

# BY THE WAY



Occasional Newsletters from The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

Number 4

June 1998

## SIR P G WODEHOUSE'S COMMEMMORATIVE PLAQUES



UNVEILING BY HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER  
OF A BLUE PLAQUE TO MARK THE RESIDENCE OF  
P.G. WODEHOUSE AT 17 DUNRAVEN STREET, W.1.

Friday, 3rd June 1988

I am particularly pleased to have been invited to unveil this plaque as for many years I have been an ardent reader of P.G. Wodehouse. Indeed, I am proud to say that his very first book "The Pothunters" was dedicated by him to members of my family.

Sir Pelham Wodehouse succeeded in the great ambition of so many novelists: not only has he brought new words and expressions into the English language but he has also created characters whose names have become household words - Jeeves and Bertie, Lord Emsworth and his prize pig, the Empress of Blandings, and even Aunt Agatha to name but a few, live on as immortal characters.

Nevertheless I think that Wodehouse's greatest gift is that fifty or sixty years after many of his books were written they still make us all laugh, and I am sure that generations to come will continue to laugh at them just as much as we have done. What an encouraging thought for the future!

P.G. Wodehouse lived in this house from 1927 until 1934, and I am delighted to unveil the plaque which now records this.

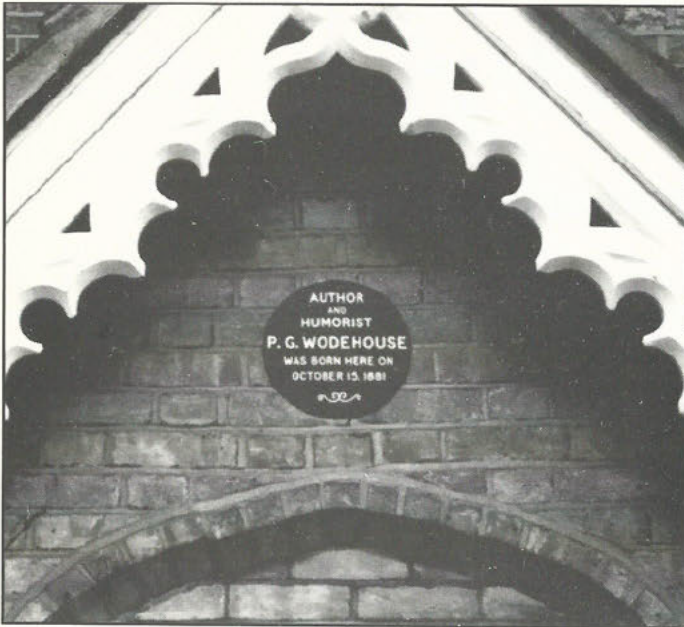
*Guildford, Emsworth  
and ten years ago,  
Dunraven Street,  
London*

Ten years ago this month, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother unveiled a blue plaque at 17 Dunraven Street, near Marble Arch in the West End to commemorate the time when the road was known as Norfolk Street and it was the home of Ethel, P G and Leonora Wodehouse. The plaque's eventual appearance was substantially due to the efforts of Michael Pointon amongst others.

We are proud that Her Majesty has consented to our reproducing the speech which she made at the unveiling. A photograph of the plaque today may be found overleaf..

Two other similar plaques may be found in England, at the site of his birthplace in Guildford, Surrey, and at Emsworth in Sussex. They, too, are featured on page two.

There is a further commemorative plate to be found in New York, in the 'Little Church Around The Corner', on East 29th Street, New York, where Plum and Ethel were married on 30th September, 1914. This was sponsored by The Wodehouse Society, based in America.



## Threepwood, Record Road, Emsworth

The plaque at Threepwood, where P.G. Wodehouse lived periodically between 1904 and 1914, was unveiled by Ian Carmichael in 1996. Plum rented the cottage from the owner, a Mr Molloy, and the estimated rental value according to the Warblington assessment of 1914 was £40. Only one property in Record Road, named Melrose, commanded a higher rental value.

Threepwood was offered for sale by Mr Morley in 1909, at £750 and in 1911, at £550, according to local estate agents records, but did not find a buyer. It does not appear that Plum ever owned this property.



## 17 Norfolk Street, London W1 (now 17 Dunraven Street)

17 Norfolk Street was taken on lease in 1927 at a rent of £450 per month, and the family incurred substantial running expenses which included the services of a butler. P.G. used the house as his London base in the early 1930s, but visited it only spasmodically during his Hollywood years. The property featured largely in the income tax case which he fought in the UK, in which it was demonstrated that the house had been acquired principally for the use of Leonora, who let it furnished for a number of years. During much of the period of the lease, Plum actually lived at Hunstanton Hall, Norfolk, the Dorchester Hotel, Rogate Lodge and, latterly, Low Wood in Le Touquet.

