

BY THE WAY



Occasional Newsletters from The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

Number 10

June 2000

HIM, ANCIENT & MODERN – 1

Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse's family tree is a matter of considerable interest and a number of surprises, and thus an ideal subject for *By The Way*. The information available is, however, too extensive to be condensed into a single issue, so this will be the first of a three-part series, which will be continued in June 2001 and completed in June 2002 (unless even more detail appears!)

Most of the information here has been gathered by our Chairman, Norman Murphy, but reference has also been made to the work of genealogist Michael Rhodes (reported in the *Express* on March 2, 2000), an article in the *Daily Telegraph* on 27 May, 1997, a piece by Simon May in *Wooster Sauce*, March 1999 based on an article by Anthony Hoskins) and a family tree prepared by Brigitte Gastel.

Sir Constantine Wodehouse

Norman Murphy says that the earliest Wodehouse he has found is Sir Constantine Wodehouse, knighted by Henry I c 1120. He held land near Wymondham, Kimberley, Norfolk, which was to become the family seat some 300 years later.

Sir John Wodehouse

A descendant of Sir Constantine, and Constable of Rising Castle, he married the daughter and heir of Sir John Fastolf of Kimberley, the probable original of Shakespeare's Falstaff.

Sir John Wodehouse

Son of the earlier Sir John, who did sufficiently well at the Battle of Agincourt (1415) that King Henry V granted him the present family coat of arms with the motto *Agincourt*. (Remember how conscious both Bertie Wooster and Lord Emsworth were about their ancestors' achievements on that occasion.)

Sir Roger Wodehouse

Knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1578, he was host to Her Majesty at Kimberley later that year. See *Summer Lightning* ch 14 pt 2 and *A Pelican at Blandings* ch 7 pt 5.

Sir Philip Wodehouse (d 1623)

The son of Sir Roger, he was knighted for his valiant actions at the capture of Cadiz, and in 1582 married the widow of Hamon L'Estrange, Grizell, who built the Octagon at Hunstanton Hall described by Bertie Wooster in *Jeeves and the Impending Doom*. He became the first baronet.

Sir Thomas Wodehouse (d 1658)

The second baronet, he married Blanche Carey, great-granddaughter of William Carey and his wife, Lady Mary Boleyn, the sister of Anne. Plum wrote to his step-daughter Leonora in 1920, in a rare reference to family history, about his reactions to an angry letter he had received from Jerome Kern:

... the manly spirit of the Wodehouses (descended from the sister of Anne Boleyn) boiled in my veins ...

Anthony Hoskins, in *Genealogists' Magazine* (March 1997), argued that there was compelling evidence that Mary Boleyn's son, Henry Carey, was not the son of William (Esquire of the Body to King Henry VIII), but of the monarch himself. (See *Wooster Sauce*, March 1999, page 12, and overleaf: P G Wodehouse and the Queen Mother).

Sir Philip Wodehouse (1608-1681)

Third baronet, and son of Sir Thomas and Blanche.

Sir Thomas Wodehouse (d 1671)

Son of the third Bart, he married the daughter of Sir William Armine, Bart, and the name 'Armine' has appeared constantly in the family line ever since.

Sir John Wodehouse (1669-1754)

The 4th baronet, married the Hon Mary Fermor (see overleaf: P G Wodehouse and the Queen Mother).

Sir Armine Wodehouse (1714-1777)

Son of Sir John, the fifth Bart had three sons by Letitia Bacon: John, who became first Baron Wodehouse in 1797; Philip, who became prebendary of Norwich and Thomas, the third son, who became a barrister.



John, 3rd Baron Wodehouse (later 1st Earl of

A Distinguished Ancestor

John, third Baron Wodehouse and First Earl of Kimberley (1826-1902)

The great-grandson of Sir Armine, he inherited the barony from his grandfather, the second baron. He enjoyed a highly successful political career from 1852 to 1899, including the appointment as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1864 and reaching the heights of Foreign Secretary under Lord Rosebery in 1894. He married the eldest daughter of the Earl of Clare in 1847.

P G Wodehouse and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother

It is believed that there are two separate lines by which Wodehouse may be related to the Queen Mother.

First, many people believe that King Henry VIII had an affair with Mary Boleyn before his relationship with Anne Boleyn. They claim that during this period, she gave him two children.

The first became Lady Knollys, from whom the Queen Mother is descended, and the second, Henry, took the surname of his cuckolded father (William Carey), and became Lord Chamberlain and patron of Shakespeare's company of players. Henry was the father of John Carey, 3rd Lord Hunsdon, whose daughter, Blanche, married Sir Thomas Wodehouse (2nd baronet) (see above).

Secondly, Michael Rhodes has traced a common ancestry back to Horatio, the first and last Lord Vere of Tilbury, who died in 1635. The Queen Mother, he points out, is a tenth generation descendant of Lord Vere through his daughter the Hon Elizabeth de Vere, while another daughter, Catherine, married the second Baron Poulett. Three generations later, the Hon Mary Fermor married Sir John Wodehouse, the fourth baronet (see above).

The second part of this review, concerning PGW's aunts and uncles on his father's side, will appear in By The Way, June 2001.

Rev Philip Wodehouse (1745-1811)

The second son of Sir Armine, he had two sons.

Col Philip Wodehouse (1788-1846)

Elder son of Rev Philip, he fought at the Battle of Waterloo (1815) and married Lydia Lea, probably a member of the family which helped to found Lea & Perrin's Worcester Sauce. Amongst his six sons and three daughters was Henry Ernest (1845-1929), Plum's father. Colonel Philip will be the starting point for the next part of this series of articles in June 2001.