of the early Assyrians". What will the outcome be when today's Assyrians read of the family life of the Reverend Mr. Heppenstall?

What revolutions of thought or philosophy may it not engender in the Coptic seminaries of Ethiopia, in the tents of the Tuaregs, or amongst the anchorites on Mount Sinai? Will a new Prester John arise, denouncing the evils of ante-post betting or fulminating against the wearing of soft-fronted albs for evening service? It might even serve to reconcile ancient enemies in the Middle East – an awesome thought.

There are those unfortunates who claim (for which error they will in due course undoubtedly be eaten by bears) that Wodehouse wrote of a sunlit world that never existed. But if you ask them to describe what they remember of their childhood holidays, the effect is remarkable. The eye softens, the lips smile in affectionate memory and they describe golden, halcyon days when the sun always shone, the grass was greener and the world was a happier place.

What Wodehouse did was dramatize his happy memories in imperishable language, and nowhere

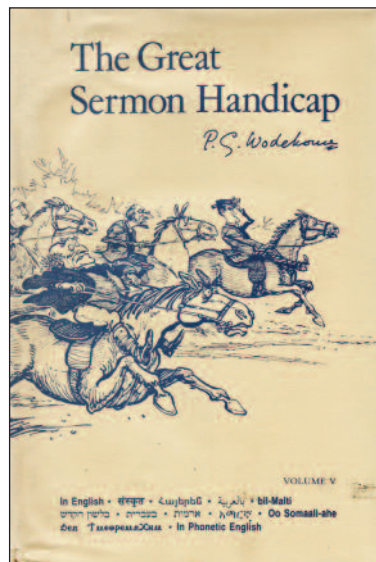
better than in 'The Great Sermon Handicap'. He spent much of his boyhood with four clergyman uncles just like Mr. Heppenstall. From them he learned of such crises in clerical life as dissent in the choir, schism in the Church Ladies' Guild and scandals recounted in hushed tones at episcopal garden parties.

He saw the Anglican church in the last years of Victorian England, before the advent of radio or television, when the Sunday sermon in the parish church was an important event in village life. While their elders endured lengthy addresses from the pulpit, the juvenile members of the congregation, including the young Wodehouse, passed the time as best they could. Some might amuse themselves by counting how often a word appeared in the Collect for the Day, or calculating how many times the vicar sneezed, cleared his throat or, as here, in betting their friends how long the sermon would be. When the story first appeared in *Cosmopolitan* magazine in 1922, every reader would have recognized the scene.

Occasionally even the older members of the congregation took steps to alleviate the tedium. One landowner, from his seat below the pulpit, managed to keep the sermon short by laying out his money for the collection in a line of half-crowns along the front of the pew, with his watch alongside. As each five minutes passed, a coin was ostentatiously picked up and returned to his pocket!

The villages of Twing, Upper and Lower Bingley, Little Clickton-in-the-Wold or Boustead Parva do not appear on any map. Their originals are to be found around Bredon Hill, just across the river from the vicarage in Worcestershire where Wodehouse spent many of his school holidays – Bredon's Norton, Eckington, Great and Little Comberton, Brickhampton, Elmley Castle, Hinton-on-the-Green and Ashton-under-Hill, each nestling around its own parish church.

No matter [in] what language it is read – and Jimmy Heineman is making heroic efforts to ensure it can be read in as many as possible – 'The Great Sermon Handicap' remains a delightful cameo of English life that will endure as long as England has village churches and clergymen to preach in them.



# Martin Jarvis's 'Jeeves Live' Recordings on BBC Radio 4

Reviewed by Michael Chacksfield

I read with interest in the December 2017 edition of *Wooster Sauce* (page 5) of two PGW recordings that took place in January last year at the Riverhouse Arts Centre in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey. Always on the hunt for trivia or productions of the great man's work, I was tempted by the invitation from our editor for any member to submit a review. I easily downloaded both recordings from the BBC iPlayer, poured myself a glass of wine, and sat back to listen to the adaptations of 'The Aunt and the Sluggard' and 'Jeeves and the Yule-Tide Spirit' (each 30 minutes).

The recordings begin with a fade-in of a murmuring audience, followed by short intro music and applause. This adds warmth, intimacy, and the feeling of a live stage performance. I am sure readers know the plot from both stories, but in case any do not, I will refrain from offering any spoilers.

The audience seemed to be composed of loyal PGW fans – laughing in all the right places, groaning at the various Bertie wheezes (e.g. with Sir Roderick and the hot water bottle), and enjoying Jeeves as he hoovered up the inevitable mess. Martin Jarvis's different voices for Aunt Agatha, Sir Roderick Glossop, his nephew young Tuppy, Rocky, and of course our stand-alone gentleman's gentleman, were

excellent and very distinct. Their lines were delivered perfectly.

However, there was one notable exception. I did not feel that Bertie sounded like Bertie. The unmistakable energy, youthful spring, and bounce of his trumpet-like speech was not evident in MJ's deep and gravelly voice. There were flickers every now and then as Martin worked with his crowd, but young Bertram Wooster's lines often seemed to default back to his own voice. However, this was easily forgiven and forgotten by his entertaining accent and funny performance as Aunt Isabel Rockmeteller.

I have one additional slight criticism in that Bertie's last line thanking Jeeves for getting him out of the soup, seemed a little too emotional, nostalgic even. I suspect this was more to do with the general feeling of bonhomie

in the room, but we are saved again by our man, with a perfectly delivered "I endeavour to give satisfaction, sir".

If you have time, I would thoroughly recommend you give these recordings a listen.

*Editor's note: Unfortunately, the recordings are not currently available on the iPlayer, but they are sure to return at some point, so do keep an eye on the BBC Radio 4 website.*



## *Appointments in the Clergy*

*As ever, we are indebted to MURRAY HEDGCOCK for spotting these candidates for the Great Sermon Handicap.*

### **Daily Telegraph, August 9, 2017**

The Rev. Carolyn McDonald, assistant curate Ashbourne with Mapleton and Ashbourne St. John, Clifton and Norbury with Snelston (Diocese of Derby) to be priest-in-charge Fenny Bentley, Thorpe, Tissington, Parwich and Alsop-en-le-Dale, and assistant curate, known as associate priest, Ashbourne with Mapleton and Ashbourne St. John, Clifton and Norbury with Snelston (same diocese).

### **Daily Telegraph, September 25, 2017**

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

The Rev. David Harry Messer, rector of Stanton, Hopton, Market Weston, Barningham and Coney Weston, and priest-in-charge Hepworth, Hinderclay and Thelnetham, and rural dean Ixworth (Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich) to be vicar of Walkington, Bishop Burton, Rowley and Skidby (Diocese of York).

(There's a busy pair . . .)



## Wodehouse Quiz 26

### *Blandings Short Stories*

by David Buckle

1. In ‘Pig-hoo-o-o-ey!’, prior to the Shropshire Agricultural Show why is pigman George Cyril Wellbeloved absent for a fortnight?
2. In which Blandings’ story does Freddie Threepwood borrow Beefy Bingham’s dog, Bottles, in order to demonstrate the benefits of Donaldson’s Dog-Joy?
3. In ‘The Crime Wave at Blandings’, what is the name of Lord Emsworth’s grandson, of whom Rupert Baxter is unsuccessfully put in charge?
4. In ‘Life with Freddie’, where is Freddie Threepwood travelling to, and not keeping out of trouble, on an ocean liner?
5. In ‘Company for Gertrude’, who has become pigman George Cyril Wellbeloved’s new employer?
6. In which story does a Pekingese named Eisenhower chase Lord Emsworth up a tree?
7. In ‘Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend’, what is the name of the young girl who rescues Lord Emsworth from the attentions of a large dog?
8. In ‘The Custody of the Pumpkin’, what is the name of Lord Emsworth’s prize-winning pumpkin?
9. In ‘Sticky Wicket at Blandings’, who does Lady Constance Keeble suggest that her brother Clarence, Lord Emsworth should dismiss from his employ?
10. In which story does a bearded Lord Emsworth help to save his son Freddie’s marriage?

*(Answers on page 19)*

Presently Lord Emsworth left the potting-shed and started to wander towards the house. He had never felt happier. All day his mood had been one of perfect contentment and tranquility, and for once in a way Angus McAllister had done nothing to disturb it. Too often, you tried to reason with that human mule, he had a way of saying “Mphm” and looking Scotch, and after that just fingering his beard and looking Scotch without speaking, which was intensely irritating to a sensitive employer. But this afternoon Hollywood yes-men could have taken his correspondence course, and Lord Emsworth had none of that uneasy feeling, which usually came to him on these occasions, that the moment his back was turned his own sound, statesmanlike policies would be shelved and some sort of sweet pea New Deal put into practice as if he had never spoken a word.

(From ‘The Crime Wave at Blandings’, 1936)

## *Emsworth Museum*

Members will be glad to hear that the Emsworth Museum will be reopening at the end of March for another season. Here’s what the museum’s website has to say about the town’s most famous resident: “Emsworth . . . is synonymous with PG Wodehouse, who lived, worked and played cricket in the town. The experience left him with a bank of names for characters and places from which his writings were to draw. The museum has the only freely accessible permanent exhibition in the country devoted to his life and work.”

The museum will be open from 31 March to 11 November 2018 on Saturdays and bank holidays, 10.30–16.30; and on Sundays, 14.30–16.30. It is additionally open:

23 April: 10.00–14.00

28–29 April and 5–7 May: 10.30–16.30

August, all Fridays: 14.30–16.30

Admission is free; donations are welcome. For more information, visit the museum’s website at [www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk](http://www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk).

## *Poet’s Corner*

### *A Defence*

It really comes a little hard,  
Because a person is a bard,  
That doctors should be led to think  
Him very much the worse for drink.  
Full many a songster, I aver,  
Is quite the strict teetotaller.

Myself, for instance, many a time  
Have scoured my ‘Walker’ for a rhyme,  
I’ve written things in sportive mood,  
(I made them scan whene’er I could)  
And several, the reverse of solemn,  
Were printed in this very column.

Yet, when I wrote those little lays,  
No bottles stood around on trays;  
I could have mouthed, without confusion,  
The mystic ‘British Constitution’.  
I wrote the whole degrading bosh  
Exclusively on lemon squash.

Then take my rivals – Swinburne, Kipling –  
No one accuses them of tipping.  
Each would refuse, with visage shocked, ale;  
Neither could mix the simplest cocktail.  
And if you still need proof to show it,  
Sir Wilfrid Lawson is a poet.

From *Daily Chronicle*, 21 January 1905

# The Word in Season by Dan Kaszeta

## Panther Woman

Once, not long ago, I was reading *Pearls, Girls, and Monty Bodkin* (1972), and I came across this bit: “a known panther woman on the silver screen, and once a panther woman, always a panther woman.” As this work is a sequel, the appearance of it made me wonder if I had missed this gem before. Digging out my beloved copy of *The Luck of the Bodkins* (1935), I found it there as well. Grayce Llewellyn, fifth wife of Ivor, the film producer, is described as having been “one of the best known panther-women on the silent screen”. As with many Wodehouseisms, we are left to our own devices to figure out what “panther woman” really means.

Now, I don’t know about you. But if I were to use the phrase ‘panther woman’ to describe an acquaintance or one or more members of my family tree, either my own, or my family-tree-in-law so to speak, I’d get poleaxed. However, everyone in the room might know exactly what I mean and would generally know which branch of the tree I was talking about. It’s that kind of explosive term. Once, in my 20s, I had a month-long temporary administrative job in a law firm, working for a lawyer who could only be adequately described as a panther woman. I can imagine that, with a surfeit of aunts (is there a collective noun for aunts? Surely it is a ‘Wooster of aunts?’), perhaps Plum himself had a panther woman somewhere among the limbs of the tree.

There are allusions to panthers in their actual feline form elsewhere in the canon. In ‘Jeeves and the Impending Doom’, Bingo Little is described as capable of ignoring his friends being devoured by panthers. However, it seems that the phrase ‘panther woman’ largely, if not entirely, applies to Grayce Llewellyn alone. So, perhaps, Grayce is not just a

panther woman, but *the* Panther Woman. Let me explain.

Wodehouse clearly based many of his characters in whole, part, or combination on real people. Ivor Llewellyn is an interesting composite of various Samuel Goldwyn-type Hollywood moguls with whom Wodehouse would have been familiar during his Hollywood years. So, it is not a stretch by any means to think that Grayce, the Panther Woman, has some basis in reality. And indeed she does.

Enter Olga Petrova, stage name of one Muriel Harding (1884–1977) and a contemporary of Wodehouse in many ways. Olga Petrova was a silent movie star in Hollywood until 1918, when she decamped to Broadway. Clearly, Wodehouse’s and Petrova’s Broadway years overlap. Both lived in Great Neck, New York, seemingly at the same time in the 1920s. Both are mentioned in the December 1917 number of *Theatre* magazine. But here is what clinches the issue for me: Olga Petrova starred in a 1918 film called *The Panther Woman*; she starred as Patience Sparhawk, the Panther Woman. The plot remains



Olga Petrova

unclear to me, and accounts vary, as the film is now lost to us. The film gained some controversy in its time, being partially censored in Chicago and being much talked about in the press.

So, for a while, Olga Petrova was the Panther Woman. I’m declaring this mystery solved.

*Editor’s note: In A Wodehouse Handbook, Norman Murphy also declared Olga Petrova to be the likeliest candidate for the original Panther Woman. He furthermore suggested another silent-screen star, Theda Bara (1885–1955), as a possibility. See volume 1 of the Handbook, chapter 28, for a description of Paramount’s Panther Woman campaign of 1932.*

### For the Birds

When she spoke, it was with the mildness of a cushat dove addressing another cushat dove from whom it was hoping to borrow money.

(*Jeeves in the Offing*, 1960)

A wooden expression had crept into his features, and his eyes had taken on the look of cautious reserve which you see in those of parrots, when offered half a

banana by a stranger of whose bona fides they are not convinced.

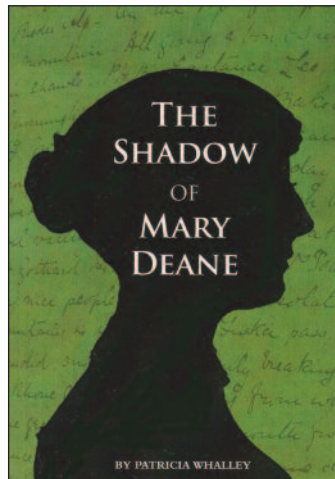
(*Joy in the Morning*, 1946)

Any male turtle dove will tell you that, if conditions are right, the female turtle dove can spit on her hands and throw her weight about like Donald Duck.

(‘The Editor Regrets’, 1938)

## The Shadow of Mary Deane

In the June 2016 edition of *Wooster Sauce* (page 11), readers were informed of a then-new book, *The Shadow of Mary Deane*, by Patricia Whalley. The subtitle of the book is *The Diaries of a Victorian Gentlewoman*, and the subject is P. G. Wodehouse's maternal aunt, of whom he once wrote: "Aunt Agatha is definitely my Aunt Mary, who was the scourge of my childhood." Mary's sister Louisa (Wodehouse's favourite aunt) was the original model for Bertie's Aunt Dahlia.



Mary Deane was herself an author as well as chronicler of the Deane family, and the diaries that make up the bulk of the book offer an interesting view of the times in which she lived, particularly her life in Box, Wiltshire, during the First World War. The book includes a Deane family tree that shows PGW's place in it and, of course, several references to Mary's famous nephew. (A section describing her final years includes an acquaintance's opinion that she "did not have a very high opinion of the class of literature upon which [Wodehouse] was engaged", although she did describe his novels as "amusing".) For information on how to obtain a copy, go to [bit.ly/1WPaWQH](http://bit.ly/1WPaWQH).

## The Milk War

A little-known but fascinating snippet from PGW's early years was featured in the December 16, 2016, *Express & Star*, a regional newspaper covering the Midlands and Staffordshire. Readers familiar with the Wodehouse family history will recall that for a time after his father's retirement, Plum's parents lived in Stableford, Shropshire, and as a teenager he often stayed with them during his school holidays. The story, as related by Toby Neal, included Wodehouse's own words on a feud with neighbours that developed quickly: "We quarrelled with them two days after we arrived and never spoke to them again. It was milk that caused the rift. At least they said it was milk . . . and we said it was skim-milk. Harsh words and dirty looks passed to and fro . . ."

The story is included in a new book on the history of Worfield Parish written by Jane Smith, who drew on research by Norman Murphy for the another Wodehouse story: "Jane tells how Sibell reared ducks for shooting, but according to Wodehouse she treated them so well that when they were sold they would approach their would-be assassins for food rather than flying away."

## The Wooster Source

by Graeme Davidson

*This is the real Tabasco,  
It's the word from Bertie Wooster,  
The bod who oft relies on Jeeves,  
his sans pareil valet  
To extricate him and fellow Drones (with  
whom he is pally and around whom  
the Code natch requires him to rally)  
Out of the consommé and messes that are  
really so wholly and utterly bally.*



The policeman was regarding me in a boiled way. "What's all this?" he asked. I smiled in a sort of saint-like manner. "It's a little hard to explain," I said. "Yes it is!" said the policeman. "I was just – er – just having a look round, you know. Old friend of the family, you understand." "How did you get in?" "Through the window. Being an old friend of the family, if you follow me." "Old friend of the family, are you?" "Oh, very. Very. Very old. Oh, a very old friend of the family."

"I've never seen him before," said the parlourmaid.

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

There was a cab standing outside, laden with luggage. From its window Gussie Fink-Nottle's head was poking out, and I remember thinking once again how mistaken Emerald Stoker had been about his appearance. Seeing him steadily, if not whole, I could detect in his aspect no trace of the lamb, but he was looking so like a halibut that if he hadn't been wearing horn-rimmed spectacles, a thing halibuts seldom do, I might have supposed myself to be gazing on something a.w.o.l from a fishmonger's slab.

*Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* (1963)

"You remember the day I lunched at the Ritz?"

"Yes, sir. You were wearing an Alpine hat."

"There is no need to dwell on the Alpine hat, Jeeves."

"No, sir."

"If you really want to know, several fellows at the Drones asked me where I had got it."

"No doubt with a view to avoiding your hatter, sir."

*Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* (1963)

### Answers to Wodehouse Quiz (Page 17)

1. He is sent to jail for 14 days for being drunk and disorderly in the *Goat and Feathers*.
2. 'The Go-getter'
3. George
4. New York City
5. Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe
6. 'Birth of a Salesman'
7. Gladys
8. Blandings Hope
9. Beach, the butler
10. 'Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best'

# The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

## *The Prince and Betty – Again*

My December 2017 Corner on *The Prince and Betty* ended with a request for readers with any more information on the subject to contact me. I have had a most gratifying response, which more than makes up in quality for what it may lack in quantity. Armed with that new information, what follows is my second innings on the subject. I must warn my public that I go into quite a lot of detail on some points, so any reader who already thought that my articles bore too great a resemblance to ‘Some Little-Known Aspects of Tacitus’ (‘The Inferiority Complex of Old Sippy’, *Very Good, Jeeves*) may wish to turn straight to page 22 now.

For those seekers-after-knowledge who are still reading, what follows will be much more comprehensible if one first opens up my previous Corner, so that one can easily refer to the handy summary table in it which shows the various Newnes reprint editions of *The Prince and Betty*, as per *McIlvaine*. In this Corner, I have attempted to identify the order in which the hardback reprints were published, and have matched them accordingly to *McIlvaine*’s references (A15b3 to A15b6, and A15b8 and A15b9). In the course of this, it has become apparent to me that some of the information given in *McIlvaine* is either plain wrong, or is correct but has been set against the wrong reprint.

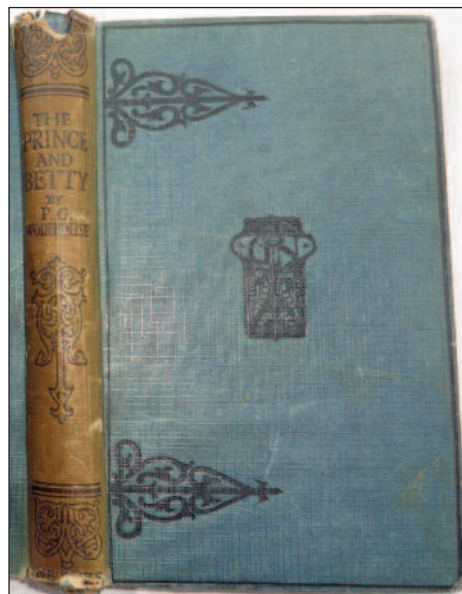
Right, now we’re off.

In December’s Corner, I stated that copies of A15b3, the first reprint (1921, per *McIlvaine*), were currently unknown, at least to me. The Corner contained a photo of the dust wrapper of what was identified as A15b4 (1924, per *McIlvaine*) bearing the statement “Uniform with this volume by the same author *My Man Jeeves*”. Underneath the dust wrapper, the book, which measures 4½ x 7 in., has red boards with a black design and lettering, in the same style as used on the first edition of *My Man Jeeves* (A22a), which was first published by Newnes in 1919. It seems odd that a volume published in 1924 would mention its uniformity with a volume published in 1919.

In fact, I now believe that what I identified as A15b4 is really A15b3, the first reprint. The dimensions *McIlvaine* gives for A15b3 (5½ x 7 in.) would make for a very squat book; I believe they are a misprint for 4½ x 7 in. The date of 1921 for A15b3 also brings the statement about its uniformity much closer in time to *My Man Jeeves*.

But if the book with red boards is A15b3, what book is A15b4? Alan Hall has informed me that he has a copy of *The Prince and Betty* which is 4½ x 7 in., with the same black design and lettering as the book with red boards, but that his copy has blue boards. There is an equivalent blue edition of *My Man Jeeves* (‘The Bibliographic Corner: My Man Jeeves’, *Wooster Sauce*, June 2003, pp18–19). The red version of *The Prince and Betty* states on page 252 that it was printed by Cahill &

Co; the blue version states on page 252 that it was printed by The Whitefriars Press Ltd. The blue version therefore seems to have been a separate edition to the red version, rather than simply being part of the same print run bound in different coloured boards. Based on the evidence of *My Man Jeeves* (where the blue boards followed the red boards) and also The Whitefriars Press (which was used for subsequent editions of *The Prince and Betty*, as discussed further below), I believe that the blue version of *The Prince and Betty* followed the red version, and that the blue version is really A15b4 (left).

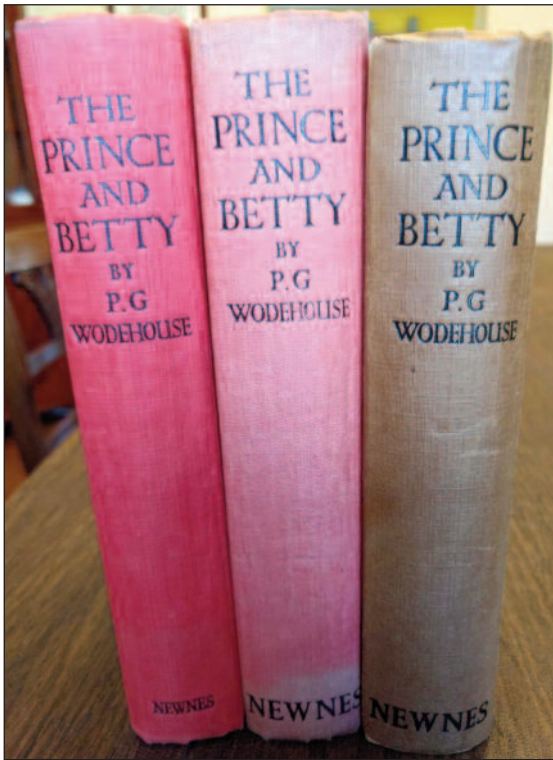


December’s Corner also contained a photo of the dust wrapper of what was identified as A15b5. Tom Ward has provided me with an image of a similar dust wrapper in his possession. The artwork on the spine and front cover (and the cover price of 2/6) is the same as A15b5, but the contents of the rear cover and

flaps are completely different. On A15b5, five of Richmal Crompton’s *William* titles are listed, with the latest being *Still William*, which was published in 1925. On Tom’s dust wrapper, seven *William* titles are listed (along with titles by other authors), with the latest being *William in Trouble*, which was published in 1927. I would therefore identify Tom’s copy as being A15b6. The book underneath the A15b6 wrapper, like the book underneath the A15b5 wrapper, has red boards, black lettering, and 186 pages, and was published by The Whitefriars Press.

In reviewing some information provided by Susan Vandyk, I realised that the positioning and size of the word “NEWNES” on the spine differs between A15b5 and A15b6, enabling the books to be distinguished from each other even if no dust wrapper is present. On A15b5, the word “NEWNES” (a) is in a relatively small font, (b) does not fill the breadth of the spine, and (c) has quite a space beneath it and the very foot of the spine. Conversely, on A15b6 the word “NEWNES” (a) is in a large font, (b) fills the breadth of the spine, and (c) has hardly any space beneath it and the very foot of the spine. (See books in left and centre of image top of next page.)

Tom Ward has also very generously shared with me an image of another dust wrapper in his possession, which I had never seen before. As can be seen from the accompanying photo, it has magnificent wrap-around artwork covering the front and rear covers and the spine. On the rear flap, eight *William* titles are listed (along with titles by other authors), with the latest being *William the Outlaw*, which was published in 1927.

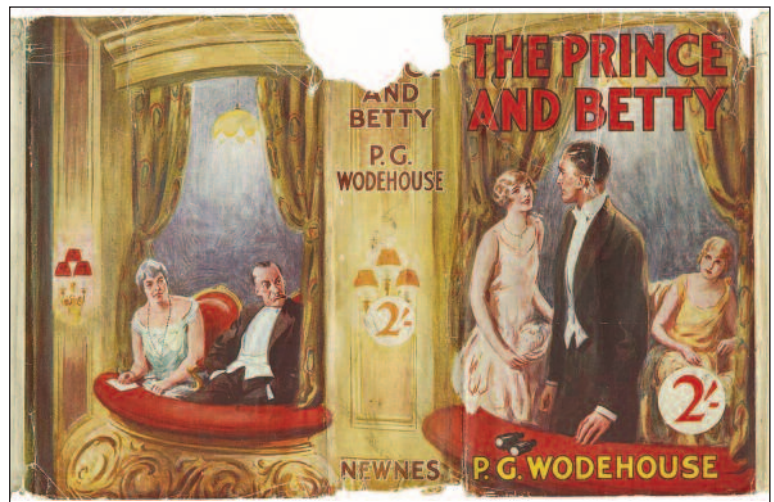


pages, and was published by The Whitefriars Press. As with A15b6, the word “NEWNES” (a) is in a large font, (b) fills the breadth of the spine, and (c) has hardly any space beneath it and the very foot of the spine. A15b8 differs from A15b6 in that it is about a quarter of an inch shorter and also has a distinct “gutter” at the left-hand side of the front board, where the board meets the spine. By examining the height of the book in conjunction with the position of the word “NEWNES”, one can therefore differentiate between A15b5, A15b6, and A15b8 even if no dust wrapper is present (see image, left).

Trying to pull the information in this Corner and my previous one together, the table below summarises my understanding of the sequence of the various reprints, identifies in which issue of *Wooster Sauce* one can find a photograph of the cover artwork, and contains sufficient issue points to enable each reprint to be differentiated from the others. A close comparison against the table in my previous Corner will reveal where I believe the information in McIlvaine is incorrect. My heartfelt thanks go to Alan Hall, Tom Ward and Susan Vandyk for kindly sharing their information and images with me, and to Dick Neal for providing the dimensions of A15b7. Without them this column could not have been written. As always, I would be delighted to hear directly from any readers who may have any further information,

(Although Wikipedia and many other online *William* bibliographies state that *William the Outlaw* was the seventh title published and that *William in Trouble* was the eighth, they seem to me to have got the order back-to-front, as the first-edition dust wrapper of *William in Trouble* advertises only six *William* titles, none of which is *William the Outlaw*, whereas the first-edition wrapper of *William the Outlaw* advertises seven *William* titles, the latest being *William in Trouble*, which is described as being in its third edition.) The evidence of the *William* titles, together with the change in artwork from that used on A15b5 and A15b6, points to this wrapper being later than A15b6. I therefore identify it as A15b8 (right).

The book underneath A15b8, like A15b5 and A15b6, has red boards, black lettering, and 186



McIlv.	Boards	Dust Wrapper	Size (inches)	Pages	Price
A15b3	Red, black design and lettering	December 2017, p20	4½ x 7	252	2s
A15b4	Blue, black design and lettering	Unknown as yet	4½ x 7	252	2s
A15b5	Red, black lettering, small “NEWNES” towards foot of spine	December 2017, p21 <i>William</i> books: five titles, latest <i>Still William</i> (1925)	5 x 7½	186	2s 6d
A15b6	Red, black lettering, large “NEWNES” at foot of spine	Artwork same as A15b5 <i>William</i> books: seven titles, latest <i>William in Trouble</i> (1927)	5 x 7½	186	2s 6d
A15b7	Paperback	December 2017, p21	5½ x 8¼	128	6d
A15b8	Red, black lettering, large “NEWNES” at foot of spine	March 2018, p21 <i>William</i> books: eight titles, latest <i>William the Outlaw</i> (1927)	5 x 7¼	186	2s
A15b9	Blue, black lettering	December 2017, p21 <i>William</i> books: 17 titles, latest <i>William the Detective</i> (1935)	5 x 7½	188	2s 6d

## Recent Press Comment

### **Puzzle Life Magazine, November**

(from Gwen Williams)

The great man's view on golf was quoted: "Golf is the infallible test. 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 a man who will serve you faithfully and well."

### **The Lady, November 13** (from June Arnold)

In the column 'First Impressions', Henry Blofeld said his favourite book was *Galahad at Blandings*.

### **Daily Telegraph, November 18**

Reporting on the Scotland rugby match against the All Blacks, Richard Bath wrote: "At Murrayfield, the undoubted Man of the Match was, to paraphrase P G Wodehouse, the Kiwi's worst nightmare: a Scot with a grievance." (Said MOTM was Stuart Hogg.)

### **Times of India, November 18**

An article on cricket's literary inspirations included, of course, mention of PGW and his writings, both fiction and poetry. The article also mentioned Society Patron Murray Hedgcock's book *Wodehouse at the Wicket*.

### **GQ Magazine, November 21**

In the Ashes preview, John Naughton wrote: "If life were a P G Wodehouse novel – and there is a strong argument to say it should be – [Ben] Stokes would have been up before the beak with a sore head the morning after the Mbargo fracas. He would have been fined, bound over to keep the peace and back in the Drones Club that lunchtime for something strongly restorative." (To those who do not follow such things, Mr Stokes was said to have been involved in a bit of a punch-up outside a Bristol nightclub).

### **Waco Tribune-Herald, November 23**

The coverage of a game of Bridge by Phillip Alder started with: "P G Wodehouse, in *Uneasy Money*, wrote, 'At the age of 11 or thereabouts women acquire a poise and an ability to handle difficult situations which a man, if he is lucky, manages to achieve in the later seventies.'" You'll have to read the account of the game itself on your own!

### **Hartford Courant, November 25**

Reminding the good burghers of New Haven, Connecticut, to go see the 80s band Squeeze, John Adamian wrote that their older songs "are classics in their own right and they have a connection to British wit, sort of a blend of P G Wodehouse, Noel Coward and Elvis Costello".

### **Daily Telegraph, November 20**

(from Carolyn de la Plain)

Jane Shilling wrote: "Farm animals have always been a staple of children's stories . . . but now they have captured the grown-up imagination as well. . . . Pigs, so nobly represented in adult fiction by the Empress of Blandings, have yet to break through into non-fiction. But it cannot be long before some contemporary swineherd remedies the omission."

### **Colorado Radio, November 30**

Writer Connie Willis included 'Another Christmas Carol', written by PGW in 1915, in her book of short stories for Christmas, saying: "There's no way to describe a P G Wodehouse story, so I won't even try. I'll just say that this is the only Christmas story I know of that involves the bubonic plague and tofu and that, if you've never read him, there could be no better Christmas gift than discovering P G Wodehouse".

### **Guardian Review, December 2** (from Terry Taylor)

In his feature listing the ten most entertaining drinking bouts in literature, Mark Forsyth included *Right Ho, Jeeves*: "For the pure unadulterated joy of drinking, you can't beat Wodehouse. He had wonderful phrases for it – 'oiled, boiled, fried, plastered, whiffled, sozzled and blotto'. He also has the wonderful story of Gussie Fink-Nottle's first encounter with alcohol . . . the result is a new Gussie Fink-Nottle, who acts as though he could bite a tiger. 'Make it two tigers. I could chew holes in a steel door.'"

### **Spears, December 7**

John Melville-Smith wrote of the ongoing battle between the Dowager Countess Bathurst and her stepson the 9th Earl over the terms of the late 8th Earl's will that it is a "story worthy of a P G Wodehouse novel".

### **Daily Telegraph, December 8**

In the Lifestyle section, the actor Simon Williams wrote: "With Henry Blofeld's departure from the Test Match Special commentary box, cricket is losing one of its great characters. . . . His amazing technicolour wardrobe brings to mind the fast-fading world of P G Wodehouse. I can imagine him as Lord Emsworth with the Empress of Blandings at his side, marvelling at the redness of a bus beyond the fine leg boundary."

### **The Spectator, December 9** (from Christopher Bellew)

In a diary column, Sir Max Hastings wrote of visiting Puglia and arriving at "a silent, sealed, fortress-like roadside building that locals claimed was our hostelry. I was put in mind of Jeeves's observation, on approaching Totleigh Towers: 'Childe Roland to the dark tower came, Sir', a sensation that intensified when repeated hammering on the doors failed to secure admission."

In the same issue, Harry Mount wrote: "The young Lord Emsworth type invented by P. G. Wodehouse studied classics at Eton and Oxford (with a spell in the Bullingdon), then devoted himself to White's Club in town and pig-rearing in the country, before marrying a fellow aristocrat." (Christopher wrote a reply pointing out that Lord E. was a member of the Senior Conservative Club, not White's, but it failed to make it into print.)

### **Radio Times, December 9-15**

(from Alexander Dainty and Gwen Williams)

The Feedback page featured a letter from Norman Evans pointing out that Highclere Castle, as well as being used as the set for *Downton Abbey*, stood in for Totleigh Towers in the 1990s TV series *Jeeves and Wooster*.

### **National Club Golfer, December 14**

The Addington, a golf course in Surrey, was 'a special place for the most famous writer of the day, P G

Wodehouse. . . . He once wrote of the savage 30 foot bunker on the 6th, “Anyone wishing to write to the author should address all correspondence to: P. G. Wodehouse, c/o the sixth bunker, The Addington Golf Club, Croydon, Surrey.”

**Mail Online, December 21**

Included on the list of the best stocking fillers was *On Christmas: A Seasonal Anthology*, introduced by Gyles Brandreth, who noted: “P G Wodehouse on friends who greet us with ‘Well! Christmas will soon be here!’ registering the while a mental vow that, until they know what sort of a present we are going to give them, they are hanged if they are going to go above a dollar-ten for us.”

**Wall Street Journal, December 23–24** (from Beth Carroll)

The review of the 2018 Mercedes-Maybach S650 said: “Even without a chauffeur the new S650 can manoeuvre itself into a parking space with the greatest of Jeeves.”

**Celebrity Mastermind, BBC2, December 27**

(from Michael Chacksfield)

Pam Ayres correctly answered the question, “What kind of prize-winning animal is Lord Emsworth’s beloved Empress of Blandings in the novels by P G Wodehouse?”

**Memphis Flyer, December 28**

In writing about hangover cures, Richard Mure wrote that “the most famous was penned 101 years ago by PGW”. He then provided the famous quote from ‘Jeeves Takes Charge’ (*Carry On, Jeeves*) in which Bertie describes the effects of Jeeves’s pick-me-up once down the throat.

**Daily Star.com, December 29**

Following nicely on from the above item, editor Sam Pollak’s ‘Sammy Awards’ included the ‘Don’t You Just Hate a Marsupial Who Can’t Hold Her Liquor?’ Sammy, relating to a story of a drunken opossum in Florida. Pollak said: “The late, great P G Wodehouse wrote this about the opossum’s ‘prudent tactics’: ‘The opossum . . . when danger is in the air, pretends to be dead, frequently going to the length of hanging out crepe and instructing its friends to gather round and say what a pity it all is’. It seems this particular opossum managed to down a bottle of bourbon and it took two days to sober her up!! What a girl!”

**The Times, December 29** (from Tony Ring)

Following the December 23rd obituary of Godfrey Smith, PGW Society member Chris Makey wrote: “Your excellent obituary omitted Godfrey Smith’s membership of the Drones, a society set up in September 1984 to honour the works and memory of P G Wodehouse. Godfrey, who despite ill health was attending dinners this year, was a fund of knowledge on the works of Wodehouse and a great raconteur. To sit next to him at dinner was to be immersed in wonderful tales brilliantly told.” (Our Patron Godfrey is sadly missed; see page 4.)

**Puzzle Life Crosswords, December** (from Roger Bowen)

The answer in a word game was that well-known PGW quotation, “Into the face of the young man had crept a furtive shame, the shifty, hangdog look which announces that an Englishman is about to talk French”. Bizarrely, the solution was said to be a quote by a well-known politician! The Rt. Hon. Monty Bodkin? Why not?!

**The Agni Newsletter, January 2018** (from Linda Tyler)

This literary magazine quoted William Girardi, its fiction editor, who said, “In this unholy New England cold I’ve

been keeping warm with Wodehouse. I go back to my three Ws once a year (Wodehouse, Wilde, Waugh) and I save Wodehouse for winter, when I need him most. He is – you can’t prove me wrong – the most fun a human can have with a book. I can’t fiddle, so as our Rome burns, I giggle and guffaw.”

**Times Literary Supplement, January 5**

(from Barry Chapman)

In a column entitled ‘The Turning Year’, the author ‘J.C.’ described a visit to Crofton Books in southeast London. The shop’s rather scattered way of organising books bemused the author, who saw on a notice board: “Please let me know if you see any . . . P G Wodehouse (old 1960s Penguin Classics), *Howards End* for Sarah.” A search revealed only one Wodehouse, a 1981 copy of *The Little Nugget* “at the foot of one of many piles, covered in cobwebby grime”.

**Pointless, BBC1, January 9**

Out of 100 people asked, 17 knew which author this haiku described as “comic novelist, he wrote over 90 books, creator of Jeeves”.

**Daily Telegraph, January 25** (from Carolyn de la Plain, David Salter, & Peter Thompson)

The final leader item read: “Sandy Blandings. Camel nobbling has been reported from the Riyadh festival. . . . Some competitors are said to have resorted to Botox. . . . True, the Earl of Emsworth would never stoop to dosing the Empress of Blandings with Botox, even supposing that it would be to her advantage, but it’s the sort of thing he’d expect from unscrupulous Shropshire rivals. In that respect, Market Snodsbury and Riyadh are more alike than often suspected.”

**Jewish Chronicle, January 26**

In a book review, Robert Low attempted to make sense of the language used and failed: “Trying to work that out, I felt a bit like Bertie Wooster grappling with the latest improving work foisted on him by Honoria Glossop.”

**Hindustan Times, January 28**

Vidya Subramanian reported on a panel held during the Jaipur Literature Festival which debated the question “Why are Indians fascinated by P G Wodehouse?” One panel member was Society Patron Shashi Tharoor.

**Broadway World UK, January 29**

Reported that PGW’s great-grandson, Hal Cazalet (pictured), would be performing at the cabaret Crazy Coqs in London on February 12–14. (Hal had performed at Crazy Coqs previously; not surprisingly, his programme featured many of his great-grandfather’s songs. Look for a review of his show in the June *Wooster Sauce*.)



**Deccan Chronicle, February 1**

Described comments made by Indian Congress member V. D. Satheesan, who had likened India’s finance minister, Dr T. M. Thomas Isaac, to Ukridge. “The simplistic manner in which Mr Isaac speaks about KIIFB reminds me of how Ukridge tells his wife about how they could run a chicken business without spending a pie,’ Mr Satheesan said.” He went on to explain the plot of *Love Among the Chickens*, concluding that “Isaac’s KIIFB plan is as simplistic, and funny, as this.”

# Future Events for Your Diary

## April 8, 2018 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.

## May 25, 2018 Gold Bats vs Dulwich Dusters

The Gold Bats will be playing their traditional against the Dulwich Dusters at Dulwich College starting from 4.15 pm. The match will be followed by a barbecue; see also page 4.

## May 31–June 23, 2018

### *Love on the Links* at the Salisbury Playhouse

A new play adapted from PGW's golf stories will be presented in Salisbury. For more information, see the December 2017 *WS*.

## June 24, 2018

### Gold Bats vs Sherlock Holmes Society of London

This traditional match will be played, as usual, at the West Wycombe Cricket Club on Toweridge Lane, HP14 3AE; start time 11 am. And, as ever, bring a

picnic lunch with you. For more details, see *Society News* on page 4.

## July 16, 2018 Society Meeting at the Savile Club

Our July meeting will feature the traditional pub quiz deviously devised by our Entertainment Impresario, Paul Kent. As always, we start from 6 pm.

## September 11–15, 2018 *Perfect Nonsense* in Lincolnshire

*Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense* will be staged by the Stamford Shoestring Theatre Company, which has been praised by the national press for their sell-out productions. For more information, visit the company's website at [www.stamfordshoestring.com](http://www.stamfordshoestring.com).

## September 17, 2018 AGM at the Savile Club

The Society will hold its annual general meeting on this night. Please observe the Savile's dress code: no jeans or trainers, and gentlemen must wear a jacket.

## October 11, 2018 Dinner at Gray's Inn

Mark your calendars now! The Society's biennial dinner will be held at our customary venue of Gray's Inn, London. See details on page 5; an application form will be sent with the June 2018 edition of *Wooster Sauce*. Information can also be found on our website.

**Have a bright idea for an article?** Send it in! We welcome all contributions with open arms (except for pastiches). Just send it to the Editor (address below), preferably as a Word document. Photos also welcome.

She melted quite perceptibly. She did not cease to look like a basilisk, but she began to look like a basilisk who has had a good lunch.

(from *The Girl on the Boat*, 1922)

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