

The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

Information Sheet Number 8

Revised December 2018

A Potted Biography of P G Wodehouse, with Milestones

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1877 February 3	Marriage of Plum's parents, Eleanor (née Deane) and Henry Ernest
1877 September 26	Birth of his eldest brother Philip Peveril
1879 May 11	Birth of his second older brother Ernest Armine
1881 October 15	Birth of Pelham Grenville Wodehouse at 1 Vale Place, Guildford, Surrey
1885 May 23	Birth of Ethel Newton, the future Lady Wodehouse, in Kings Lynn, Norfolk
1886	PGW attended Dame School in Croydon, Surrey
1889	PGW was transferred to Elizabeth College, in Guernsey
1891	PGW moved to Malvern House, a preparatory school in Kearsney, Kent
1892 May 30	Birth of his younger brother Richard Lancelot Deane
1894 to 1900	PGW attended Dulwich College
1900	Received his first payment for writing: from <i>Public School Magazine</i> for an article entitled <i>Some Aspects of Game-Captaincy</i>
1900 September	Started work at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, London and took rooms in Markham Square, Chelsea
1901 June	Caught mumps
1901 July	First real short story published in <i>Public School Magazine</i> , entitled <i>The Prize Poem</i>
1901 August 16	First contribution to <i>Globe</i> newspaper
1902 September 9	Resigned from the Bank
1902 September 17	First article for <i>Punch</i> , entitled <i>An Unfinished Collection</i>
1902 September 19	First book published, <i>The Pothunters</i>
1902	Moved to Walpole Street, Chelsea
1903	Stayed at Emsworth House School, Hampshire
1903 August	Joined the <i>By the Way</i> column of <i>The Globe</i> on a permanent basis
1904 April 16	First visit to the USA
1904 August	Appointed Editor of the <i>By The Way</i> column at the <i>Globe</i>
1904 December 10	First published lyric – <i>Put Me In My Little Cell</i> – sung in <i>Sergeant Brue</i> at the Strand Theatre
1905 July	First contribution to the <i>Strand</i> , a short story entitled <i>The Wirepullers</i>
1906 March 6	Employed by Seymour Hicks as the resident lyricist at the Aldwych Theatre, working on <i>The Beauty of Bath</i>
1906 March 19	First met Jerome Kern, also working on <i>The Beauty of Bath</i>
1906 August	First novel for adults, entitled <i>Love Among the Chickens</i> , published by George Newnes Ltd. There is confusion over the date, the second edition giving July as the date of the first printing and Newnes themselves claiming June. The first edition is silent on the matter
1907	Moved to the Hicks Theatre, still writing lyrics for Seymour Hicks
1907 December 6	Joined Gaiety Theatre as lyricist
1909	Second visit to USA, where he sold short stories to <i>Colliers</i> and <i>Cosmopolitan</i> , and from where he resigned his job at the <i>Globe</i>

1909 May 11	<i>Love Among the Chickens</i> , published in USA
1911 August 24	First play, <i>A Gentleman of Leisure</i> , opened in New York
1913 April 8	First play in London, <i>Brother Alfred</i> , flopped
1914 January	First substantial contribution to a musical production, <i>Nuts and Wine</i> , which also flopped in London
1914 August 2	Returned to New York
1914 August 3	Met Ethel Rowley, née Newton, an English widow, at a New York party
1914 September 30	Married Ethel Rowley at <i>The Little Church Round The Corner</i> , off Madison Square on East 29th Street, and inherited her daughter Leonora
1915 March	Appointed drama critic of <i>Vanity Fair</i>
1915 June 26	First appearance of Lord Emsworth and Blandings Castle in the serialisation of <i>Something New</i> (<i>Something Fresh</i> is UK title) in <i>Saturday Evening Post</i>
1915 September 18	Jeeves made his first appearance, in <i>Extricating Young Gussie</i> , published in <i>Saturday Evening Post</i>
1916 September 25	First Bolton, Wodehouse, Kern musical comedy, entitled <i>Miss Springtime</i> appeared in New York and was moderately successful
1919 June 7	First Oldest Member story, <i>A Woman is Only a Woman</i> , published in <i>Saturday Evening Post</i>
1923 April	First <i>Ukridge</i> short story, <i>Ukridge's Dog College</i> , appeared in <i>Cosmopolitan</i>
1926	PGW elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature
1926 July	First Mr Mulliner story, entitled <i>The Truth About George</i> , appeared in the <i>Strand</i>
1927 April 1	Took lease of 17 Norfolk Street (now Dunraven Street) in London
1929 May 27	Death of PGW's father Ernest
1930 June 1	Started first contract with MGM in Hollywood
1931 June 7	Interview with a reporter from the Los Angeles Times published, which caused a furore in Hollywood as PGW complained about being paid so much for doing so little
1932 December 12	Leonora married Peter Cazalet
1933 August	First instalment of the first Jeeves and Bertie Wooster novel, <i>Thank You Jeeves</i> , published in the <i>Strand</i>
1934 January 19	Successfully challenged in court the UK Inland Revenue's attempts to claim more income tax on his earnings
1934 March 31	Birth of Leonora and Peter Cazalet's daughter, Sheran
1934 June	Settled in Le Touquet
1935 June 3	Bought Low Wood in Le Touquet
1936 April 26	Birth of Leonora and Peter Cazalet's son, Edward
1936 June 26	Awarded medallion by International Mark Twain Society
1936 October 9	Death of PGW's brother Armine
1936 October 10	Started second contract with MGM in Hollywood
1937 November 4	Returned to Le Touquet
1939 June 21	Invested as D Litt at Oxford University
1939 July 8	Visited Dulwich College for last time, writing a report on a cricket match against St Paul's which was published in <i>The Alleynian</i>
1940 May 21	PGW, Ethel and animals tried to leave Le Touquet in the light of the German advance, but their car twice broke down
1940 July 21	Start of PGW internment by Germans in camps successively at Loos Prison (Lille), Liege, Huy and Tost (Upper Silesia)

1941 June 21	PGW released from internment and taken to Berlin
1941 June 26	PGW made the first of five radio broadcasts for fans in neutral USA
1941 July 15	Cassandra's radio broadcast of a vituperative attack on PGW, the BBC only allowing it on the direction of Duff Cooper
1941	Death of PGW's mother Eleanor
1943 September 11	PGW transferred to Paris
1944 May 16	Death of PGW's step-daughter Leonora
1947 April 27	PGW and Ethel arrived in US on <i>SS America</i>
1948 September 2	PGW used the pseudonym Stephen Powys for a play jointly written with Guy Bolton which was successful in London
1949 June	PGW's challenge to the US tax authorities ended in the Supreme Court with some decisions going in his favour and others against
1952 March	Ethel bought a house in Basket Neck Lane, Remsenburg, Long Island, New York, close to Guy Bolton's home
1953 July 15	PGW resumed contributing fortnightly articles to <i>Punch</i>
1955 May 1	The Wodehouses gave up their New York apartment
1955 December 16	PGW became an American citizen
1960 January 27	PGW elected to the <i>Punch</i> table
1961 July 15	BBC broadcast <i>An Act of Homage and Reparation</i> by Evelyn Waugh
1965 May 27	BBC TV series <i>The World of Wooster</i> commenced
1967 February 16	BBC TV series <i>Blandings Castle</i> commenced
1967 November	P G Wodehouse Animal Shelter opened in Remsenburg
1974 November	PGW's last complete novel, entitled <i>Aunts Aren't Gentlemen</i> , published in the UK and immediately topped the list of best-sellers
1975 January 1	PGW knighted by Queen Elizabeth II, his wife Ethel taking the title Lady Wodehouse
1975 February 14	PGW died in hospital
1977 October 15	Formal opening of the PGW Memorial Corner of the Dulwich College Library
1978 September 19	<i>Sunset at Blandings</i> , a partially completed book, published posthumously with notes by Richard Usborne
1984 October	Lady Wodehouse died
1997 January	Formation of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) announced
2018 October	Announcement at a Society dinner that The Very Rev Dr. John Hall, Dean of Westminster Abbey, had given permission for a memorial of P G Wodehouse to be placed in the Abbey, in a ceremony expected to be held in 2019.

Thanks to the many PGW biographies for help in compiling this Information Sheet, especially:

Frances Donaldson	P G Wodehouse
Norman Murphy	In Search of Blandings
Barry Phelps	P G Wodehouse
Robert McCrum	P G Wodehouse – A Life
Sophie Ratcliffe	P G Wodehouse: A Life in Letters