



Sensational Discovery of Rewritten Novel

The Editor describes the reappearance of A Prince for Hire

It has recently been discovered that an early P G Wodehouse novel, dating from 1912, was wholly rewritten in 1931 and serialised in five parts in an American magazine.

The serial, entitled *A Prince for Hire*, appeared in the obscure *Illustrated Love Magazine*, one of a number of journals produced by Tower Magazines of New York for sale through the American network of F W Woolworth stores. Unfortunately, although the other contemporary Tower Magazines titles can be found in the Library of Congress and elsewhere, no American library admits to having more than the very first issue, from 1929, of the *Illustrated Love Magazine*. To date, only the last three of the five parts of the serial have been traced.

A Prince for Hire is based on the American book *The Prince and Betty*. I came across two instalments of the serial while inspecting the collection of a Californian Wodehousean friend and Society member, who had acquired them some ten years previously from a second-hand magazine store, but had never quite got round to reading them. Accordingly, he had not appreciated that they represented a radically different, rewritten version of one of Wodehouse's least successful but probably bibliographically most interesting books.

The Prince and Betty was originally written for the American pulp monthly magazine *Ainslee's* which included it in full in its May 1912 issue. The plot, no more than a routine romance, had probably been suggested to Wodehouse by the editor of the magazine. As Wodehouse was still very much the apprentice writer in those days, he would have welcomed the opportunity to earn the fee, and would have been more pleased when, with a few changes to location for part of the plot from America to Britain, he was able to sell it to the *Strand* magazine in London as a three instalment serial.

The question of book publication, though, required more thought. American publishers may have been

silly, as Bertie Wooster might say, but they were not *that* silly. The bright idea emerged to combine the plot of this story with the action-packed adventure of *Psmith Journalist*, a novel which had appeared in serial form in the British boys magazine *The Captain* in 1909-10 but as yet nowhere else. This solution was adopted, and the American book edition of *The Prince and Betty* emerged, much changed, later in 1912.

The British publishers, however, were in a quandary. *Psmith Journalist*, which featured Psmith, who was evidently a star character, was ready for publication in book form. For the American book he had been renamed 'Smith', and his personality toned down somewhat, but his conversational style remained distinctive, and anyone familiar with the Psmith books would have had no difficulty in recognising him. So to reproduce the American book in the UK would be unthinkable, and it was decided that *The Prince and Betty* would also appear in 1912 in its original form through the specialist publisher of romances Mills & Boon, while *Psmith Journalist* would be released later by A & C Black.

Though the British version of *The Prince and Betty* is scorned by a high proportion of PGW fans, it is clear that it still enjoyed moderate commercial success. Later editions were taken on by Newnes, and the title had at least nine editions up to 1935, either in hard covers or paperback format.

There are five other Wodehouse novels which exist in substantially different versions, and a short note about these appears on page 11. Perhaps the most important distinction between all these five and *A Prince for Hire* is that their different versions were written at about the same time. *A Prince for Hire* is the only occasion on which Wodehouse was known to completely rewrite a novel after a gap of almost twenty years, and one can only presume that he believed he had found a way to significantly improve on the original.

How Wodehouse Made Use Parisienne Anne-Marie Chanet analyses

Two of PGW's post-war novels, neither belonging to one of his major 'series', include French settings. Anne-Marie Chanet, a member from Paris, has identified the source of a number of characters and incidents in these books from the works of Georges Courteline (1858-1929). The lead she followed had been provided by PGW himself in the *Preface* to the 1974 edition of *French Leave*, but the extent of her discoveries is perhaps surprising.

Frozen Assets

The opening of this book is set in a Parisian police station, where Jerry Shoesmith had gone to report the loss of his wallet, money and keys. Whether his dialogue with the Sergeant was or was not in any way realistic, it certainly reflects the popular perception today (let alone that prevailing in the 1950s) of the typically adhesive qualities of French bureaucracy.

Anne-Marie reports:

Chapter 1 has a strongly Courtelinesque flavour. I haven't found a passage that exactly mirrors it, but there is a short theatrical work, *La Lettre Chargée* (1898), from which Wodehouse may have drawn some inspiration. The theme is similar: a hapless member of the public is trying to recover his property from a French post office clerk and fails because of nonsensical red tape. Courteline's mislaid goods, a *lettre chargée* (ie a registered letter containing money) also differs from the wallet and key-ring in *Frozen Assets*, but there remains a striking resemblance.

French Leave (referred to below as 'FRL')

It is in this book that the similarities are both more extensive and more specific, PGW having borrowed not only many of Courteline's characters' names, but several of their personalities, some of their exchanges of dialogue and even a number of plot situations.

Anne-Marie cites four sources from Courteline's work:

- 1 *Messieurs les Ronds-de-cuir* (1893, novel, referred to as 'MRC')
- 2 *Monsieur Badin, scène de la vie de bureau* (1897, one-act play. 'MB')
- 3 *Le gendarme est sans pitié* (1899, one-act play written with Edouard Norès. 'GSP')

- 4 *Le Commissaire est bon enfant* (1900, one-act play written with Jules Lévy. 'CBE')

The characters utilised from Courteline's work in FRL are as follows:

- i *M. de la Houmerie*, who in MRC is *chef du bureau des Legs*, a department head within the *Direction Générale des Dons et Legs*, a department which was itself borrowed for FRL.
- ii *M. Soupe*, who in both MRC and MB is a rather pitiful employee of 36 years' service, compared to the 41 years completed in FRL.
- iii *M. Letondu*, whose mental condition in MRC deteriorates from mere madness to homicidal mania and culminates with his stabbing *M. de la Houmerie* to death. In FRL Letondu contents himself with hitting de la H with a hatchet (ch 6(3)), the sloppiness and incompetence expected of the French civil service causing his hand to slip and little harm to be done.
- iv *Ovide*, who in both MRC and MB was a *garçon de bureau*, the lowest form of life in any office.
- v *M. Floche*, whose name in CBE was used by Wodehouse, though he had attributed to him (FRL ch 6) the character of the anonymous '*le monsieur*' (also from CBE), in particular his request for permission to carry a revolver to protect himself on the streets.
- vi *M. Boissonnade*, who in GSP was *procureur de la République*, endeavouring to spread a form of sweetness and light. PGW gave the name to *le commissaire*, who acted very much as did the anonymous holder of that office in CBE. PGW's specific use of the far from befitting expression "I am *bon enfant* . . ." (FRL ch 6(1)) implies a clear acknowledgement of the source of the character.
- vii *M. Punéz*, who in both CBE and FRL was a humble police employee, relentlessly bullied by the Commissaire. Anne-Marie explains that *Punéz* is pronounced exactly like *punaïse*, whose literal meaning is 'bug' or 'beetle', but whose figurative equivalent is 'unpleasant person, the dregs of society'.
- viii The name of the Marquis de Maufringneuse et Valerie-Moberanne, affectionately known as 'Old Nick', may emanate from the same stable as some of those used in *The Play's the Thing*,

Of His French Lessons

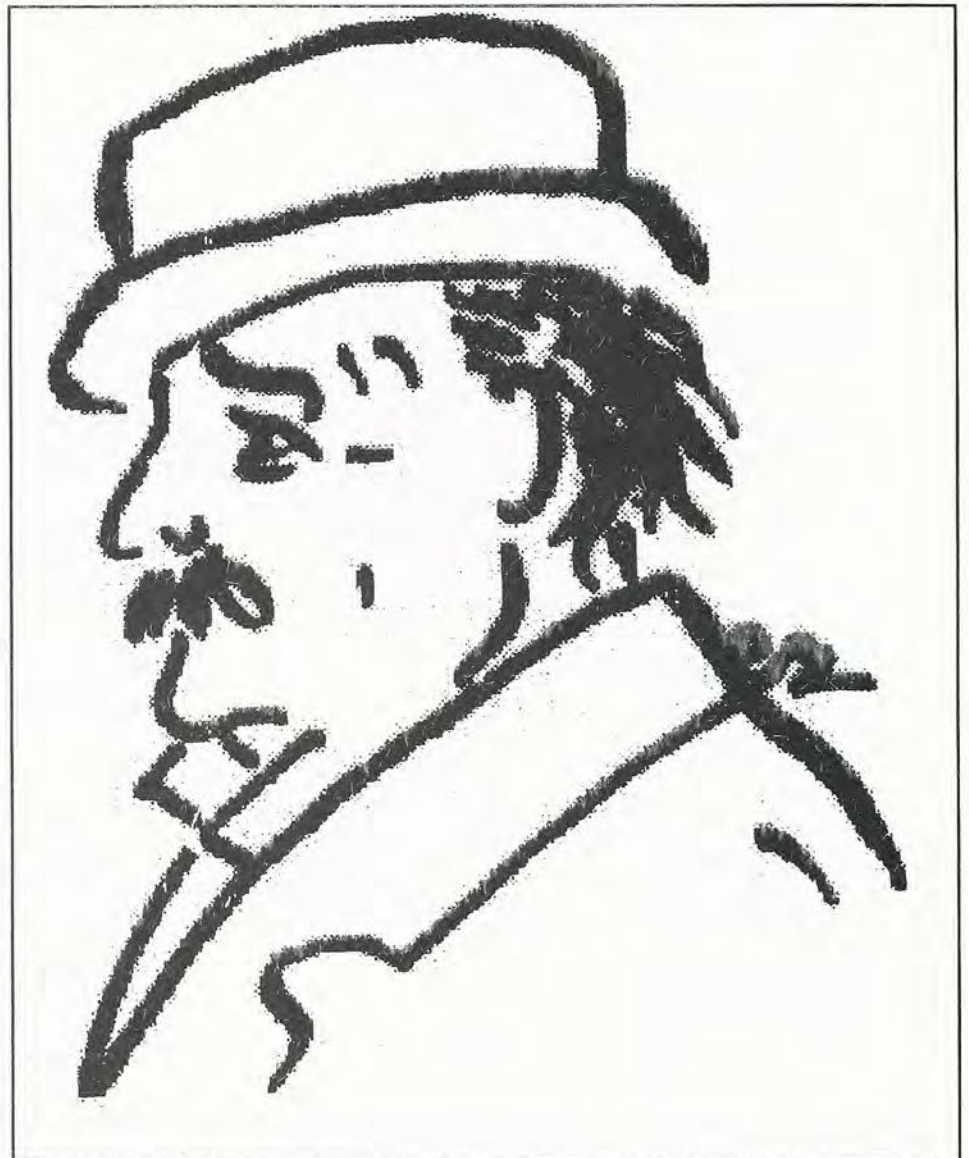
the influence of Georges Courteline

where Plum's objective had been to give an unpleasant character as many problems as possible in committing to memory a number of French names. Old Nick's personality in FRL, though, bears some resemblance to M. Badin from MB, and the expression 'badinage' offering a strong clue as to both their characters. Neither M. Badin nor Old Nick had visited the office in the two weeks previous to their appearances in their respective stories.

No description of the similarities would be complete without mention of the '*dossier Quibolle*'. It was a thin file when slipped into Old Nick's pocket (FRL ch2) as he left the Ministry for the last time, causing M. de la Houmerie to pursue him to Rville (ch6(2)). But though in MRC it was much larger (*'un dossier gigantesque'*), in both stories it related to (in PGW's words in FRL) 'the gift to the Ministry of a museum or something of that sort by the mayor of some rural community'.

In fact, in MRC we have the whole story. It referred to a legacy of binoculars and a pair of candlesticks to the museum at Vanne-en-Bresse, not of the museum itself to anybody, by a native citizen named Quibolle. The file relating to the legacy had been filched and almost destroyed by a mentally unbalanced employee named Van der Hogen, and as a result the museum curator wandered endlessly down dusty corridors searching for news of the legacy.

In real life, too, Wodehouse was to imitate Georges Courteline, for the latter was a dedicated animal-lover, and when living in a house in Montmartre used to shelter cats and dogs. He took this generous nature to extremes, perhaps, when keeping a pig in a rather large but messy ground-floor dining-room, a



A contemporary cartoon image of Georges Courteline

step which was beyond Plum and Ethel, Plum merely making a heroine out of the species.

A number of other situations in Courteline's work, including specific exchanges of dialogue, were reproduced in FRL, either precisely or with minor modifications. Wodehouse said in his introduction to the 1974 edition that he had studied Courteline's plays in the early 1930s. They evidently made a lasting impression, so much so that the suspicion lingers that he may even have started an adaptation of one of those plays, as this was his prime period for writing adaptations of plays; particularly those of European playwrights.

Which Earl of Emsworth

An Investigation is Needed

Neil Midkiff recently identified several significant differences between the American short story, *The Matrimonial Sweepstakes*, and its British equivalent, *The Good Angel*. Each was published in February 1910, in *Cosmopolitan* and *Strand* respectively, the British version being included in the short story collection *The Man Upstairs and Other Stories* (1910, Methuen & Co).

Keggs, an English butler, appears in both versions. The problem of how many different Keggs there were in Wodehouse's canon was considered first in *Plum Stones*, Book 4 (1994, Galahad Books), and then in the *Millennium Concordance*, Volume 7 (*Wodehouse with Old Friends*, 2000, Porpoise Books). But it was only in the American version of the story, *The Matrimonial Sweepstakes* (which was published five years before the first Blandings Castle story appeared), that Keggs revealed that he had once been butler to a Lord Emsworth.

Furthermore, he mentioned that Lord Emsworth's heir was the Hon Claude Havant, though he also referred to him as 'Mr John', and mentioned his fondness for whiskey. This raises the question of how this Lord Emsworth fits into the Threepwood family tree. As an 'Hon' title indicates a younger son, it might in theory be possible that he was the younger brother of Clarence, our ninth Earl, yet older than Galahad, and thus heir to Clarence until the birth of Clarence's first son, Lord Bosham.

The application of basic arithmetic and genealogy leads to the conclusion that for this to be the case, the eighth Earl would have had to be over 50 when Clarence was born, and while not impossible, when one bears in mind the sheer number of Clarence's younger sisters, it is unlikely.

This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that we never hear about the Hon Claude Havant again, which we surely would have done, even if he had suffered an early demise as a result of alcoholism or some other scandal. It would also add a complication to the question of how many Keggs there were, as although we don't know how long Beach actually acted as butler at the Castle (as opposed to his total length of service), we don't really see him as footman under Keggs. For one thing, he would have learned an awful lot of bad habits. (We do know, of course, from Ronnie Fish, that Beach has been butler for quite a long time.)

So can we look elsewhere? John Fletcher offers a solution to one aspect of the problem, that of the apparently inconsistent family name ('Havant', rather than 'Threepwood') by suggesting that the 'Havant' may have been an additional Christian name donated at the font by a godfather such as the Duke of Havant. The name of the Duke would shortly appear offstage in *A Gentleman of Leisure* when his wife had her diamonds stolen, and later in *Something Fresh*, Beach referred to 'the Havant affair' in the context of a breach-of-promise scandal as though all present would know of the family.

John then threw a spanner in the works by drawing attention to Clarence's comment in *Company for Gertrude* that his cousin Claude died at the age of 84. In arriving at his own preferred solution, he proposed that Claude might have been the younger brother of the seventh Earl and a full cousin of Clarence. He added that if both Claude and the seventh Earl died childless, Clarence's father could have inherited the title from an elderly nephew.

While this may be plausible, the mathematics make it unrealistic, especially when you consider that Clarence is himself in the mid-fifties, and his father had at least a dozen children (Constance, a senior if not the senior sister, was described in one story as a handsome woman in her forties). So if the cousin Claude is the Hon Claude Havant, John's theory needs refinement.

This can come from a wide reading of the term 'cousin' as used by Clarence to describe Claude. In popular parlance, cousins can be first (or 'full'), second, and so on, and can be removed through generations. All are likely to be referred to in everyday speech as 'cousin'. If we explore this route, we can speculate that Clarence's grandfather might himself have been a younger son of say the seventh Earl, his elder brother being father to two sons, of whom the younger was Claude. Claude is then a second cousin once removed to Clarence, or a 'cousin' as he would say in conversation. Of course, Claude and his elder brother would have had to remain childless. It is even plausible that one of them, or their father, inherited the title, in which case Clarence's grandfather would have been the younger son of the sixth Earl. So that relationship may work in principle. What about the problem of ages?

Did Keggs Work For?

suggests Neil Midkiff



THE NEXT MOMENT HE HAD AN UNINTERRUPTED VIEW OF HER SHOULDER AS SHE PRATTLED GAILY TO THE MAN ON HER OTHER SIDE

We know that Clarence was in his late fifties. If his cousin Claude had died at age 84 about twenty years earlier, when Clarence was a slip of a lad of say 39, then the oldest his father could realistically have been at that time, bearing in mind his later fecundity, is 69. His grandfather, had he still been alive might well have been 95 or more, and his great-uncle, Claude's father, 105 or 110. Which brings us back, quite reasonably, to Claude, as a younger son, aged 84.

So, if Claude is the 'cousin' referred to by Clarence in *Company for Gertrude*, the 'Lord Emsworth' whom Keggs introduced might have been either Claude's father or brother.

But even this is not the end of the story, since an heir to an Earldom who was an elder son would not be an 'Hon', but would take the secondary title, in this case Viscount Bosham, 'Hon' being reserved for younger sons. The probable solution to the problem can thus be narrowed down to the Lord Emsworth who had been Keggs's employer having been Claude's elder brother and a second cousin, once removed, of Clarence, the ninth Earl.

The Matrimonial Sweepstakes

A STORY OF THE INTEREST BELOW STAIRS IN A YOUNG LADY'S CHOICE OF A HUSBAND

By P. G. Wodehouse

Illustrated by Wallace Morgan



ANY man under thirty years of age who tells you he is not afraid of an English butler lies. Carpers may cavil at this statement. Possibly cavers may carp. I seem to hear them at it. All around me, I repeat, I seem to hear the angry murmur of carpers caviling and cavers carping. Nevertheless, it is true. He may not show his fear. Outwardly he may be brave, aggressive even, perhaps to the extent of calling the great man "Say!" But in his heart, when he meets that cold, blue, introspective eye, he quakes.

The effect that Keggs, the butler at the Keiths', had on Marvin Rossiter was to make him feel as if he had been caught laughing in a cathedral. He fought against

the feeling. He asked himself who Keggs was, anyway; and replied defiantly that Keggs was a menial, and an overfed menial. But all the while he knew that logic was useless.

When the Keiths invited him to their country house he had been delighted. They were among his oldest friends. He liked Mr. Keith. He liked Mrs. Keith. He loved Elsa Keith, and had from boyhood up. If ever there was a visit that had promised well, this visit was that visit.

But things had gone wrong. As he leaned out of his bedroom window, at the end of the first week, preparatory to dressing for dinner, he was more than half inclined to make some excuse and get right out of the place next day. The house was full of English servants. The footmen he could have endured, but the bland dignity

The first page of The Matrimonial Sweepstakes as it appeared in Cosmopolitan, in February 1910.

Wodehouse's Time in Hollywood

Brian Taves returns with the first of a short series of articles on PGW's involvement in lesser-known films

While employed as a screenwriter at MGM for a year, P G Wodehouse received only two screen credits, the first as a writer of dialogue for *Those Three French Girls*. Early in 1931 he was credited, along with Sarah Y Mason, as 'Author of Additional Dialogue' on a picture which Mason had adapted from a play by H M Harwood, *The Man in Possession*.

He evidently felt that such a credit was of little worth, lampooning it in several of his short stories of the Mulliners in Hollywood. In *George and Alfred* the narrator remarked:

The lot of a writer of additional dialogue in a Hollywood studio is not an exalted one – he ranks, I believe, just above a script girl and just below the man who works the wind machine

and later equated the position to that of a 'Yes-man'. In *The Nodder*, the title position, a man who nods after all the Yes-men have indicated verbal approval, is described as a position that:

lies socially somewhere between that of the man who works the wind-machine and that of a writer of additional dialogue.

Reportedly only three of Wodehouse's lines were used in the film. Certainly less than half a dozen lines resemble his style, by contrast with the way his dialogue had pervaded *Those Three French Girls* (see *Wooster Sauce*, December 2000).

The Man in Possession tells the story of how a stern family of two brothers, one of whom (played by Robert Montgomery) is recently out of jail for an apparently innocent financial error; the other (Reginald Owen) is seeking to marry a woman he believes is an heiress (Irene Purcell). Montgomery refuses the family directive that he depart England for the colonies, and gets a job as a bailiff, whose first task is to take possession of Purcell's property. He assists her by pretending to be a butler, only to be astonished to discover that he is waiting on his own family when Owen brings his parents to meet Purcell. Eventually Montgomery and Purcell discover their love when her poverty causes Owen to end the engagement.

The Man in Possession was to be hastily remade in 1937 under the title *Personal Property*, with Robert Taylor now in the lead opposite Jean Harlow in one of her last roles. Reginald Owen and Forrester

Harvey played the same roles in both versions, and while the 1931 version alternates between comedy and drama, the remake is in comedic vein throughout, with the spiciness of the original toned down considerably.

Ironically, while Wodehouse received no credit this time, *Personal Property* highlights more clearly three aspects of the original that may have either given Wodehouse ideas for future plots, or been his original contributions.

One was a play on the words 'butler' and the act of 'buttlings', for he had written an article entitled *Butlers and the Buttlings* for the British magazine *Piccadilly* in April 1929 which would be largely reproduced in the book of essays, *Louder and Funnier*.

More importantly, and probably an influence on Wodehouse, was that the brothers' family is in the business of manufacturing ladies' undergarments, and the treatment of Owen's selfish character is linked to this background – foreshadowing the fascist Roderick Spode's secret *Eulalie*, the brand name for his designs in women's apparel in the 1938 novel *The Code of the Woosters*.

In the original play, also, the family was in the underclothes business (though the gender was not specified), and this was regarded as a certain sign of financial success. Adding to the intertextuality was a Harwood line referring to a modern Wodehouse-type servant, though this was excised in the screen adaptations.

The third aspect is represented by the use that Wodehouse made of the basic plot situation in *Money in the Bank*, the book written in wartime captivity which was first published in the USA in 1942.

The penniless Lord Uffenham was forced to let out the family property Shipley Hall to raise some of the necessary. His particular problem was that he had stashed away the family fortune, in the form of diamonds, on the premises but was unable to recall what he had done with them.

Accordingly, he had made it a condition of the lease that he be retained as butler and could not be dismissed, even if he was perpetually found to be rummaging in the private apartments of Clarissa Cork, the lessee.

A Sauce of Misquotation *Clarified by Nigel Rees*

Wendy-Irene Grimm has asked, understandably enough, about two rather oblique allusions in *The Code of the Woosters*. Firstly, in Chapter 8, Bertie refers back to ‘my earlier adventures with Augustus Fink-Nottle at Brinkley Court’ (he means *Right Ho, Jeeves*, Chapter 7) in which:

I mentioned that I had once read a historical novel about a Buck or Beau or some such cove who, when it became necessary for him to put people where they belonged, was in the habit of laughing down from lazy eyelids and flicking a speck of dust from the irreproachable Mechlin lace at his wrists.

But which historical novel? Norman Murphy pointed me in the direction of one of Baroness Orczy’s several sequels to *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, entitled *Eldorado*, in Chapter 11 (1913):

[Sir Percy Blakeney’s] usual debonnair manner was on him once again, his laziness, his careless insouciance. He was even at this moment deeply engaged in flicking off a grain of dust from the immaculate Mechlin ruff at his wrist. The heavy lids had fallen over the tell-tale eyes as if weighted with fatigue, the mouth appeared ready for the laugh which never was absent from it very long.

Secondly, in Chapter 5, Bertie asks Jeeves, “Who was it you were telling me about the other day, on whose head all the sorrows of the world had come?”, and in Chapter 10 writes of Madeleine Bassett:

For perhaps half a minute [she] stood staring at me in a sad sort of way, like the Mona Lisa on one of the mornings when the sorrows of the world had been coming over the plate a bit too fast for her.

This alludes to Walter Pater’s noted description of the Mona Lisa in *The Fortnightly Review, Notes on Leonardo da Vinci* (November 1869), where, just before he talks of her being ‘older than the rocks among which she sits’, he states:

Hers is the head upon which ‘all the ends of the world have come’.

As is apparent, this also incorporates a quotation – from 1 Corinthians 10:11:

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Talk about many-layered allusions.

Jeeves, Bertie and Lord Emsworth *in the same book – at last*

One of the more unusual uses to which PGW’s characters have been put must be that by Liliane Haegaman, Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Geneva and author of *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory*, (1991, Blackwell Textbook in Linguistics).

Throughout the 600-page book, which was developed on the basis of her own teaching in Geneva, she illustrates her texts by sentences (and combinations of words which are not sentences) that she has created. A high proportion use characters from well-known book series, such as Poirot,

Maigret, Bertie and Jeeves, and Blandings. The examples are designed to stress particular linguistic points, and are not based on Wodehouse’s own text. Examples of her sentences are:

Jeeves is baking a cake.

Where has Emsworth hidden the Empress?

Which detective will Emsworth invite for Sunday lunch?

How big was the pig?

I wonder whether it surprised all the inhabitants of Blandings that the pig was stolen.

My First Wodehouse Experience

Three members reminisce

McLean Robertson from Cheshire writes:

My earliest ever recollection of Plum's work is in the shape of a fourteen-year-old boy listening to an audio-book, *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* and the voices of two of our greatest orators, Michael Hordern and Richard Briers bringing the story and the characters to life.

Ever since that autumnal Saturday morning in WH Smith's when the cassette was taken down from the shelf and placed in my hands, I have been excessively grateful to my mother for making the introduction to the world and characters created by P G Wodehouse. To some, this may even appear to be a touch of eccentricity, but it is my belief that, looking at the world and the state it is in today, it is wonderful that Plum's work is kept alive so it can be cherished by us all.



McLean Robertson

Erica Kirby from Australia writes:

My first Wodehouse experience was during the 1960s and was gained at second hand. My father was a huge fan and would often attempt to read aloud passages that amused him, or quote pithy phrases gleaned from the Master, much to my acute boredom and disdain! What self-respecting teenager would take the slightest notice of anything that a parent considered interesting? Now, of course, older and wiser, I regret the lost opportunity for all the wonderful exchanges we might have had.

It was not until my twenties that I was to make any meaningful reacquaintance with PGW. Reporting for duty at my first job as a statistician, and being

shown into my very own office, a reconnaissance revealed a copy of *Over Seventy* buried in the bottom of a filing cabinet intended to hold a lot of dry figures and mathematical manipulations. Clearly it had been secreted there when someone's clandestine reading session during working hours had been interrupted by the sound of approaching Authority. My predecessor, the presumed owner, had departed for pastures new, leaving no forwarding address, and the book seemed destined for the wastepaper bin; but some mysterious force stayed my hand in the very act of tossing it in. I opened the cover and have been spellbound ever since. Although *Over Seventy* is by no means his finest effort it got me started and I have had almost thirty years of pleasure from PGW's books since then.

How things have come full circle. These days I bore my own son with my attempts to share some hilarious tit-bit and am rewarded with the same contempt of which I was guilty. I like to think that one day all will be revealed to him too.

Rona Topaz from London writes:

I owe the introduction of Wodehousean charms to a close friend, Mary, who lent me a copy of *The Inimitable Jeeves*. She thought it would suit my literary tastes and she could not have got it righter! But for my awareness of the Society I must credit a very different source.

It is possible that there may be the odd member of the Society who does not share my opinion that Stephen Fry is one of the greatest living human



Rona Topaz

Could Winchcombe be Market Blandings Station?

Alexander Dainty assesses the evidence

In the first edition of *Sunset at Blandings* (1977, Chatto & Windus), Richard Usborne wondered not only where Blandings was but also where was the station of Market Blandings from which one was able to catch a train to and from Paddington.

Although it seems that Blandings Castle was largely based on the buildings, grounds and interior of Weston Park, nr Bridgnorth, Shropshire and Sudeley Castle, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, there seem to be facts which unmistakably point to Winchcombe as being the model for Market Blandings station.

In *Heavy Weather*, Market Blandings is mentioned as being 114 miles from London. In *The Chronology of the Blandings Saga* (a chapter in *Thank You, Wodehouse* by J H C Morris, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981), Morris judges *Heavy Weather* to have been set in early August 1923. In the *ABC Railway Guide* of a similar era (July 1923), Winchcombe is shown as 133¾ miles from London (as opposed to 145¾ for Bridgnorth, presumably another contender for the station's source in view of its proximity to Weston Park.

Also in *Heavy Weather*, the times of trains running between Paddington and Market Blandings bear a

close similarity to those between Paddington and Winchcombe. The accompanying table compares fiction with reality:

	Heavy Weather	ABC Guide
Market Blandings	08.50	
Winchcombe		07.56
Paddington	12.00	12.05
Paddington	02.45	02.10
Winchcombe		06.22
Market Blandings	06.45	

Wodehouse frequently referred to the taxi-service from Market Blandings to Blandings Castle, operated by Mr Ed Robinson. The *ABC Railway Guide* contains an entry offering a similar service:

'The New Inn' Hotel. Family and Commercial. Beautiful situation. Lock-up Garage. Carriages meet train upon request.

A G Beadell – Proprietor.

My First Wodehouse Experience, continued

beings. I believe he deserves this accolade for a myriad of reasons too numerous to mention here, but the main determining factor in drawing this conclusion is that he took my appreciation for P G Wodehouse and ballooned it into a passion.

My reading of *Moab is My Washpot*, the Fry autobiography, coincided with a few personal meetings with the man himself, and it wasn't difficult to assess just how much Wodehouse's work influenced Stephen as a writer. My passion for Fry spilled over into a discovery of *The Code of the Woosters*; *Joy in the Morning*; *Thank You, Jeeves* and others and the Granada series, watched for obvious reasons but not a patch on the books. A photograph of Stephen as Jeeves led to information on how to join the Society.

I don't think I can appreciate anything or anyone without due consideration of its source, and the wellspring from which Stephen Fry emerged is undoubtedly Wodehousean to a large extent. Although it was a friend who gave the door a nudge, it was the great Stephen Fry who swung it open, making my life and literary appetites richer as a result.

Dancing Mad

Arthur Robinson of Georgia wrote to report that he had located an article by PGW entitled *Dancing Mad* in the Christmas 1923 issue of *The Passing Show*. Arthur pointed out that the article, which concentrated on the activities of The Society of the Amalgamated Professors of the Dance, was partially recirculated a few years later in chapter 4 of *Summer Lightning*, when Hugo Carmody went dancing with Sue Brown at Mario's.

In the August 1937 edition of *Stage*, an issue devoted to articles on a variety of subjects credited 'as if by' respected professional authors, the one claimed to have been written in the style of P G Wodehouse was entitled *Are We Going Dance Mad?*

Dulwich Days

by Murray Hedgcock

Cricket, dinner, and endless enjoyable Wodehousean chat in that setting Plum so loved, once again made our Dulwich day an occasion to be savoured. Our annual dinner on June 15 in the Great Hall of Dulwich College was a splendid opportunity to meet old and new friends, especially for those able to come early to watch our gallant Gold Bats in action against the Common Room XI – the Dulwich Dusters.

This was our fourth annual trial of strength: rain early in the afternoon could not spoil the day, but the home batsmen were less than hospitable. The Dusters cracked a lively 161 for six wickets in their 20 overs – and our batting never got a start, especially when Oliver Wise, whose half-century dominated our batting earlier in the week against The Sherlock Holmes Society, was out in the first over. Mark Wilcox, skippering the team on the ground where his father Denys was a schoolboy star before playing for Cambridge and Essex, added a determined 23 to his two wickets, and Patrick Gilkes and Robert Miller enlivened the later stages, but we were well beaten.

But if golfers have the 19th Hole to soothe and cheer after a disappointing day on the links, then The Gold Bats, and their supporters, can enjoy the traditional Lower Hall reception. Hospitality this year was provided by those nice people from the Reading office of the accounting firm PriceWaterhouse-Coopers.

Eighty sat to dinner in The Great Hall, proceedings being guided in his usual amiable fashion by Tony

Ring. Our chairman, Colonel Norman Murphy, recited the special Grace, and proposed the Loyal Toast. Another tradition, the Toast to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, our most illustrious member, was proposed by Sir Edward Cazalet. Guests from exotic spots included David Tang of Hong Kong, who by good fortune had been at dinner the previous evening alongside the Jeeves and Wooster pairing of Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie. They sent messages of goodwill on an inscribed menu, promptly accepted for the Society archives.

Sir Edward introduced his cousin, (and one of our Patrons) Patrick Wodehouse, and fellow old Etonian and racing enthusiast Lord Oaksey, who entertained with reminiscences of the Wodehouse family of the Twenties, and appropriate readings from the Plummish oeuvre. It underlined in unique fashion how PGW based his marvellous writings on real life, observed among his throng of relatives. It was fun, it was informative, and it did much to explain why we wallow endlessly in our beloved world of Wodehouse.

Match scores (20 overs): Dulwich Dusters 161/6 (Wilcox 2/21) beat The Gold Bats 102/5 (Wilcox 23, Bloxham 21, Gilkes 21 n.o., Miller 18 n.o.) by 59 runs.

FOOTNOTE: The Dusters have no intention of letting The Gold Bats repeat our solitary success of 1999, and have yet again moved to strengthen their line-up. Bill Athey, the former Yorkshire opening bat who played 23 Tests, is joining the Dulwich cricket staff next season. Gold Bats bowlers – be warned!

Wodehouse in Bolton by Mark Reid

Bolton did its best to live up to its reputation as rain hung in the air and visitors turned up to a Bolton Little Theatre in the midst of redecoration, but after decamping to the rehearsal room the meeting on August 18th got underway with introductory comments from Norman Murphy.

After the experience of organising the meeting, I was quite nervous before it started, faced with an audience demanding to be entertained. Tony Ring put everyone at their ease, presenting a potted Wodehouse biography with disarming style and a wonderful selection of quotations. I tried to get to grips with the bar as everyone started to mingle, and the audience seemed pleasantly surprised to be entertained at all.

During part two of the programme I realised my ambition to be a DJ, including extracts from *By Jeeves* and the new recording in a musical presentation, which found the audience very attentive.

The final offering, from a gang of four from the theatre company, was a rehearsed reading of the opening of *Good Morning, Bill*, and the work of Wodehouse the dramatist, like the music not widely known, was much appreciated. It was difficult even for those of us performing to keep our faces straight.

The closing suggestion that we should get together for further meetings was received with enthusiasm, for even the rain couldn't dampen our spirits. Bolton seemed that little bit brighter for an afternoon.

Different Versions of Plum's Novels

A reminder of the existence of other rewritten books

Although most Wodehouse books which appeared on each side of the Atlantic have a number of textual differences, there are five novels, other than *The Prince and Betty*, which stand out as having versions with at least one major change to their plots.

In two cases the changes only affect a single chapter. In *Something New*, the American title of *Something Fresh*, the first Blandings novel, a scene of some twenty pages was included which was taken almost word for word *Mike*, and for that reason the scene was excised from *Something Fresh*.

The second Blandings novel, *Leave It To Psmith*, also features in this group, in a slightly different manner. After the last episode of its serialisation in the *Saturday Evening Post*, the journal's readers rebelled at the way Wodehouse had conceived the dénouement, and he had to rewrite it before the book was published in either the UK or the USA.

The history of *The Prince and Betty* was reversed in the case of *The Little Nugget*. *Nugget* is a combined adventure story and romance which started life as a serial *The Eighteen-Carat Kid*, which related the somewhat dramatic events at a boy's school and appeared in three parts in *The Captain* in 1913. Wodehouse no longer wished to be regarded as a writer of school stories, however, so he added a romantic sub-plot for the book version on each side of the Atlantic.

The other two changes were also rather substantial, and more on a par with the changes discovered in *A Prince for Hire*. When Wodehouse submitted the script of the novel *The Luck of the Bodkins* to the *Saturday Evening Post*, he was surprised to find it rejected. After he cut the length by at least a quarter, it was serialised instead by the *Red Book* in the USA and by *The Passing Show* in the UK. The American book version followed the rewritten script, but the British publisher preferred the longer original.

And when yet another Blandings novel, *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, was submitted to the *Saturday Evening Post*, it was accepted provided two major characters were removed, as the editor felt that the plot was too complex for readers to follow on a weekly basis. Fortunately, both British and American book publishers kept to the longer text, and this remains one of his very best novels.

Many other novels, particularly from the mid-1930s onwards, were written by Wodehouse in two forms, for the magazines were requiring far more substantial abridgements than before. The way he handled this problem was generally to reduce the number of sub-plots rather than materially change the main plots. This is an over-simplified description of a process which took a great deal of work, but is, I think, a fair way to distinguish the five 'different' versions mentioned from the majority of later abridgements.

Louise O'Connor questions Richard Jenkyns' opinions as summarised in the March edition of Wooster Sauce

The March edition of *Wooster Sauce* included two short extracts from Richard Jenkyns' article on the Harry Potter phenomenon which referred to P G Wodehouse. Louise O'Connor wrote as follows:

I feel that Richard Jenkyns has rather missed the point of the Harry Potter books, which is the fantasy. They are not set in an ordinary boarding school, but in an academy of magic. I understand that the popularity of the books has led to an increase in the popularity of boarding schools, but I can't help feeling that any children who do go to boarding school as a result of reading Harry Potter are going to be very disappointed when they find that they can only play boring old football or hockey rather than Quidditch, that

they can only learn Maths and French rather than spellcasting, and that there are no giants or werewolves on the staff.

I would also like to say that I don't think women who read Barbara Cartland are indulging in snob-fantasy, but simply in escapism. Her world is short on humour, but it is a world in which men are handsome, powerful and rich, a world in which you know the heroine is never going to have to cook, clean, or run around after the children all day. The hero will always be focused on her, and will never want to spend hours watching football or making steam trains. Her world is as unreal as the worlds of Wodehouse and Rowling, and she is read for the same reason, sheer pleasure.

Progress of a Biographer

Robert McCrum reports on his 'Life of P G Wodehouse'

Shortly after I got the green light to start work on a new life of PGW, I decided to keep a diary. I had never written a biography before. I wanted to chart the contours of the experience, and also to have a useful record of my relationship to the material when I actually came to write the book. Also, since I work by day as the literary editor of the *Observer* in London, I was keen to have a place where I could sustain a private conversation with my subject, uninterrupted by the news agenda of the moment. In a vague way, I expected that I would probably turn up enough material to have something worth noting on a week by week basis, at least in the early stages.

I could not have been more wrong. Almost every day in the first six months of my research has thrown up some kind of fascinating surprise. First, there were the discoveries I made about Wodehouse simply from a careful re-reading of his books and articles. Next, there were the treasures buried in the Wodehouse archives at the Sussex home of Sir Edward Cazalet, and the leading light of the PGW Estate. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, there were the many letters I received in answer to my appeals for information in the *Spectator*, the *London Review of Books*, the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *New York Times*.

What I have discovered in this first stage of my biography is that PG Wodehouse and his work are woven deep into the consciousness of the English-speaking world. Usually, when people ask me what I'm up to as a writer, and I tell them, they quickly acquire that glassy expression of polite indifference with which all writers (if they're honest) are familiar. Not with Wodehouse. A characteristic reaction, which I do nothing to discourage, is, "That must be a nice job" or, "That must be a lot of fun," followed by one of three typical responses:

- 1 a confession of lifelong enthusiasm for the work
- 2 a reference to the infamous broadcasts and the 'Nazi' slur
- 3 some arcane piece of PGW trivia of the "Did you know . . .?" variety

This is not simply a literary response. From Delhi to Manhattan, and from Sydney to Droitwich, there are people who not only know and love the work, but who feel a deep personal connection to Wodehouse the man, and who turn to him for comfort and

reassurance. Subscribers to *Wooster Sauce* will know that the Queen Mother is one of his biggest fans. They might also be surprised to learn that his other famous devotees include the spy novelist David Cornwell (John le Carré), the leader of Sinn Fein Gerry Adams, and Salman Rushdie (who can quote pages of Wodehouse from memory).

Partly, this is because he created so many timeless comic characters. Evelyn Waugh once said that "One has to regard a man as a Master who can produce on average three uniquely brilliant and entirely original similes to every page". By the same token, you have to call a writer a genius who creates not one (Psmith), not two (Jeeves and Bertie Wooster), but more than three (Lord Emsworth, Ukridge, and Aunt Agatha) universally recognised characters. Shakespeare did it, of course. So did Dickens. Wodehouse is in their company. Now that the twentieth century is over, he stands out as one of the two or three really important and influential literary figures of the past one hundred years, arguably a writer to be considered in the same breath as TS Eliot, James Joyce and Evelyn Waugh.

Like Shakespeare, Wodehouse the man is elusive, often maddeningly so. Unlike Shakespeare, he left behind a mass of manuscript material. Famous authors get a lot of fan mail from the public. Many don't bother to reply. Wodehouse was remarkable for the patient way, especially in retirement, in which he answered all his correspondence. To do this he did not employ a secretary but preferred to reply himself, usually giving away tiny snippets of autobiography in the process.

From this material, and from a number of interviews with people who actually knew him, I am beginning to compose a portrait in my mind. I find I like him as much as I did when I was not his biographer, but simply a regular civilian admirer. I have not yet fallen in love with my subject, as some biographers do, but I take a lot of quiet pleasure in his company, and am beginning to feel confident that I know him, as much as he wants to be known, which is (frankly) not much.

Some other puzzles remain. I would like to know much more about William Townend, the old school friend with whom he shared, by post, many of his most intimate thoughts. *Performing Flea*, the published record of this correspondence, leaves out many of these and hardly conveys the true quality of



Michael Vermehren, who met PGW in Berlin

the original letters. I would also like to locate a photograph of Townend, which, so far as I know, has not been published in any previous biography.

I would like to know more about the (for Wodehouse) dreadful war years 1940-45. There are mysteries about his time in Berlin, and his activities in Paris, that may never be clarified satisfactorily. At the moment I am digging hard, with the help of researchers, and hope to come up with some freshly-mined nuggets. To date, my most intriguing discovery, reported in the *Observer* on 17 June, has been the

testament of (see photo) Michael Vermehren, a German journalist who befriended Wodehouse during his time in the Adlon Hotel.

That was nearly sixty years ago, and Wodehouse lived to see the hysteria of wartime soften into the regretful embarrassment of peacetime. The way in which he devoted his later years to setting the record straight, so far as he was able, is an area of particular fascination.

For the rest, I am having a fascinating time. A number of people, especially Dr Jan Piggott at Dulwich, Sir Edward Cazalet, Col Norman Murphy, Iain Sproat, and Tony Ring, have been incredibly generous with materials, suggestions and advice. Patrick Wodehouse, his surviving nephew, has patiently answered a barrage of inquiries on matters large and small, and given me some wonderful insights, together with copies of two priceless letters from 1936. It goes without saying that it is a massive life – ninety-three years devoted almost ceaselessly to literary work of all sorts: stories, novels, lyrics, letters, and at least one diary, all of which add up to more than a hundred published books, to say nothing of the mass of unpublished papers held in collections here, and in America. Despite this, at the moment I am contemplating a volume of some 400 pages, including index, notes etc, a book you can read in two or three sittings, and without conceding any independence of biographical scrutiny, the kind of length I hope that Wodehouse himself would have enjoyed.

Behind the happy fossicking there is, of course, a sterner purpose. Penguin Books, clearing their throats with Jeeves-like dignity, occasionally inquire after my progress, never failing to remind me, like the most discreet midwife, that delivery of the final typescript is due on Jan 1st 2004. Already that seems alarmingly soon.

A few weeks ago I see that I wrote in my Wodehouse diary, "I can't quite believe that research for a book could be so enjoyable."

Now all I have to do is write it.

Any member who has information in which Robert may be interested is invited to contact him

I SAY!

Favourite Exchanges– 19

"You don't like the Princess?"

"I regard her as the sand in Civilisation's spinach."

From *Summer Moonshine*, 1937

The Smile That Wins

Favourite Nifties – 16

He had a pleasing and distinctive singing voice, not unlike that of a buzzard suffering from laryngitis.

From *Frozen Assets*, 1964

Wodehouse Concert at the Library of Congress

Amy Plofker reports

The June 20th *New York Festival of Song* event at the Library of Congress that was, as pianist Steven Blier put it “All Wodehouse, all the time” was beyond my expectations, and believe me, my expectations were pretty high, having heard Hal Cazalet perform some of the songs last July in London.

The live performance of Wodehouse’s best-known Broadway musical songs was just stunning, with an ensemble of four wonderful singers who sang, acted, and danced out the songs. I was expecting a more static kind of concert, and it was an exhilarating surprise to get the richness of acting, dancing, and facial expression along with the music. All four singers were obviously experienced in multiple genres, with tenor Hal Cazalet and soprano Sylvia McNair’s voices outstanding, soprano Jill Anderson being a great dancer as well (*Cleopatterer, Non-Stop Dancing*), and baritone Jason Graae showing a fantastic turn for comedy parts (*Napoleon, We’re Crooks*). Some songs were done as a twosome, some as a foursome, and the timing was fluid, with the action beginning again even as the applause from the last song was ending. There was no hushed, concert-like pause between numbers, and overall it gave a wonderful Broadway feel of being a revue rather than a concert *per se*.

Steven Blier was hot stuff on the piano, with Gregory Utzig ably assisting on guitar/banjo as needed. Blier also introduced the concert, explaining some of the research that had gone into it (some done right there at the Library of Congress).

Blier also gave witty introductions to a few of the songs, acknowledged Hal as the moving spirit behind the project, and thanked him for “channeling his great-grandfather this evening – we can all feel his presence.”

The performers received standing ovations at the end and again after their encore, which had this introduction:

Blier: “I have just six words for you: George Gershwin. Ira Gershwin. P G Wodehouse.”

Anonymous Voice from Audience: “That’s seven words.”

Blier: “Our encore is *Oh Gee, Oh Joy!*”

And gee, it was joyful!

By Jeeves at Newcastle-under-Lyme

Tony Ring reports

By Jeeves made a welcome reappearance to the British stage in July and August at the New Vic, Newcastle-under-Lyme. Why Newcastle-under-Lyme? A friend remembered that while she was an usher at the theatre in the early sixties, Alan Ayckbourn had been in the cast. Was that a clue?

Sir Alan has confirmed to *Wooster Sauce* that he and Heather Stoney had been founder members of the six-strong cast which opened the first Victoria Theatre (then in Stoke), and stayed until 1964 when his play *Mr Whatnot*, originally staged at the theatre, was taken up by a London management. He has now been the resident director at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough for 30 years, and rewrote the present version of *By Jeeves* to celebrate the opening of the new theatre in 1996. He added that, since the New Vic is a sister theatre of the Stephen Joseph, both being leading theatres ‘in the round’, the staging of *By Jeeves* there makes a lot of sense.

Directed by the popular Gwenda Hughes, the production differs visually from the original more obviously than in the presentation of dialogue or song. Not surprisingly, a three-and-a-half week production has to compromise on some of the minor details of props and choreography compared to a long-running show, and the changes were easily spotted. I particularly regretted two changes: the dance routine for the song *By Jeeves* at the start of the second act was tame compared with the vibrant choreography of the Scarborough original, while Stinker Pinker’s gift of a flower to Stiffy Byng during the superb duet *Half a Moment*, one of the funniest moments in the first production, was omitted entirely despite requiring only one simple prop.

The cast were generally able to cope with the special requirements of the round and were in good voice on the songs. I would pick out Christopher Pizzey whose Bingo Little was rather more convincing than his predecessor in the role, but must add that Lana Green’s brunette head of hair spoiled her otherwise believable Madeleine Bassett. We were entitled to a dizzy blonde and she should have been asked to wear a blonde wig. I should add, incidentally, that just about all the cast helped with the music on a variety of instruments while their presence was not required on stage. They all demonstrated a range of talent which made the evening very enjoyable for the general theatregoer and the Wodehousean alike.



PROFILE OF A PATRON

In 1991 Andrew Lloyd-Webber became the first composer to have six productions running at one time in the West End. He was also the first composer to have three musicals running in London and New York simultaneously. Some time previously, in October 1974, with the success of *Jesus Christ, Superstar* behind him, he and Alan Ayckbourn visited Plum on Long Island to play highlights from the score of the forthcoming *Jeeves* musical. Though the show was uniquely not a hit in its first coming, its transformation into *By Jeeves* in the late 1990s was a veritable triumph. It sits alongside such compositions as *Evita*, *Cats* (the one show where he wrote the music for pre-existing words), *Starlight Express*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Aspects of Love*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Whistle Down the Wind* and the recent *The Beautiful Game*. His production company, The Really Useful Group, also produced the late Edward Duke's *Jeeves Takes Charge*. His awards include six Tonys, three Grammys, five Oliviers, a Golden Globe, an Oscar and the London Critics' Circle Award for Best Musical 2000. In 1992 he was awarded a knighthood for services to the Arts and was elevated to the peerage in 1997.

Romano's and the Clarkson's Beard

In stories such as *The Fat of the Land* and *Big Money*, Wodehouse was happy for Freddie Widgeon and Lord Biskerton to disguise themselves in beards by Clarkson to escape from various pursuers.

The Clarkson in question was Willie Clarkson, a bohemian costumier and wig-maker who frequented Romano's, which was just round the corner from his Wellington St premises.

He was considered the greatest living exponent of the art of disguise, and when Scotland Yard decided on an all-out drive to trap Jack the Ripper, Clarkson was engaged to provide realistic but inconspicuous

costumes, wigs, beards and moustaches for the plain-clothes detectives involved in the hunt.

Scotland Yard also brought in some medical students to help as the Ripper appeared to have great anatomical skill, and some could be disguised successfully only as women. Clarkson achieved remarkable results when he tested the effectiveness of his handiwork by taking to lunch at Romano's a student disguised as a better class of prostitute.

It was a curious and unfortunate coincidence that the fourth of Jack the Ripper's victims was found to be wearing a Willie Clarkson wig.

Thank You, Jeeves

Michael Pointon recently bought a video through Coastal Stamp Auctions, whose proprietors include JL, RJ and JN Jeeves, with M Jeeves as Secretary.

An extract from his receipt, alongside, shows the words 'Thank You' and 'Jeeves' in very familiar juxtaposition.



An Umpire Writes

Murray Hedgcock donned the short white coat for the match between The Gold Bats and The Sherlock Holmes Society of London

It was indeed a privilege to associate with such grand folk as the gentlemen of the P G Wodehouse Society (UK) and their friendly foes of The Sherlock Holmes Society of London, on the tented field at West Wycombe. For a humble workingman who had long made his profession the grand old game of cricket, it was high honor in my declining years to stand in such fashion alongside the gentry – and their ladies.

One lady spectator was so kind as to offer a selection of quails' eggs to add to the rough bread and cheese I had prepared for my lunchtime repast. Another even invited me to share the rug spread for her family. While duly thankful, it led me to muse as to whether this might be carrying a new concern for the lower classes perhaps a little too far? But as to the match itself: in this year of Grace 1895 ('Grace' is a little cricketing humour of my own, which has often amused gentlemen players) we were confronted with a field still recovering from the rains which the Almighty had seen fit to send.

In the best tradition of British pluck, our cricketers proceeded regardless of mud, slippery grass, and the showers which would have sent players in any Great Match to their comfortable quarters. (They would have been aided in such retreat by Bird, the well-known Umpire). We disported ourselves in accordance with the Laws of the Noble Game as now apply, but our gentlemen had in their recent matches looked into the Future, and observed changes forecast for the conduct of a match. They were accustomed to a wicket nine inches across, rather than the prescribed eight, and some variants in the Laws, including the placing of the bowler's foot behind the bowling crease. I too have recently mused in this vein, so that being required to play within the code set down by our betters of the Marylebone Cricket Club in 1894, presented us all with problems.

I have to confide in all shame that in one over, a batsman from the Wodehouse Eleven was accorded the opportunity to attack without risk a ball which I had wrongly called as a No-Ball. The bowler had transgressed with his back foot – but with a curious contortion, he had placed his front foot behind the line, legitimising his delivery. It is fortunate for this ageing Umpire's reputation that none of the gentlemen appeared to notice.

Sadly, the same young gentleman batsman was dismissed later in the same over when caught – but this time the bowler had truly delivered a No-ball, which I had failed to indicate. The lot of the Umpire is not always an easy one.

I was accompanied in my duties by my fellow-umpire Ellis, whom I believe to have been of a certain more elevated social class. He was much at ease, exchanging banter with the gentry, so that I envied him his assurance. But it was truly a day of great honour, when the gentlemen of the Sherlock Holmes Society included among their number My Lord the Sixth Baron Northbrook. I was infinitely relieved when My Lord came to bat, that I was being given temporary relief from duty by a Mr Fingleton, who had the onerous responsibility of deciding the fate of this member of our peerage. Mr Fingleton I judge of even more notable status than is Ellis: he wore an elegant outfit topped with the exalted colours of MCC – signifying his considerable standing in the world of cricket.

The Sherlock Holmes gentry also were blessed with a senior member of the clergy, a Canon in point of fact. (A Big Gun of the Church, as I jocularly commented to my intimates in a moment of levity – a frivolity which I pray the Good Lord will forgive). But the prospect that Divine Providence as well as the Aristocracy might be disposed towards the success of the Sherlockians, as they playfully call themselves, did not eventuate. The Wodehouseans – what wags these gentlemen are in the names they apply to themselves – triumphed with a most accomplished team in which Mr Oliver Wise, a Serjeant at Law, displayed great skill with the bat, although inclined to lack a satisfying strategy in the art of running between wickets.

He was most ably accompanied by Mr Mark Wilcox and Mr Hal Cazalet, a thespian of note, who was attired not only in a top-hat – rarely seen on cricket fields in these days – but also a somewhat unstable false beard. I heard comment that it was "obviously not one of Clarkson's", but I do not know what this might mean. Mr Robert Bruce, a scribbler of authority, was the lob bowler for the Wodehouse team – as was the becomingly moustachioed Mr Chas Taylor for the Sherlockians.

Mr Bruce displayed such confidence that he bowled while sporting a most fetching broadbrimmed

Record of Scores in the Match held on Sunday 10th June, 1895 at the West Wycombe Cricket Ground

The Gold Bats of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

Mr Mark Wilcox b King	40
Mr Oliver Wise run out	52
Mr Hal Cazalet b Melmoth	27
Mr Timothy Stevens caught, b Deveney	2
Mr Thomas Stevens caught, b Melmoth	3
Mr Anthony Ring lbw b Melmoth	6
Inspector Miller (Capt) b Horrocks	29
Mr Patrick Gilkes not out	1
Mr Robert Bruce, caught, b Miller	0
Mr Willaim Kent did not bat	
Mr Alan Fitzpayne did not bat	
Extras	11
Total (for eight wickets)	171

The Sherlock Holmes Society of London

Mr Philip Porter b Cazalet	1
The Rt Hon Lord Northbrook run out	0
Mr Jonathan Horrocks b Kent	3
Mr Charles Miller caught, b Kent	2
Mr Peter Horrocks b Fitzpayne	13
Mr Lindsay Deveney b Fitzpayne	5
Mr Anthony Freeman caught, b Stevens	2
The Rev Canon Graham King not out	14
Mr Nicholas Utechin caught, b Bruce	1
Mr Richard Melmoth not out	14
Mr Richard Freeman did not bat	
Extras	10
Total (for eight wickets)	65

Result: Match drawn



The 1895 Gold Bats team

sunhat. This clearly did not discommode him, although he delivered one over in which five balls would have had to be called Wide by your servant, except that the batsman strode to either side of the pitch and struck the errant projectile with great velocity. Mr Bruce achieved his reward when a most cunning delivery was placed by the bemused batsman into the capacious gloves of Mr Patrick Gilkes, holding the arduous post of keeper of the wicket.

One other gentleman deserves mention: Mr Anthony Ring, who had attended in the praiseworthy intent of supporting the Wodehouse XI, was swiftly apprised that he was in fact a member of the team. His charming consort was dispatched to his country seat to obtain the necessary trappings, and Mr Ring adorned the field with a notable straight bat, bowling

of subtle guile, and most particularly fielding in the covers of great gallantry.

The gentlemen charged with the duties of captaincy, Messrs Peter Horrocks for the Sherlockians and Robert Miller for the Wodehouseans, maintained the game in the most amiable of spirits, so that the afternoon was greatly enjoyed by all. Even the discomfited but gallant members of the Sherlock Holmes Eleven insisted on shaking this Umpire's gnarled old hand, with expressions of thanks for my modest contribution to the afternoon.

Editor's Note

Murray Hedgcock has expressed a wish that it be known that he was in his time a player of some modest ability, rather than a lifetime umpire, as many of those inquiring kindly after his health affected to believe.

The Society Annual General Meeting

A report from the Chairman

The Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Savage Club on 10th July, 2001, and was attended by twenty-five members.

The Chairman and Officers reported on the activities of the Society since the last AGM, highlights of which had been the Millennium Tour (a huge success largely due to the work of Hilary Bruce), the dinner at Gray's Inn (ditto, Tim Andrew) and the recent splendid cricket match against the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. "No doubt," said the Chairman, "it was the stress of that match that led to our defeat a week later at the hands of the Dulwich Dusters." Meetings will be held in the near future at Bolton (18th August) and Coventry (29th September).

The Society reached a membership of over 850 during the year, with members from Argentina to Bhutan and Japan, and the website receives over 40 hits a day. The Chairman thanked David Herboldt, Chris Reece and John Fletcher for their work behind the scenes, and Murray Hedgcock and Robert Bruce for their highly original thoughts on our activities. He said of Robert:

Robert has made me giggle for the last year with his splendid description of my taking the Millennium

Tour on a Wodehouse Walk when there were pneumatic drills on every corner: "London was full of chaos and noise, not all of it coming from the Chairman."

The Officers and Committee Members who were re-elected were:

Chairman	Norman Murphy
Membership Secretary	Helen Murphy
Treasurer	Nick Townend
Editor, Wooster Sauce	Tony Ring

Other Committee members:

Tim Andrew
Hilary Bruce
Sir Edward Cazalet
John Fletcher
Oliver Wise

A summary of the accounts appears below this report. A copy can be obtained from the Treasurer

The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking the Committee for their hard work in making the Society such a success.

Income and Expenditure *Year ended 31 May, 2001*

Subscriptions	£ 9,135
Sales of publications et al	571
Bank interest	110
Millennium Tour	545
Donations & sundry	174

TOTAL INCOME	£ 10,535

Printing costs	£ 4,946
Postage, copying & stationery	2,862
Insurance	52
Room hire & sundry	438
Bank charges	43

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 8,341

SURPLUS FOR YEAR	£ 2,194

John McGlinn is Recording *Four Wodehouse/Kern shows*

No sooner has the Hal Cazalet/Sylvia McNair CD been released than we hear the extraordinary news that no fewer than four Kern/Wodehouse shows are being recorded from scratch. It is amazing that there are very few full recordings of Kern shows (*Showboat*, *Sitting Pretty*) and John McGlinn is directing new productions of *Have a Heart*, *Oh, Lady! Lady!!*, *Oh, Boy!* and *Leave it to Jane*.

Recording is in London, split between the Henry Wood Hall and Abbey Road Studios, and the vocalists are accompanied by the London Sinfonietta, a group of highly accomplished musicians who are the reason why the recording is in London.

John McGlinn has a superb reputation as a musical historian and what will emerge will surely be as authentic as it possibly could be. It is probable that the first two shows will be released to the public next year.

We can only be patient.

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

Magazine Serialisations

Before the Second World War, most of Wodehouse's output appeared in magazines in England and America before appearing in book form. With the post-war decline in the magazine market, more of Wodehouse's stories first appeared only in book form, but he still preferred to place a story in a magazine before publishing it in book form. Given the range of magazines in which his stories appeared, it is not surprising that *McIlvaine* has some omissions in this area, in which previously unrecorded appearances are often discovered.

Sometimes *McIlvaine* does not record the complete dates of the magazine appearances. *A Gentleman of Leisure* was serialised in *Tit-Bits* (under its American title *The Intrusion of Jimmy*) from 11 June until 10 September 1910; however, *McIlvaine* (D137.3) records only one appearance, for 3 September 1910. *Jill the Reckless* appeared in *The Grand* from September 1920 to June 1921; but *McIlvaine* (D91.3-7) fails to record the last five parts and also fails to provide details about chapters and page numbers for the first four parts.

The PASSING SHOW

Leave It To Psmith was serialised in *The Grand* from January to December 1923, but *McIlvaine* (D91.8-12) omits the first six parts and the final part, and the details about chapters and page numbers are incomplete for the period from July to October. *Summer Lightning* appeared in *Pall Mall* from March to September 1929, but *McIlvaine* (D115.6-11) omits the final part. *Thank You, Jeeves* appeared in the US in *Cosmopolitan* from January to July 1934; again *McIlvaine* (D17.56-61) omits the final part. It was published in Canada in the *Family Herald and Weekly Star* in 21 weekly instalments from 24 March 1937 to 11 August 1937, but *McIlvaine* (D146.10-25) omits parts 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10.

The Luck of the Bodkins appeared in *The Passing Show* in ten weekly instalments from 21 September to 23 November 1935, but *McIlvaine* (D117.1) only records the first appearance. Finally, *Summer Moonshine* appeared in *Pearson's* from September 1937 to April 1938, but *McIlvaine* (D118.27-28) only notes appearances in September and November 1937.

Sometimes *McIlvaine* omits a magazine serialisation entirely. For example, she does not record the following English magazine serialisations: *The Adventures of Sally* in *The Grand* from April 1922 to July 1922; *The Gold Bat* (under the title *By Order of the League!*) in *The Boys' Friend*, in eight weekly episodes, from 6 January to 24 February 1923; *Bill the Conqueror* in *The Grand* from about August 1924 to March 1925; *Sam the Sudden* in *Sunny* from July 1925 to February 1926; *The Small Bachelor* in *New* from December 1926 to July 1927; *Doctor Sally* in *The Yorkshire Weekly Post Illustrated*, in nine weekly episodes, from 2 January to 27 February 1932; *Laughing Gas* in *Pearson's* from August to October 1935; and *The Code of the Woosters* in *The Daily Mail* from 8 September to 21 October 1938.

Nor does she record the following US magazine appearances: *The Prince and Betty* in *Ainslee's* in January 1912 (or its reappearance in the *Saturday Evening Mail* in about October and November 1912); and *A Gentleman of Leisure* (under its American title *The Intrusion of Jimmy*) in *Evening World* from October 1914; or the Canadian appearance of *Jill the Reckless* (under its American title *The Little Warrior*) in *Maclean's* from August to November 1920.

STAR WEEKLY NOVEL FIRST PUBLICATION ANYWHERE

Finally, *McIlvaine* does not record several serialisations in the Canadian magazine *Star Weekly Toronto*. After the war, this was a prime market for many of Wodehouse's stories, which often appeared in a condensed form in a single issue. The following appeared, but are not recorded in *McIlvaine*: *Spring Fever* on 9 October 1948; *Uncle Dynamite* on 30 April 1949; *Ring for Jeeves* on 5 September 1953; *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit* (under the title *Double Jeopardy*) on 4 December 1954; *French Leave* on 24 September 1955; *Jeeves in the Offing* (under its American title *How Right You Are, Jeeves*) on 23 April 1960; *Ice in the Bedroom* (under its American title *The Ice in the Bedroom*) on 5 November 1960; *Service with a Smile* on 26 August and 2 September 1961; *Company for Henry* (under its American title *The Purloined Paperweight*) on 29 April and 6 May 1967; and *Pearls, Girls and Monty Bodkin* (under its American title *The Plot That Thickened*) on 28 April 1973.

Items for Sale

The Land Where the Good Songs Go, the CD by Hal Cazalet and Sylvia McNair, will be in the shops in November, retailing at £15.99. We are still able to supply copies to members at the special post-free price, of £12 (UK and Europe) or £13 elsewhere. Sterling cash or cheques (payable to The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)), or US dollars cash only, please, to Tony Ring at the address at the foot of page 24.

A pack of 12 notelets featuring a cartoon of Jeeves and Fred Bassett (see June 2001 *Wooster Sauce*) costs £5 post-free worldwide. Payment as described in the previous paragraph, please.

The *McIlvaine Addendum* has been produced principally to prior order. Because we received a good response, the price will be lower than forecast. The small number of spare copies will be offered first to those attending the US Society Convention in October, but if there are still unsold copies, they will be available at £15 post-free in the UK, or £16 elsewhere. Sterling cheques this time payable to A J Ring, otherwise payment as above, but initially please just register your interest.

Forthcoming and Recent Publications

Chivers have released their unabridged audiobook *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*, read by Jonathan Cecil (CAB1896)

Granada have produced a DVD of the second series of *Jeeves and Wooster* episodes (GVDO21)

Book and Magazine Collector for August 2001 contained a 6,000 word article entitled *P G Wodehouse, Storyteller*, a review of the book collections of his short stories.

In October, Hutchinson will be publishing *In His Own Words*, edited by Barry Day and Tony Ring. The story of Wodehouse's life, and the factors which influenced him are retold by reference to quotations from his fiction, plays, lyrics, essays and letters. ISBN 0-09-179399-8, £12.99.

Porpoise Books have published the eighth and final volume of the mammoth *Millennium Wodehouse Concordance*, entitled *Wodehouse with New Friends*. The longest book of all, it costs £22 from Book Systems Plus (BSP2B@aol.com or phone 01223-894870). ISBN 1 870 304 21 7.

At the Savage Club

On November 13th David Colvin, recently retired Ambassador to Belgium, will speak about his experiences as Patron of The Drones Club, our sister Society in Belgium, and more broadly about his favourite incidents in a long diplomatic career.

Geoff Hales has intelligence, wit and a fine speaking voice, all of which made his performance on July 10th a memorable one. Drawing on some of the less well-known Wodehouse essays, he gave his audience a delightful review of Wodehouse's comments on his work.

Parodying Shakespeare's *Exit, pursued by a bear*, with Bertie's reaction to the same situation was one example of Wodehouse's grasp of English literature. His ability to mock its clichés, its best-known quotations and, in passing, his critics, was skilfully and amusingly presented and Geoff left us arguing happily over our own favourite misquotes for the rest of the evening.

THE CD: Your Comments

Eva Fitzpatrick: evocative of the period; charming; absolutely delighted.

J Melvyn Haggarty: enjoying it in the precious last hours before the new School term starts

Terry Moore: look forward to many more listenings

Anne Cotton: Having now played the CD, I can simply regret deeply that all the superlatives have been so over-used, they cannot convey my joy. If you do not acquire this treasure at once, you'll live to regret it.



A Day with The Drones

A visit to a Drones Club meeting at Millfleet Hall can be a somewhat surreal experience. The 26th may prove to be no exception, reports Tony Ring.

My wife Elaine and I had chosen a hotel in Brussels, and our hosts offered to pick us up at 5am, if we wanted to join in the angling, or 8am otherwise, for the hour or so drive to the Hall. Adopting a cautious approach, we selected the latter, yet when we arrived we still found angling in progress. We were told that the lake at Millfleet Hall, on and in which Drones both boated and swam, had at least four fish in it, of which two had been good enough to be caught that morning. They had, of course, been returned to the lake for future entertainment.

No sooner had we arrived than a glass of champagne was thrust into our hands, to be followed by a full English breakfast. The British influence even extended to a bright, warm, sunny day (!) and a Rover 75 parked outside the front door.

After breakfast, the first event was shooting with airguns, the target not being bending Baxters but images of magpies set on music-stands. A highly competitive two rounds ensued, the winner being an Englishman who had never previously held a shotgun, and had not shot at anything for about forty years.

This was followed by a form of archery yet to feature in the Olympic Games, for when the target was missed, the arrows would fly (or slide along the ground) into the messuages and domains beyond, where fierce dogs patrolled. Since failure to recover the arrows would have caused the competition to end, angling skills were once more called upon, the stray arrows being recovered by fishing rods dangled over the fence.

Between the beer and sandwiches provided for a picnic lunch and afternoon tea Walter van Braeckel led a discussion of an intellectual nature. Walter translates poetry between Dutch, English, French and German, and we read examples of his recent work.

The day, which of course had been punctuated with Wodehousean conversation, quotation and song, ended with a barbecue (prepared and served under the eagle eye of an immaculately-dressed butler), a sing-song, and a speech by Kris Smets, the President. The Drones are indeed fortunate to have both access to such a suitable venue as Millfleet Hall, owned by one of their members, Walter Rens, and a group of enthusiasts clever enough to realise its potential for enormous fun.

More on By Jeeves

A report on the recent production at Newcastle-under-Lyme appears on page 14. Members may be interested to know about the following additional developments:

- 1 The Goodspeed Opera production is to open on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theatre on October 28th, previews starting on October 17th. Tickets may be obtained by phone (001) (212) 239-6200, or, from October 1, at the Helen Hayes Theatre box office (240 W. 44th St).
- 2 Shortly after the Pittsburgh production closed earlier this year, the cast recorded a video of the show, which we understand will be available in the UK during October. We hope to review it in the next issue.
- 3 We have learned that sheet music for two of the songs from the show (*Banjo Boy* and *Half a Moment*) may be obtained at £2.50 each from Music Sales Ltd, 8-9 Frith Street, London W1P 4AA (020 7434 0066).
- 4 A German language production is expected to be staged by a repertory company at the Theater Derstadt, Heilbronn, between 30 October, 2001 and 31 July, 2002.

PGW Letters at Christie's

Auctioneers Christie's included a single Wodehouse-related lot in their sports auction of June 22nd. It consisted of around 75 letters from PGW to Billy Griffith, the former Sussex and England wicket-keeper and MCC President. They were sold on behalf of the family by Billy's son (and PGW's godson) Mike, who had been named after Mike Jackson, the fictional Wrykyn star batsman. The letters extended over a considerable period, 1932 to 1974, and were written from a variety of addresses. They contained many comments on Dulwich and wider cricket topics. Estimated at £8-£12,000, they cost an anonymous purchaser a remarkable £24,000 (plus buyer's premium).

Hal & Sylvia at the Wigmore Hall?

There is every prospect that Hal Cazalet and Sylvia McNair will be reprising their concert in London on 1st December. They, and pianist Steven Blier, are in the final throes of arranging a performance at the Wigmore Hall on December 1st. To check the position, call Wigmore Hall (0207 935 2141) from, say, the beginning of October.

Recent Press Comment

The Week, May 19 (from Edward Cazalet, Alexander Dainty)

Author Bernard Cornwell included *Right Ho, Jeeves* as one of his six favourite books. He added:

They are impossible to summarise, except to say they are still the funniest books ever written. Except perhaps for *Flashman* by George MacDonald Fraser. Jeeves meets Flash? Now there's a thought.

Sunday Times, June 3

Godfrey Smith mentioned the forthcoming cricket match against the Sherlock Holmes Society (see page 16).

The Times, June 5

Simon Callow wrote of the books that fired his passion for collecting and recalled that:

At the age of nine I went to live in Africa. Suddenly my reading became more intellectual. It was the content now, not the container, that excited me, although I well remember the Penguin cover of *Right Ho, Jeeves* with its orange stripe down the sides and a droll cartoon of Bertie and his Man. It was the first comic novel I had ever read and I took to reading it out loud to all who had the misfortune to cross my path.

Daily Telegraph, June 6 (from Murray Hedgcock)

The Peterborough column introduced a piece on the Sherlock Holmes cricket match by saying:

Few sillier spectacles does the English countryside afford than that which will take place at West Wycombe cricket ground on Sunday morning.

Chicago Tribune, June (from Kathy Lewis)

Reviewed *Jeeves and the Mating Season* at the City Lit Theatre (see *WS*, June 2001)

Daily Telegraph, June 11

Carried a picture on its court page of Hal Cazalet with his bat and a splendid false beard (by Clarkson?) taken during the Sherlock Holmes cricket match, together with a brief report.

Daily Mail, June 15

Author Marion Keyes wrote about the book she would take to a desert island:

The weird thing is that people always choose a book they've already read! Wouldn't it make more sense to choose a new one? But perhaps there's no point in taking the chance that I might not like it, so (and this is cheating a little, I know) I'd like to take the *Jeeves Omnibus*.

Sunday Telegraph, June 17 (from John Baesch)

Catherine Milner, Arts Correspondent, broke the news of the recording by Hal Cazalet and Sylvia McNair of the CD *The Land Where the Good Songs Go* (page 20).

Observer, June 17 (from Peter Viggers)

Robert McCrum's article disclosed new information concerning PGW's experiences during the war years, including a meeting with Michael Vermehren (see *Robert's article in this issue on page 12*).

Daily Telegraph, June 17 (from Hilary Bruce)

Reported the outcome of the Christie's auction of PGW letters (see page XX).

Independent Weekend Review, June 23

Christopher Hirst challenged Catherine Milner's assertion in the *Sunday Telegraph* article (June 17) that Wodehouse had written the words to *You're the Top* and *Anything Goes*, saying everyone knew it was Cole Porter.

[Editor's note: neither was wholly correct. Porter wrote the original lyrics, but Wodehouse adapted them for the London production so that over half the London lyrics were his work. It is the London version that was recorded on the CD.]

The Times, June 30 (from Dr B Palmer)

A correspondent enquired of Philip Howard when it would be correct to wear a plum-coloured Edwardian smoking-jacket recently inherited from a deceased great-uncle. The answer was:

In private. . . . To wear such a garment in public shows insensitivity and ostentation. Bertie Wooster might; Jeeves would contrive to ditch the garment.

Various, July 9 to 16, concerned the Anglo/Irish meeting on the Ulster question at Weston Park

The *Daily Telegraph* reminded readers that Gerry Adams is a self-confessed PGW fan. David Glover submitted an *Irish Times* article which pluckily claimed that Jeeves and Bertie had occasionally motored to Blandings Castle [Weston Park] for idle weekends to facilitate its suggestion that another Bertie [Ahern] and Mr Blair could have done with Jeeves's company. The *Financial Times* pointed out that the Earl of Bradford was charging £100 for parking and the local pub £ 6.50 for a sandwich, and wondered what 'Blandings' gloriously unworldly Earl of Emsworth' would have said about it. W F Deedes (also in the *Daily Telegraph*) declined to be drawn on whether Weston Park was a source of Blandings, but quoted Evelyn Waugh, who once said "The gardens of Blandings are that original garden from which we are all exiled."

The Guardian, July 12 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Stephen Moss visited Ivor Spender's school for 'butler administrators' and concluded that:

Buttling is nothing less than the pursuit of perfection – that Jeevesian sense of being on top of everything, a dozen steps ahead of Wooster and the inane world at large.

Recent Press Comment, continued

The Weekend Australian, July 14 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Jonathan Eske wrote a long review of the new Penguin *Jeeves and Wooster Omnibus* and concluded that, like Hugh Laurie (who provided the book's introduction) he does think PGW was the funniest writer ever to put words on paper.

Daily Telegraph, July 16 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Its obituary of actress Eleanor Summerfield mentioned her portrayal of Aunt Dahlia in the 1965-1967 series of *The World of Wooster*.

The Times, July 21

In a column *My Cultural Life*, Sir Peter Hall wrote

P G Wodehouse is another favourite [author], and I am currently rereading the Blandings books.

Sunday Times, July 29

Michael Lewis wrote about his 'little night reading', saying he had just started PGW's *Hot Water*. He added:

I have to confess that I have never read him before, but have been egged into trying him by a friend who is writing his biography. Previously I had imagined his humour to be simply stupid, but now I realise just how funny he is.

The Oldie, July (from Norman Murphy)

Jocelyn Rickards reviewed the Chivers unabridged recording of *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets* and concluded

There is a heroically funny character, Ukridge's Uncle Percy from Australia, who causes criminal mayhem in mid-Sussex. I laughed out loud. Listening to this story alone, with Jonathan Cecil's reading of it, justified buying the book.

Various, July and August

Reported with varying degrees of accuracy the sad position in which Rosie Wodehouse found herself. (According to our committee member John Fletcher, she is a third cousin, once removed, from PGW, but clearly not a 'descendant'.) Her misfortune is to have, through no fault of her own, entered into a bigamous marriage; her act of courage, to stand by her man.

Test Match Special, Radio 4, August 17

Henry Blofeld, commentating from Headingley on the 4th Ashes Test, likened the running between the wickets of the Australian batsman Simon Katich to PGW's description of Queen Elizabeth I's flitting in a snipe-like manner between country houses.

Home Truths, Radio 4, August 20, (from Melanie Ring)

Introducing a short feature on *Animal Noises*, John Peel commented that it related to 'what P G Wodehouse would have referred to as "our dumb chums".'

POETS' CORNER

De Tea

I asked the youth in uniform
To say, for he knew best,
To what he owed his puny form,
His microscopic chest.

"You miracle of weediness,
Whence got you," I exclaimed,
"That general air of seediness,
For which your kind are famed!"

"Alas," quoth he, "kind gentleman"
(And, really, on my word,
Though not a sentimental man,
I wept at what I heard),
"When but a tiny stripling it
Was quite a craze with me –
I spent my boyhood tipping it –
To drink too much bohea.

I might," he added bitterly,
"Have got my muscle up,
And wrestled Hackenschmidtily,
Had I but shunned the cup.
But oh! I drained it eagerly,
And now through life I go
All shrunken Wee-McGregorly."
(I sobbed. It pained me so.)

Moral

In training up your families
Don't give them any tea.
The men who fought at Ramillies
Drank beer in infancy;
When Marlborough won at Blenheim, he
Led soldiers reared on stout.
The teapot is an enemy:
Avoid its lethal spout.

From *News Chronicle*, 15 February, 1904

(In response to a report that an eminent medical man states that the deteriorated physique of our recruits is largely due to their having drunk too much tea.)

FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

September 29, 2001 – Meeting at Coventry

A reminder about a Society meeting to be held at the Chace Hotel Coventry.

October 12 to 14, 2001 – TWS Convention, Philadelphia

The convention of the American-based Society, with a plethora of events such as a cricket match, talks, question-and-answer sessions, cocktail party (with demonstrations), banquet, Sunday brunch and much more. If you need more information, contact Susan Cohen

October 20, 2001 – Seminar in Washington DC, organised by the Smithsonian Institute

A full-day seminar on the work of P G Wodehouse, with presentations by Allen and Patricia Ahearn, Brian Taves and Tony Ring and a live musical presentation directed by member Barry Day, during which another member, Lorna Dallas, will sing some of PGW's songs, and Wodehouse, Bolton and Kern will be portrayed by local actors.

For information, contact Erik Quick

October 21, 2001 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

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

November 13, 2001 – Informal meeting at the Savage Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London

Our regular evening meeting, at which member David Colvin, CMG, will speak (see page 20).

February 12, 2002 – The Savage Club

The first meeting of the New Year. Details later.

June 21, 2002 – Cricket at Dulwich

The annual match between the Gold Bats and the Dulwich Dusters.

October 17, 2002 – Society's Formal Dinner at Lincoln's Inn

Advance notice of the expected date of the Society's biennial formal dinner, to be held at Lincoln's Inn.

EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

Kate Jones, the Penguin Editor responsible for the recent launch of the new editions of so many of Wodehouse's books, left *Penguin* in June, but will remain a member of the Society. We wish her well and hope to see her at future functions. We also welcome her replacement as Editor, Mary Mount, to the Wodehouse scene.

The anarchic BBC television sports quiz, *They Think It's All Over*, includes a film clip of a strange sport for the panellists to identify. On 1st June, one of the sports featured was hog-calling, from Pomona, California. It was correctly identified by David Gower.

Burton Manor College is hosting *A Weekend with P G Wodehouse*, presented by member Geoff Hales, from Friday 26th to Sunday 28th October. Geoff covers the whole of Wodehouse's career, including his time on Broadway and in Hollywood. Delegates can attend a dinner with entertainment on Saturday evening only.

0151 336 517

The BBC drama series *The Cazalets* featured an Edward Cazalet who was described as 'a serial adulterer'. He was, of course, wholly fictional and unrelated to our Committee member. The series included a nice private joke, when a hospital visitor told a patient with extremely severe and disfiguring facial injuries that she would bring more reading material. "Not more P G Wodehouse," said the patient, making it clear that laughing at the previous supply had caused considerable agony.

Mark Goodfellow has a copy of *Do Butlers Burgle Banks* which has the library stamp of H M Yacht Britannia and a library number. The Royal Collection Trust suggests that it may have come from a Royal Navy library provided for sailors, which would have been dispersed on the decommissioning of the Yacht.

Sarah Cutts spotted a review of the *Jeeves and Wooster Omnibus* in *The Australian* which said that: 'Wodehouse is a kind of Don Bradman of the literary world, so far above his contemporaries as to render comparison superfluous.'