

WOOSTER SAUCE

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A Westminster Abbey Memorial for P G Wodehouse

It was the obvious place to announce it. News as good as this cried out for a live audience to hear it, and the bigger the better. If that audience had browsed, sluiced, and been entertained to within an inch of its life, then better yet.

And so it was that at the very end of the closing speech at the Society's 2018 Dinner, the Chairman astounded the room with the news that the Society had been granted permission to place a memorial for P G Wodehouse in Westminster Abbey.

The stunned silence quickly gave way to applause, cheers, and the scraping of chairs as members, guests, performers – *everyone* – leapt to their feet. It was a fine time to be part of such a jubilant crowd! This was a truly significant moment for the Society and for the recognition of Plum's extraordinary talent, and everybody there knew it.

We had always believed that Wodehouse should be honoured with a place in Westminster Abbey, and in 2017 the Committee followed a suggestion from the late Norman Murphy that the idea's time might have come. With Norman's notes, Tim Andrew, Hilary Bruce, and Edward Cazalet made a detailed submission to the Dean of Westminster the Very Reverend Dr John Hall, and in due course the Dean decided that there should be a memorial stone in the Abbey.

The processes involved in installing a stone are necessarily complex and lengthy, but everything is progressing satisfactorily. While many details remain to be finalised, we have an indication of where the stone will be located and understand that the dedication will be sometime in 2019, possibly in the first half of the year. We also have some understanding of the form the Service of Dedication might take, but there is still much to work out. In particular, we don't presently know how many people will be allowed to attend, in what capacity, and on what terms.



P G Wodehouse is to join other literary immortals at Westminster Abbey.

(© Dean and Chapter of Westminster)

As soon as we have dates and details for the dedication, we will share the news with members in *Wooster Sauce* and on our website. However, because *Wooster Sauce* is published quarterly, we advise members to keep an eye on our website.

An Evening of Song and Inspiration

by Noel Bushnell

The Hall of the venerable Gray's Inn is hung with portraits of eminent lawyers, and it was under their righteous gaze that several talented performers presented 'A Comic Crook Parade' as the entertainment at the Society's 11th biennial dinner on 11 October. How they might have squirmed in their day at Plum's song lyrics extolling the, er, virtues of burglary and cracking a crib, as well as the comforts of one's little cell at Sing Sing or similar graduate colleges.

It was an audacious, not to say impudent, theme, given the surroundings, but one thoroughly enjoyed by the 148 attendees, including some from the United States, the Netherlands, and Germany – and this Old Stepper from Down Under, who was surprised and gratified to find the portrait of one R. G. Menzies¹ among those present, albeit in the reception room rather than the Hall proper.

The Hall itself, with that Gothic hammerbeam roof dominating overhead, offered an immediate reminder of the Great Hall of Market Snodsbury Grammar School, built sometime around 1416. Was the air sort of heavy and languorous as a result of some 600 years of Young England and its characteristic menu of boiled beef and carrots?

Not at all. In fact, the Hall of Gray's Inn had been rebuilt after being ventilated pretty well comprehensively during the late unpleasantness. The current version is less than 70 years old, for heaven's sake. The Old Stepper had to get a grip before he succumbed to an excess of history awe.

The delicately nurtured came splendidly attired, of course, but among the male contingent black tie conformity was not strictly observed. One facially hirsute egg dared to appear in a white mess jacket with brass buttons . . . and he wore a soft-fronted shirt. Maybe he had the imprimatur of the Prince of Wales.

The Latin grace specially written for the society by the late Paul W. de Voil, and intoned by Oliver Wise, brought diners to the main business of the night:

browsing and sluicing with elbows out. The banquet menu would have done Anatole proud, although somehow ham hock and roast chicken terrine is less tasty than *terrine de jarret de porc et poulet rôti* and herb-cruste roast lamb rump not quite as toothsome as *gigot d'agneau recouvert d'herbes aromatiques*.

As the foodstuffs settled underneath the cummerbund, Sir Edward Cazalet opened the post-prandial formalities with the Loyal Toast. Our president, Alexander Armstrong, then took to the podium to deliver the toast to P. G. Wodehouse and the Society. His humorous talk is now lost in the fog of the good evening being had, except for the bits about El Presidente that Patrick Kidd reported in *The Times*. (Editor's note. Never fear! Alexander's delightful talk can be read on page 10.)



Chairman & President:
Hilary Bruce & Alexander Armstrong



To say that the diners enjoyed the entertainment would be putting it mildly!

As the cheers faded, diners were informed they could take a brief break while preparations were made for the commencement of the evening's entertainment. And before long we were sitting back in chairs, port in hand, to savour the Comic Crook program under the MC-ship (if that's the word) of its creator, Tony Ring.

The fact is – and it should be acknowledged that this is not confined to the underclasses – a distinct strain of criminality pervades the Wodehouse canon. Even Jeeves has been known to take a high-handed approach to what might be considered the law of the land. The Old Stepper examined the remnants

of his conscience and found a lurking regret that no bobbies were present. A demonstration of how to pinch a policeman's helmet would have been so instructive.

HRH The Duke of Kent, as he has often done before, joined the cast – this time consisting of Neil Pearson, Robert Daws, and Katy Reece – in renderings from the works of the Great Man about the delights of the criminal life. The dulcet warblings of Hal and Lara Cazalet and Alexander Armstrong, like Beach's bullfinch, set the hall resonating with song.

The gang brought back to life PGW's very first professional lyric for the musical theatre, a lament of every old lag called 'Put Me in My Little Cell', from the 1904 West End show *Sergeant Brue*:

Put me in my little cell
 Let my job be soft,
 Tell, oh tell the gov'nor that,
 My heart with grief and pain is tore.
 Say it's all a blunder
 That I'm not the chap they want . . .

They went on to perform 'Our Little Nest' (from *Oh, Lady! Lady!!*, 1918), 'We're Crooks' (*Miss 1917*, guess which year) and 'Tulip Time in Sing Sing' (*Sitting Pretty*, 1924), before Lara went straight with, of course, 'Bill'. The Old Stepper nearly choked up as he scrounged another sip at the port decanter.

But the best was yet to come, as you must know by now. Our chairman, Hilary Bruce, was clearly very emotional as she announced that Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse had been granted, a memorial stone in Westminster Abbey, alongside other greats of English literature (see page 1). It was a grand climax, and an inspiring one, to an evening of fun and fellowship – one of people bound together by mutual admiration, if not love, of an extraordinary artist.

The Old Stepper left the Hall alone to hoof it back to his hotel – getting a little lost among the unfamiliar surroundings of Bloomsbury but clear in his ageing mind as



HRH The Duke of Kent did his bit to entertain the troops.

to what he must do as soon as he could. The next morning he went directly to the Abbey, not passing 'Go' and not collecting £200, joined the tourist queue, and filed through the ranks of long deceased kings and queens and dukes and duchesses until he reached Poets' Corner. And there he sat quietly for a good half-hour among the memorials to Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dickens, Austen, Kipling, Hughes, Larkin, et al, and theatrical greats like Sheridan and Olivier, and pondered what Plum might have thought of his elevation from exile in America to immortality in Westminster.

For the record, the Stepper, not much given to spiritual sentiment, found the experience most uplifting. It was worth crossing half a world just for that, never mind the *tarte aux poires et aux amandes avec crème anglaise*.

¹ Sir Robert Gordon Menzies (1894–1978), Australia's longest serving Prime Minister, Honorary Bencher of Gray's Inn, and inter alia Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. The 1963 portrait hanging at the Inn is one of several of him painted by the Australian artist Sir Ivor Hele.



As did Hal and Lara, who sang some of PGW's finest lyrics..



Superlative entertainment was provided by (from left to right): Hal Cazalet, Susie Allan, Lara Cazalet, Alexander Armstrong, Katy Reece, Tony Ring, Neil Pearson, and Robert Daws.

Photos Credit: All photos by Katy Photography (www.katyphotography.co.uk)

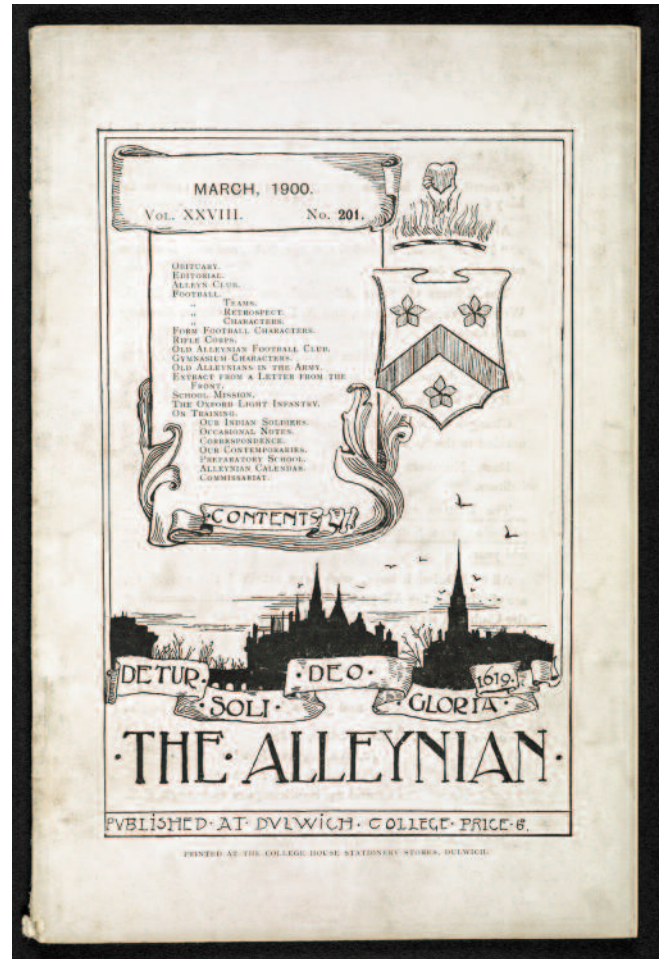
P G Wodehouse at the British Library

by Rachel Foss

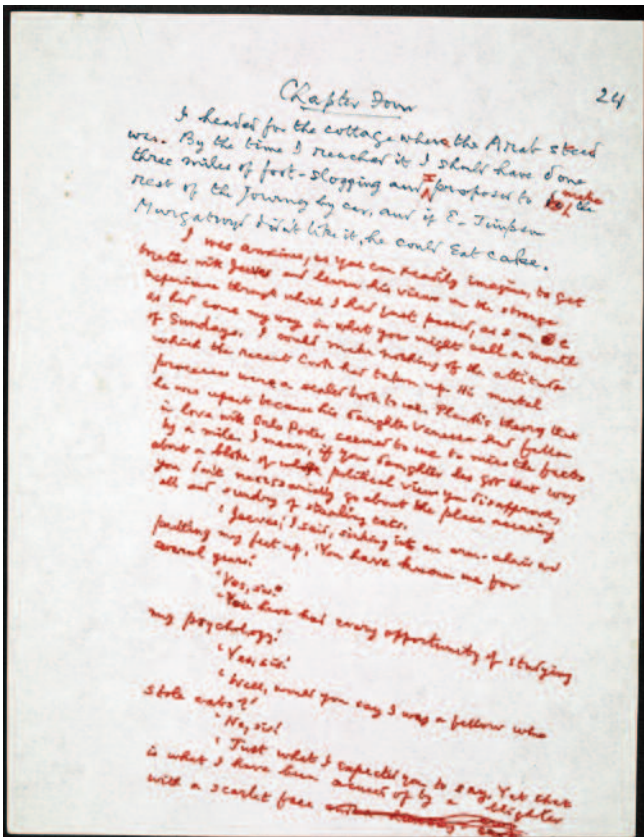
In 2016, through the generosity of Sir Edward Cazalet, the British Library acquired the Wodehouse Archive on long-term loan. (See *Wooster Sauce*, December 2016.) The archive has now been arranged and catalogued according to the British Library's standard practices and is available in the Manuscripts Reading Room for anyone who wants to do research.

To celebrate the collection's public launch, the Library is holding an exhibition, *P. G. Wodehouse: The Man and His Work*, which opens on 29 November. The exhibition draws on the archive, and on the Library's printed and manuscript collections, to trace the development of Wodehouse's writings within the context of his life, from his beginnings as a schoolboy editor to his knighthood for services to literature shortly before he died. It is structured chronologically in four sections.

The first section, Beginnings (1894–1915), considers Wodehouse's early work, including as one of the exhibits the March 1900 issue of *The Alleynian*,



Issue of *The Alleynian*, March 1900 (Loan MS 129/5/22)



Manuscript draft of *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* (Loan MS 129/1/76). This image of the first page of Chapter 4 is reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the P. G. Wodehouse Estate. It begins: "I headed for the cottage where the Arab steed was. By the time I reached it I should have done three miles of foot-slogging and I proposed to make the rest of the journey by car, and if E. Jimpson Murgatroyd didn't like it, he could eat cake."

for which Wodehouse wrote and acted as editor during his Dulwich College days. It also includes a 1902 issue of *Public School Magazine*, in which *The Pothunters*, Wodehouse's first novel, was serialized incompletely before its publication in book form later the same year. Many of Wodehouse's best known fictional characters – including Ukridge, Lord Emsworth, and Psmith – emerged in embryo over the next decade or so, while the first story involving Jeeves and Bertie appeared in 1915.

A challenge that curators face when working on exhibitions largely focussed on documents and textual objects is how to make a display sufficiently visually appealing for the visitor. Including artefacts can often help. Again, owing to Edward Cazalet's generosity and support for the Library's work, we have been able to borrow several personal items that were owned by Wodehouse. Among these is his Warwickshire cricket club tie, which he received after watching Percy Jeeves play for Warwickshire against Gloucestershire at Cheltenham in 1913. It is wonderful to be able to show the tie alongside an autograph and a typescript page of *The Man With*

Two Left Feet. Such evocative material embodies the connections between Wodehouse's life and writing that the exhibition examines.

The second section, Stage and Screen (1915–1934), explores Wodehouse's highly successful career as a lyricist, which took off shortly after his marriage to Ethel Wayman in New York in September 1914; this event brought into the family Ethel's daughter, Leonora, whom Wodehouse came to adopt and adore. That same year he met Guy Bolton and Jerome Kern, with whom he would go on to write works that earned the trio a seminal place in the history of musical theatre. Aware that visitors who know Wodehouse primarily as a writer of comic fiction might not realize the extent and significance of his work in the theatre, I thought it particularly important to draw out this part of his life in the exhibition and to highlight its inter-relatedness with the development of his mature fiction. This influence seems most apparent in his approach to the creation of character and in his mastery of farcical plots and dialogue. While reading and re-reading some of Wodehouse's fiction in preparation for the exhibition, I found it interesting to note the references to the theatre that appear. To cite just one example among many, in *Much Obligated, Jeeves* (one of the manuscripts that appears in the exhibition), L. P. Runkle remarks to Bertie: "You remind me of one of those fellows who do dances with the soubrette in musical comedy."

The third section, Rise and Fall (1934–1946), treats Wodehouse's rise to a peak of literary fame in the 1930s and the circumstances surrounding his move to France in 1934, his failed attempts to return to England after war was declared, and his subsequent internment at Tost in Upper Silesia. A highlight of this section is Wodehouse's Camp Diary, written in pencil and recording many of his own and his fellow internees' experiences of life in the camp.

The fourth and final section, America (1947–1975), treats Wodehouse's years in America from the postwar years until his death. Here the visitor can see manuscript pages from *Much Obligated, Jeeves, Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, and *Sunset at Blandings*, along with a page headed 'Sequence' from Wodehouse's many working papers relating to *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, which shows his meticulous plotting, his reflections and rigorous questioning of himself, and a note of his working title for the novel, *Red Spots at Sunrise*, written in the bottom left-hand corner of the page.

The exhibition will run in the British Library's Treasures Gallery from 29 November 2018 to 24 February 2019. The Library is holding two events to accompany the exhibition, the first on 6 and 7 December and the second on 21 February, which will be an evening of readings, music, and commentary (see the box in the next column).

Rachel Foss is the British Library's Head of Contemporary Archives and Manuscripts.

Society News

February Meeting News

OUR IMPRESARIO WRITES: Even if you can't tell a mashie from a niblick, there will still be plenty to inform and entertain at the Society meeting on 18 February 2019 when John Hodgson delivers his talk on 'Plum's World of Sport'. As we all know, Plum rarely wrote about competitive games for their own sake. There's usually a love interest in there somewhere, and his biography is packed with quotable anecdotes about his own sporting prowess – or lack of it. John's sparkling talk (I've seen the draft script) is a masterly compendium of fact and commentary, expertly harvested from Plum's vast oeuvre. Bookending his performance will be ample opportunities for browsing and sluicing, meeting and making new friends, and engaging the Savile Club's glassware, full to the brim with the blushful Hippocrene, in an interlocking grip. Tee-off is 6 for 6.30 pm – and, gentlemen, please remember to wear your club's blazer or, failing that, a jacket of any kind.

Website Information Sheets Update

As most members are aware, the Society's website provides helpful resource materials that include a series of Information Sheets (found under the Reference Materials tab). Happily, these sheets have been updated recently by Tony Ring. To learn more about the changes, see Tony's article on page 23.

A Northern Gathering

In our last issue, member John Wood wrote of his attempt to organise a gathering of northern-based Wodehouseans. He now writes that he has received some interest but is hoping for more, adding: "Those who are able to should assemble for lunch at the New Club, 86 Princes Street, Edinburgh, on **Friday, 8 February 2019**, at 12.30 in the members' bar. Lunch will be in the dining room at our own table (thus avoiding the cost of a private room). It will be purely a social occasion, and there will definitely not be a quiz!"

P G Wodehouse: What Ho!

As described in the preceding article, near the end of the British Library's Wodehouse exhibition, there will be a special event, to be held on **Thursday, 21 February**, from 7 to 8.30 pm. This will be "a night of readings, music, and stories linking Wodehouse's life and work, inspired by his items on display in the Treasure Gallery", chaired by broadcaster Matthew Bannister. Among those taking part are PGW's great-grandson Hal Cazalet and biographer Robert McCrum.

“Enough splosh in the old sock”

*Mike Swaddling reports on the Society’s 21st AGM,
17 September 2018*

Returning after a year’s sabbatical from PGW social events, this was my inaugural visit to the Savile. How would this middle-class lad cope with his first visit to a Mayfair club?

The first thing I had to think about was the sartorial requirements, i.e. a jacket. Having recently reread *Right Ho, Jeeves*, I did briefly flirt with the idea of the white mess jacket with brass buttons – “all the rage – *tout ce qu’il y a de chic* – on the Cote d’Azur” – but decided not to risk an upheaval. So I turned to the wardrobe and made my Hobson’s choice, the only one to survive a post-retirement orgy of donations to charity shops. Fortunately, ties were not an issue. Nor were trousers, despite those “moments when one asks oneself ‘Do trousers matter?’” As Jeeves omnisciently replied, “The mood will pass, sir” – and it had. Still, I turned up at the door shortly after 6 pm half expecting to have my clothing credentials checked before being allowed entry. But this did not happen and I was able to join the merry throng of 30+ attendees.

After about 20 minutes of the required b. & s. and nodding across the room at familiar faces, we were called to order by impresario Paul Kent with a few melodic taps of a spoon on a beer glass, and then the stopwatches were out to see if Chairman Hilary Bruce could come anywhere near her personal best for getting us through the AGM formalities.

It was a valiant effort. Among the solid facts in her report, we learned that we have had more new membership applications than the previous year, that most of these have come from the website, and that we now have just under a thousand members, of which an estimated 75 per cent live in the UK. There have also been some changes to the committee’s constitution (which needed voting in later on).

Treasurer Ian Walton’s report was a masterpiece of brevity, telling us that we had slightly less money in the coffers because of (a) the move to the Savile and (b) the decision to make *Wooster Sauce* four-colour, but we still had “enough splosh in the old sock” to do what we wanted in the Master’s name.

So back to the committee changes. Jo Jacobius, after many years of providing sterling advice ad hoc, has been persuaded to join the committee. Our

indefatigable Membership Secretary, Christine Hewitt, has now assumed the role of Secretary as well, partly because her former load had been lightened by the work of Sue and Bryan Williams as Database Managers. Sue, Bryan, Jo, and Christopher Bellew as Website Manager were all voted in as committee members, plus the existing officers of Chairman, Treasurer, and *Wooster Sauce* Editor Elin Murphy and retiring-by-rotation members Sir Edward Cazalet and Paul Kent. Hilary finished by thanking each and every one for their contributions over the last year.

Sadly, the clock had beaten her, but in fairness there had been some extra business to contend with this year, which now clearly required some light lubrication before our guest speaker took the floor.

Regular readers of this august publication will have seen Richard T. Kelly’s headline article in the June issue, and I must say that, whilst there was no doubting its entertainment value, your reporter was slightly disappointed that his talk seemed to be a virtual carbon copy. I had hoped for some further knowledgeable insights on the important subject of continuing our membership through to the younger generation (a discussion that needs to happen, possibly within these pages).

Richard reiterated his point that, despite the belief that humour doesn’t travel, Wodehouse was an example to “the rising generation” of would-be authors because he had been the “immaculate model of a writer who worked hard” and made it look effortless through his “fine carpentry” and “work ethic”. In his tuition Richard uses Stevens, the butler, in Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *The Remains of the Day* as an obvious reference point, which he demonstrated with a few excerpts.

He also mentioned how “frightfully important” is the choice of one’s first PGW novel, a regular series in *WS*. His talk finished with a quote to ponder from the end of *Remains* about the skill of bantering and whether it is not “the key to human warmth”.

Unfortunately, there was no time for questions, and after Tony Ring’s ‘parish notices’ and the draining of glasses, we all slowly wended our individual ways homeward. The next conviviality is on Monday, February 18, 2019 (see page 5).

A sort of dull resignation came over Cedric Mulliner. It was useless, he saw, to struggle any longer. He was on the point of moving from the door and going back to the cab and embarking on the laborious task of explaining to the driver that he wished to return to the Albany . . . when from somewhere close at hand there came to his ears a sudden, loud, gurgling noise, rather like that which might have proceeded from a pig suffocating in a vat of glue. It was the sound of someone snoring.

(From ‘The Story of Cedric’, 1929)

Profile of a Patron

Jonathan Coe

For a society devoted to a great writer, it is truly a pleasure when another great writer becomes one of our patrons. Such was the case when we welcomed Jonathan Coe to our ranks last year and he immediately bestowed upon us an insightful look at the great British comic novelist Anthony Buckeridge (see *Wooster Sauce*, September 2017). On the front page of that same issue, he told us how he became a Wodehouse fan late in life, the trigger being his receipt of the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize in 2001, awarded for his novel *The Rotters' Club*.

Born in 1961 and educated at King Edward's School, Birmingham, and Trinity College, Cambridge, Jonathan went on to teach at the University of Warwick, where he received both his MA and a PhD in English Literature. Like Wodehouse, he began writing at an early age: his first surviving story was written when he was eight years old. He submitted his first full-length novel to a publisher when he was 15, though he later burned the book out of embarrassment. He continued writing while teaching and working on his PhD, and in 1987 his novel *The Accidental Woman* became the first of his books to be published. In addition to 12 novels (to date), he has written three biographies, a collection of short prose, and two books for children – not to mention a slew of articles for newspapers and magazines. He has been awarded several prizes for his books, including the Samuel Johnson Prize, the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, the Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger, and the



Prix Médicis Étranger. He was made Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2016.

Jonathan's talents are not confined to the literary world, however: he also has a passion for music. In the late 1980s he played with and wrote songs for his band, The Peer Group, as well as a feminist cabaret group called Wanda and the Willy Warmers. Both groups did not last long, and he turned his focus to writing, though he has always maintained his musical interests.

In November 2015, Jonathan and his colleague David Quantick presented a delightful talk about Wodehouse at the Society's London meeting. By this time he had become a diehard Wodehouse fan, and frequent references to his predecessor's genius would make appearances in print. In one memorable article published in *The Guardian* (September 2013),

he wrote of winning the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize: "It was only then that I realised the pure, unpolluted humour of which [Wodehouse] was possessed was the greatest possible gift he could have offered the world: the same thing, I suppose, that Italo Calvino had in mind when he extolled the virtues of 'thoughtful lightness', or 'comedy that has lost its bodily weight'. More and more I feel that, just as all art aspires to the condition of music, all humour should really aspire to the condition of Wodehouse."

Since 1989 Jonathan has been married to Janine McKeown, with whom he has two daughters. It is unknown whether they are Wodehouse fans.

A Cosy Moment

The Elements of Eloquence: How to Turn the Perfect English Phrase, by Mark Forsyth (2013)

(from David Landman)

Chapter 30 of this book is on transferred epithets, and the second paragraph says it all:

It's astonishing how often epithets are transferred and how little we notice. . . . Once you point out the transfer, it becomes rather amusing. P.G. Wodehouse was the great master of this technique. His transfers are just a little too ridiculous to work. 'I lit a rather pleased cigarette' is just a bit too much, as is 'I balanced

a thoughtful lump of sugar on the teaspoon'; but Wodehouse's best, for my considered money, was: 'His eyes widened and an astonished piece of toast fell from his grasp.' The idea of astonished toast is just too much, and we let out a surprised chortle.

We take exception to his comment 'a little too ridiculous to work': if that is the case, why do they make us laugh? Harrumph! (NB. The author includes a footnote referring readers to 'The Transferred Epithet in P.G. Wodehouse' by Robert A. Hall, Jr., which appeared in *Linguistic Inquiry*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter 1973), pp. 92-94.)

Jeeves and the King of Clubs

Reviewed by Paul Kent

Sebastian Faulks has called his “a tribute”; Ben Schott’s is “an homage”; to publishers they are simply “brand extensions”. But whatever you choose to call them, writing follow-ups to P. G. Wodehouse’s novels is one of the more hazardous projects a writer can take on. Imitating the inimitable requires no little skill and buckets of self-belief, because it’s oh-so-easy to do it badly, particularly if you’re trying to channel Bertie’s matchless narrative style. Put one foot wrong and you end up pastiching what you set out to celebrate. As Plum himself wrote in 1946, every line in a Jeeves and Bertie story has to be a zinger or the comedy immediately starts leaking air. And if *he* felt that degree of pressure, what must it be like to assume that burden of responsibility without the benefit of being Wodehouse?

Schott, in my view, winningly pulls this off while adding his own personal take on Wodehouse’s World. Arguably more so than Faulks, he is his own man, treating us to a shiny, urban, sophisticated Wooster, for the most part set on Bertie’s home turf in Mayfair.

As you might expect from a compiler of factual Miscellanies, Schott has done his homework meticulously. I doubt that even Norman Murphy could find fault in his research – hence the 16 pages of footnotes at the end of the book that prove we needn’t bother trying. Like Norman’s, they are fascinating and they enrich our understanding of what Schott, in his crack at Wodehouse, is trying to do, which is to create a sense of place, a credible alternative based on Plum’s vision, but more in tune with Schott’s own preference for facts, names, times, dates, and locations. We find ourselves inside a very precise mechanism here, and Schott has clearly read and knows his Wodehouse backwards. Many of our favourite characters reappear – a brilliantly realised Aunt Dahlia, Florence Craye, Roderick Spode, and Madeline Bassett, to name but four – and Schott’s knowledge of and affection for these icons are evident throughout the book. They are in capable, safe hands.

But what of Bertie and Jeeves? Well, the latter is pretty much himself, but his employer has undergone something of a sea change into something rich and . . . not strange, exactly, but unfamiliar. For he has somehow become intelligent. One of the things that has long puzzled Schott about the two men’s relationship is why a factotum possessed of a brain the size of a planet would remain in the employ of one whose cerebellum had more in common, size wise, with a peahen’s. Wouldn’t he get incredibly bored? So in this tale, the playing field, while not levelled, is biased at a less severe angle. As things turn out (and the following needs no

spoiler alert if you have read the book’s pre-publicity), Jeeves has long been working for British intelligence, for which the Junior Ganymede Club is a well-disguised front. In seeking to recruit Bertie to the cause, the mysterious Lord McAuslan wouldn’t audition a half-wit, so Bertie’s IQ is necessarily given something of a boost. This Wooster Mk2, while no less generous of spirit, is altogether more, suave, debonair, and considerably less tongue-tied with the opposite sex. Take this exchange with Madeline Bassett:

“Lovely, lovely Bertie! Have you missed me?”
“As the slaves miss Pharaoh.”
“Is your heart still shattered?”
““Like the splinters of Don Quixote’s lance.”
“Like the what of who?”
“One of Jeeves’s. Beats me.”

Nicely done. As is this a few lines later:

“Oh, so you and Spode are back on?”
“We’re engaged all over again, Bertie! Isn’t it wonderful?”
“It’s more than wonderful, Madeline, it’s . . . indescribable.”

Wodehouse’s Bertie wouldn’t have the speed or presence of mind for this quick-fire repartee, nor the multiple meanings of that post-elliptical “indescribable”. But here he does. Indeed, on one memorable occasion,

Bertie outsmarts the Ganymede spooks, cracking a crucial code using his knowledge of the mysteries of Dorothy L Sayers which they, as ‘educated’ types, haven’t read. I rather like this somewhat de-chumped Bertie, who remains recognizably himself while capable of learning new, character-developing tricks.

Which brings us to love: while Bertie is usually to be found sprinting in the opposite direction, Schott has him a willing accomplice in some weapons-grade flirtation. His pairing? The daughter of spymaster McAuslan, the fragrant – and even sexy – Iona. Bertie soon becomes enamoured of her soft Edinburgh brogue, keen intelligence,

sharp humour and intense beauty – and there is, in their conversations, an air of mutual attraction. Iona doesn’t take pity on Bertie like Madeline or see him as a work in progress à la Craye, but finds him, on this showing, plausibly attractive. And Schott has left their relationship intriguingly open should the call come for a sequel.

But here’s the \$64,000 question: is it funny? To which I can reply: yes – in spades. And I have first-hand evidence. The reason I got my hands on a proof copy of *Jeeves and the King of Clubs* is that I was directing the audiobook version, read by James Lance, who has form with Wodehouse, having played Bertie onstage during



the West End run of *Perfect Nonsense*. The studio quickly became a madhouse, and we spent much of our time laughing like drains.

So if this latest pretender to Plum's throne is approached on its own terms, I reckon there's a huge amount to enjoy. Sometimes Schott tries just a little too hard, but he rises to the challenge with a greater élan than his predecessor, engineering some clear blue sky between his version and his inspiration. I don't propose to award it marks out of ten,



but if I did, Schott would earn a very high score for effort, application, and overall enjoyment.

This is literary stalking of a very high calibre.



Paul Kent with Ben Schott at the Society's formal dinner, Gray's Inn, in October. Mr Schott will be writing an article for the March issue of Wooster Sauce - something to look forward to!

(Photo by Katy Photography)

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Emily Gulley

As my dad works at CERN, I was born in Geneva and lived in France until 2013, when we moved to England. My view of England had always been somewhat Wodehousian despite the fact that it was another year until I came across the great author's work.

My very first Wodehouse experience was not of the books but of the television series *Blandings*. We were staying at my Nan and Gramp's house in Wales when it came on the TV and we decided to watch it. Afterwards my Nan dug out a book of short stories on which some of the television episodes were based (her only P. G. Wodehouse book!), and I read it. And, obviously, I did not stop there, but went from book to book.

The first Jeeves and Wooster book I read was actually *Ring for Jeeves*, which my Mum had found in the library and which, of course, does not contain Wooster, Jeeves being on loan to a friend in need. I can remember very little of the story – indeed, I cannot remember if I actually finished the book – but it was enough to spur me on to read a second. Once I encountered Jeeves (with Wooster thrown in as well), there was no going back.

I have now, as you can see, amassed a small treasure trove of Plum's work. I have tried branching out to books apart from the Jeeves and Wooster and *Blandings* series. I have read *Ukridge*, *Young Men in Spats*, and *Piccadilly Jim* and enjoyed all of them, although they do not come close to rivalling the bliss of dipping into the world of *Blandings*. Another member commented that Wodehouse is the best antidepressant, and I heartily agree with him.



I have recently acquired the Folio Society edition of *Summer Lightning* and its sequel *Heavy Weather*, and they are delightfully illustrated hardback books – a beautiful example of how every book should be, quite incomparable to the dreaded Kindle!

Despite my best efforts, my family are only just coming round to the charm of reading Wodehouse.

My Mum and I are reading the books aloud together; she reads the narration and I the speech. We have all encountered the stories through the television adaptations of both *Blandings* and *Jeeves and Wooster* (played by the marvellous Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie). However, despite the brilliance of these, I maintain that the books are the best and by far the funniest, and my Mum agrees now that she is also reading them. I do not think it is possible for any author to be funnier than P. G. Wodehouse, only to equal him, and it is very hard to think of anyone who does that, except

perhaps for Richmal Crompton with her *William* series.

I am, at the moment, studying History and German at A level and would like to read Wodehouse in both German and French when I am good enough. I have read the Harry Potter books in German, and it is amazing how it changes one's outlook on the story.

Well, I think that's about it. All that remains for me to say is that I am delighted to be part of such a lovely society and look forward to making the acquaintance of as many of the members as possible! Thank you and toodle-pip! (I wonder how one translates that into German?)

A Toast to P G Wodehouse and The P G Wodehouse Society

by Alexander Armstrong

Delivered at the Society's dinner at Gray's Inn on October 11, 2019.

My very dearest friends in Plum. What a great pleasure it is to be amongst this joyous, convivial gang and what an extraordinary honour it is to be speaking *to* it as president. Oh, how I have abused that word (not 'president' – there are others who abuse that with far more skill than I). I now realise that all those other occasions when I've said it was an 'honour' to be at an event – I'm thinking, for example, of the Pipes and Plumbing Awards over whose dazzling ceremony, only last week, I pronounced it an 'honour' to be presiding – I have been massively overstating the case. Don't misunderstand me – it's definitely 'kind of fun' to be announcing the 2018 Winner of Best Overall Solutions Provider (Plastic Guttering) and watching an enormous man from Hitchin snake his way through the tables whilst I'M THE FIRESTARTER, TWISTED FIRESTARTER booms out of the speakers at the volume of an act of God, but I begin to see that *that's* not an honour. *This* – he says like Mick Dundee brandishing a hunting knife – *this* is an honour.

And now, having flogged that poor word half to death, I hope there is just enough power in it, just a vestige of mint left in that gum, for me to convey to you quite how deep my pleasure is at being here, and how much that lovely letter from Hilary Bruce meant to, and moved, me when she wrote asking if I would fill the position of president left vacant by the death of dear Sir Terry.

For those of you who don't know me, I had better introduce myself. Good evening, I am Alexander Armstrong. I come – very proudly – from Northumberland. Yes, I *know, I know* I don't sound like it, do I? It's amazing how often people like to point that out to me, usually with a raised eyebrow and the withering implication (occasionally voiced),

"You're not really a proper northerner, though, are you?" I don't even know what that means. What do you want? I'm a Northumbrian born and raised. It's where I call home. My family has lived there since before it was *called* Northumberland. I live in . . . yes, alright, Oxford. But *North* Oxford. So very *much* a proper northerner. The killer fact that I like to chuck in round about this point is that I actually grew up on one of the roughest estates in the northeast and thank *goodness* for that – makes me a good deal more

Radio 4 compatible, I can tell you. I say *one* of the roughest; I'm pretty sure it's *the* roughest estate in the northeast – it's got to be at least 85% moorland.

Anyway, I'm now a game-show host. I present a programme called *Pointless*, which is on BBC One every day at 5.15. So that is me: friend to the infirm, darling of the long-term unemployed. And known more generally as that man who says goodbye just before the 6 o'clock news.

Something else I do every so often is get together with a rather serious-minded panel of young people, the idea being that I fulfil some kind of mentoring role and perhaps unwittingly pass on some tiny grains of knowledge over time. That makes

it sound considerably less fun than it is. It's actually enormously rewarding, and I've become terribly fond of our little group. They're rather wonderful. The other day, they had an interesting question for me. "Daddy," they said, "what would you say is the best career to aim for?" The answer, of course, is comedy. It doesn't matter if you make a career of it or not, but strive to write comedy, to perform comedy, to work on your comic skills at all times and in all places until you have developed an instinctive nose and ear for *humour*. Because humour is becoming a vanishingly rare and precious commodity. And I don't mean that ghastly ersatz humour of endlessly parading our best-loved punchlines of yesteryear, but simply a deft ability to enjoy and share the madneses and impossibilities of life.



In addition to delivering the toast, Alexander sang 'Tulip Time in Sing-Sing' during the post-dinner entertainment.

(Photo by Katy Photography)

As a seasoned insomniac, I know only too well that heavenly moment when the subconscious mind steps in and leads my worn and hackneyed thoughts off down a gloriously surreal path to peaceful sleep. And this, I think, is the role that humour plays in our lives: it's a breadcrumb trail to balance and a balm to rutted minds. And at a time when there is plenty to keep us all awake at night, it is, of course, good humour that will draw us all together again and start to mend our differences. If only there is enough of it about.

Which leads me inevitably to P G Wodehouse and the reason that I am at such pains to stress how honoured I am to be here in my new role. It is quite simply the perfect Hollywood ending to a story that began when I first discovered Bertie Wooster and Jeeves at the age of ten. There are some authors that I like reading; there are many that I love. There is only one that I think of as a *friend*. P G Wodehouse has always (as they say) 'been there for me' – this is especially true if by 'there' we mean 'on my bedside table'. I took him to boarding school and never felt homesick again because in my pocket I was not only carrying a whole compendium of friends and relations, sunny landscapes with country houses and chefs, well-mown lawns and ornamental lakes, and a capital that buzzed with the promise of young love and fun – but therein was also this wonderful comic voice that leapt from the page and spoke gently and hilariously to me with the warmth of a close confidant. A solid and lifelong friend.

There was a strange, slightly disingenuous habit people had when I was growing up, particularly prevalent among the generation that taught us, of quoting someone by always saying, "I think it was . . .", as in "I think it was Proust who said . . .", "I think it

was Dickens who said . . .", or the slightly more cliquy version of it that I heard on the radio the other day: "It was Charles Rosen, wasn't it, who said . . .". It's just one of those strange conventions I've never understood – come on, man! Either you know something or you don't – have the courage to wear your learning with grace – let's have none of this false modesty.

Of course, the master of gracious and broad erudition is Wodehouse. He can leap from high to low register like a clarinet, taking us in the space of a single page from the book of Job to Shakespeare to the *Racing Post* to the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and all in such a way that it's never flashy or cumbersome but always inclusive, so it doesn't matter a jot if we're not fully up to speed with our Coleridge or our Old Testament because once again Wodehouse has 'been there for us'. And all that he knows is simply shared out with great love and generosity, like wine from the large cellar of someone who *loves* wine.

And – good Lord – the humour. No one comes close to Plum on that front. To dissect and pore over someone's comic style is never as much fun as simply to sample it, so allow me here to parade a best-loved line of yesteryear:

I think it was Wodehouse who wrote: "I turned to Aunt Agatha, whose demeanour was now rather like that of one who, picking daisies on the railway, had just caught the down express in the small of the back."

Your Royal Highness, my Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to ask you all to be upstanding and to drink a toast to the great love that unites us: P G Wodehouse and The P G Wodehouse Society.

Reaction to *Jeeves and the King of Clubs*

On page 8, Paul Kent favourably reviews Ben Schott's newly published homage to Wodehouse. Reaction in the Press was, for the most part, equally favourable. In *The Guardian* (November 4), Alexander Larman described the book as "consistently witty rather than laugh-out-loud hilarious" and also noted that "Schott excels with a series of similes and metaphors every bit as striking as those Wodehouse came up with." Larman commented on "a blacker humour than Wodehouse might have embraced" but concluded that the book is "a delight to read" and applauded the appendix describing its allusions and references.



In *The Times* (October 20), Patrick Kidd gave the novel an enthusiastic thumbs up, saying that it is a reboot of "one of literature's great double acts that captures His Master's Voice and, above all, the famous Wodehouse rhythm". However he pointed out that "maybe some of the early dialogue paints Wooster as a bit more intelligent than he should be, but let's put that down to Jeeves slipping an extra kipper on his breakfast plate."

Matthew Adams in *The Sunday Times* (October 28) also approved of Schott's work, saying that the author's "sensitivity to the tics and cadences of his characters' speech and ways of being is uncannily acute, and full of the same freshness and resonance of perception as Wodehouse's own style".

Only Tom Matthews in *The Irish Times* (November 10) struck more of a negative note than a positive one in his review. While acknowledging that the plot "is of an intricacy worthy of the master", Matthews also felt that Schott failed to capture "what Jeeves refers to as 'the psychology of the individual' or, as Bertie has it, 'what they're like'." He concludes: "The difference between this well-meaning homage and a real Jeeves novel is the same as that between seeing a couple of nice old Americans dressing up as Laurel and Hardy and watching a screening of *The Music Box*."

What is your opinion of this book? Like it? Hate it? Appreciate it? Members are invited to submit short reviews (60 words or fewer) to the Editor.

Profile of a Committee Member

Christopher Bellew

When Christopher joined the Society, his *Wooster Sauce* address label told him he was the 201st member. The first Society event he remembers attending was a Wodehouse walk conducted con brio by the late Norman Murphy. A couple of Christopher's friends came along for the ride, bringing their young son in a pushchair. Mungo has just turned 21, and Christopher hopes he will accept a gift membership to mark this rite of passage.

Initially Christopher attended meetings and dinners only occasionally. A meeting at the Savage Club sticks in his mind as he had brought his Smuggler fly fishing rod to lend to a friend about to go to Iraq to fight in the Second Gulf War. The friend didn't catch anything but said the soldiers felt a lot safer if Sir insouciantly went fishing.

In the 1970s Christopher was a soldier in the Territorial Army; his regiment, The Honourable Artillery Company, traces its origins back to 1537. When he gave up part-time soldiering, he retired at the rank of Trooper. There is nothing lower in the pecking order, and he fully expected to remain in the ranks in the Society as well. However, an unexpected vacancy arose to be Website Editor, something far beyond his level of IT competence. But he soon learned that somebody else actually does the work ("the sainted Chris Reece"), and thus Christopher regards the position as almost a sinecure. As the only candidate, he was elected unanimously, and he says he is prouder of

being a Committee Member than almost anything else. But he has found his membership somewhat bewildering, as he explains:

"Unfortunately, the Chairman, usually beyond reproach, has a Bobby Wickham streak. I must enter into the spirit of committee membership, and she gave me a few options. Wearing heliotrope pyjamas seemed the least demanding. 'Well that's settled, then,' she boomed in full Aunt Dahlia throttle. 'You come to the next meeting in heliotrope pyjamas.'

"'Hang on a second,' I muttered. 'I'm not really the man for heliotrope pyjamas, but I could have a go at playing the banjolele.' That marked the start of my troubles. Postulants of the banjolele are not given a big welcome by their neighbours if they happen to live in terraced houses in London. The Home Counties were no more accommodating. I went to Wales to find a banjolele instructor

and, perhaps, banjolele bliss, but, frankly, I might have done better to opt for Hilary's hog-calling option. It didn't take long for Alan to size me up. He removed four of the strings from his eight-string instrument and abjured me to practice outdoors where only the sheep would be driven to distraction.

"I am an unpromising student, all fingers and thumbs and need to grow my nails. Alan advises me to 'black up', but I think Hilary has put him up to this. Be assured I will not be performing at Society meetings."



Cosy Moments

Paper Cuts, by Stephen Bernard (2018)

Dr Stephen Bernard is an Academic Visitor at University of Oxford. While the subject matter of his memoir may be hard for some to read, of interest is his tribute to Wodehouse near the end of the book, which includes: "Dryden, Pope, Swift, and Waugh spoke to the ages, but Wodehouse, if he speaks to any time, speaks to the present in which one reads him, to the moment, outside time. He is the 'new Augustan', the laureate of a better time."

Wedding Tiers, by Trisha Ashley (2009)

(from Karen Shotting)

The quote Karen found in this book must have

brought a broad smile to her face: "The bride was one of those soppy, Madeline Bassett types, who should have stayed safely incarcerated in a P. G. Wodehouse novel telling people that the stars were God's daisy chain. She showed a distressing tendency to refer to her husband-to-be as Peter Rabbit and in return, he called her Bunnykins. Urgh!"

Hamlet, Revenge!, by Michael Innes (1937)

(from Penelope Forrest)

Penelope writes that this book "bristles with erudite literary references and allusions. Inspector Appleby's friend says to him: 'I hope you read Wodehouse. If so, you will have realised that the Duke cultivates the part of Lord Emsworth – you remember? Mark him and you expect to mark that immortal porker, the Empress of Blandings, round the corner. The man cultivates ineffectiveness.'"

The Westminster Abbey Memorial: Reactions

Not surprisingly, the news that P. G. Wodehouse would be honoured with a memorial stone in Westminster Abbey was greeted with jubilation by Wodehouseans the world over. And it was gratifying to see how many commentators in the Press also approved. *The Times* led the way on October 13 with a page 3 article by Society patron Patrick Kidd as well as a leader that asserted the honour for Wodehouse is well deserved. As in articles published in other newspapers, the leader mentioned the “wartime controversy that sullied his public reputation and drove him to voluntary exile in the United States”. But, pointing out that PGW had been exonerated, *The Times* concluded: “Wodehouse is a great figure of English letters and eminently deserves his place near Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Shelley. Rehab was never sweeter.”

On October 15, *The Guardian* described the “ripple of joy” that had taken place at the Society’s dinner at Gray’s Inn the previous Thursday, and quoted both our chairman, Hilary Bruce, and author Ben Schott, who noted: “It’s fitting he will be there with his heroes, such as Trollope, Dickens and Shakespeare, but also alongside Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear. Both of the latter are like Wodehouse, in that you only have to read a line of them and you know exactly who it is. Literature has always spanned the high and the low, and it’s a mistake to think there is a huge chasm between them.” Hear, hear!

Numerous other publications also paid tribute to Wodehouse and his well-deserved elevation to “literary immortality”, as the *Evening Standard* described it. In *The Scotsman* (October 18), Tom Peterkin wrote: “The latest recognition of [Wodehouse’s] comic genius by the Dean of Westminster is a reminder of the delight in retreating to that idyllic world with its rich young wastrels, resourceful valets, terrifying aunts, eccentric aristocrats, beguiling chorus girls and even monosyllabic Scots. Like a healthy slug of Mulliner’s ‘Buck-U-Uppo’ or an anecdote from the Oldest Member, the world of Wodehouse offers an escape from the harsh reality of life.”

But perhaps the most delightful effect of the news occurred in the letters section of *The Times*. The first letter, published on October 17, came from Maritz Vandenberg: “Installing a memorial stone to P G Wodehouse in Westminster Abbey is wholly appropriate. Hilaire Belloc once judged him to be ‘the best writer of English now alive’, and Rudyard Kipling thought *Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend* ‘one of the most perfect short stories I have ever read.’”

The next day, Richard Sherwood added his PG tip: “As a pendant to Maritz Vandenberg’s letter, may I put forward *Uncle Fred Flits By* as one of the most perfectly conceived short stories in English?” And on the 19th, under the heading ‘Plum Crazy’, Michael Galgut wrote: “When Hilaire Belloc judged P G Wodehouse to be ‘the best writer of English now alive’, Wodehouse was sure that it was a joke. Hugh Walpole confronted Wodehouse, expressed his amazement at Belloc’s judgment, and attributed it to senility.” To which we can only say that the joke is on Walpole!

Applause, Applause

The one time this Editor prints a Wodehouse parody or pastiche is when reporting on the results of a *Spectator* writing competition, wherein competitors are invited to write something in the style of famous authors. The entries are invariably brief and clever, therefore well worth mentioning here. This past August *Spectator* readers were challenged to “imagine a well-known author who doesn’t normally write in the genre trying their hand at science fiction”. One of the winners was Nicholas Hodgson, who deserves his brass ring for this ingenious entry:

Jeeves shimmied across the cabin. I don’t know if you’ve tried shimmying when wearing a spacesuit, but Jeeves managed it. ‘The helmet a little further back, sir.’

I was about to reply that I liked the rakish tilt, when I realised the rumminess of our posish.

‘Jeeves, if you’re here, who’s driving this thing?’

‘I have set the controls to automatic, sir. We will not reach Mars until after luncheon.’

At lunch, something was missing.

‘I say, Jeeves, where’s the salt cellar?’

‘I fear the lack of gravity makes shaking salt unwise, sir.’

I’ve always fancied time travel, mainly to find out who won the 3.40 at Goodwood before the race, and I know all about alien life-forms, what with Aunt Agatha, but why were we going to Mars?

‘To investigate the discovery of liquid there, sir.’

‘You mean water?’

‘No, sir.’

‘No?’

‘No, sir. It appears to be gin.’

Clerical Serendipity

While we were filing into the Marlborough Room at Blenheim Palace to enjoy Robert Daws’s performance of *Wodehouse in Wonderland* (see p.21), I picked up a copy of the October *Literary Review* from a pile left on a side table. In it I found a short review of a new book, *A Field Guide to the English Clergy: A Compendium of Diverse Eccentrics, Pirates, Prelates and Adventurers; All Anglican, Some Even Practising*. This looked extremely promising.

And so it turned out to be. “The cover, the title and the excellent illustrations suggest a book of Wodehousian levity,” the reviewer Paul Lay says, beginning a paragraph that refers to a 17th-century rector of a parish named Great Snoring. The author, himself splendidly named Fergus Butler-Gallie, is revealed to be a young curate in the Church of England.

– NOEL BUSHNELL

PGW to DWW: A New Letter Comes to Light

by George Wynne Willson

Between the ages of 16 and 21, Dorothy Mary Wynne Willson, known in our family as Doddy, wrote her novel *Early Closing*, set in a boys' public school over the course of a year. It was published in 1931 by Constable & Co. in London and the following year by Doubleday, Doran in New York. By December

1931, sales were about 17,640. No doubt they were boosted, by *Early Closing* being the Book Society's choice for September.

Sadly, Doddy died young. She played in a hockey match on 21 January 1932, went down suddenly with influenza the following day, and died on 25 January,

19, GROSVENOR MEWS,
W. 1.
MAYFAIR 4992.

Dec 2-1931

Dear Miss Willson.

This is the first time I have written to an author (as people always say when they write to me about my books), but may I join with Arnold Bennett and Hugh Walpole in congratulating you on 'Early Closing'. It is wonderful.

There are just two things I would like to ask (a) Is it any particular school (scenically, I mean) and (b) How did Nigel get on when he was tried on the wing for the school? I feel that he got one nice try by the corner-flag and tackled well.

I have not quite finished the book yet, as my daughter stole it from me and refused to give it up. She is shrieking complimentary things about it from the next room.

With best wishes for your next one

Yours sincerely

P. S. Wodehouse

age 22. She is buried at Church Hanborough, Oxfordshire, near the southwestern corner of the churchyard.

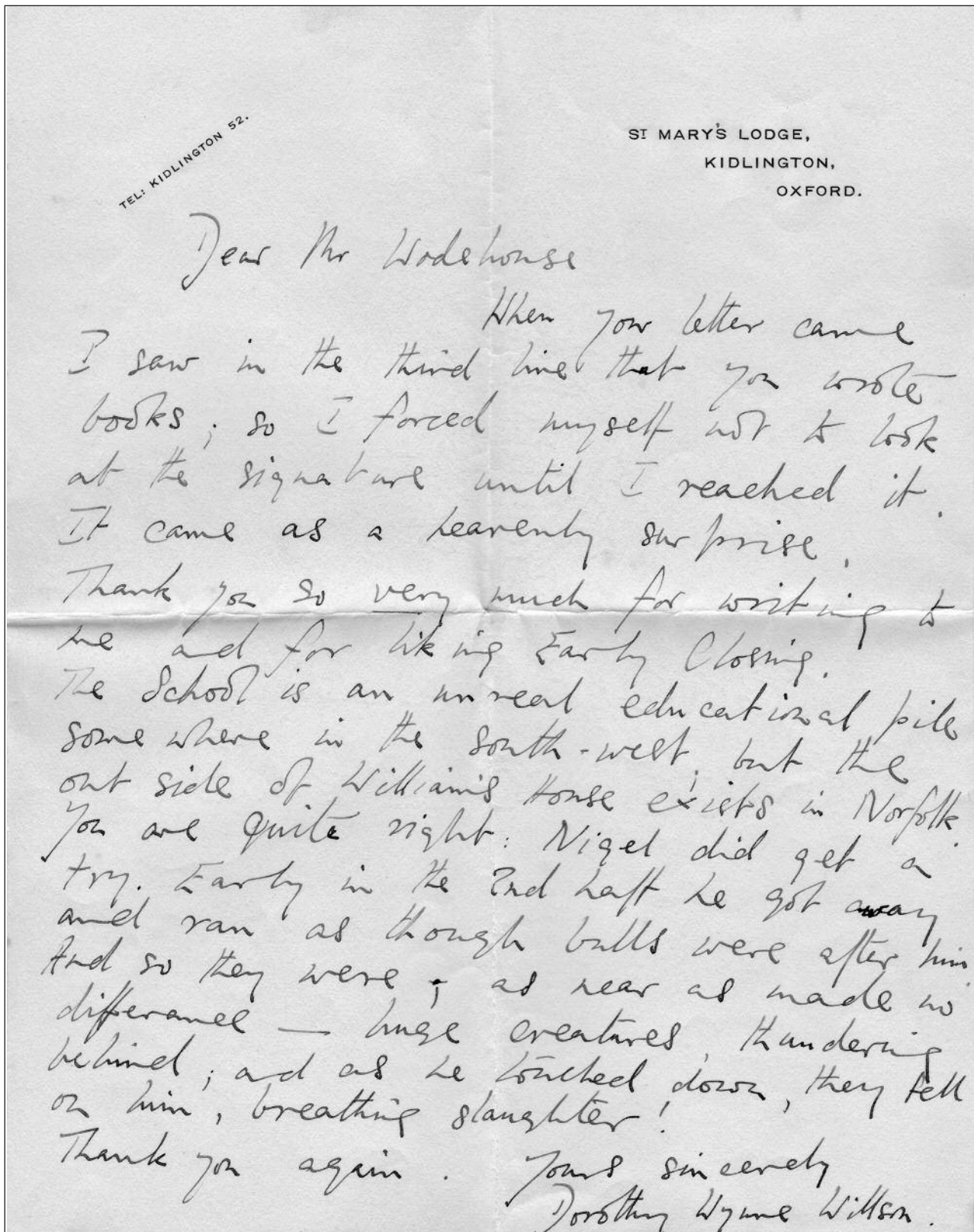
My father, William Wynne Willson, was the younger brother of Doddy and her twin sister, Margaret (Margy), who lived well into her 80s. The three siblings grew up in their father's house at Gresham's School in Norfolk. (Among the boys in his charge were Britten, Auden, and Spender, not to mention the spy Donald Maclean.)

I was very fond of my aunt Margy. Poignantly for me, my elder daughter, Celia, was born on Doddy and

Margy's 80th birthday and bears a striking resemblance to Doddy.

In 2015, while going through my late father's papers, I came across this delightful letter that P. G. Wodehouse wrote to my aunt upon the publication of *Early Closing*, as well as her reply. Given PGW's own history as a writer of school stories, I thought his letter to DWW might be of interest to Society's members.

Editor's note: Members interested in knowing more about Dorothy Wynne Willson can go to goo.gl/FE1WSH.



My PGW Collection

by Steve Griffiths

I began collecting P. G. Wodehouse's works when I was serving as a staff officer in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in the early 1980s. In my article on 'My First Wodehouse Experience' (*Wooster Sauce*, September 2008), I described how I had discovered these wonderful stories and how I had decided to pursue quantity (as cheap as is sensible) over quality (first editions). I also decided that I wanted to find all the books myself rather than send scouts out to look for me. I did, of course, gratefully receive the occasional new addition to my collection in the form of a birthday or Father's Day present.

I began by making a list of all the stories and plays as given in Appendix A to Frances Donaldson's biography of PGW. This helpfully gave both UK and USA titles where they differed and also the publishers. I then raided all the second-hand bookshops off the Tottenham Court Road while I was still at the MOD.

After that the success rate slowed somewhat as such bookshops were less easily found away from London. I quickly exhausted the supplies in any town that the RAF took me to. Postings to Norway and Belgium offered even rarer sightings. Moreover, I was suffering the law of diminishing returns: the more I collected, the fewer there were left to collect and, by logic, were therefore all the harder to find.

I will admit to a degree of disheartened collector's fatigue as we entered the new millennium. Having moved to Lincoln, I had made no new additions for a couple of years and despaired of ever finding those stories still on my list. Then came the most remarkable miracle: for my birthday my daughter gave me a year's subscription to The P G Wodehouse Society (UK), which I have readily renewed every year since.

Looking back now, I can hardly believe that I had never heard of either the Society or the quarterly journal it produced. Suddenly, my collection was transformed and my enjoyment and involvement in all things PGW greatly enhanced. Now I could hunt not only for books *by* PGW but for books *about* PGW.

I avidly read every *Wooster Sauce* from cover to cover and still do. I entered some of the prize competitions and managed to win a wonderful Jonathan Cecil audio book of *The Code of the Woosters*. I felt encouraged to join the throng of those with



something to say about PGW. For example, issue 58 of *Wooster Sauce* (June 2011) included an article I wrote on the likelihood of Bertie ever meeting Hercules Poirot. A couple of years later, in issue 66 (June 2013), I published a review I had written about a production of the play *Carry On, Jeeves* in Lincoln.

My book collection swelled at a fine rate. Because I now had access to all the current affairs of the world of PGW, I added two books that I knew I would never find in their original print. Thanks to Kessinger Publishing I now have *William Tell Told Again* and *The Swoop*. I also added more biographical books as they were published, such as Sophie Ratcliffe's *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters* and Robert McCrum's *Wodehouse: A Life*.

What I found particularly helpful were the books by Wodehouse experts on various aspects of PGW's life and writing. Among others, I collected both volumes of Norman Murphy's *A Wodehouse Handbook*; Tony Ring's *Second Row, Grand Circle*; *The Complete Lyrics of P. G. Wodehouse*, edited by Barry Day; both volumes of the *P. G. Wodehouse in the Globe Newspaper*; and, very recently, Curtis Armstrong and Elliott Milstein's *A Plum Assignment*, which I read while on holiday this past summer.

I am now the proud owner of over 90 of PGW's works, plus all the omnibus editions and sundry other books about the Master, a few of which I mention above. My enthusiasm for collecting is as sharp as ever, but the point of having the collection is not in owning the books, but in the enjoyment of reading them. I have read every one twice and am working my way through books about PGW for a while. But I know the itch to start over again will not be long in coming. *The Pothunters* is in easy reach.

Hamilton Beamish, the thinker, had ceased to be: and there stood in his place Hamilton Beamish, the descendant of ancestors who had conducted their love affairs with stout clubs and who, on seeing a rival, wasted no time in calm reflection but jumped on him like a ton of bricks and did their best to bite his head off.

(From *The Small Bachelor*, 1927)



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Patrick Kidd

With regard to Graeme Davidson's fun piece on John Rockett (*Wooster Sauce*, September 2018), the tradition of naming children after the scenes of golfing triumphs has continued to the modern day. Sir Nick Faldo called his daughter Georgia after the state where he won his three US Masters titles, while Sergio Garcia, winner of the Masters in 2017, was more specific: he called his daughter Azalea after the name of the 13th hole. And the American golfer Webb Simpson, winner of the US Open in 2012, named his daughter Wyndham after the title (Wyndham Championship) of his first PGA Tour win. There's probably more, but one last one: Barney Williams, an Olympic rower who was president of Oxford's Boat Race crew in 2006, honoured that contest by calling his son Hammersmith.

From Mark Taylor

Graeme Davidson's article 'Rockett Man' reminded me of a couple in Leicester who named their daughter Wembley in 1963 when their local team reached the Cup Final. Unfortunately, they lost! And there was the Liverpoolian who named his son after England's World Cup winning team in 1966.

Regarding pastiches (Editor's note, *WS* Sept. 2018, p.19), I would agree that PGW's style is pretty inimitable. While Norman Murphy's *Reminiscences of the Hon. Galahad Threepwood* made me burst out laughing, he didn't try to copy the Master, nor did C. Northcote Parkinson in his 'biography' of Jeeves.

From Dexter Ball

Combining the letters of Mike Swaddling and Linda Tyler (Letters to the Editor, *Wooster Sauce*, September 2018), you could suggest to the Everyman/Bollinger people changing the criteria for their prize to 'work in the manner of PGW'.

From James Hogg

Re. 'Clubs, Wodehouse, and the Savile' (*Wooster Sauce*, September 2018), any common-or-garden ignoramus who dares to tangle with the encyclopaedic Paul Kent is asking for trouble, but I have a feeling he may be wrong to say that the Prime Ministerial Lord Rosebery's given name was Archibald Primrose. Archibald was certainly his Christian or given name, but Primrose is the family surname of the aristocratic Roseberys. So they've all been landed with it, generation by generation!

Paul replies: James is absolutely right. And I did actually know that, but my sloppy English roped in 'Primrose' with 'Archibald', implying that both names were given, when only one was. My apologies, and thanks to James for pointing it out.

From Barry Chapman

I recently watched a TV programme that included scenes from a hog-calling contest at the Iowa State Fair. Unfortunately, it was not pretty. Some members of the audience covered up their ears. Only one call actually

included the sound "Pig" (and that was in "Piggy"). How any self-respecting pigs – let alone such a refined being as Empress of Blandings – could put up with it, however attractive the food that was provided, I cannot imagine. Until now I had wondered whether hog calling was an authentic pastoral activity or something invented by Wodehouse. Regrettably, now I know. No wonder the eminent members of the Senior Conservative Club universally decided "to write in strong terms to the Committee" when Lord Emsworth and James Bartholomew Belford practised hog calling during luncheon in the club's main dining room in London.

From David Hamilton

Having bought a DVD of Wodehouse Walks, which I have enjoyed watching, I wondered if you knew that the pub The Only Running Footman now seems to be just called The Footman. I discovered this recently while walking in the area.

The Editor replies: This came as a surprise to me, though nothing should any more. The pub, which Norman Murphy had identified as the 'home' of the Junior Ganymede Club, was originally called I Am The Only Running Footman, and more recently had been The Running Footman. I guess the Footman in question has stopped running and now lies inebriated in the pub.

From Tony Ring

In the Bibliographic Corner in September's *Wooster Sauce*, Nick Townend makes the point that Wodehouse's comments in his 'New Prefaces' were liable to be unreliable. This may have been due to faulty memory or to a preference for a more entertaining variation of the truth. In the last paragraph of the article, Nick referred to Plum's confession that he did occasionally make factual errors about England, the worst of which was, in *Piccadilly Jim*, having Surrey play cricket against Kent at Lord's.

Strangely enough, this seems to reflect an error in Wodehouse's memory, rather than a bad factual error. On 10 and 11 August 1914, Surrey had played Kent at Lord's (for J B Hobbs's benefit) because the War Office had requisitioned the Oval for accommodation of the troops, a change from the normal venue of which, with his interest in cricket, Wodehouse would certainly have been aware at the time. Wodehouse referred to Lord's in the original *Saturday Evening Post* text in September as well as in the early editions of the books. I believe that Wodehouse's original, plausibly correct, text was partially amended by a Herbert Jenkins editor to 'The Oval' in the inter-war years or later, and Penguin adopted the error in their earlier editions. I use the word 'partially' because the change was made in chapter 2, but not in chapter 3 – making the overall accuracy definitely worse! I'm pleased to say that on the advice of the Society, Penguin reverted to 'Lord's' in all places with the 1999 Hitch edition, and the recent Everyman edition has followed suit.

Two heads, unless of course severed, are so often better than one. (From *Pigs Have Wings*, 1952)

Rockett Man: Part 2

by Graeme W. I. Davidson

In the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, I examined the eccentric child-naming tendencies of Champion golfer John Rockett in Wodehouse's short story 'Scratch Man', and addressed the question whether the roots of those tendencies lay in the real world. Writing that article prompted in my mind a further question that readers may also have been asking: *If John Rockett twice (or thrice) won the Amateur Championship (British and/or US) and was thrice runner-up in the Open Championship (British or USA), was there a golfer (British or US) whose Championship history (on the courses in question or other courses) exactly mirrors that?*

My inspection of the tournament histories of the Open and Amateur Championships over the period 1860–1940 (i.e. earliest tournament date to the story's year of first publication) comes up with the answer: *No*. Wodehouse was clearly inspired by elements of the deeds of certain Champion golfers, but he was not slavish in mirroring them. He was, after all, writing fiction.

That said, Wodehouse's writing of a player who might twice (or, for that matter, thrice) have won the Amateur Championship (British or US) and might thrice have been runner-up in the Open Championship (British or US) is not beyond credibility, as my inspection of those tournaments' histories revealed. The information I uncovered suggests to me that Wodehouse, in confecting Rockett, was inspired by the exploits of a small number of great players, and created Rockett's golf successes as something of a homage to those golfers. This information threw me somewhat as I had, until then, thought that the kind of stellar performance that Wodehouse attributed to Rockett did not exist outside the almost fairy-tale worlds of Bobby Jones and Jack Nicklaus.

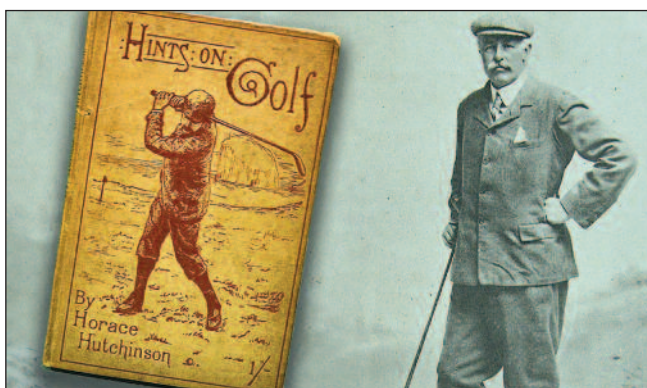
I learned that Horatio (Horace) Hutchinson (1859–1932; pictured below) and Harold Hilton (1869–1942) are the only two players in the period under investigation who each won the British

Amateur Championship *at least* twice, the first of the hurdles I have determined necessary for a real golfer to be a mirror image of Rockett. (No American, apart from Jones and Walter J. Travis (both of whom I discuss later), won the US Amateur Championship at least twice in the same period.)

Hutchinson won the British Amateur Championship twice (1886 and 1887) *and* was runner-up in the British Amateur Championship twice (1885 and 1903) *and* had three top ten finishes in the British Open Championship (1887, 1890, and 1892). Though sadly forgotten by many now, Hutchinson had a phenomenal success in the world of amateur golf, his twice peaking the Everest that is the British Amateur Championship evidencing that. Such was his success and standing as an amateur player that it should come as little surprise to note that Wodehouse, in his preface to *The Heart of a Goof* (Herbert Jenkins, 1926), conjoins mention of John H. Taylor and James Braid (two of golf's triumvirate in the early part of the 20th century) with the name Horace Hutchinson. *The Heart of a Goof* was published in the US under the title *Divots* (George H. Doran, 1927) and later in *Wodehouse on Golf*, (Doubleday, Doran, 1940), and it is worth mentioning that the reference to Hutchinson in the preface stood unaltered, with no concession made for an American audience. This speaks volumes as to Hutchinson's mythic standing at the time Wodehouse wrote that preface.

Hilton (pictured, right, in 1911) won the British Amateur Championship four times (1900, 1901, 1911, and 1913) *and* was thrice runner-up in the British Amateur Championship (1891, 1892, and 1896) *and* won the British Open Championship twice (in 1892 (Muirfield) and 1897 (Hoylake)) *and* had six top ten finishes in the British Open Championship (1891, 1893, 1898, 1901, 1902, and 1911 (finishing the British Open Championship in 1911, one stroke behind Harry Vardon and Arnaud Massy)) *and* won the US Amateur Championship in 1911.

Though not multiple winners of British or American Amateur Championships, an additional two Champion golfers are worth mentioning here, given their incredible pedigree – namely, John H. Taylor (1871–1963) and Henry (Harry) Vardon (1870–1937).



Taylor won the British Open Championship five times (1894, 1895, 1900, 1909, and 1913) *and* was runner-up in the British Open Championship six times (1896, 1904 (tied), 1905 (tied), 1906, 1907, and 1914) *and* had a further 11 top ten finishes in the British Open Championship (1897, 1898, 1899, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1908, 1911, 1922, 1924, and 1925) *and* was runner up in the US Open Championship in 1900. He was not, however, a multiple Amateur Championship winner, and therefore is not a candidate for a real player mirroring Rockett.

Vardon, too, had an impressively long and extensive run of successful Championship play. He won the British Open Championship six times (1896, 1898, 1899, 1903, 1911, and 1914) *and* was runner-up in the British Open Championship four times (1900, 1901, 1902 (tied), and 1912) *and* had a further 10 top ten finishes in the British Open Championship (1894, 1895, 1897, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1913, and 1922) *and* won the US Open Championship in 1900 *and* (though only playing thrice in the US Open Championship, including the great centennial year he won it) was twice runner-up in the US Open Championship (1913 and 1920). But Vardon, too, was not a multiple winner of British or American Amateur Championships, and therefore did not pass my first hurdle for a player mirroring Rockett.



Another golfer of particular note is Walter John Travis (1862–1927; pictured left), a writer (highly regarded as an early golf writer), publisher, and amateur golfer. Travis won the British Amateur Championship in 1904 (the one year he competed in it) *and* won the US Amateur

Championship thrice (1900, 1901, and 1903) *and* was runner-up (tied) in the US Open Championship in 1902 *and* had two further top ten finishes in the US Open Championship (1909 and 1912). Though he might not have a victory history that quite mirrors Rockett, and might not have had children with quirky golf-related names, there is one Wodehousean reason to shine a light on him here. It was Travis who said of golf: “As a disciplinarian and establisher of character, it is without a peer.” He also wrote: “It cultivates patience and endurance under adversity and yet keeps constantly alive the fires of hope. It is a leveler of ranks and classes: rich and poor alike meet on common ground.” These are sentiments which ring loud bells in the minds of readers of Wodehouse’s golf writings.

A better-known golfing great deserves mention here. Robert Tyre Jones (1902–1971; pictured right), better known as Bobby, won the British Amateur Championship once (1930) *and* the British Open Championship three times (1926, 1927, and 1930) *and* the US Amateur Championship five times (1924, 1925, 1927, 1928, and 1930) *and* the US Open Championship four times (1923, 1926, 1929, and 1930); *and* was runner-up in the US Open Championship four times (1922 (tied), 1924, 1925 and 1928) *and* had two further top ten finishes in the US Open Championship (1920 and 1921). And that just scrapes the surface of why the man is so regarded by golfers and other sportsmen.



When addressing whether Wodehouse might have had exclusively Hutchinson or Hilton in mind when he confected Rockett’s golf success pedigree, it may be worth noting that both men had the initials HH. Having an inkling of the way Wodehouse’s quirky mind worked when he translated reality to fiction, I suspect that a similar double initial thing might have been carried over by him into the story when naming Rockett. That perhaps kicks Hilton and Hutchinson into the long grass as solo prototypes for Rockett, though there is another reason: it would appear that neither Hutchinson nor Hilton had children and, that being so, none whom they called after a golf course.

It is, however, interesting to note that Rockett’s initials were JR – if, that is, one ignores the seemingly inexplicable aberration of calling him Walter in the January 1940 *Saturday Evening Post* version of the story ‘Tee for Two’ (unless this was, perhaps, a nod to Walter Hagen or – more likely? – to amateur Walter Travis). And who among the golfing great had those initials JR, albeit reversed in order (which is the kind of thing Wodehouse would do in translating an inspiration from reality into fiction)? Robert Jones.

Though Bobby Jones had three children, none of them were named after golf courses. For that reason, though I am not saying to bet the farm on it, Bobby Jones is also consigned to the long grass as a solo prototype for Rockett. Nevertheless, as a prototype for a mighty golfing figure, I’m hard pressed to instance a better model than Bobby Jones, the man whose dazzling performances in competitive golf in those few years up to 1930 lit up the skies like an exploding firework, indeed a bit like a rocket, one that would still shine brightly in Wodehouse’s mind when he wrote his short story.

The name John Rockett will, of course, be familiar to you. If you are a student of history, you will recall that he was twice British Amateur Champion and three times runner-up in the Open. . . . He called his children after the courses on which he had won renown, and they did not disgrace the honoured names. They were all scratch.

(From ‘Scratch Man’, 1940)

The Empress Effect

No, we're not talking Empress of Blandings. Rather, it's Empress Michiko of Japan who has caused a sensation in her country with a simple announcement that has had a big impact.

The Empress and her husband, Emperor Akihito, are preparing to step down from the Japanese throne next year, to be succeeded by their son Crown Prince Naruhito. On the occasion of her 84th birthday in October, the Empress issued a statement in which she reflected upon her life in the public eye. In answer to a question from the press about what she planned to do in her retirement, she said she wanted to read as many books as possible, being an aficionado of detective novels in particular. And, she added, "There are two or three P.J. [*sic*] Wodehouse 'Jeeves' books waiting for me." This was later followed by the information that, in fact, she was a big Wodehouse fan and was looking forward to reading all of the Jeeves and Wooster short stories and novels: "When I read them, I get completely hooked and can't do anything else, so up until now I've kept away from them. But after retirement I can easily keep them on hand."



Fire up the presses and stock the bookstores! Barely had the Empress finished speaking when there was a rush to reprint volumes upon volumes of Wodehouse books, as reported to the Editor by Society member and Wodehouse translator TAMAKI MORIMURA: "Most of the Japanese people wondered 'What is Jeeves?' and started googling, and my Jeeves books are selling like hotcakes now." And it's not just Tamaki's translations that are ringing the cash registers in Japan; those published by Mike Iwanaga are also doing very well. Some reprints are being issued with special book jackets featuring the Empress's words.

The moral of the story is: never underestimate the influential power of an Empress!

A Trio of Stage Reviews

Leave It to Psmith

Reviewed by Peter Read

A collaboration between P. G. Wodehouse and Ian Hay, *Leave It to Psmith* was first performed in 1930 in the West End, where it ran for 156 performances. In a rare revival, it was recently performed by the Riverside Players to great effect in the village hall of the picturesque riverside Kentish village of Eynsford.

The play is, of course, based on the book of the same name, but with important differences. Inevitably, it has been pruned in size and scope, with all reference to Psmith's previous adventures removed, so it stands alone. Various key characters in the book, including Susan Simmons, the private detective, have also been painted out along with their scenes. The events in Miss Clarkson's office have gone, so that Psmith and Eve's initial meeting is through the gift of the umbrella, now set, as is the whole of Scene 2 in Act 1, outside Green Park tube station. Irritatingly to me, apart from Psmith himself, all the characters have been allocated new names. These include Eustace, Earl of Middlewick, who has now acquired a wife, although still the chatelaine of Blandings Castle. I found it especially difficult to adjust to Phyllis Jackson being unnecessarily cast as Freddie's girlfriend. In the novel she was the wife of Mike, Psmith's trusted companion in this and previous books. Of course, all this is froth when put alongside the development of the play into more of a farce, moving away from Plum's gentle humour in the book.

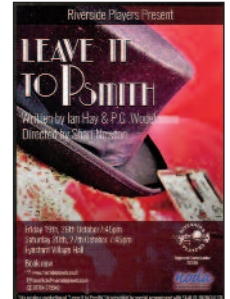
The excellent cast ran to 14 players, several duplicating roles requiring rapid change of character or else playing short cameos to set up single walk on jokes, notably outside Green Park station. Sadly, the lead character, Psmith, is reduced by the plot from being a forceful personality and controller of events to a cheery chappie who is far from the sort implied in the title. Although he was still played to make the most of the role in this production, such devices as his adoption of 'Across the Pale Parabola of Joy' lost much of their impact. Conversely, Freddie grew in stature from his original cluelessness, becoming a much stronger character than in the original.

The great leap of faith was Baxter, the Earl of Middlewick's secretary, becoming female, which worked well with the character portrayed in the plot. Although described as "less efficient, more officious" by the strangely lively Earl, she now wrote all his speeches but otherwise faded into the background along with the plot line and chapter "all about flowerpots".

A completely new and singular character was the superbly played Gladys Rumbelow, the angular receptionist of the Morpheus (aka the Senior Conservative) Club, also doubling as Ethelberta Fitzwiggan, the cousin of the Earl of Middlewick

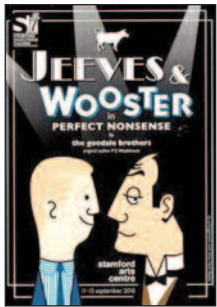
The final scene remains true to the discovery of the necklace; the unveiling of that pair of classic Wodehouse crooks, Miss Peavey and Eddie Cootes, played out with all the tension of the original; and, with Psmith and Eve united, Psmith succeeding Baxter as the Earl of Middlewick's secretary.

This review may come across as critical, and I suspect betrays my personal prejudices. In spite of these, a fellow enthusiast and I both found this a most enjoyable and absorbing evening, dripping with Wodehouse humour. What was perhaps more significant was that our other halves, there solely through a sense of duty, both declared themselves royally entertained.



Perfect Nonsense

Reviewed by Steve Griffiths



PGW aficionados will be familiar with *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*, which has been doing the rounds since its debut on 10 October 2013 at the Richmond Theatre before transferring to the West End. It won the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy in 2014 and has toured internationally as well as around the UK. Now it was the turn of the Stamford Shoestring Theatre to give it an airing for five days in September.

As members know, the play's storyline has Bertie using a one-man show to describe the harrowing time he spent at Totleigh Towers (as depicted by PGW in *The Code of the Woosters*). All the usual suspects are present: Sir Watkyn Bassett, Roderick Spode, Gussie Fink-Nottle, Constable Oates, Aunt Dahlia, Stiffy Byng, and Madeline Bassett. Offering solace and advice are Jeeves and Seppings. Of course, the central props are a cow creamer, Gussie's little black book of comments about Sir Watkyn, and a policeman's helmet.

The problem Bertie (played with wonderful authenticity by Tom Johnson) has is that there are only two other actors: Jeeves (Henry Sauntson) and Seppings (Chris West-Sadler), who play all the other characters. A huge amount of the play's comedy is derived from the skilful costume changes, characterisations, and comic timing that Sauntson and West-Sadler achieve while retaining the personae of Jeeves and Seppings when returning to their original characters.

My favourite running gag in the play was performed by the Roderick Spode character (played by Seppings). To convey height, each time he came on stage he stood ever higher on a ladder, with his long raincoat covering it. Finally he had to duck down as he was pushed by stage hands through the scenery door to enter the stage. Chris West-Sadler, playing Seppings playing Spode (complete with comic Hitlerian moustache and evil gleam in his eyes), was every bit as good as John Turner's Spode in the 1990s TV series *Jeeves & Wooster*.

The writers, David and Robert Goodale, have retained a lot of Wodehouse's wonderful dialogue, aphorisms, and complex plot lines, all of which the cast delivered with panache, accuracy, and perfect timing, bringing appreciative laughter from the audience throughout the evening. However, during the interval I stood behind a lady in the queue for the ice creams. She turned to her companion and said, "I can see that the play was written by the Goodale brothers, but who is this P. G. Wodehouse person?" I promptly left the ice cream queue and retired to the bar for a restorative.

The Stamford Shoestring Theatre's production of *Perfect Nonsense* was every bit as good as any you will see anywhere. What a joy it was to witness it, and what a wonderful medium to bring PGW's work to a new generation. Long may it continue.

Wodehouse in Wonderland

Reviewed by Elin Murphy

On Saturday, October 13 – two days after he participated in the entertainment for the Society's formal dinner at Gray's Inn – actor and writer Robert Daws again took to the stage, albeit a small one in the Marlborough Room at Blenheim Palace. There he presented a one-man show (written by author, screenwriter, and playwright William Humble) to a small but appreciative audience that included several members of the Society. And a jolly good job he did, too.

Wodehouse in Wonderland takes place in the late 1950s in Remsenburg. It begins with Plum writing a letter to his darling daughter, 'Snorkles', and proceeds from there into a reminiscence of his life and career, stimulated by the visit of a biographer named Phillips. At various points he relates his story to Phillips, at other times it is via his letters to Leonora. His monologue is punctuated by short readings from his stories and snippets from songs that include 'If Ever I Lost You' (from *The Golden Moth*); 'What Do You Mean, You Lost Your Dog?' (*Nuts and Wine*); 'The Land Where the Good Songs Go' (*Miss 1917*); 'Some Day Waiting Will End' (*Kissing Time*); 'My Castle in the Air' (*Miss Springtime*); and 'Oh, Gee! Oh, Joy!' (*Rosalie*).

If any confusion is caused to knowledgeable Wodehouseans by Plum writing letters to his daughter in the 1950s, this is cleared up by the dramatic second act, in which he finally addresses Leonora's death, describing the visit from Malcom Muggeridge at which he and Ethel were given the devastating news. His pain is palpable as he writes to Leonora: "I thought you were immortal." This, along with a very diplomatically telling of the Berlin broadcasts imbroglio, makes the show very effective and moving.

Daws (whose credits include playing Tuppy Glossop on the *Jeeves and Wooster* series) presents all this alone on the stage, but he is helped along by sound effects that include music (arranged by Stephen Higgins), dogs barking, and the voices of Ethel and Snorkles. And, thanks to a well-written script, he does a very credible job of conveying the joys and the sorrows of Wodehouse's life. As Ken Clevenger wrote to me subsequently: "Robert Daws made a superb Plum. The show really made Wodehouse a man – a human with all our frailties and follies, and yet still a genius of the written word in English. Perhaps best of all, it highlighted his lyrics, a too often forgotten demonstration of his verbal felicity."

We were informed that this show was a work in progress, and that its future, whether on stage or on radio, was still being determined. Let us hope that it finds a home soon as there is much in it to appeal to Wodehouse fans. For those of us fortunate enough to attend this performance, it was an enriching experience, well worth the price of admission.

Wodehouse Quiz 29

Musical Wodehouse Characters

by David Buckle

1. In which Wodehouse novel does the title character lose all her wealth and break off her engagement before running off to New York and become a member of the chorus of *The Rose of America*?
2. In which book does American composer George Bevan falls in love with Maud Marsh?
3. What is the name of the chorus girl who is the daughter of Dolly Henderson – a former star of the musical hall and the only girl Galahad ever loved – and is engaged to Ronnie Fish in *Summer Lightning*?
4. Prudence Stryker, a chorus girl and singer, appears in which Wodehouse novel featuring William Paradene West?
5. In which book does Jeeves leave Bertie Wooster's employ after having had enough of the latter's continual playing of the banjolele?
6. Which of Mr Mulliner's nephews, who forsakes tobacco for the girl he loves, is an avid ukulele player as well as being a painter?
7. Which Wodehouse character, when attending the annual outing of the Village Mothers of Maiden Eggesford, is shocked by the ribald songs the mothers sang on the bus?
8. Who punches Tuppy Glossop in the eye after singing 'Sonny Boy' at Beefy Bingham's clean and bright entertainment?
9. In *Galahad at Blandings*, which of Lord Emsworth's nephews is a struggling musician who eventually gains employment with a music publishing company?
10. Which member of the Drones Club disguises himself as 'The Masked Troubadour' in order to sing incognito at an East End musical entertainment?

(Answers on page 25)

The Wooster Source

by Graeme Davidson

*This is the real Tabasco,
It's the word from Bertie Wooster,
Whose bosom p is Tuppy G,
who might seem both a sap and a fool
with scarcely a wile and little more guile,
but has cunning enough to land
fully clad Bertie in the Drones pool.*



I went in and sank down on a sofa. I was profoundly stirred, for if you think fellows enjoy listening to the sort of thing Spode had been saying about me, you're wrong. My pulse was rapid and my brow wet with honest sweat, like the village blacksmith's. I was badly in need of alcoholic refreshment, and just as my tongue was beginning to stick out and blacken at the roots, shiver my timbers if Jeeves didn't enter left centre with a tray containing all the makings. St Bernard dogs, you possibly know, behave in a similar way in the Alps and are well thought of in consequence.

Much Obligated, Jeeves (1971)

"He resents my constant presence."

"Has he said so?"

"Not yet. But he gives me nasty looks."

"That's all right. He can't intimidate me."

I saw that she was missing the gist.

"Yes, but don't you see the peril that looms?"

"I thought you said it lurked."

"And looms."

Jeeves in the Offing (1960)

It has been well said of Bertram Wooster that when he sets his hand to the plough he does not stop to pick daisies and let the grass grow under his feet. Many men in my position, having undertaken to canvass for a friend anxious to get into Parliament, would have waited till after lunch next day to get rolling, saying to themselves Oh what difference do a few hours make and going off to the billiards room for a game or two of snooker. I, in sharp contradistinction as I have heard Jeeves call it, was on my way shortly after breakfast. It can't have been much more than a quarter to eleven.

Much Obligated, Jeeves (1971)

The still summer air was disturbed by a sound like beer coming out of a bottle. It was Pop Glossop gurgling. His eyes were round, his nose wiggled, and one could readily discern that this news item had come to him not as rare and refreshing fruit but more like a buffet on the base of the skull with a sock full of wet sand.

Jeeves in the Offing (1960)

There was a throbbing silence. Then Agnes Flack spoke.
"Important, if true," she said. "All square again. I will say one thing for you two – you make this game very interesting."

And once more she sent the birds shooting out of the tree-tops with that hearty laugh of hers.

(From 'Those in Peril on the Tee', 1927)

A Grateful Note

It has been some time since we last saluted Baines Design and Print, who have been printing *Wooster Sauce* and *By The Way* for 21 years; they have also produced the programmes for our biennial dinners. The Society extends its deepest gratitude to Katrina Frost and all the good folks at Baines who have provided unfailingly excellent customer service over the years and have played such a key role in creating a quality journal for our members.

I would also like to express my personal and heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Graeme Davidson, Caroline Franklyn, and Mike Swaddling, who help keep me sane by proofreading *Wooster Sauce* with an eagle eye every quarter. Occasional help is also provided by Gwendolin Goldbloom. I am so lucky to have such able assistance, and I am indebted to these lovely eggs for all that they do.

– ELIN MURPHY

Poet's Corner

The Barber's Love Song

If you'll but marry me, dear
We'll be a happy pair.
I'll teach you gratis, free, dear,
The art of cutting hair.
In all the barber's trade, dear,
Proficient shall you be,
If only you will say, dear,
You're game to marry me.

Lest clients rush in, raving,
Because their chins are blue,
The mysteries of shaving
Will I impart to you.
Ah, happy he who lingers,
Transfixed within the chair,
While you, with fairy fingers,
Abbreviate his hair.

In days to come, together,
My angel, you and I
Will talk about the weather
To men who won't reply;
And, as the agile razor
Glides swiftly to and fro,
Say "Fine again to-day, sir,"
Or "What do you think of Joe?"

So heed my ardent prayer, dear;
Behold me on my knees.
The barber's trade, I'll swear, dear
Is one that's sure to please.
For, think! no day will pass, dear,
On which you will not see
Your image in a glass, dear,
If you'll but marry me.

From *Daily Chronicle*, 23 June 1903

A Significant Update on One Section of Our Website

By the time this issue of *Wooster Sauce* drops through your letter boxes, we should have in place the first significant update of the pages relating to reference materials for some years. The link is pgwodehousesociety.org.uk/sheets.html, and the page provides links to Information Sheets (IS) on particular topics.

The most significant change has been the expansion of IS 9, formerly the 'Order of First Publication of Series Short Stories', which has (understandably in many ways) never been revised from its first appearance in June 2000. However, the information contained in it was considerably expanded and improved by the Society's publication in May 2011 of a separate booklet entitled 'A Simplified Chronology'. We are delighted to announce that its content, together with the subsequent six articles in *Wooster Sauce* expanding on various specific and complex topics, will now appear as IS 9, IS 9a, and IS 9b.

Some members have queried why, as the introduction to the reference materials pages stated that "We have gathered together in this section all of the reference materials used on this website for your convenience", two of our Information Sheets did not appear in this section but elsewhere on the site. It has been decided that although IS 8 ('A Potted Biography of P G Wodehouse, with Milestones') and IS 10 ('Wodehouse's Actions During the War – Put in Context') are not directly related to the legacy of Wodehouse's work, it makes sense and maintains the numerical completeness of the Information Sheets if they are added to this section while continuing to appear elsewhere. We believe also that the content of IS 10 cannot be too widely read, as recently there have once again been examples of adverse comments about Wodehouse's broadcasts from persons who could not possibly have said what they did if they had been aware of and understood the facts laid out in the Information Sheet.

The complete list of Information Sheets as they now appear is:

No.	Title
IS 1	Books by P G Wodehouse
IS 2	Plays written by P G Wodehouse
IS 3	Libretti written by P G Wodehouse
IS 4	Novels by P G Wodehouse appearing in magazines
IS 5	Musical comedies with lyrics written by P G Wodehouse
IS 6	Foreign translations of books by P G Wodehouse
IS 7	Magazines which featured P G Wodehouse stories
IS 8	A Potted Biography of P G Wodehouse, with Milestones
IS 9	A Simplified Chronology of P G Wodehouse Fiction: Introductory Notes
IS 9a	A Simplified Chronology of P G Wodehouse Fiction
IS 9b	Articles from <i>Wooster Sauce</i> providing further details on six aspects of the chronology of P G Wodehouse's fiction writing
IS 10	Wodehouse's Actions During the War – Put in Context

Readers who would like to add to the information contained in those pages are invited to write to the Website Editor at: websiteeditor@pgwodehousesociety.org.uk

–TONY RING

The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

“With a New Preface by the Author”: Part Three

Continuing our review of the series of new prefaces contributed by Wodehouse to 14 reprints of his books issued by Herbert Jenkins/Barrie & Jenkins between 1969 and 1975, the fourth preface to appear was for *The Small Bachelor* (1927).

Wodehouse’s preface states that he has “three reasons for being particularly fond of *The Small Bachelor*.” First, it “was one of the easy ones [to write]. I wrote most of it in a punt on a lake at a country house [Hunstanton Hall] in Norfolk”. Wodehouse’s “second reason . . . is nostalgic. So much of the action takes place in the Greenwich Village sector of New York, where I lived between 1909 and 1914. [E]verything such as food and hotel bills was inexpensive: one could live on practically nothing, which was fortunate for me because I had to.” And his “third reason . . . is that it is based on a musical comedy I have always had a weakness for, a thing called *Oh, Lady*.” He reveals: “Making a novel out of a play is not the simple job it might seem to be. You can’t just take the dialogue and put in an occasional ‘he said’ and ‘she said’. . . . I wrote 50,000 words of *The Small Bachelor* before I came to the start of *Oh, Lady*. When I did, I admit that things eased up a lot, though even then the fact that I had added so many threads to the plot made it impossible to use the dialogue as it stood. Sigsbee Waddington, the false necklace, Officer Garroway and the oil shares were not in the play, and Mrs. Sigsbee Waddington was an entirely different character.”

The Herbert Jenkins reprint of *The Small Bachelor* containing Wodehouse’s new preface was published in 1970 (A37a14). *McIlvaine* states “With a New Preface by the Author”. However, like the preceding *Bill the Conqueror*, the “New Preface” is not mentioned anywhere on the dust-wrapper

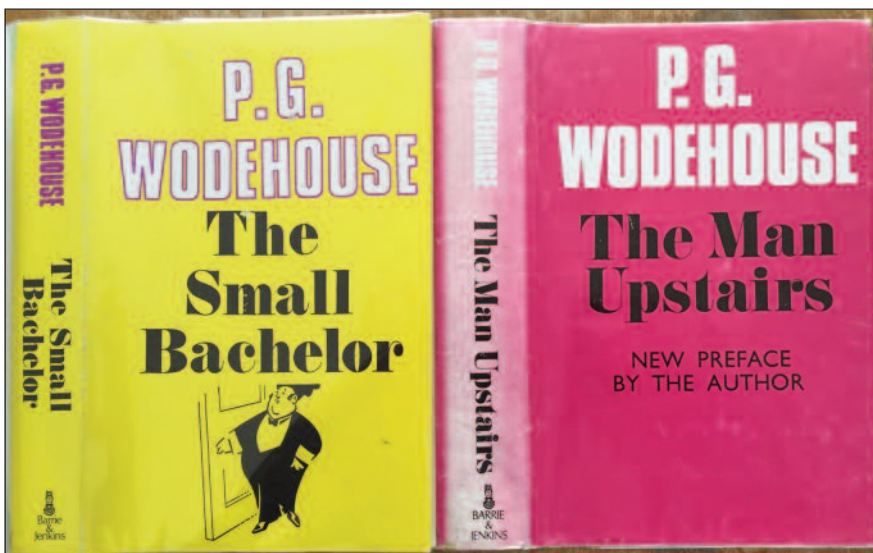
(although, like its predecessors, it is clearly headed “Preface” in the text), so there is no indication that the book contains a new preface. As was the case with *Bill the Conqueror*, the only clue in the book that the preface is new is a discreet “© 1970 by P. G. Wodehouse” on the copyright page. *McIlvaine* describes the book as “Black cover, gold lettering on spine”; copies also exist in chocolate-brown. When Penguin first printed the title in 1987 (A37a20) the new preface was included.

The first four prefaces, in order, were for books first published in 1915, 1917, 1924, and 1927. For the fifth preface, Barrie & Jenkins decided to go back to an earlier title, namely *The Man Upstairs* (1914). This preface was published in 1971 (A17a24).

With this title, Barrie & Jenkins changed the dust-wrapper format that had been used for the earlier prefaces. First, they dispensed with the colour used for edging Wodehouse’s name on the front cover and for the whole of his name on the spine, so that his name now appeared in white in both places. Second, they dispensed with the use of an illustration on the front cover, replacing it with the statement “NEW PREFACE | BY THE AUTHOR”. *McIlvaine* describes the book as “Black cover, gold lettering on spine”; copies also exist in chocolate-brown. When Barrie & Jenkins republished the title in 1980 (A17a25), the new preface was included.

Wodehouse’s preface starts by saying that “The contents of this book belong to what, if I were important enough to have such things, would be called my middle period; the time when . . . I had gone to New York. . . . They were written between 1909 and 1912 in a bedroom at the Hotel Earle down in Greenwich Village.” Wodehouse would no doubt have been surprised to learn that by 1975–76, the date of Elliott Milstein’s famous thesis on Wodehouse (‘The Growth of Sweetness and Light’ in *A Plum Assignment*), he *was* important enough to have such things as periods, and he would have been doubly surprised to learn that what he regarded as his middle period was regarded by Elliott as falling within his Early Period (1902–23).

The rest of the preface deals with Wodehouse’s disreputable agent at the time, “Archie – I have forgotten his surname”. He says “in my more charitable moods I tell myself that he was not really dishonest. (Though he did sell my book *Love Among the*



Chickens to a publisher, copyright it in his own name, and when it was subsequently bought by the silent pictures made me pay him quite a bit of money to release it.)” Wodehouse was obviously in a charitable mood when writing this preface, as he disguised the identity of his agent, who, as the copyright page of the US edition of *Love Among the Chickens* shows, was really called A[braham] E Baerman. Wodehouse had likewise given him an alias of Jake Skolsky when writing about the episode at more length in 1935

(‘The First Time I Went to New York’, in *The First Time I . . .*, ed. The Hon Theodora Benson) and had changed the alias to Archie Fletcher Fitzmaurice in 1956 for the chapter ‘Archie Had Magnetism’ in *America, I Like You*.

Wodehouse on Wikipedia

Welcome to **Wikipedia**,
the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit.
5,734,551 articles in English

From today's featured article



P. G. Wodehouse (15 October 1881 – 14 February 1975) was an English author and one of the most widely read **humourists** of the 20th century. His novels and short stories feature elaborate plots and a unique writing style based on a combination of very formal language, references to classical literature, and contemporary club-room slang. His early novels were mostly **school stories**, but he later switched to comic fiction, creating several regular characters who became familiar to the public. They include the jolly gentleman of leisure **Bertie Wooster** and his sagacious valet, **Jeeves**. He began the 1930s writing for **MGM** in Hollywood and moved to France in 1934 for tax reasons. In 1940 he was taken prisoner at **Le Touquet** by the invading Germans and interned for nearly a year. After his release he made six broadcasts from German radio in Berlin. The talks were comic and apolitical, but they prompted anger and a threat of prosecution in Britain. He never returned to England, living from 1947 until his death in the US. ([Full article...](#))

Regular users of the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia know that each day there is a featured article on its home page. On October 15, it was the turn of – guess who? There is much to commend in Wikipedia’s article on Wodehouse, which is both lengthy and well researched, having been written by such scholars as the late Terry Mordue and tweaked by others, including (probably) contributors to the excellent website Madame Eulalie’s Rare Plums. So if you haven’t yet had a gander at it – do!

And on Twitter

Thanks to CAROLINE FRANKLYN for pointing out that Gyles Brandreth is not the only celebrity with a penchant for tweeting Wodehouse quotes. The renowned cellist Steve Isserlis (@StevenIsserlis) has also revealed his passion for PGW, including these quotes among recent tweets:

- “Good God, Clarence! You look like a bereaved tapeworm.”
- “The first thing to do,” said Psmith, “is to ascertain that such a place as Clapham Common really exists. One has heard of it, of course, but has its existence ever been proved? I think not.”
- Professor Pringle was a thinnish, baldish, dyspeptic-looking cove with an eye like a haddock, while Mrs Pringle’s aspect was that of one who had had bad news round about the year 1900 and never really got over it.

Yet Another Cosy Moment

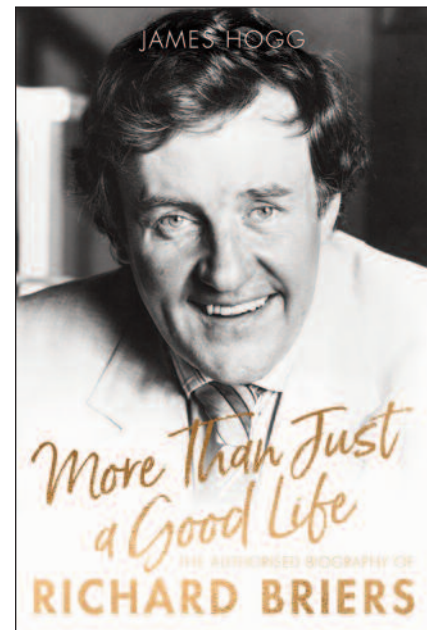
Bring Me Sunshine, by Charlie Connelly (2012)

(from Roger Bowen)

In this book on the British absorption with weather, the author writes: “On the face of it our weather seems entirely inoffensive. If weather were literature ours would be written by P G Wodehouse; if it were rock ‘n roll we’d be represented by Bananarama.”

Good News

As this issue of *Wooster Sauce* arrives in letter boxes, so too has the authorised biography of our late esteemed president, Richard Briers, just been published. Written by Mr James Hogg (not the author of *The Annotated Whiffle*), *More Than Just a Good Life* covers more – a lot more – than Mr Briers’s association with Wodehouse and the Society. But rest assured Wodehouse is in there, and the book is sure to be of interest to all Briers fans as well as Wodehouseans. The perfect gift for Christmas, perhaps?



Answers to Wodehouse Quiz (Page 22)

1. *Jill the Reckless*
2. *A Damsel in Distress*
3. Sue Brown
4. *Bill the Conqueror*
5. *Thank You, Jeeves*
6. Ignatius Mulliner
(‘The Man who Gave Up Smoking’)
7. Cyril ‘Barmy’ Fotheringay-Phipps
(‘Tried in the Furnace’)
8. Cora Bellinger
(‘Jeeves and the Song of Songs’)
9. Wilfred Allsop
10. Freddie Widgeon
(‘The Masked Troubadour’)

Recent Press Comment

The Guildford Dragon, August

In the column 'Guildford Snippets – Do You Know?', the question posed was: "Who was the author born in Guildford [who] had clearly not forgotten the Guildford area as one of the characters he created in later life was called Lord Worplesdon?"

Evening Express, August 7 (from Jo Jacobius)

Included a joyful little piece on a rescue Pomeranian dog dressed up as Paddington who, on being rehomed, was renamed Bertie, in honour of Bertie Wooster, by his new owner.

The Conservative Woman, August 10

In 'Wodehouse and the fairway to heaven', Ollie Wright wrote: "Having no interest in golf is not a reason why you can't enjoy the thirty-one short stories that make up the P G Wodehouse *Golf Omnibus*. His skill with the English language and understanding of human nature are so strong that the setting of his stories is almost irrelevant. His characters shine and his jokes work wherever you put them." Wright goes on in this vein, providing some prime PGW quotes along the way.

Ricochet, August 18

C. B. Toder's 'Quote of the Day: Masterful Character Sketching' started: "She sprang it on me before breakfast. There in seven words you have a complete character sketch of my Aunt Agatha." Toder used this opening from 'Educating Young Gussie' to demonstrate PGW's ability to convey characters through expert use of metaphor and descriptive language.

The Week, August 18 (from Roger Bower, Alexander Dainty, & Jo Jacobius)

Stig Abell, Editor of the *TLS*, chose *Psmith, Journalist* as one of his favourite books, describing it as "the greatest novel ever written about journalism. The winningly elegant Psmith (the 'p' is silent) travels to New York, where he takes over a magazine called *Cosy Moments* to devastating effect."

The Times, September 1 (from Dave Anderton)

Patrick Kidd's article on French 'word traps' touched on the troubled British relationship with France due to language difficulties. He noted: "The wisest opening line in English literature is not from *Pride and Prejudice* but *The Luck of the Bodkins*" and went on to quote the magnificent opening sentence of that book.

Daily Telegraph, September 8

(from Carolyn de la Plain)

Tom Ough entitled his article about Messrs Monkman and Seagull (who captained Wolfson College Cambridge and Emmanuel College Cambridge, respectively, on *University Challenge* in 2017) on their return to TV screens: 'We're like Jeeves and Wooster, except we're both Jeeves'

Daily Telegraph Magazine, September 8

In the opening to his article 'The Rules of Gentlemanly Dressing', Stephen Doig noted: "As Bertie Wooster so memorably commanded: 'Bring me my whangee, my yellowest shoes and the old green Homburg. I'm going into the park to do pastoral dances.'" He subsequently

wrote: "I have released my inner Jeeves to proffer advice on the basics of wardrobe maintenance."

New Indian Express, September 9

According to Sajin Shrijith, watching the film *Theevandi* "feels a lot like reading a PG Wodehouse novel. Nothing bad ever happens in it: and even if something bad does happen, it will somehow resolve itself by the end."

The Guardian, September 11

(from Murray Hedgcock)

From the letters page: "Dining on roadkill depends on one's constitution. In *Heavy Weather* by P.G. Wodehouse, Galahad Threepwood tells the tale of Eustace and Freddie Potts, who were served a casserole of what turned out to be hedgehog. The teetotal Eustace fell violently ill, whereas Freddie, 'his system having been healthily pickled in alcohol, thrrove on the dish and finished it cold the next day'."

Daily Telegraph, September 13 (from David Salter)

In a letter headed 'Wodehousian hero', Charles Jackson commented on a feature about Congo explorer John Blashford-Snell: "Curiously, years before this real-life explorer was born, a splendidly named character, one J. Bashford Braddock, appeared in P.G. Wodehouse's short story 'The Ordeal of Osbert Mulliner'. This fictional Bashford Braddock was also a Congo explorer and was a fearsome figure at the sight of whom 'rhinoceroses frequently edged behind trees and hid themselves till he had passed'. Surely a case of life reflecting art?"

Shortlist, September (from Babioli Lillington)

PGW featured in a list of books to read in the loo. Professor Robert Douglas-Fairhurst said: "Nobody writes more episodically than him. Every sentence, every paragraph, every chapter is perfect in itself."

Slightly Foxed, September 16

(from Christopher Bellew)

Published *A Country Doctor's Commonplace Book* by Dr Philip Evans. Among his many interests was his passion for Wodehouse.

Evening Standard, September 18 (from David Salter)

From 'The Londoner' diary column: "Sir Nicholas Soames blasts fellow Tory MP Owen Patterson for coming out against Chequers. 'OhshutupSpode' was his rebuke. Note: Roderick Spode led the Black Shorts in P.G. Wodehouse's novels."

Telegraph India online edition, September 25

In a lengthy appreciation of PGW's *Mike at Wrykyn*, Ruchir Joshi wrote: "The Mike books are, one now realises, Wodehouse-lite, . . . As you get into the book, though, you get all the Wodehousian delicacies, the sharp delineation of each new character in a very few lines, the terse but often hilarious dialogue and descriptions. . . . Whatever his class and race prejudices P.G. Wodehouse saw life as the act of constantly playing on a sticky wicket."

Daily Telegraph, September 29

In the GK crossword, the clue for 35ac was: "Male of the honeybee; common name for an unmanned aerial vehicle; or a member of the gentleman's club in novels by PG Wodehouse. (5)"

The Times, September 29 (from David Lindsay)

In Rose Wild's 'Feedback' column, Gesche Ibsen had a bone to pick with a cryptic crossword clue ("Disproof concerning what Jeeves would do, we hear"), pointing out that if the answer was 'rebuttal', "your setter may wish to refresh their memory of Wodehouse, because Jeeves is most assuredly not a butler." Ms Wild responded: "Calling Jeeves a butler is a sure-fire way of attracting a ticking off from the Wodehouse faithful, but the clue . . . said he 'would' buttle. It's a fine point. Bertie says, in *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*, 'Jeeves is a gentleman's gentleman, not a butler, but if the call comes he can buttle with the best of them' and as Patrick Kidd, diary editor and Wodehouse scholar, points out, he certainly impersonated a butler when called on. The clue hinges on the word 'would' and Jeeves 'would' do anything if circumstance demands."

The Oldie, October (from June Arnold)

Gyles Brandreth wrote: "PG Wodehouse is the finest comic writer the English language has ever known. Yes, [others] have their chucklesome moments, but for consistent page after page rib tickling, no one can hold a candle to the master. On 15th October, Wodehouse's 137th birthday, I will be with my friend Stephen Fry (a definitive Jeeves) raising a grateful glass to the memory of Plum Wodehouse."

The Guardian, October 1 (from Jo Jacobius)

In 'Crosswords for beginners: cryptozoology', Alan Connor dealt with animals as clues, writing: "When British crosswords started to become cryptic, PG Wodehouse sent a despairing letter to *The Times*. 'Sirs,' he said, 'May I commend your public spirit in putting the good old emu back into circulation again?' Wodehouse was appalled to have read that . . . MR James used that paper's crossword to time the boiling of his breakfast egg . . .; he longed for puzzles he could solve as speedily, with the kind of words he alluded to in *The Code of the Woosters*: 'He looked at me like someone who has just solved the crossword puzzle with a shrewd "Emu" in the top right hand corner.'

Daily Mail, October 5 (from Terry Taylor)

Alan Titchmarsh's response to "What book would you take to a desert island?" was: "The complete Blandings novels of P.G. Wodehouse. They transport me to a gentler age with great humour and wonderfully constructed prose that is never self-conscious."

Yours Magazine, October 9 (from Roger Bowen)

Roy Hudd referred to his favourite quotation relating to dogs (equally apposite for comedians) being from PGW: "It is fatal to let any dog know he is funny, for he immediately loses his head and starts hamming it up."

The Guardian, October 11 (from Nirav Shah)

An article on the pairing of Francesco Molinari and Tommy Fleetwood at this year's Ryder Cup began: "It is easy to be the best of friends with a player who is exactly as bad as you, since as PG Wodehouse (handicap 18) put it: 'Few things draw two men together more surely than a mutual inability to master golf, coupled with an intense and ever-increasing love for the game.'"

The Times, October 13 (from Dave Anderton)

In his Diary, Patrick Kidd led off by quoting Alexander Armstrong's remarks about being a northerner during his toast at the Society's dinner at Gray's Inn (see page 10).

The Guardian, October 13 (from Terry Taylor)

Spanish author Javier Marias described his guilty pleasure as being "PG Wodehouse. I devote too much time to reading him, now and then."

RealClear Politics, October 15

Carl M. Cannon's 'Morning Note' began: "It's Monday, October 15. On this date in 1881, Eleanor Wodehouse, a well-bred Englishwoman living with her husband in Hong Kong, gave birth to the couple's third son while visiting her sister in Surrey." He went on to describe PGW's later writing of his dislike for his name: "I was named after a godfather, and not a thing to show for it but a small silver mug which I lost in 1897."

The Conservative Woman, October 22

(from Mark Taylor)

Responding to a reader comment stating "Never apologise!", one reader quoted PGW's famous line about making it a good rule never to apologise.

The Telegraph, November 3

David Chazan wrote of French disregard for the English language: "As many British visitors have learned to their discomfort, if you ask a local, 'Parlez-vous anglais?', the answer is often, 'Non'. Such a response, perhaps accompanied by a Gallic shrug, may prompt the appearance on the traveller's face of what the novelist P.G. Wodehouse described as 'The shifty hangdog look which announces that an Englishman is about to speak French'."

The Observer, November 4 (from Hilary Bruce)

Our patron Jonathan Coe had these wise words for staying calm in the run-up to Brexit: "Maybe we should sometimes read PG Wodehouse, or watch *Some Like It Hot* or watch Victoria Wood videos, to remind ourselves that lightness and jolliness can still exist in the world."

The Times, November 3 (from Hilary Bruce)

Under the header 'Prince's Hogwash', Patrick Kidd wrote of the Prince of Wales talking, amongst other things, of his "regular discussion with his Tamworth pigs, . . . Presumably his cousin, The Duke of Kent, who is patron of the P G Wodehouse Society, has taught him the magic word for befriending any swine. 'Pig-hoo-o-o-o-ey,' Wodehouse wrote, 'is to the pig world what the masonic grip is to the human.' Champion hog callers who use that word have even been known, PG went on, 'to bring pork chops leaping from their plates'."

Stella, Sunday Telegraph, November 5

(from Dave Anderton)

Sebastian Faulks wrote of his 'life in books' and included *Right Ho, Jeeves*: "A country-house farce. I was on a panel at the Cheltenham Literature Festival with Terry Wogan when he read out one hilarious scene. They say you could hear the laughter in Birmingham."

The Times, November 6 (from Hilary Bruce)

On the occasion of the National Crossword Championship, the paper's third leader commented on the challenges posed by the *Times* Crossword, which first appeared in 1930. It referred to a letter to the editor that PGW wrote in 1934, complaining he had never yet succeeded in finishing a *Times* puzzle. The leader concluded: "For those enthusiasts of Wodehouse's class, this weekend's nail-biting outcome should be an inspiration."

Future Events for Your Diary

November 29, 2018–February 24, 2019 P G Wodehouse: The Man and His Work, at the British Library

This very special *free* exhibition at the British Library features materials from the Wodehouse Archive loaned by Sir Edward Cazalet. See the article on page 4, as well as the BL's website.

January 13, 2019 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Richard Burnip leads 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.

February 8, 2019 Social Gathering in Edinburgh

Members living up north may wish to join an informal gathering with other members at the New Club in Princes Street, Edinburgh. See Society News, page 5, for details.

February 8, 2019 Travels with Sheridan Morley

Lecture presented by Morley's cabaret partner, Michael Law, using songs by Noël Coward and Cole Porter and lyrics by P. G. Wodehouse. The lecture begins at 8 pm at the Astor Community Theatre, Stanhope Road, Deal, Kent. For more information, go to www.theastor.org.

February 18, 2019 Society Meeting at the Savile Club

John Hodgson will deliver a talk on 'Plum's World of Sport'; for more information, see page 5. We meet at the Savile from 6 pm. Gents, no tie is necessary but please be sure to wear a jacket.

February 21, 2019 British Library Event

To celebrate the BL's exhibition of Wodehouse Archive materials, they will be holding a special event on this date. Society members will be able to obtain a discount on tickets. For full information, see the box on page 5.

March 10, 2019 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Take a walk with Richard Burnip and enjoy much about and by Wodehouse along the way! See January 13, above, for details on when and where.

March 21–April 14, 2019

Perfect Nonsense in Hartford, Connecticut

Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense will make its North American debut at the Hartford Stage. For tickets and further information, visit www.hartfordstage.org/.

May 11–18, 2019

A Damsel in Distress at the Whitefield Garrick

The Whitefield Garrick Society will perform *A Damsel in Distress*, by Ian Hay and P. G. Wodehouse, at the Whitefield Garrick Theatre in Bury, outside Manchester. The Director, Andrew Close, hopes to meet Society members attending this production. For information and tickets, go to www.whitefieldgarrick.org.

July 8, 2019 Society Meeting at the Savile Club

This will probably be our traditional quiz night, but stay tuned, as you never know! Start time and address as usual: from 6 pm at London W1K 4ER.

October 7, 2019 Society AGM at the Savile Club

No word yet on the entertainment for this meeting, but it is sure to be special, so do hold the date in your calendar!

October 17–20, 2019 TWS Convention in Cincinnati

The Wodehouse Society will be holding its 20th biennial convention, 'Pigs Have Wings', at the Netherland Plaza Hilton in Cincinnati, Ohio.



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