

WOOSTER SAUCE



The Quarterly Journal of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

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March 2000

Pig-phoo-o-o-oey?

We have received the following letter from Sir Richard Body, MP, Past Chairman, Berkshire Breed Council and a Society member:

It is a mercy that neither Lord Emsworth nor the Empress have lived to see the photograph on the front page of the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

The photograph was taken in Norfolk in the 1920s. The County at that time was infested with an inferior breed of pig called Large Blacks, and the pig is unmistakably one of that miserable breed.

Having myself been the proud owner of the Supreme Champion at the Royal Show, where only the greatest of the finest are paraded, I agree wholeheartedly with Lord Emsworth. Anyone serious about keeping a future champion must have a Berkshire.

Plum, ever careful over his facts, would have known that. I am sure our hard-working sleuth of a Chairman is right to believe that when the master gazed into the sty in Hunstanton he was inspired to write about a pig. But he goes too far in claiming the object in the photograph has a likeness to our beautiful heroine, described by the master as one of that superior breed, being a Berkshire.

Our Chairman responds:

I am not hurt, just disappointed, that anybody might think I could not distinguish a Large Black from a Berkshire. This basic skill is an essential qualification for service on the Committee of our Society.

However, I accept Sir Richard's justifiable objurgations. I used the wrong words. I should have spoken of the 'source', not the 'original' of the immortal Empress.

I believe it was the Mott Pig that inspired Wodehouse to create the Empress and from whom he learned so much; how a pig moves, how it snuffles for an apple, how it rustles the straw in its sty. But I also believe that, always anxious to get his facts right, he did some more homework.

Some years ago my learned colleague James Hogg found the other half of the answer in a book *The Pig – Breeding, Rearing and Marketing* by Sanders Spencer. In the copy I saw, the only illustration is of a magnificent, balloon-like Berkshire sow and has the note *From a painting by Wippell!* I would bet good money (well, twenty-five quid anyway) that Wodehouse read that in the Hunstanton library and used it to add technical details of diet, etc, to what he had learned while making friends with the Mott Pig.

Who is this Patron?



To discover the answer and find out why he is dressed like this, see page 14.

Literary Societies and Favourite Authors

by Alan Symons, a member resident in Australia

It has been suggested that, as a new member of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK), I should earn my keep and write an article for *Wooster Sauce* on the reasons why people join literary societies, answering the question: "Is it because the works have things in common with each other, or the reverse?"

The short answer to why I join literary societies is firstly to learn more about the authors and their works from like minded enthusiasts, and secondly as a sort of tribute to the authors – a recognition of my appreciation and enjoyment of their works.

As to whether the works have things in common or the reverse, the former is much more likely to be true than the latter. I cannot say that I have actually joined any literary society because the author has anything particular in common with any other. There are connections though, in good humour, good writing about children, good writing about adventure including spying, detection, suspense, war and the sea. No doubt you can see the main connection beginning to form – good writing, or what I would call good English literature.

Perhaps I should now list the societies to which I belong (in order of joining) and say something about them and their authors. In doing so I should point out that my views are entirely my own. I am not an academic, not a person given to critical analysis, although I appreciate this from others. I read, when I can, purely for enjoyment and pleasure, not only the author's works, but also books about them (biographies and 'Lit Crits').

The *John Buchan Society* is very literary minded, with regular newsletters and journals, although there are a few other functions such as dinners and weekends with a JB theme. I am a great admirer of JB's fiction. I believe everyone should read *The Thirty-Nine Steps* before leaving school. I like each of the Hannay books, the Dickson McCunn stories and the Leithen adventures, as well as the more 'historical' novels such as *The Blanket of the Dark* and *Witch Wood*. I am less enamoured of his more 'supernatural' stories, except *The Gap in the Curtain*. Overall, my favourite would be *John Macnab*.


Let nobody tell you that *The Arthur Ransome Society* represents an author who wrote children's books. Books about children, yes, but they read perfectly well to adults, and they are particularly good to read aloud, as I did with the basic series of twelve *Swallows and Amazons* books. These should be read

in order, starting with *Swallows and Amazons* and ending with *Great Northern?*. As a former broadcaster who did a lot of 'on air' reading, I believe I can judge what is good to read aloud and Ransome receives high marks.

The society is very active, with branches all over Britain and overseas, including Australia, Canada, the USA and Japan. There are many excellent publications put out by the society, including ones especially for the large junior membership. The scholarship and research done by members never ceases to both amaze and impress me, both in articles and other books published about Ransome. I am neither fisherman nor sailor, and approach Ransome from a literary point of view, but it is worth remembering that he wrote widely on many subjects including these two. Perhaps it is not so well known outside the society that Ransome was a newspaper correspondent in Russia at the time of the Revolution and knew most of the principal players personally. Indeed, his second wife was Trotsky's principal private secretary.

My favourite Arthur Ransome book is *Pigeon Post*.

The John Buchan Journal



John Buchan

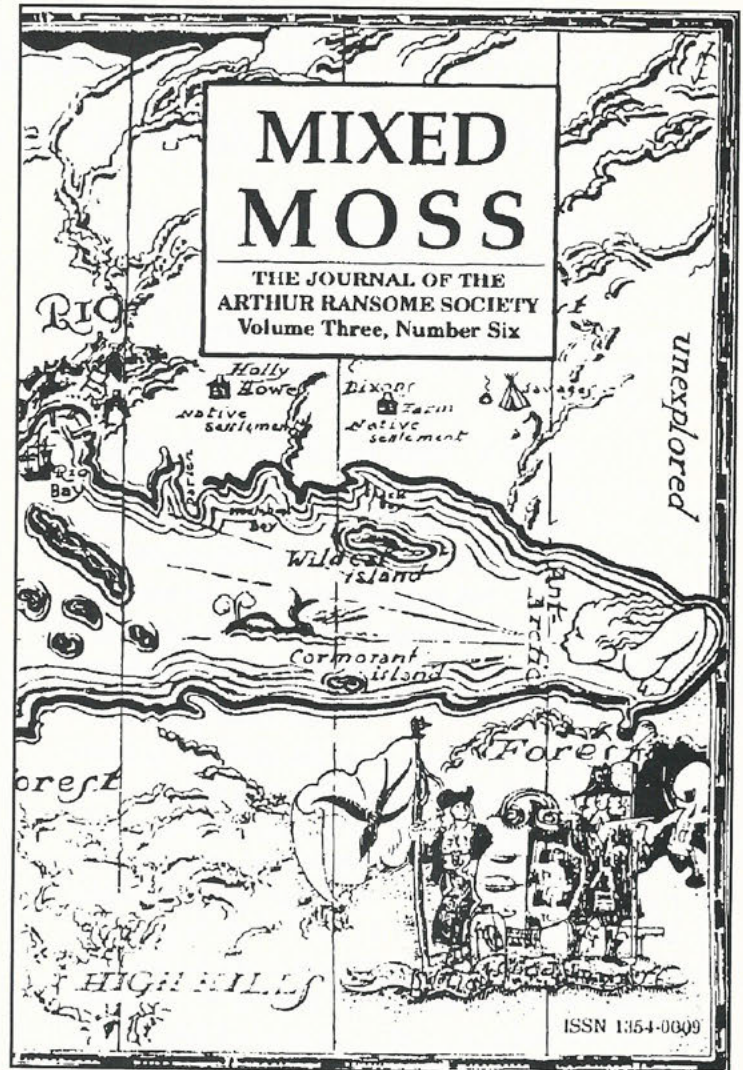
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I joined *The Just William Society* early in 1999. It puts out a journal twice a year, as well as holding amusing 'literary weekends'. Richmal Crompton and PGW are my favourite humorists, and like Arthur Ransome, she wrote books about children. In Crompton's case, these were first published in adult magazines, rather than being stories for children. Again they read well out loud, when, as with Ransome, you can appreciate the quality of the writing. And again like Ransome, there have been some excellent supplementary books written: biographies; an illustrated bibliography; an excellent companion or who's who of the books; and even an illustrated map of William's village. If you have not read any William books then it is best to start at the beginning with *Just William*, but if you were to try a single story, I would suggest *William Prime Minister* from *William the Bad*. Altogether there are 38 William books, the last few both hard to find and expensive.

The C S Forester Society was formed in Oxford in 1999. It would be wrong to regard Forester as purely the author of the Hornblower books, although his detailed descriptions of life at sea in Nelson's day are wonderfully vivid and real. There may be other authors who write well about the sea, but it must be remembered that Forester wrote on many other subjects, particularly land-based, historical war books. Try, for example, *Death to the French*, *Brown on Resolution*, *The Gun* and *The African Queen*. I am not so keen on his more 'sinister' or 'supernatural' titles such as *Payment Deferred*, *Plain Murder* or *The Nightmare*.

As a new member of *The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)* I am here to learn and be entertained! I have 60-70 PGW titles, Phelps's biography and Usborne's *Wodehouse at Work to the End*, and have recently acquired the Chairman's *In Search of Blandings*. My favourite character is Psmith, and my favourite book *Quick Service*. Rupert Baxter wins the title of 'Most Disliked Character' hands down, although I confess to finding Galahad Threepwood irritating. (Not so, Uncle Fred.) Bertie is without doubt the most maligned character. Much put upon, he bears up manfully when you consider some of his annoying friends, to say nothing of his aunts. Bertie is more sensible than he is generally given credit for these days. I think the funniest episode is the 'flower-pot throwing' in *Leave It To Psmith*, and of the short stories I have always liked the *Very Good*, Jeeves collection and *The Great Sermon Handicap* from *The Inimitable Jeeves*.

I have two other favourite authors: Dorothy L Sayers and Francis Clifford. I am sure the former has a Society, though I have not sought to find out about it.



I agree with the sentiments in a reference seen recently that her books are better written and with some humour, when compared to Agatha Christie. My favourite books are *Have His Carcase* and *The Nine Tailors*. Harriet Vane seems to me too vacillating a character, *Gaudy Night* too drawn out.

Francis Clifford deserves to be better remembered; having been likened to Graham Greene and Eric Ambler he is, in my belief, superior to both. He was a convert to Roman Catholicism and there is usually a somewhat tired, faded, down at heel but wise priest who is above reproach in most novels. Try *The Green Fields of Eden*, *The Third Side of the Coin* or *The Grosvenor Square Goodbye*. His book of short stories *Ten Minutes on a June Morning*, published posthumously, bears distinctive Clifford hallmarks, most notably the unexpected twists in the tail.

I have laid bare for all to see my membership of literary societies and favourite authors. The names differ from the 'librarian's list' in *By The Way* for June 1999, but I hope some may be encouraged to investigate the works and societies of these authors.

Editor's Note: Details of any of the societies mentioned can be obtained from Alan at

To The Editor, Sir?

Puzzled of Valley Fields (Murray Hedgcock) suffers a crisis of identity

I feel it would need the Problem Page of *Milady's Boudoir*, the Editor's Corner of *Wee Tots* or even (heaven forbid) the Agony Page of *Society Spice*, to help in this, my hour of social and protocol need. Perchance your erudite and sophisticated readership can offer guidance.

My difficulty is this. When the Society, in its wisdom and of its bounty, lays on those delightful evenings of good cheer with fellow-members, and we gather at the *Savage Club*, how do we tell who is who? Just how are we expected to know which of the assembly are fellow-Wodehouseans, and which are noble Savages? I exclude instances where you know members personally. But what of the others?

That chap in the tweed suit, standing by the bar round the corner, quietly studying his g-and-t? Is he a Wodehouse member up from the country – Lord Emsworth on a periodic cultural visit, so to speak? Perhaps a new member who has not previously graced one of our little soirées? Possibly even a visitor from one of the international Wodehouse Societies who has dropped in with determined purpose to study how the English celebrate their greatest humorous writer? And in any of these instances – Is He Waiting Nervously For Someone To Talk To Him?

On the other hand, is he simply a Savage? Is he nothing more or less than a member of the host club, who has popped in for his usual quiet drink, and is startled to find the place overrun by chaps and chapesses who, whatever their merits, obvious or hidden, are clearly not members? Is he wishing they would drink up, shut up, and get out? Does he crave nothing more than silence, to allow him his usual hour of evening relaxation so that he can mull over his day's savagery? Or is he perhaps curious as to the visitors and their doings, rather hoping that someone might strike up a conversation, and Reveal All?

This is the poser that has faced me at our *Savage* evenings. I have launched into witty conversations with one I judge to be a PGW pundit, delivering a sparkling monologue laced with Wodehouseanisms, indicative of my boundless knowledge of the oeuvre, only to find it falling on deaf ears, as the dulled eyes of my listener reveal that he is Not One Of Us, but rather a Savage – and an unenlightened one at that.

On other even more embarrassing occasions I have identified an obvious local inhabitant, skated round

him as he has sat nearby, let him get on with his drink while I and my fellows exchange repartee full of brilliant Dronesian badinage – and dear, oh dear, up comes a long-standing Wodehousean who greets the onlooker with cries of joy, and engages him in conversation of a PGWish quality I can only hear and admire, while shrinking back in embarrassment that I had left my fellow man alone.

How does one identify the species? Should we wear a sort of badge? Or, given the modest attendance of club members, should Savages be asked to do so? Or would it be simplest if they stayed away, and let us take over their pleasant home, secure in the knowledge that it was ours for the night, and we need not worry about the stranger in our midst?

Parliamentary Report

In a debate about the powers of the Child Support Agency on January 11, 2000, Mr Eric Pickles, the MP for Brentwood & Ongar pointed out that unearned income was outside the scope of the CSA's ability to assess contributions. Arguing that this was illogical, he added:

Conservative members believe strongly in people having dividend income. We want people to invest, to put money aside and enjoy dividends, but we want them to use the money to pay for their children's upkeep. The Bill offers a Bertie Wooster escape clause. The House will recall that Bertie Wooster led a blameless life, but he had many liaisons and was engaged to no fewer than six females. He was engaged once to Madeline Bassett, Honoria Glossop, Pauline Stoker and Vanessa Cook, and twice to Lady Florence Craye and Roberta Wickham.

What would have happened if those liaisons had been consummated and there had been issue from one or more of them? Wooster was a wealthy man who received dividend income but, under the Government's current proposals, the CSA would not have been able to lay a hand on a penny piece.

Jeff Rooker, Minister of State, Department of Social Security, responding to the debate, did not comment on this point.

Wooster Sauce *is Open for being Written In* *at least by Helen Murphy, as she remembers Barry Pain*

Murray Hedgcock's article about his occasional 'doubts' (*Plummy Penpricks, Wooster Sauce*, September 1999) sent me in several strange directions, and I hope to add something both to the subjects discussed in that article and his earlier plaint that non-conformism was neglected by PGW.

Bertie, permanently perplexed, cannot assume the role of 'omniscient narrator' as he speaks in the first person, but we all of us react cravenly to disaster and tend to lack the balanced mind recommended by Marcus Aurelius. Bertie eventually approaches it when, in one of the later books, he greets another of his forced engagements with the stoic "Well, I'll tell you, Aunt Dahlia," and explains that he has come so near the frightful fate so often and been rescued that he now has confidence in his stars.

Mr Hedgcock drove me to examine some of PGW's oft-repeated phrases. There are, of course, many more than he lists. I started by tracking down "Such-and-such is open for being whatever-it-is at this time of year". This is used by Barry Pain (1864-1928) in one of his *Eliza* stories (published 1900-1913), but in the person of a rustic, who may well have been quoting a popular contemporary catch-phrase. When the narrator, a pompous city clerk, goes to 'the country' for a day with his wife, and asks a stranger if they can sit in a field, the rustic "said, in a rather offensive and sarcastic way, that he believed the field was open for sitting in about that hour".

In another *Eliza* story the narrator, annoyed with what he assumes to be littering by their next door neighbours, says: "To pick up the mustard-tin and throw it at the cat was with me the work of a moment." In a later tale, he removes himself, "to resume the garb of an ordinary English gentleman".

Others may have used these phrases before Barry Pain, I don't know. But what I do know is that there were several other authors whom PGW admired so much that he used their most famous phrases *ad lib*, knowing that no one would think he had originated them himself. He refers to Barry Pain particularly in the early adult and school stories, later tending to confine the references to the waiter Alphonse, who in his *Confessions* talks about his reluctance to lend money: "It is more strong than me."

I wish to nominate Barry Pain as a fourth member to make up the quincunx, with PGW at the centre:

Conan Doyle, Gilbert, Kipling and Pain (the Bible and Shakespeare are already on the Island). Pain was at Sedbergh, one of the ancient grammar schools founded pre-reformation and then adapted to the Protestant way:

When abbeys wept for Wolsey's doom,
Floruit Sedberghia –
 Our dawn of life was lost in gloom,
Floruit Sedberghia;
 But English boys had work to do,
 So Edward founded us anew,
 In fifteen hundred fifty-two;
Floruit Sedberghia!

Wodehouse, whose own school had had a similar post-Arnold transformation, would have known the school's reputation well even though, being so far apart, schools like Dulwich and Sedbergh could only ever have expected to meet in such fora as Bisley and Aldershot.

Finally, having elaborated one of his clichés, let me deal with Mr Hedgcock's qualms. Rather than say to himself "When I lie upon my bed, sick in heart and sick in head, and with doubts discomfited" that he has Doubts, may I recommend him to return to his non-conformist roots in the greatest hymn book in that tradition, Sankey and Moody's *1200 Sacred Songs and Solos*. I do not wish to be in the least blasphemous, but he may do well to repeat the following chorus, doubtless often rendered by Heavenly Rest Johnson:

Believe! and the 'feeling' may come or go;
 Believe in the Word that was written to show
 That all who believe their salvation may know;
 Believe, and keep right on believing!

I SAY!

Favourite Exchanges – 13

"What's that word beginning with an 'X'? It's on the tip of my tongue."

"Xylophone?"

"Extenuation . . ."

From *Ice in the Bedroom*, 1961

Something Fishy? Precisely!

Mark Goodfellow provides compelling evidence of plagiarism

Recently added to the strength of the Society is Mark Goodfellow, who kindly sent in a copy of a letter dated September 16, 1956, which he has in his collection. In it, Wodehouse explains how a scene from *Sam the Sudden* turned up in a condensed serialisation of *Something Fishy* in *Colliers*.

Note the date of the letter for the exchange referred to had appeared in the second (14 September) instalment of the *Colliers* condensation. The equivalent serial in the British *John Bull* had not yet started, and it the book would not be published until 1957 either in England or the USA.

The short scene referred to can be found in chapter 29 (on pages 240-241 in the Penguin edition) of *Sam the Sudden*. It appeared between what became the last two paragraphs of chapter 22 in *Something Fishy* (ie *The Butler Did It*), using these words:

“Besides, money isn’t everything. As a matter of fact, I despise the stuff. When I said I would have liked to have a million, I was wrong. It’s much more fun being married when you’re hard up.”

“Of course it is.”

“Do you know, I knew a wretched devil in America who came into about forty million when his father died, and he went and married a girl with double that in her own right.”

“What became of them?” asked Jane, shocked.

“I don’t know. We lost touch. But just imagine that marriage.”

“Awful!”

EASTPORT 5-0374

MRS. P. G. WODEHOUSE
REMSENBURG, LONG ISLAND

Sept 16.1956

Dear Mr Williams.

Fancy you spotting that bit of plagiarism! Here is how it came about.

These damned magazines nowadays won't buy full-length serials, so I wrote a short version of *Something Fishy* for serial purposes and was so eager to get the thing finished so that I could start the real story, the full length one, that - needing a hero and heroine scene - I said to myself "Oh, dammit, will remember 'Sam' and bunged in the Sam scene.

If you come across the story in book form - it is to be called THE BUTLER DID IT and will be published by Simon and Schuster in January or February - you will see that I have written a completely new scene for that spot. The whole story is a hundred per cent better in its longer form, as I had to cut out a whole sub-plot in the serial version. I do hate these condensed versions.

OVER:-

“What fun could they have had?”

“None. What was his name?”

“Blenkiron,” said Bill in a hushed voice. “And hers was Poskitt.”

They stood silent for a moment, deeply affected by the tragedy of these two poor bits of human wreckage. Then, for they were young and resilient, they threw off the passing sadness.

What Ho! A Review by Lindsey Davis

After completing her forthcoming book, Lindsey Davis kindly undertook the task of reviewing the anthology, published by Hutchinson on February 3.

I was up to the elbows in dough when *What Ho!* arrived, so Beloved tore open the parcel. He sampled, started reading aloud – then pulled up a kitchen chair. Exclaiming with pleasure at the scenarios and the prose, he continued with the whole story, so I can report that *Jeeves and the Impending Doom* is exactly the right length to time baking a batch of dinner rolls.

This may not sound like critical insight, but I count it as a bonus. I apply the William Morris maxim to have nothing in my house that I do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful. This rule safely excludes Pokes (Sorry!), boys who are fiends in human shape, rampaging Uncle Freds, and some Aunts. Apply it to books; whisk those that fail into the jumble bag. *What Ho!* earns an automatic place; it combines the beauties of imagination, construction and language with the usefulness of a tonic. Probably the kind of insidious tonic that will end up being banned as an over-the-counter remedy after scientists notice that it is dangerously addictive and that people like it far too much. Wodehouse does you good. Take my word, the comforting glug will be prescription-only soon, with leaflets that warn you against its pleasurable side effects.

I know Societies voted on the selection. I wish more had been made of that. You deserve it. Isolating the gems to include must have been almost impossible.

Let's get this out of the way: New to Mike and Psmith, I started there. I enjoyed the stories, but found them too "Boys Only". Fine; that is the point of a selection. It showed why I myself like Wooster, Ukridge and Mr Mulliner more. Their world may be an eccentric creation – though I concede that reluctantly, because the best fiction makes you want to believe it to be true – but it is a creation built upon a decent range of perceived 'real life'. Yes, there are women in it, and by gum they are not ciphers. (A word on behalf of mastodons: Dahlia is the archetypal feisty heroine – spirited, wise, rude, fond of heroes, etc.) A daughter could safely be given this book – though you might hesitate over a son, lest he touch you for a Drones Club subscription and be inspired 'just to exist beautifully'.

The miscellany works splendidly. Each short story is a perfectly formed cracker, the extracts from novels lure you back to the full volume, and I particularly enjoyed the snippets on 'God's back garden' (Hollywood), *My World* (Aha! So we are discussing historical novels), and *Writers and Writing*.



Lindsey Davis

© Robin Farquhar-Thomson

Stephen Fry's *Introduction* is excellent, though I take issue mildly; some details may only work on the page, but most Wodehouse prose cries out to be *heard*, even if only in your head. It has that satisfying punch. You roll around gurgling not just at what the story is about, but how it's said. It's a rare skill – and it makes for a wonderful read.

What Ho! – The Best of P G Wodehouse is published by Hutchinson at £ 15.99. ISBN 0-09-180140-0. Society members may still qualify for a discounted price through TBS Direct Ltd (01206 255800).

Lindsey Davis has published 11 novels about her Roman imperial spy, Falco, which regularly appear in the top ten best-seller lists. They are murder mysteries set in the time of the Emperor Vespasian and are both impeccably researched and augmented by deft touches of humour which Society members would appreciate. Her new book, Ode to a Banker, will appear in June.

Wodehouse Screenings At The Library Of Congress

Library of Congress staff member and Society enthusiast Brian Taves writes about the recent presentation of Wodehouse on film.

P G Wodehouse has been part of film and television history in a number of different ways. This tribute examined each facet of Wodehouse's contributions to the moving image.

Most obviously, the more than seventy novels and countless short stories he wrote have been adapted into many movies and television productions. As well, Wodehouse spent several sojourns in Hollywood writing directly for motion pictures, which in turn led to a number of satirical stories of film-making, that have also been filmed. He was also a prolific adapter and originator of plays and lyrics, particularly for the Princess Theater, in collaboration with such luminaries as Jerome Kern and Guy Bolton, and much of this stage work has appeared on the screen.



A still from *A Gentleman of Leisure*

In this tribute, Wodehouse's work in the theatre was saluted by two songs from *Sitting Pretty* (1924), *Bongo on the Congo* and *You Alone Would Do*, and a 1960 Ford Startime TV production of *Dear Arthur*, one of the many European

farces he reworked for the English-speaking stage. We began with perhaps the earliest film from Wodehouse: *A Gentleman of Leisure* (1915), a reasonably faithful adaptation from the play he co-authored (which had starred Douglas Fairbanks on the stage) and his own novel.

Wodehouse was originally brought to Hollywood by MGM to write dialogue with the coming of sound, collaborating on *Those Three French Girls* (1930) and *The Man in Possession* (1931), both loaned by Turner Entertainment. Wodehouse summed up his experience this way:

They had the greatest difficulty in finding anything for me to do. . . . They brought completed scenarios of other people's stories to me and asked

me to do some dialogue. Fifteen or sixteen people had tinkered with those stories. . . . That about sums up what I was called upon to do for my \$104,000.

Such honesty won Wodehouse little favour, and studio financial backers were not pleased at such open acknowledgement of extravagance. Not until several years later did Wodehouse return to MGM, before moving to RKO to co-write the script of *A Damsel in Distress* (1937), adapted from his own novel.


The Hollywood scene Wodehouse had known was parodied in a number of novels and short stories, including *The Old Reliable*, a 1951 novel presented on television in 1988. Hollywood's pathetic attempt to turn Wodehouse's Jeeves stories into a film series in the 1930s probably caused the author to look askance at such efforts. The Library season showed some of Granada Television's more successful 1990-1993 *Jeeves and Wooster* series, including some of the five segments never broadcast in the United States.

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE
An Organ of the Photoplay Appreciation Movement

VOLUME II SERIES OF 1937 NUMBER 7

A GUIDE TO THE CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF
THE PHOTOPLAY BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
P. G. WODEHOUSE

DAMSEL IN DISTRESS



Suggestions for Reading and Discussion in
Mature Groups

Prepared by
B. J. R. STOLPER
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Columbia University, New York

General Editor
MAX J. HERZBERG

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WILLIAM, LEWIN Managing Editor

An unusual item: an educational tool for the Wodehouse film *A Damsel in Distress*

Wodehouse and Moby Dick

On Sunday 28th November listeners to *Open Book* on Radio 4 heard the result of a quiz set some weeks earlier. The task had been to rewrite the end of *Moby Dick* in the style of P G Wodehouse. Jonathan Cecil, the voice of Blandings and Jeeves on the Chivers audio books, judged the competition. Colin Luck of Hounslow's winning entry was as follows:

I was wakened next morning by a tremendous crashing without, and went up on deck in search of the reviving eggs and b. The hake was on the wing, the herring on the thorn, but I was far from grunted. For the perpetrator of the outrage now made himself known: Moby Dick, thrice winner of the Big Whales Medal of the Cape Cod Agricultural Show, reared up, covered in harpoon-like quills upon the fretful porpentine, and spouting like an aunt.

Old Barmy Ahab reeled and would have fallen had he not been entangled by a passing rope. If you know what 'excesses' are, those are what the w. w. proceeded to commit.

Looking now like an aunt short-changed by a costermonger, he smote the ship, just below where its third waistcoat-button would have been had it been wearing a waistcoat. We sank like a – what is it? Queegeg would know.

Congratulations to Colin. If any member has a Hounslow telephone book handy and cares to recruit him as a member, he can be assured of a warm welcome.

A New Collectors' Edition

Everyman have announced an exciting new edition of Wodehouse in hard covers. They plan to publish some eighty titles over a period of several years, in uniform style and pictorial dust-jackets.

Since the previous attempt to build a Collector's edition (the Herbert Jenkins *Autograph Edition* of 1956 to 1966) stumbled after 41 titles had been issued, Everyman have set themselves a challenging task. We wish them well and are pleased to enclose details of a discount offer to members which should help give them a flying start.

British Library Exhibition

The *Chapter and Verse* exhibition at the BL (March 10 to October 15) includes a page from a PGW manuscript and a draft 'head' from the Low cartoon.

Sex, Violence and Savages

The Chairman complements Murray Hedgcock's article on page 4 with his personal view of the Society meeting at the Savage Club on 15th February.

At 5pm a trio of Savages were trying to cheer up a fellow member. "Of course it will go all right. It always does. We're looking forward to it." The fellow member refuses to be consoled. He is Chairman of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) and, as always before a Society evening, he is wondering what will go wrong.

Nothing ever has. It probably never will – but he is convinced that one evening it will all go, like Lord Uffenham, pear-shaped. With the easy confidence of those on their fourth drink, his fellow Savages spurn such gloomy thoughts. They know that Society evenings end in a haze of deafening cheerfulness with Savages urging Wodehouseans to join the Savage Club and Wodehouseans arguing even more loudly that Savages join the Society.

They were right, of course. Lots of people turned up, the barman got busier and busier and we settled down to enjoy Oliver Wise's enthralling excursus on sexual aspects of the Wodehouse novels. Only a criminal lawyer could have picked up or even imagined such depravity. Though disguising it with much wit and humour, Oliver laid the soul of Wodehouse's women bare as with a scalpel. Was it imagination or did our female members really sigh wistfully when he described the Ickenham method of bending a proud female to one's will? A splendid talk, and Oliver thoroughly deserved the applause he received.

We are proud of our tradition that, when a member appears for the first time in the Savage, somebody puts a glass in his/her hand and introduces him/her to other members within a minute and a half. People met old friends; stalwarts like pere et fils Rush from Norfolk came along to support us and take newcomers under their wing, and everybody enjoyed themselves.

A member named John Baesch caused a problem. I knew him from somewhere. Then it dawned: the somewhere was Houston last October. This is an occupational hazard in the Wodehouse world. You are happily talking to someone in one continent, the conversation is broken off – and resumed four months later four thousand miles away.

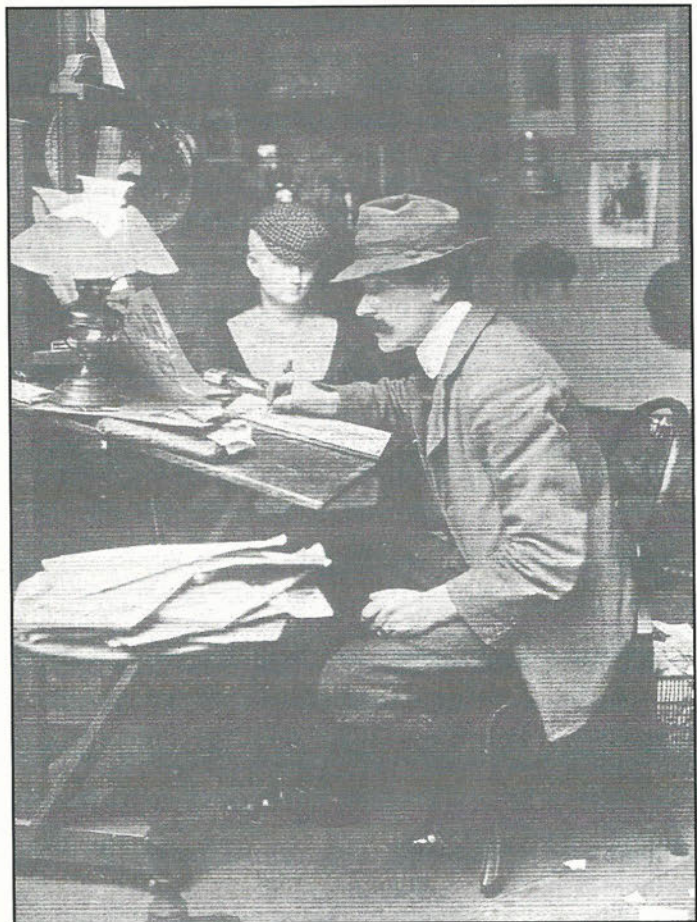
As Bertie Wooster once sagely observed: "It's a small world."

P G Wodehouse's Illustrators Are

as Dr Jan Piggott, Dulwich College Archivist, starts a series

There are many ludicrously inept or fatuously inadequate pictures of Bertie Wooster and Jeeves; Jeeves should perhaps resemble Robert Morley whom Wodehouse said he would like to see play the part. The most recent and one of the worst images of Jeeves is on the cover of the BBC Radio Collection, *The Inimitable Jeeves*. Contempt for such insults, one is bound to say, is partly mixed with a certain satisfaction at the triumph of integrity for the two characters in eluding portraiture. It is a pure joy, however, to find in T M R Whitwell an ideal Wodehouse illustrator, who furnished magnificent illustrations for Wodehouse's early school stories; these were published in the first serialisation of the stories in the public school magazine *The Captain*, and some were reproduced again in book form by the publishers A and C Black.

Whitwell was the best of *The Captain's* team who illustrated stories of school life. His first illustrations for a story by Wodehouse in the magazine were for *The Babe and the Dragon* of February 1902 (volume VI); they show the uncomplicated rugby-playing hero MacArthur in his miserable encounters with the blue-stocking Florence Beesley, an embryo Honoria Glossop, who torments the boy with his ignorance of Robert Browning and *Sordello*, and who turns out to be engaged to his future housemaster. Whitwell brilliantly presents schoolboy characters, their states of mind and emotions, with the slightest elements of caricature or affectionate mockery, such



T M R WHITWELL



"I believe the stuff . . . was poisoned"
(From *An International Affair*)

as attitudes and postures that suggest the desire to appear adult. He also excels at boarding-house interiors: studies with deck- and wicker-chairs and mantel-pieces with photographs and ornaments. Boys break bounds by climbing out of windows and down drain-pipes; boys in tuck-shops guzzle or show horror at the suspicion of having been poisoned. One illustration shows a group of boys in a train compartment wearing boaters – one has *The Captain* in his hand. Masters appear as earnest and bearded, and their anger and dreariness contrast with the mirth or the affected languor of the boys. There are many sporting scenes in the pavilion, at the nets or at the crease, and scenes of boxing and rugby, and of the army camp at Aldershot. Touch-line scenes show kempt and unkempt boys in caps and boaters. Dormitory high spirits and schoolboy justice are shown where boys douse others from water jugs and cans. In the most ambitious illustration, for *Ruthless Reginald* in *The Captain* for

Remembered and Reviewed

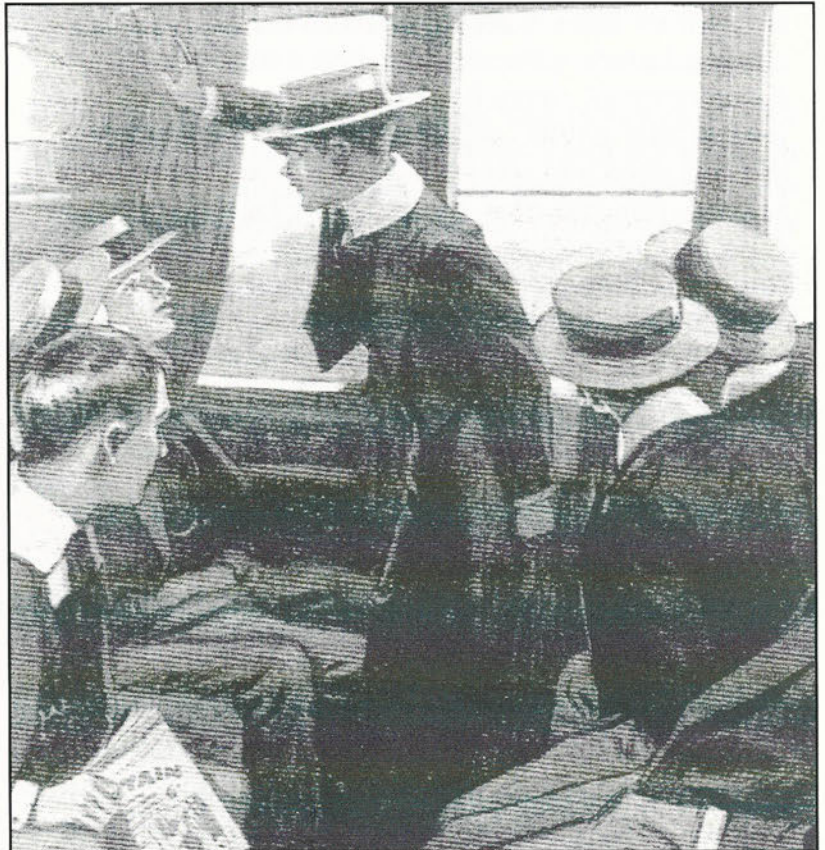
of articles by looking at the work of T M R Whitwell

April 1905 (see *Tales of Wrykyn*, Porpoise Books, 1997), the boy Rankin is shown in mid-air having been pushed over the partition wall into his fag-master Rigby's study, where the senior boy has been preparing his Greek translation.

The Captain ran for twenty-five years from 1899 to 1924, was edited by R S Warren Bell and its Art Editor was W E Hodgson. On the plum-coloured cover of the bound volumes a splendid sporting School Captain stands in a swagger posture with a red scarf round his neck, to the applause of the boys on the touch-line. *The Captain* is a truly impressive publication with predictable articles about stamps, natural history, science, cycling and photography, but also a few on literature, art and history. There is, as might be expected, a strong hearty and imperial element in *The Captain* – with photographs of school captains of rugby football and articles about heroic exploits in the Empire with titles such as *My First Tiger*. It is fascinating to see how successful a formula it was, as the balance and type of school stories and the other features hardly changed throughout its whole run.

A curious fact was noted by Wodehouse in a letter to Lord Citrine of January 16, 1972, in which he says that a friend had spotted a bound set of *The Captain* in Tolstoy's house. (One can't help the suspicion that they may have been added, ingenuously or wittily, after the writer's death by the Moscow authorities).

I have consulted the obvious reference books in the National Art Library and elsewhere, but have been unable to discover any biographical facts about Whitwell. He is shown with Wodehouse in a drawing of the New Year Party of the magazine staff for 1911, in volume XXIV, pp366-7. His photograph appears twice: in the frontispiece to volume IX (1903), which also has pictures of Wodehouse and of E F Skinner, another illustrator of Wodehouse's school stories, and again in a fascinating photograph of him in his studio in volume XVII, August 1907, with a plaster cast of a bust of the young Caesar which he has crowned with a tweed cap. The text that accompanied this photograph, for the hundredth issue of the magazine, says he is the most prolific of



“Look here,” he said, “are you going to get out or have I got to make you?”

(From Harrison's Slight Error)

The Captain illustrators, and has illustrated to date eight of the magazine's serials and ninety-four short stories, all dealing with school life. All in all, Whitwell made illustrations for seven serials and eighteen of Wodehouse's short stories between February 1902 and February 1911.

Whitwell illustrated a story by Warren Bell in the very first volume of *The Captain* in 1899, and the magazine would surely have been enthusiastically studied by the young Wodehouse when he was still at Dulwich. Whitwell contributed to each volume from the first up to and including Volume XLIV of 1920, and neither strayed from his speciality of school stories nor appeared seriously to weary of it. In the very latter years, however, there are some signs that his talents had become slightly stale, and that his position was being eclipsed (for the more ambitious school serials) by the brilliant and perhaps more facile H M Brock.

A Happy Release

Mark Child reveals the story behind his first Wodehouse experience, with Eve Halliday in the back of an Austin Ruby car in 1954, when he was just 11.

Having no car of our own, father occasionally borrowed 'the firm's runabout' and took us out for the day. The vehicle was an aged Austin Ruby saloon. In father's hands it was more of a 'crawleround'; virtually dead on its wheels.

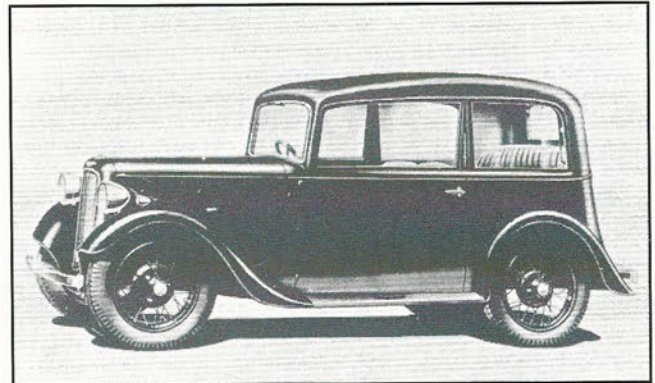
He progressed the vehicle at 20mph down the middle of the road, thus giving the wildlife a sporting chance and enabling cyclists to pass on the inside. We stuck to a maze of B-roads and country lanes on a route which had been plotted with military precision the night before. Approaching AA men had plenty of opportunity to identify the metal badge on Ruby's bumper and make their salute. Father always thought this to be some sort of justice for having to make the running in the matter of salutes throughout the late war, owing to his lowly rank.

We were lost for much of the time. Father attributed this to road signs which had not been re-aligned since they were altered during the war to confuse the enemy. Also, we stopped every 25 miles or so for various calls of nature, to take in "healthy farmyard smells" or "to let the engine cool down". It usually took about six hours to travel the 70 miles to the seaside. We would spend two or three hours there and then come home. It was not a pleasant experience.

It was during one of the stops en route that I bought a copy of *Leave It To Psmith* (Penguin, 2/-) at the White Horse Bookshop in Marlborough. Father reproached me. Why on earth did I want to read when I could further my education by looking out of the window at endless high hedges? If bored, why didn't I try to anticipate what might come straight at us round the next blind corner and, if it was an AA man, would he see us in time to salute? Most of them only just saw us in time to get out of the way. Or there was the really educational game (father being in the motor trade) of correctly identifying on-coming cars from their radiator grilles. I preferred being snapped at for reading in the back of the car to being harangued for an incorrect identification.

Occasionally returning from the world of Blandings, I was aware of having chuckled aloud, and of father's eye glaring malevolently at me from the driver's mirror. Books did not represent reality; being sound in the matter of car radiator grilles did.

P G Wodehouse was an influencing force of gathering magnitude, and father did not know how to cope with it.



A 1930s Austin Ruby
(provided courtesy of David Thirlby and Brian Heath)

Imagine the hostility as we reached Bournemouth, when I announced that I was going off to find a bookshop. The sun was shining, the sky and the sea were blue. The knitted-wool swimming trunks had been packed (around the thermos flask, to give it extra insulation) and the three hours before we had to set out for home promised numerous opportunities for building sand castles. "Build sand castles today, and you may learn the principles of building real architecture!" I hated the seaside. I hated sand castles.

P G Wodehouse had given me a reason to abandon them all. In Bournemouth I bought *Blandings Castle*, *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* and *Summer Lightning*. It cost all but 2/- of my allocation for the entire summer holiday. Father hoped I wouldn't spend the home journey laughing in the back seat. Laughter was off-putting for the driver, and too much of it was the sign of an empty mind. We drove home in silence; I read, he grasped the steering wheel, giving us a truly white knuckle ride. But oh, the joy I felt inside. At one time *Penguin* editions used to carry a quote about Wodehouse by Evelyn Waugh, part of which ran: "He will continue to release future generations from captivity . . .". I will always be grateful that he released me from the captivity of an Austin Ruby saloon into the world which, over forty years later, is as fresh and as funny every time I return to it.



PROFILE OF A PATRON

Auberon Waugh was born into a literary family and published five novels before deciding that his time was best spent in journalism. He has been writing the *Daily Telegraph's* *Way of the World* column three times a week for the past nine years and more recently started a fourth weekly column in the *Sunday Telegraph*. His passion for Wodehouse, which was largely inherited, started at the age of eleven and has never left him. Waugh was very active in the campaign to have Wodehouse knighted, which finally achieved success under Harold Wilson in 1975, just before Wodehouse's death. He may be best known for his *Private Eye* *Diary* which ran for 16 years in the 1970s and 1980s and was entirely inspired by the Master. He contributed *Father of the English Idea* to the book *Homage to P G Wodehouse*, a collection of essays which was edited by Thelma Cazalet-Keir and published by Barrie & Jenkins in 1973.

An Evening with P G Wodehouse

Eddie Grabham reports on his visit to Maryland College, Woburn, on November 6th, 1999, where Geoff Hales was running a weekend course on the subject of Wodehouse and his work.

That fine actor Geoff Hales was in the process of providing a fruity weekend at Maryland College when he thought that a few carefully chosen guests might enjoy a spot of Anatole's juiciest before hearing the great man tell his story in his own words.

I was not surprised to find a few members of the Wodehouse Society present to make sure that no one was tempted to nick the odd cow-creamer. In fact, I had the pleasure of dining with recent recruits Prof William Prescott and his charming wife Philippa who will no doubt make themselves known at the Savage Club in the not too distant f.

But what of Plum himself, I hear you ask?

Of course, he turned up in disguise. In the vicinity of Woburn, PG would have been easily recognised and one can imagine the embarrassment if asked why he was not dining with the Duke. Being a shy, retiring sort of cove, he dismissed his great success with a mere "My dear chap" and told us how much Ethel enjoyed throwing parties in Hollywood.

To cap his highly amusing reminiscences, Mr Wodehouse read from one of his own works, reminding

us how Bertie recounted the story of Gussie Fink-Nottle dishing out the prizes at Market Snodsbury Grammar School. It was all good stuff – even Jeeves would have approved.

It was a jolly evening, but I suspected from the start that this P G Wodehouse was an impostor. When I asked him to say a few words for the readers of *Wooster Sauce*, he said: "You like my little effort, do yer? Glory, Glory, Halleluia!" Dashed clever, of course and totally in character – but I'm convinced it was Geoff Hales all the time.

*Member Malcolm Lowrie
writes from Romania*

Further to the letter from Tom Kreitzberg in *Wooster Sauce* 12 (December 1999), I would like to say that rereading P G Wodehouse assists me to unwind after my work with street-children and youngsters with HIV here in Romania, working with Lovelight, a small Christian charity

Petition for Wodehouse Playhouse Video

The photo of the Gorilla on the front page of this issue of *Wooster Sauce* is of patron Jonathan Cecil, who was aping around in the BBC adaptation of *The Nodder*, part of the superb *Wodehouse Playhouse* series of short stories broadcast in the 1970s.

The International Wodehouse Association, a co-ordinating committee of representatives from six national Societies (including the UK) recently submitted a petition to BBC executives in both the UK and the USA requesting that videos of *Wodehouse Playhouse*, starring John Alderton and Pauline Collins, should be commercially released.

The petition had been circulated for signature at three meetings: The Houston Convention of The Wodehouse Society, the 10th Anniversary dinner of The Drones Club and the November meeting at the Savage Club of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK), and had generated almost 200 signatures. An interim reply has been received from the Deputy Chief Executive, BBC Worldwide, in the following terms:

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 17th November including your impressive petition.

The release on video of items from the BBC archive can be a difficult matter. In many cases the BBC did not secure video rights and these rights have to be obtained from all of the talent involved in a production with appropriate rights payments being made or agreed. Accordingly, there is a quite high threshold sales level below which it is normally not economically viable for us to issue a video on commercial release.

I will have Emma Boughton look at this matter again, and see whether there is any prospect of us issuing the videos, which your association values so highly. Emma or I will respond to you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Peter Teague

Managing Director UK Region & Deputy Chief Executive BBC Worldwide

Uncle Dynamite:

The latest offering from Chivers

Those who regularly listen to Jonathan Cecil's rendering of unabridged Wodehouse stories know what to expect from his narrations: a clear exposition of the text full of expression and meaning. What adds to the interest is to think how he will handle the variety of voices with which he is faced.

Jonathan gives particularly effective treatment to the gruff, irascible tones of irritable characters such as the overpowering dishpot, Sir Aylmer ('Mugsy') Bostock and the urgent, snappish Major 'Bimbo' Brabazon-Plank. If one exchange did not work quite so well, it was that between Pongo Twistleton and the young American girl, Sally Painter.

But Jonathan's voice barely wavered as he sailed through the word 'trinitritoluol', as notoriously severe a test for sobriety as 'She stood at the door of Burgess's fish-sauce shop in Ethelbertha Street, Oswaldtwistle, welcoming him in', and when he came to another tongue-twister, the Fenimore Cooper character Chingachgook, he merely glared at it before giving it the treatment. The conclusion from listening to *Uncle Dynamite* is that this Uncle Fred novel is in safe hands.

Jeeves and Wooster:

4th series video now released

The elusive fourth series of the Granada *Jeeves and Wooster* television series has now been released on videotape. It can be obtained from HMVdirect by telephone (0990 334578) or fax (0207 4671103), at £ 14.99 plus £ 1.50 postage and packing (UK).

Penguin New Editions

Penguin have provided details of the next group of new editions with the David Hitch covers, as follows:

March:

Hot Water; Laughing Gas; The World of Psmith (omnibus)

May:

Big Money; The Girl in Blue; Summer Moonshine; The Adventures of Sally

June:

A Damsel in Distress; The Luck of the Bodkins; Pearls, Girls and Monty Bodkin; Money for Nothing; Piccadilly Jim; The Small Bachelor

The Origins of an Audio-Book

At the Savage Club meeting on November 16th, member Peter Barker read two extracts from Something Fresh, a book which he had recorded unabridged many years ago. In this article he explains the circumstances in which the recording came first to be made, and then to be made commercially available.

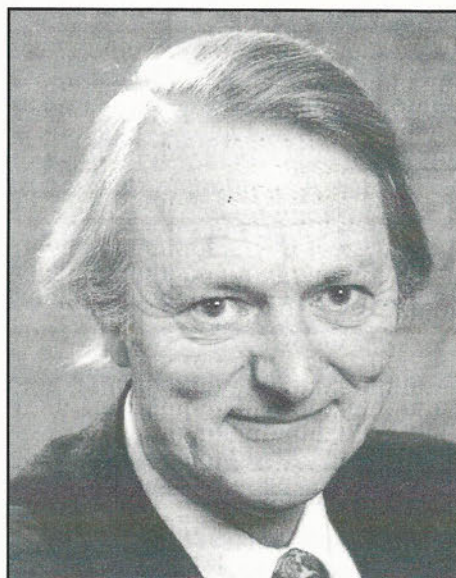
When I first joined the BBC as a radio announcer in the early '60s I was engaged to appear on all three programmes – Home, Light and Third. I was a disembodied voice – the voice of the BBC – and my name was never mentioned. I used to go home after work and ask my wife for comments, hoping for advice and maybe encouragement about my performance. But sadly, she was unable to give me any such assistance, as she said she found it difficult to tell which was me. In those days we really did all sound very much the same.

Before I had been there very long, I discovered that all the other announcers were going down the road from Broadcasting House once or twice a week to the Royal National Institute for the Blind in Great Portland Street to record talking books on tape. Announcers' prestige in those days was pretty high, but our salary was modest and needed augmenting to some degree. So, in due course, I began to record all manner of books for the blind. And since leaving the BBC I have continued to do so on a regular basis.

The RNIB library is immense, and anyone who is registered blind or partially sighted can apply for a special machine on which to play any of the thousands of books in the catalogue. The special cassettes each have eight tracks and so can accommodate many more words than the ordinary commercial cassette.

I myself have recorded well over a hundred books in their entirety from cover to cover – no abridged books here. A sighted person can obtain absolutely any book – unedited – from a public library, and so why should not a blind person be able to do the same?

At the BBC I was, to a great extent, suppressing character to assume the impartial voice of the Corporation. And I soon came to realise that the RNIB job was, for an erstwhile actor, a marvellous opportunity. Not only was one able to read books in a great range of styles and periods, but one was invited to play all the parts oneself – an actor's dream. I read everything, from historical novels to modern thrillers, from classical works to autobiographies. One of the longest was the complete diaries of Noel Coward, which kept me in the studio



for a total of 36 hours and 45 minutes.

Towards the end of his life, Wodehouse regularly produced a novel a year, and because of my obvious enjoyment of them, for a number of years Wodehouse books were all kept

for me. One I remember particularly (*A Pelican at Blandings*) appeared in the year of his 88th birthday 1969 – and had a 'recent photograph of the author' by Tom Blau on the back of the dust jacket. It was a picture of Wodehouse beside his writing-desk, in stout walking shoes, a check shirt and crumpled tie, bending to touch his toes in such an effortless manner as to rouse envy in a much younger man.

Another was *Something Fresh*, the first novel of the Blandings Castle Saga, originally published in 1915, and brought out in a revised edition 53 years later. In it Plum establishes one of the memorable features of this stately home – the constant incursion of impostors. Blandings, he explains, has impostors like other houses have mice. And at the heart of this tale there are two engaging characters who are decidedly not what they appear to be.

After a while, the RNIB decided to widen the field and released some of their recordings to commercial producers. And that is how, many years after I had recorded it, my reading of *Something Fresh* became available in the shops. It is also how, prompted by a friend, I was able to confirm that, in the recording, I had been inadvertently guilty of a frightful, uncorrected Spoonerism. In a list of ingredients for a recipe, I heard myself solemnly intoning: "two table-fool-pulls of butter".

The New Initiative from the International Wodehouse Association

After the successful example of cooperation between Societies which resulted in the publication of the new Anthology, *What Ho! The Best of P G Wodehouse*, the International Wodehouse Association is turning its attention to an update of parts of the standard 'McIlvaine' bibliography which was published in 1990. It plans, with Eileen McIlvaine's support, to have available a simple printed *Addendum* in time for the Philadelphia convention of *The Wodehouse Society* in October 2001.

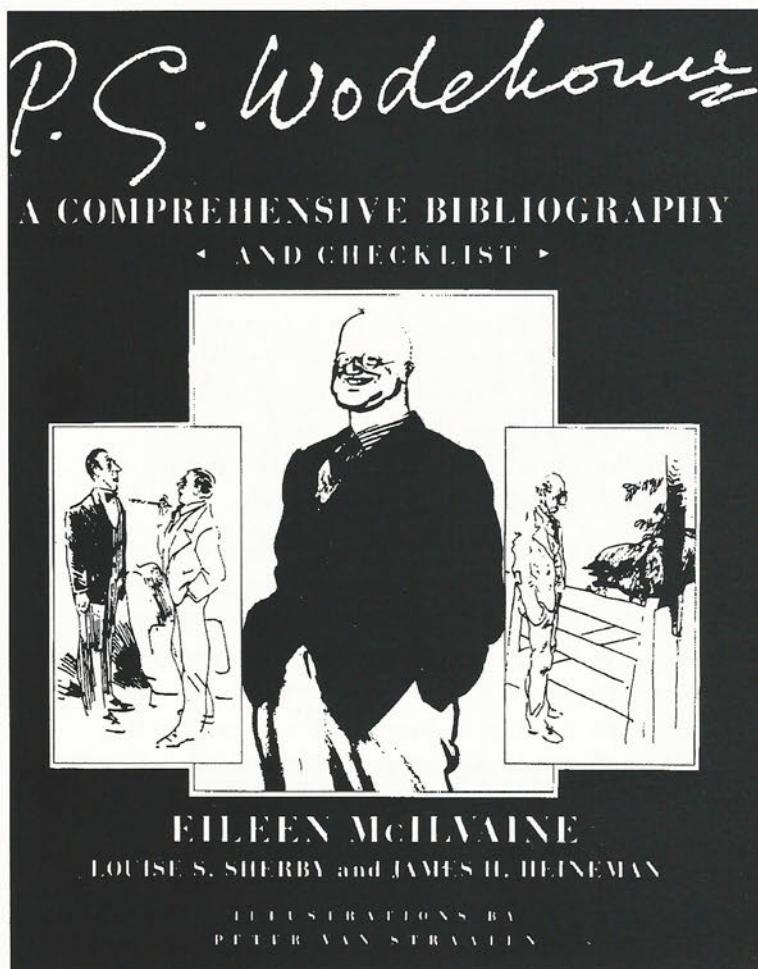
McIlvaine tabulated an enormous amount of information concerning Wodehouse books, plays, magazine articles, etc about which the compilers were aware. Such was PGW's capacity for work, however, and such is his ongoing popularity, that much important material has been omitted.

Many new books (including a large number in translation) which deserve to be included have been published, many older items not known to the compilers have been found, again in many languages, and in at least two cases (audiotapes and videotapes) material not included in *McIlvaine* has gained sufficient of a commercial hold as to warrant compilation.

Members are thus asked to notify the Editor if they have any material in the following categories which does not appear in *McIlvaine*:

Section Scope

- A The original editions of books written by Wodehouse. The mere printing of a collection of stories, most of which have appeared in books, would not be considered for entry in this section.
- B Omnibus volumes of novels or short stories by Wodehouse.
- C Plays by Wodehouse, or collaborations between PGW and another.
- D Periodicals, in relation to material written BY Wodehouse, but not ABOUT him. (In ALL languages and countries.)
- E Contributions to books by other authors by way of Introduction or Preface BUT NOT by contribution of a story to an anthology.



- F Translations of books by Wodehouse OR of full-length books ABOUT Wodehouse.
- H Full-length works about Wodehouse
- J The Dramatic Wodehouse. Information about plays, musicals and films to which he contributed, including locations, dates and the number of performances.
- New Commercially produced records and audiotapes
- New Commercially produced videotapes

The timing of the project is such that information needs to be collected not later than December 31, 2000.

If you are in the fortunate position of being able to contribute information relating to any of those sections, please send it to the Editor as soon you can summarise it. *You do not need to leave it until you have reviewed your whole collection!*

Did You Know Printers' Errors – 13

The first three sentences of the last chapter of *Something Fresh* should read:

The Earl of Emsworth sat by the sick-bed, and regarded the Hon Freddie almost tenderly.

“I fear, Freddie, my dear boy, this has been a great shock to you.”

“Oh, what? Yes, rather. Deuce of a shock, governor.”

Many hardback reprints and probably all the paperbacks have omitted the second of these sentences, which makes the third rather difficult to understand. We hope all future printings will correct this error.

With this item, which was brought to our attention by Michael Pointon, the Printers' Errors feature comes to a close. It will be succeeded in future issues of Wooster Sauce by a more general bibliographical survey to be written by Nick Townend, entitled The Bibliographic Corner, his introduction to which appears below.

Nick Townend introduces a new feature: The Bibliographic Corner

It is well known that some of Wodehouse's earliest school stories were first published in *The Captain* magazine. Joseph Connolly once commented that *The Captain* “had a quite preposterous number of Corners for a merely rectangular journal. There were *The Camera Corner*, *The Cycling Corner*, *The Athletics Corner*, *The Naturalists Corner*, *The Stamp Corner*, and *The Library Corner*, among not a few other angles.” (*P G Wodehouse: An Illustrated Biography*, p26.) As far as I am aware, *The Bibliographic Corner* will be the first defined corner of *Wooster Sauce*, and it is to be hoped that, in the opinion of readers, it will not be one corner too many.

Its purpose is to discuss sundry bibliographical details of Wodehouse's work. To some extent it is a natural development from the retiring *Printers' Errors* column, but it will be more concerned with the publishing history of Wodehouse's work, rather than with details of the texts themselves. What the column aims to do is to complement the admirable *P G Wodehouse: A Comprehensive Bibliography and Checklist* which was produced by Eileen McIlvaine, with assistance from Louise Sherby and James Heineman, and published by Heineman in New York in 1990. This is the most recent and by far the most comprehensive bibliography of Wodehouse, and is the standard reference work.

Inevitably there are certain points which are not covered by *McIlvaine* – variant editions or unrecorded magazine appearances, or where the details in *McIlvaine* are incorrect for one reason or another. (See the page opposite for details of plans to produce an addendum in respect of certain

sections.) This column will discuss details of such instances and will usually give the reference of the relevant title in *McIlvaine* in brackets, in order that readers may obtain more information if they wish to do so. However, ownership of *McIlvaine* is not assumed and is not essential for an appreciation of the discussions. Throughout *The Bibliographic Corner*, all editions of books and all magazine appearances referred to will be English, unless indicated otherwise.

As Peter Schwed wrote more than a decade ago “In recent years there have been several scholarly volumes devoted to the writings of P G Wodehouse and these naturally include in one way or another a complete list of his books. I tip my hat in admiration in the direction of anyone who has actually succeeded in scoring a perfect mark in that undertaking because I, admittedly no professional bibliographer, have tried to do it more than once over the past quarter of a century or so when I have been his American editor. It's a little like trying to square the circle.” (Frances Donaldson, *P G Wodehouse – A Biography*, p350.)

The aim of the column will be to add a few modest stones to the already impressive, existing bibliographic cairn, not to attempt to construct a new one. The examples cited will not be comprehensive, but will merely be some of the more interesting ones of which I have become aware from personal observation, book and auction catalogues, recent publications and discussions with various individuals. My sincere thanks go to all those who have helped in any way.

Recent Press Comment

Comment on Ask Jeeves

Many papers have reported on this topic, but in view of the statement on page 19, it is inappropriate to reproduce their views.

Reviews of What Ho!

Appeared in the *Standard* (January 24), *Sunday Express* (January 30), and *New Statesman* (February 18). On January 18, the *Independent* published a condensed version of Stephen Fry's *Introduction*.

International Press and the War

The MI5 'disclosures' emerged in the Maharashtra Times (Bombay) on September 25, with a rebuttal by member Harshawardhan Nimkhedkar on October 2; the *Australian Daily Telegraph* on November 25, with a rebuttal by member Murray Hedgcock on December 18; and the *Boston Globe* on December 9. Member David Landman's attempted rebuttal was overlooked in favour of a rather less informed defence. Thanks to all vigilant members!

Sunday Business, October 24 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Jonathan Fenby's article about *What the Chinese Really Think about the British* included the comment:

"... you find bad behaviour by the British being referred to as unsuitable for a gentleman, as if Bertie Wooster was as enduring a symbol of Britain as Confucius is of China."

Times, October 29 and *Independent*, November 3

In reviews of Joseph McAleer's book *Passion's Fortune* about the history of Mills and Boon, both papers referred to their publication of a PGW novel.

Times, November 4

An obituary of John Hadfield recalled the thrill he experienced when receiving a letter of congratulation from PGW on publication of his book *Love on a Branch Line*.

Sunday Times, November 14

Godfrey Smith wrote about his recent acquisition of a copy of *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*. It seems a man died and asked all his friends to a farewell party in his flat, to drink fizz and help themselves to a book from his richly-stocked library. "What a stylish way to go," added Godfrey.

Times, November 20

A letter to the *Modern Manners* column from Thomas Holdsworth referred to men's trousers with creases running down the sides. The writer "seemed

to recall a friend of Bertie Wooster having a wife who indulged in this abomination." In his response, the column editor, John Morgan, failed to identify the friend as Alistair Bingham-Reeves (in *Jeeves and the Hard-Boiled Egg*), nor did he point out that the guilty party was not his wife but his valet.

Daily Telegraph, November 23 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Peterborough reported on the incidence of bread-throwing at the banquet of The Wodehouse Society at the recent Houston convention.

Daily Telegraph, November 27 (from James Hogg)

Paul Hayward commented in the sports pages:

"The French have invented the only known cure for dandruff. It is called the guillotine", P G Wodehouse once wrote. But that was before L'Oreal signed Ginola up to sell shampoo.

Daily Telegraph, November 29 and *The Scotsman*, November 30 (from Joe Harkins)

Both ran stories about the Chairman's discovery of the source of the Empress, coverage in *The Scotsman* being extensive.

Wall Street Journal, December 8 (from Peter Cannon)

Gave Bertie Wooster's possible reaction to the proposal to ban men-only clubs in the UK.

Daily Mail, December 9

In commenting on the same proposed legislation, Keith Waterhouse said that as an issue, "... it doesn't amount to a row of beans – or, come to that, a row of eggs or crumpets either."

Financial Times, December 24

Reprinted PGW's article *Christmas in New York*, which was featured in December's *Wooster Sauce*.

The Australian, January 27 (from Murray Hedgcock)

In an article about crosswords, Jonathan Este recalled that a former provost of Eton who solved the daily puzzle while boiling an egg had inspired PGW to write:

To a man who has been beating his head against the wall for 20 minutes over the simplest anagram, it is gall and wormwood to read a statement like the one about the provost of Eton and the eggs".

Standard, February 18 and *Daily Telegraph* (19th)

Reported on the sale at Christie's of Mike Carter's collection of PGW books, which realised £ 67,000. (*Note:* The Editor has details of prices realised.)

Society Announcements

Subscription for 2000-2001

The Committee has agreed that the subscription for the year to May 31st, 2001 should remain unchanged at £ 15. Members who do not pay by standing order should receive a letter requesting renewal by the due date with this issue. Any such member who does not receive one should please contact the Membership Secretary without delay.

The Millennium Tour

Although the Tour has been fully subscribed, there may be opportunities for members to join in the London-based events as set out on the enclosed Booking Form. Priority will be given to those members who have previously expressed a written interest in attending London-based events, but please apply as soon as possible.

Cricket Tea at Dulwich

The annual cricket match against Dulwich College staff will take place on June 16th, starting at 4pm. During the interval between innings, members and guests will be able to enjoy an authentic cricket tea in the Pavilion, at the cost of £ 4 (children £ 3), if they send in the enclosed Booking Form by May 31st.

The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will also be held during the tea interval, in the Pavilion at Dulwich College at 5.30pm (approx). The Committee is not aware of any business other than routine matters which will need to be raised.

ASK JEEVES

A P Watt issued the following statement in February:

Ask Jeeves Inc and the Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate have reached the outline of an agreement whereby Ask Jeeves Inc will continue to use the name Jeeves in connection with its business activities. There is no legal action threatened or pending. Details of the agreement are confidential.

PGW and the Queen Mother

As *Wooster Sauce* was about to go to press, the *Express Diary* published an item based on the researches of genealogist Michael Rhodes which showed that PGW and the Queen Mother are distant cousins. He has traced both their ancestries back to the 1st and last Lord Vere of Tilbury, who died in 1635. Further details, including the family tree, will be included in future Society publications.

POETS' CORNER

A Pastoral

The weather (in the past
Emphatically bitter),
Seems to have changed at last.
The birds begin to twitter.

The rivers, decked with sedge,
In lavish streams are flowing.
On every side the veg-
Etables, too, are growing

The young man's fancy turns
In almost all directions;
Promiscuously burns
The lamp of his affections.

Approaches now the close
Of Rugby and of 'Socker';
The football jersey goes
Back to its native locker.

To make rough meadows flat
The cricketer is toiling;
He scans his favourite bat,
In case the thing wants oiling.

The bard begins to tear
His hyacinthine tresses,
Or polishes with care
Last year's returned MS's.

The farmer once again –
I learn from one who knows it –
Takes quantities of grain,
And walks about and sows it.

Dear friends, who hear my song,
Of brain decay acquit me.
That explanation's wrong
I'll make it clear. Permit me.

The reason why I sing,
The point at which I'm driving,
Is simply this; that Spring
Is rapidly arriving.

This poem first appeared in *Punch*, on
8th April, 1903.

The Smile That Wins

Favourite Nifties – 10

Men of Beach's build do not leap from
seats. He did, however, rise slowly like
a hippopotamus emerging from a river
bank . . .

From *A Pelican at Blandings*, 1969

FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

April 1 (Yes, really!) – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

The first of the Chairman's popular walks round Wodehouse's London to be held this year. Please contact Norman Murphy for more information and to reserve a place.

June 3 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Please contact Norman Murphy on for more information and to reserve a place

June 16 – Cricket Match

The Gold Bats v The Dusters at Dulwich College, with an authentic cricket tea (see page 19). Please contact as soon as possible if you are interested in playing for the Gold Bats. No recent experience necessary.

June 20 – Golf Day

A Society Golf Day will be held at Tandridge Golf Club near Oxted, Surrey. Please contact for details as soon as possible.

July 17 to 23 – Wodehouse Society Millennium Tour

To join in any of the London events, please see page 19 and send in the booking form at once.

August 26 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

See information under June 3rd.

September 2 – Meeting in Glasgow

There will be a meeting in the centre of Glasgow to which all are invited. Full details in June *Wooster Sauce*,

October 19 – Society Dinner at Gray's Inn

The Society's formal (black tie) dinner will be held at Gray's Inn. Full details and a booking form will appear in the June issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

October 28 – Meeting in Cambridge

There will be a meeting in Cambridge to which all are invited. Full details in June *Wooster Sauce*, or contact

November 14 – Informal meeting at the Savage Club

Advance notice of our regular evening meeting at the Club of which Plum was once a member.

Oct 12 to 14, 2001 – TWS Convention, Philadelphia

Advance notice of the dates of the next convention of the American-based Society, to be held at the Sheraton Society Hill Hotel.

EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

Mea Culpa. Apologies to all UK members who were surcharged by the Post Office as a result of the last mailing. The explanation is complex, involving new staff at my post office, my desire to use self-adhesive stamps and the reduction in the value of a 2nd class NVI stamp from 20p to 19p. It won't happen again!

Congratulations to Patron Martin Jarvis on the award of the OBE for services to drama. And you should have heard his masterly reading on the radio of the Highway Code! He was also featured on *This Is Your Life* on November 29.

During December, San Francisco International Airport had a display at the departure gates featuring Teas from all parts of the world, with relevant quotes from various writers, including PGW's gem from *The Code of the Woosters*.

The cup of tea on arrival at a country house is a thing which, as a rule, I particularly enjoy. I like the crackling logs, the shaded lights, the scent of buttered toast, the general atmosphere of leisured coziness.

Housebound member Joanna Wood entertained a few members at her Wimbledon home in December for Wodehousean talk and banter. If local members would care to visit her, please contact Helen Murphy who will approach Joanna on your behalf.

David Landman has sent a warning to anyone researching PGW's writings for the *New Yorker*. In the 1920s a writer named Philip G Wylie often signed his contributions 'PGW'.

In Waterstone's *Toast of the Century*, a selection of one great book from each year from 1900 to 1998, the choice for 1917 was PGW's *Uneasy Money*.

Members James Hogg and John Hayzelden both sent in the *Daily Telegraph* Quick Crossword for 15 November. The clue to 1 across was: 'Antoine ----- French painter (1684-1721)', and that to 8 across was: 'Ideal valet'. The top line of the completed grid thus read:

WATTEAU JEEVES

A sentiment with which I am sure we all agree.