



## *Farewell to 'The Old Reliable'*

*Robert Bruce reports as Norman Murphy,  
the Society's First Chairman, steps down*

Throughout the illustrious history of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) there has been one absolute certainty on which members would take no bets. No one would ever see the Chairman, Colonel Norman Murphy, speechless. But at the dinner which the members of the Society's Committee gave (at their own expense, naturally) to mark his retirement, this singular event occurred.

It happened at the end of a eulogy from Edward Cazalet, Plum's step-grandson. Edward had referred to Norman's "huge creativity" which he likened to "a rocket which has taken off". He pointed out that: "He knows more about Wodehouse than anyone else alive" and, with a reference to some detective work which proved that three small holes in a wall off Fleet Street showed the site had been a Victorian lavatory, that "he has an encyclopaedic knowledge about virtually everything else in the world". Then he talked of Norman's love of his pipe. He said that Plum too had loved his pipe and, furthermore, "liked to smoke crushed-up cigars in it". Then Edward reached in his pocket and, to mark the event, presented Norman with the silver matchbox which Plum had used to tamp down his tobacco. It was at this moment that the aforementioned singular event occurred. Colonel Murphy was speechless.

He recovered swiftly, of course, to point out that it was 51 years since he had served on his first committee and learned that the trick was to "become its secretary and so write up what had happened". He praised the Society committee as "the only one I have enjoyed" and said he looked forward to being simply an expert in the wings.

Earlier in the evening's festivities, held at Boodle's Club, a mere bread roll's throw from where PGW used to live, the Society's president Richard Briers

had opened proceedings by saying that Norman was "a powerhouse of scholarship" and would always be, for him, "Uncle Norman in the Springtime". Murray Hedgcock, Australian journalist and a patron of the Society, pointed out that it was thirty years to the day when he had gone along to Farnham



*The moving finger points at the President . . .  
and having pointed, the Chairman moves on*

for a study weekend on Wodehouse and had first encountered the then Major Murphy. "Typically the best coverage was in a colonial newspaper", he said, and flourished a story headlined: *The First Jeeves-In*. In that story Hedgcock, presaging things to come, had referred to "The voluble Major Spud Murphy".

An evening of great good humour and much emotion came to an end as the incoming chairman, Hilary Bruce, declared that Norman would be an impossible act to follow. She led the toast to "Our Good Friend, Norman". Colonel Murphy then announced, typically, that the first research work of his retirement would be to establish the name of the maker of the silver matchbox.



# The Tost Times and Advertiser

## The late Mr Hurlock's copy comes to light!

At least one of the Internees of Ilag VIII, Tost, retained a copy of the first number (June 1, 1941) of the *Tost Times and Advertiser*, a periodical produced by and for the Internees. Mrs Marion Datlen recently discovered a number of papers which had belonged to her father, Mr S J Hurlock, while he was Internee number 950.

Unfortunately, the journal is now very browned and delicate, and with the exception of the masthead cannot be readily reproduced, but much of the material contained in it is of considerable interest. In all, Mrs Datlen found four double-sided pages from the *Tost Times*. It is probable that these come from at least two issues, as they contain two letters columns and two separate pages of advertisements. (In his article in *Cosmopolitan* in October 1941, Wodehouse refers to 'our twice-monthly paper'.)

Covering the whole of one page and half another is Chapter One of *All's Well With Bingo* by P G Wodehouse, an episode of about a thousand words. (At the end it states 'To Be Continued'.) A story with this title had first appeared in the magazines and an American book collection in 1937 but was not to appear in a UK collection until *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets* was published by Herbert Jenkins in 1940, its last Wodehouse publication until after the war. But the *Tost Times* story was not that one.

It was, instead, based on *The Word in Season*, a short story which had appeared in *Punch* on August 21, 1940, but would not appear in book form until 1957, when it was included in *A Few Quick Ones*. It was clearly going to be much condensed from the *Punch* version and assuming Wodehouse would not have had a reference copy of that original with him, its reappearance in the *Tost Times* would be based on his recollection of the plot. This version thus evidences yet another interesting variation on Plum's working practices.

The pages of the *Tost Times* contain much other interesting material, including independent support for comments in *Performing Flea* or other letters and articles. For example, one column explains about the programme of talks for the Internees:

The new eleven o'clock talks in the lower Dining Room have caught on well. At first the audiences came through curiosity, but a regular attendance of about 200 has now been achieved.

The idea is that every morning there will be a talk designed to entertain as well as instruct. Professor

Doyle-Davidson opened the series by reviewing the educational classes of the Camp. His last, upon the origin of week-day names, was both original and instructive. Prof Macintosh drew blood by advocating Victorian as against present-day methods, and followed with instancing Oscar Wilde as an eminent Victorian. Mr Sarginson has appealed specially to the French-speaking element, by amusing examples from famous French authors. Dr Steel has ranged from the Romance of Medicine to lovely Woman. Mr Wodehouse delighted everybody by being just Wodehouse. We have also listened to Gardening by Mr Roberts, obviously a garden-lover. The last was an amazing half-an-hour on Astronomy as it appears to the working man.

Wodehouse himself wrote about his involvement in these talks, and the fact that he used them as a basis for his broadcasts:

I had written the material in rough form at Tost and had read extracts in the lower dining-room to an audience of patriotic Englishmen – one might almost say 'super-patriotic', for nowhere does patriotism reach greater heights than in an Ilag – and so far from appearing to find anything wrong in my remarks these Englishmen, some two hundred in number, had laughed a good deal.

The journal was used to relay all types of important information to the Internees, such as the British Government's views on *Voluntary Work*, which had been obtained through the American Embassy:

### *Voluntary Work*

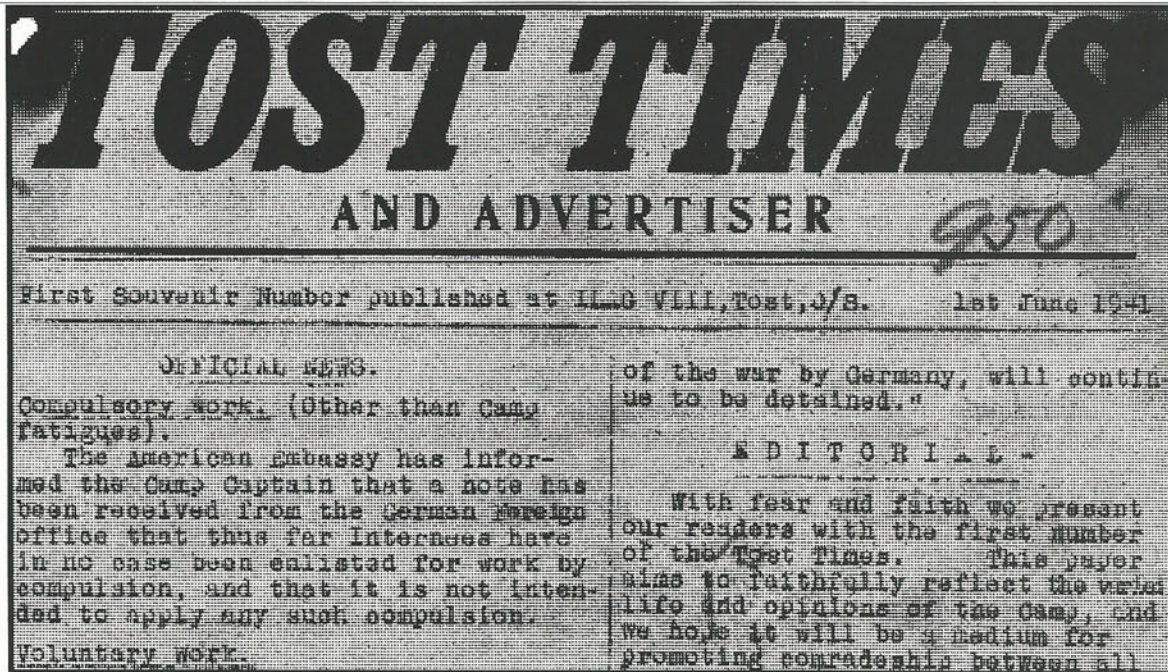
The attitude of the British Government towards the performance of Internees of work of a non-military character is laid down in the following Telegram which has been received from the American Embassy:

'British Government has no objection to acceptance by civil Internees of work of non-military character, such as agricultural or road work.'

The *Tost Times* included a column for the purchase, sale and exchange of goods between Internees. The examples below provide a flavour of the conditions which existed for the inmates.

Readers who are familiar with *Performing Flea* will appreciate in particular the relevance of the offer about Pudding Recipes. And while the J Fletcher





offering PT classes is not, in our belief, the same J Fletcher who serves on our Committee, it is the Sergeant-Major Fletcher whom Plum immortalised in verse in *Performing Flea* (see adjacent column):

1oz tea for 7 pounds Straw. Box No 1

Pair new Shoes, English 10, in exchange shoes size 11. T Harrold, Room 114

Keep that well groomed appearance. Haircutting etc by GORDON THOMPSON, late of Sloane Square, now 401. Hours by appointment. Hairdresser to *Cinderella*, *Out of the Blue*, *Dover Road* and other successes.

GOODS bought sold or exchanged. Bring your problems to Dustpan for a fair deal. Exchange anything. Apply DUSTPAN, Room 401

Nobody is too old for my PT classes, commencing 8am sharp. Roll up and keep fit. Open air. Ex Gen Guards J FLETCHER Room 407

Pudding recipes and advice on camp cook-ups. Apply JIM JOSIAH, Room 403

Free treatment for corns, ingrowing toenails and weary feet. Mr Gamble Room 114

Learn to TAP, ex champion Bert Houcham No 790 gives free tap dancing lessons daily. Room 114

Those familiar with *Performing Flea* will also recognise the name Max Enke, whom Wodehouse used as the model for Lord Uffenham in *Money in the Bank*. An article about the activities of the Chess Club mentioned that it had been set up by Mr Enke, and it offered the opportunity for people to learn the game.

Mr Hurlock's papers also included a sheet of paper on which Plum had typed a page of an early draft of *Full Moon*, on the back of which, presumably forced

of the war by Germany, will continue to be detained."

EDITORIAL

With fear and faith we present our readers with the first number of the *Tost Times*. This paper aims to faithfully reflect the varied life and opinions of the Camp, and we hope it will be a medium for promoting comradeship between all

When I strained a tendon in my leg, along came Sergeant-Major Fletcher night after night, when he could have been playing darts, to give me massage.

I was so touched by this that I broke into verse on the subject:

I used to wobble in my walk  
 Like one who has a jag or bend on;  
 It caused, of course, a lot of talk,  
 But really I had strained a tendon.  
 And just as I was feeling I  
 Would need a crutch or else a stretcher  
 A kindly friend said: "Why not try  
 A course of rubs from J J Fletcher?"  
 He gave me massage day by day  
 Till I grew lissome, lithe, and supple,  
 And no one now is heard to say,  
 "Avoid that man. He's had a couple."  
 And so with gratitude profound  
 I shout "Three cheers for good old Fletcher.  
 He is the man to have around  
 When legs get out of joint, you betcher.  
 Fletcher,  
 I'm glad I metcher."

(From *Performing Flea*)

into the contingency by shortage of paper, he had hand-written in pencil a draft of an entirely different section. Both these pages have points of interest, which will be the subject of a short article in the September issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

The material which Mrs Datlen showed us is of interest not only as further background to the conditions in which Plum was living during his year in the Tost camp but in the wider context as well. We are most grateful to her and her brother for bringing it to our attention.



# Mugg and Plum – A Strange Pairing

*muses Murray Hedgcock*

There are more than 100 literary societies in Britain, according to the records – celebrating everyone from Margery Allingham to Francis Brett Young. In America, where they have a special taste for such devotion, there are no doubt many more. But until now, the centenary year of his birth, on neither side of the Atlantic has there been a society dedicated to Malcolm Muggeridge, who died in 1990 and was once described as the most brilliant controversialist and media personality of his generation.

Sally Muggeridge, an executive with media group Pearson, and daughter of Malcom Muggeridge's brother Jack, has founded The Malcolm Muggeridge Society to pay tribute to a man and writer of extraordinary talents. And this has special meaning for we of the Wodehouse world, because Malcolm Muggeridge played a unique part in the postwar life of The Master.

His was probably the first friendly British face Plum and Ethel Wodehouse saw near the war's end when, as an Intelligence officer, he was assigned to Paris after its liberation in August, 1944. An MI6 colleague suggested that on a list of suspected collaborators, P G Wodehouse – who had lived in Paris since the previous September – might make for an interesting investigation.

Muggeridge recorded their initial meeting in a chapter of his autobiographical volume, *Tread Softly for You Tread on My Jokes* (Collins, 1966):

I attempted the banal observation that his books had given me great pleasure. This was not strictly true. With my strict socialist childhood, Bertie Wooster and Jeeves had about them a flavour of forbidden fruit. ... To me, Wodehouse was just a distinguished and highly original writer, and as such, entitled to be kept clear of the atrocious buffooneries of power maniacs and their wars. Otherwise, I had no feelings about the matter at all.

But the trio hit it off immediately. Muggeridge wrote:

It became increasingly hard for me to remember I was supposed to be probing a 'case', rather than just spending delightful hours with dear friends. All my endeavour was directed towards sparing them worry and discomfort, and relieving them of any apprehension they might have had about their future fate. This, I know, is not the attitude Intelligence officers are supposed to have in dealing with alleged traitors, but I have to admit that it was mine in dealing with the Wodehouses.

Perhaps the single most important service he rendered followed a phone call from one Jacqueline de Broglie, who told him that the Wodehouses had been arrested by the French police and were in custody at the police station in the Quai d'Orléans. When Muggeridge found Ethel and the Pekinese, Wonder, he had the strong impression that the police wanted the dog out of the place, and it was not difficult to persuade the police to release them. Plum posed a trickier problem.

The police had no idea why Plum was there or who he was. The then Préfet, a man called Luiset, had been told at a dinner party by an Englishwoman that it was a scandal that P G Wodehouse should be walking about free in Paris. So he gave instructions for his arrest, which was carried out by three men in shiny black jackets in the middle of the night, and he and Ethel had to remain in a draughty corridor, on hard chairs, for almost twenty-four hours without food or drink.

The French let it be known that the only way his lot could be ameliorated was if he were ill, as he could then be taken to a clinic. Although his temperature was normal, the doctor agreed he was in a poor way, but the only place with an available bed was a maternity ward. So the Wodehousean background to his war continued: from the lunatic asylum at Tost, he now awoke in a maternity ward where, true to his art, he set up his typewriter and continued to work. He had two gendarmes to guard him, with whom he played cards and would probably have been content to stay there, with visits from Ethel. But Muggeridge arranged his release and transfer to a hotel in Fontainebleau.

The principal archive of Muggeridge papers is at Wheaton College, Illinois, where a seminar, *Muggeridge Rediscovered*, was held on May 22-23. The publicity for the conference says that he manifested a prophetic ability to see through political and intellectual fashions to the deeper – and often darker – realities of the modern era. 'Muggeridge wrote scathing criticisms of the crumbling British Empire, was among the first to expose Stalin's genocidal regime in the 1930s, found himself banned from the BBC for claiming in the 1950s that the media was turning the British Monarchy into a 'Royal Soap Opera' – and became known in his later years for being an outspoken critic of materialism, the power of the media, and both abortion and euthanasia.'



# *And Don't Forget Bert Haskins*

*Marjorie Barton wrote in about another fellow-internee*

Another of Wodehouse's companions at Ilag VIII in Tost was Bert Haskins. This is what Wodehouse wrote about him in *Performing Flea*.

When I was in camp, I had the most tremendous liking and admiration for the War Graves Commission men. With one of them, Bert Haskins, I formed a friendship which will last all our lives. He was pure gold, and we kept up a correspondence all the time after I left Tost until, a few weeks after the liberation, his letters suddenly ceased and I assumed he had been repatriated. I hope so. Bert was the chap who, when we were spending that eight hours in the cattle trucks before leaving Loos, suddenly appeared at my side with half a loaf of bread, butter, radishes, a bottle of wine and a slap of potted meat. He didn't know me, but out of sheer goodness of heart he came and gave me the stuff. He was a splendid chap, and I was always so sorry he was not in my dormitory.

One of our older members, Marjorie Barton from the Isle of Wight, has written to tell us that Bert's father, David Haskins, was a 'Boozing Companion' of

her father (referred to irreverently and vulgarly by her many siblings as her father's 'BC'). She described him as a 'lovely man, rather stout in a formal three-piece suit and fat gold watch chain', and that one day in the early forties he came to tell them that he had heard from his POW son Herbert, who had been taken from the War Graves at Dunkirk by the Germans but was now in camp with 'this writer, a splendid fellow – made them all laugh'.

Mrs Barton told us that the Haskinses lived in Green Lane, Small Heath, Birmingham, which housed many small arms factories: BSA, Bakelite and others, and that the area was badly bombed. The local A-Z still shows a Green Lane running east to west at the northern edge of Small Heath, but it is not clear if it remains a residential street.

We were very pleased to hear from Mrs Barton, who has loved reading PGW for more than seventy years, for it is particularly interesting to learn a little more about people who actually met Wodehouse at any time. We are always eager to receive such direct or indirect reminiscences.

## *An Anomaly at Windles claims Bernard Lewis*

In *The Girl on the Boat*, what powers the orchestration in the Windles drawing room?

The house, still using candles and oil lamps, apparently has no electricity, yet Jane Hubbard pushed something and the orchestration broke off in the middle of a bar.

Later, though Mr Bennett referred to "that damned gas engine", Sam Marlowe groped for a light switch while caught in the dark, pressed a knob and started up the orchestration.

## *European Politics and PGW According to Giscard d'Estaing*

On Friday May 16, the *Financial Times* reported that M. Giscard d'Estaing had reacted with typically patrician disdain to the *Daily Mail's* warning that his draft European Union Treaty on the constitution would be 'a blueprint for tyranny'.

"I'm not astonished because I know the British talent for fiction," he said. "It brings to mind the style of P G Wodehouse. They say it's a secret convention made up of foreigners – it's secret because it sits in Brussels."

## *Mugg and Plum, continued*

It seems difficult to imagine a close friendship between such a seeker after truth, enjoying publicity for his quest and his beliefs, and the self-effacing P G Wodehouse, happiest on his own and recreating his part-real, part-fictional England long gone. But that friendship survived Muggerridge's return to England in 1945. They kept in close touch, and when Muggerridge was appointed Editor of *Punch* in 1952,

it was not long before the name Wodehouse was again found among the list of contributors.

This development will be considered in the second part of this article, in September's *Wooster Sauce*, and members might like to know that Sally Muggerridge will speak about the links between the pair at the October 14 Savage Club evening.



# My First Wodehouse Experience

*Christine Hewitt challenges her memory*

Some loves are instant, some slow burn for a while before they grip you. For me the world of Wodehouse was the latter.

I wonder what made me pick one of the books from a library shelf many years ago? I know that I liked it and that some time later I read another, a Jeeves & Wooster story. Why am I not giving you the titles? Sadly my powers of recall are akin to those of the Earl of Emsworth and the past is a little foggy.

Time passed; then the Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie television series re-kindled the fire and I read every Jeeves & Wooster story that I could find. Examining the inside cover of one of those books a few years later it occurred to me that the Master had written a great deal more and it was out there awaiting my attention. Old school chum and fellow enthusiast Anne and I began to look out for the other books and we in particular wished to read those with funny titles. For two years we have in vain searched in bookshops for the delightfully named *Ice in the Bedroom*.

By now hopelessly devoted to Wodehouse I wanted others to share the joy. Two former bosses have received Wodehouse material as their parting gift and in 2001 a friend I had introduced to the wonderful Jeeves & Wooster videos sent me a newspaper cutting about the Wodehouse Society and suggested that I join.

So there I was at the November 2002 meeting at the Savage Club engaged in a conversation about first Wodehouse experiences. But what was mine? I was ashamed to admit to such erudite people that I could only remember a tiny scrap of the library novel that I knew had sparked my interest all those years ago, and that I had no idea of the title. Of course this



challenge was taken up with relish and it was no surprise to me that the book was soon identified. My thanks to John Fletcher for working it out, based only on a few misquoted words that turned out to be from the beginning of chapter 5. My thanks also to Tony Ring who found a copy of the book for me. Which book are we talking about? It appears to have been, ahem, *Ice in the Bedroom*. Truly I am proud to be as daft as Bertie!

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## ***Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for Comic Writing: 2003***

This award is given to the novel which best maintains the tradition of P G Wodehouse, celebrating both satire and the comedy of manners. The six short-listed novels were:

- Life of Pi*, by Yann Martel;
- The Autograph Man*, by Zadie Smith;
- I Don't Know how She Does It*, by Allison Pearson;
- Don't You Want Me*, by India Knight;
- Vernon God Little*, by DBC Pierre; and
- Dot in the Universe*, by Lucy Ellman.

The winner, who receives amongst other things a Gloucestershire Old Spot sow, was DBC Pierre, whose book was described by judge James Naughtie as 'A *tour de force* of a certain kind of raucous, coruscating humour, a sort of white trash-*Gone with the Wind* version of *The Simpsons* with all the dirty bits left in'.

This may not sound wholly Wodehousean in tone, but Peter Florence, another judge and Director of the Guardian Hay Festival, said that it had 'that most elusive of things: brilliant and original comic tone'.



# Oh, Joy! Oh, Rapture! Come Pig Racing!

## Join the Society Visit to Bocketts Farm

As mentioned in the March edition of *Wooster Sauce*, arrangements have been made for a Wodehouse Day at Bocketts Farm, near Leatherhead in Surrey. This is a working farm with cows, sheep, goats, chickens, pigs and many other animals, including less common species such as llamas, xebu, rheas and wallabies. There are always babies around of various species, ever an attraction to young and old alike. The farm is open to the public daily, except for winter bank holidays.

But the particular reason for this event is that Bocketts Farm holds two pig races just about every day of the year, with six competitors running a course of about 75 yards, being rewarded, of course, by food at the finish. In the light of the misunderstanding between the Duke of Dunstable and Lord Emsworth in *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* it seems wholly appropriate that our members, their families and friends, should be encouraged to visit.

Accordingly, the races held at 12.45pm and 3.45pm on Saturday July 26 will have a Wodehousean slant, with both races and pigs being renamed for the day. At 2pm we hope that the public will respond to our overtures to join in a light-hearted pig-calling competition in honour of the story *Pig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey*. Since the general public will be present, this may be

an opportunity to generate new interest in the Blandings stories.

The Farm has a tea-room offering both home-cooked lunches and sandwiches, but there is also plenty of space to sit and enjoy a picnic. You and your party will be welcome to look round the whole farm and meet the animals, and perhaps try your hand at milking goats, or, age permitting, having pony or tractor rides. It opens at 10am, and we plan to meet as a group outside the tea-room at 12 noon so that we can vigorously support our favourites in the first race.

Cost of entry is £4.35 for adults, with reductions to £3.95 for children and senior citizens. The farm is easy to find by car, being close to the roundabout where the A246 meets the B2122, and there is ample free parking. From Leatherhead station it is a five-minute cab ride; walking is only recommended for the very fit.

We are not issuing tickets but would be glad to hear from members who are likely to attend. Please e-mail

to let  
us know how many will be in your party

## Five Years as a Freemason

### *Plum dabbled with freemasonry - and spiritualism*

In *Joy in the Morning*, when Bertie Wooster was discussing the personality of Stilton Cheesewright with Nobby Hopwood, Nobby explained that the reason Florence was upset with Stilton was that he wanted to earn his own living, as a result of her talking Socialism to him and making him read Marx. Bertie agreed with her that he was impressionable and recalled that when at Oxford someone temporarily converted him to Buddhism.

Wodehouse himself seems to have been equally impressionable. He was admitted a Freemason in 1929 at the Jerusalem Lodge in London (but resigned in 1934); influenced by both his brother Armine and his friend Arthur Conan Doyle he dabbled in Spiritualism; he announced his intention to stop eating meat; and he believed in the curative effects of the springs at Harrogate and elsewhere.

He was obviously familiar with aspects of freemasonry before becoming a mason, as he used the expression 'the meeting is tiled' as early as 1919, in *A Damsel in Distress*, repeating it in *If I Were You*, *Heavy Weather* (twice) and *Cocktail Time*. In *Hot Water* he used the phrase 'gives you the grip', a reference to the masonic handshake.

One of the meanings of 'tile' given in the OED, dating back to 1762, is:

To protect a lodge or meeting from intrusion, so as to keep its proceedings secret, by placing a tyler before the door.

*Observations on Plum's interest in Spiritualism and the other matters mentioned will appear in future issues of Wooster Sauce.*



# Casting the Ladies in Wodehouse Fiction

*Eddie Grabham goes fishing*

In the last issue, I discovered a veritable repertory company of modern actors to bring Wodehousean characters to life – but who among the ranks of modern actresses could best capture the magic of Plum on stage or screen?

It is satisfying to note that the current roster of Thespian ladies is just as full of potential. For example, that lovely American actress Gwyneth Paltrow is so adept at English accents we can easily cast her in various roles, but surely perfect casting would have her playing Madeline Bassett.

Whether or not Miss Paltrow will ever be called upon to adopt the soupiness of Madeline Bassett remains pure speculation of course, but that's the beauty of 'make believe casting'. One can cast the biggest name in the smallest role if one wishes. "Spare no expense" goes up the cry, for these are contracts that will probably never be signed. So when we read that Sir Buckstone Abbott's invaluable secretary Prudence Whitaker is 'tall, slender and elegant', we can pencil in the name Catherine Zeta Jones without fear of rejection. Pure summer moonshine you may say, but I think she'd be good in any role.

Talking of moonshine, summer or otherwise, one is tempted to wonder who could tackle the role of the monstrous Princess von und zu Dwornitzchek. The fact that no actress could possibly be that wicked has already been commented upon within the erudite columns of *Wooster Sauce*, so we must find an actress of extraordinary talent, one who can convince that the humble male will find in her a fatal attraction. Who else but the magnificent Glenn Close whose impersonation of Dodie Smith's appalling Cruella De Vil could be taken as a starting point.

Before we leave the confines of Walsingford Hall we must not forget Jane Abbott, if only because one may wish to cadge a lift in her Widgeon Seven two-seater. Here we have no real difficulties; spoilt for choice one might say, but I'll stick my neck out and give the part to Emilia Fox whose pedigree cannot be doubted.

Having tarried awhile in the pleasant Berkshire countryside, I have digressed. With Gwyneth Paltrow cast as Madeline Bassett, all those other popies in the world of *Wooster* have been temporarily set aside. Fear not, the omission is about to be corrected.

The thing to grasp about all these young ladies is that, despite the many and various reasons why they

cause Bertie to come out in a rash, they are all attractive females who could happily adorn the arm of the handsomest of men.

Pauline Stoker presents another opportunity to cast one of our American cousins. Given that such a role must surely offer Oscar-winning opportunities, I would happily offer the role to Renee Zellweger who, taken out of the rather murky atmosphere of twenties' Chicago, would score a huge hit. Of course, when Miss Zellweger played Bridget Jones, she revealed English accent tendencies of Paltrow proportions and could therefore also be considered for the part of cousin Angela.

This would then leave the role of P Stoker to Kate Hudson, who has a twinkle in the eye which she must surely have inherited from Goldie Hawn (Kate's mum for those not up with the latest Hollywood social scene).

Stephanie 'Stiffy' Byng? Easiest of the lot in my humble opinion. Here is the perfect role for Lara Cazalet who surely was born to play in a Wodehouse opus. Or would she be better cast as Dolly Molloy?

The sheer determination of Florence Craye could be realised to the full by Kristin Scott Thomas, while Jennifer Ehle would give complete satisfaction as Honoria Glossop.

Now we come to the aunts, without whom no Wodehouse casting would be complete. I feel that the lovely Dame Judi Dench could disguise her fair nature with hard-favour'd rage to turn in a blood-curdling performance as Aunt Agatha.

As for Bertie's favourite Aunt Dahlia, who else but Joanna Lumley (forget *Ab-Fab* – think *New Avengers*).

I've left the most inspired piece of casting until last. For this part, we need an actress of extraordinary talent, one who can peer down her nose and put the fear of God into the soul of any man within fifty paces. I'm talking about an actress who can cast her beady eye on Clarence, the ninth Earl of Emsworth as if to say "I don't know how you did it, but I'm sure it's your fault that not one P G Wodehouse novel appeared on the recent list of the best one hundred English books". Yes, the role of Lady Constance would call upon the most exacting resources and the actress who could meet the challenge and have us breathless with admiration (and have quite a hearty laugh to boot) would be Dame Maggie Smith.

QED. Something long and cool, I think, Jeeves (and I don't mean Miss Paltrow).



# Starship Woosters

## Tristan Godfrey considers Plum's Influence on Robert A Heinlein

On the face of it, P G Wodehouse, master of comic writing, has little in common with the American pioneer of hard science fiction, Robert A Heinlein. Heinlein wrote the books that were later turned into such films as *Starship Troopers* and *Puppet-Masters*. Such tales of intergalactic warfare seem a long way away from *Piccadilly Jim*. By the time Heinlein was born in 1907, Wodehouse had already established himself, and Heinlein devoted his writing career to producing material for pulp magazines which would only have been read by office-boys in the world of Wodehouse. The only odd connection they seem to have is that both have been accused of having fascist tendencies, equally inaccurately.

Both authors get entries in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (by John Clute and Peter Nicholls). Wodehouse gets in because of *The Swoop* and *Laughing Gas*. Heinlein rates well over a page in his own right, but the fact that Wodehouse was loved and enjoyed by, and affected the outlook of, Heinlein was neglected. It is time to put the record straight.

In 1953-54 Heinlein and his wife Virginia (referred to as 'Ticky' in the book) took a trip around the world, the old-fashioned way, steamships and trains. The book Heinlein wrote about this trip was not published until after his death in 1988 (Ace Books 1992). *Tramp Royale* is the most personal of his books, not least because he is actually a 'character'. There are two explicit Wodehouse references in this book.

The first deals with the sea voyage aboard a Dutch motor ship, *Ruys*. They say of their cabin steward: "Kwai Yau could give Jeeves pointers on how to take care of people." While this sounds unlikely, Heinlein

obviously has Jeeves as his measure of what good service should be. The Wodehousean ability to treat servants as of equal worth comes through when Heinlein mentions his horror at finding out the other passengers do not know the name of their 'Chinese' stewards. Anyone who adopts the standards of Wodehouse is always liable to be shocked when others fail to observe even the most basic of common decencies.

The second reference is longer and deals with 'John . . . a young Englishman fresh out of college'. Heinlein mentions that he was a candidate for the Drones' Club, and Heinlein reports John's description of just how difficult it was to get arrested on Boat Race Night, the proctors being very vigilant. Disguises had to be adopted in order to actually get arrested. Wooster's ability to give false names when in trouble was obviously second nature. If further proof of John's credentials were needed, Heinlein adds this: 'When Ticky told him that his cumberbund should be Dubonnet in shade, rather than claret, he agreed, stripped it off and threw it overboard, and resumed dancing, all with smiling aplomb.' (All spellings are as in the book). An eccentric character, but one that Heinlein had no trouble in placing culturally.

Knowing this, and reviewing Heinlein's work, Wodehouse's influence is clearly seen.

Despite all the action and philosophising, none of Heinlein's heroes hit a woman, or even speak harshly to one, they are all loyal to their friends, and accept that all people are worthy of treating with respect.

Some things transcend genre.

## The Wodehouse Notebooks on Radio

On April 24, Radio 4 broadcast a programme about the notebooks in which Plum used to enter his daily observations during his apprentice years.

Chris Campling previewed the programme in *The Times's Radio Choice* column in as enthusiastic a manner as would have been possible:

Get out the tape-recorders, because it is taping-for-the-grandchildren time. For this is prime living history at its most vital, even if the central character has been dead for thirty years.

But then they don't call Wodehouse the Immortal for nothing, and here the satirist John Bird brings him back more alive than ever. For these are Plum's own words, extracts from the journals he kept before he became the greatest comic writer of them all, back when he was a bank clerk living in digs in Chelsea. Read by Tim McInnerny, the extracts provide us with that uniquely Wodehousean view of his own upbringing and life in Edwardian England, not to mention giving us a damned good laugh.



## Read, Snigger and Escape

### Murray Hedgcock's rule for living

Many moons ago, discovering that my insurance broker was a cricket buff, I sent him a copy of *Wodehouse at the Wicket*, and was mildly miffed that I received no acknowledgement, except his response to a passing query in a phone call on business, that he was working his way through it.

Today in a letter responding to my complaints about the erratic response of the insurance companies dealing with my burglary claims, he adds:

I very much enjoyed the book, which I read with great amusement, primarily at the annual voluntary duty of invigilating the insurance exams at the local community hall. This duty is tiresome, but one of those which is hard to avoid. My helpless sniggering at the story of the refusal to declare [presumably *The Match With Downing's*] drew many disapproving glances, and it may be that I will not be asked again. If this is the case, I am indebted to Mr Wodehouse and of course yourself!

Could this means of escape be more widely adopted? Nasser Hussein read, snigger, and not be asked to captain England again? Carole Caplin read, snigger – and not be asked to take showers with Cherie Blair again?

## Now You Know

*From time to time Wodehouse would include in his fiction some educational information of such fundamental importance that it is our duty to pass it on when our researches brings it to our notice. This masterpiece comes from Money for Nothing (1928).*

Although it was his impression that the few drops of whisky which he had drunk in John's room had but scratched the surface, their effect in reality had been rather pronounced. 'In some diatheses,' an eminent physician has laid down, 'whisky is not immediately pathogenic. In other cases the spirit in question produces marked cachexia.' Hugo's cachexia was very marked indeed. He would have resented keenly the suggestion that he was fried, boiled, or even sozzled, but he was unquestionably in a definite condition of cachexia.

*Note: the OED describes 'cachexia' as, inter alia:*

A depraved condition of the body in which nutrition is everywhere defective.

## Letters to the Editor

### From Nicholas Aldridge of Oxford

I have recently re-read *Psmith in the City* (1910), a splendid book and full of historical insights into how people viewed the prospect of revolution by 'the masses'. An interesting detail is that one of the apostles of the Revolution who speaks on Clapham Common is Comrade Wotherspoon,

a tall, thin man with a high voice [who] scattered his aitches as a fountain its sprays in a high wind.

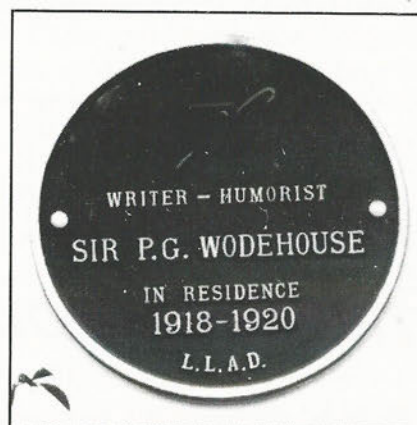
In Chapter 3 of *The Man Who Was Thursday: a Nightmare* by G K Chesterton, published two years earlier, we attend a meeting of anarchists, prominent among whom is a little man with a velvet coat, a pointed beard and a squeaky voice. He is Comrade Witherspoon.

I wonder if they are by any chance related.

### From Chris Deuker of California

Whilst I was awaiting the start of the Millennium Tour in July 2000, Norman Murphy gave me several suggestions for local Wodehouse site visits. He directed me to Walton Street, behind Harrods in Knightsbridge, where Wodehouse spent much of 1919 and 1920.

I was delighted to see a blue plaque at number 16, noting the two year residence of P G Wodehouse. I had not yet met Norman and already he was impressing me.



Several days later, I met the man, told him I'd found the plaque. He actually paused before replying that he'd never seen it! At the evening's gathering he kindly announced my discovery.

The plaque is unofficial as a person can only have one 'Blue Plaque'. The discovery nevertheless remains a triumph for a colonial who is strong neither on Wodehouse details, nor the Kings of Judah!



# Help the Society Choose a New Logo

*We plan to rationalise our image*

When the Society was established, in the days long ago when none of the members of the putative Committee really understood the scope and flexibility of IT, we seem to have generated different logos for different purposes on an *ad hoc* basis. There is the hand-holding-pen sign on the top of *Wooster Sauce* and *By The Way*; the Kid Brady image on the Christmas story, the butler-cocktail on our note-paper and data-sheets, the Low cartoon on our prospectus and the coat of arms of the Earl of Emsworth used on the Society tie.

All, with your help, is about to change.

We would like to select a single Society logo which will represent our principal image to the outside world, although our publications will continue to feature their present images as well. It needs to be simple, easily recognisable, highly relevant to an aspect of Wodehouse's life or his characters, and capable of good reproduction in black-and-white both in print and when passed through a photocopier. The latter requirement would count against using a photograph as a logo, but one which might otherwise be suitable is shown alongside.

We are therefore inviting members to submit proposed designs for consideration by the Committee by August 15. Those considered to be the best will appear in September's *Wooster Sauce* and displayed at the Savage Club meeting on October 15. After we



have had the chance to consider comments by members on the various proposals, the Committee will make a decision on the logo to be introduced early next year.

## *The Woosters weren't in Trade, but . . .*

While rotivating some abandoned corner of his garden in Northamptonshire, Patron Lord Scott was surprised to dig up a number of evidently aged glass bottles in good, but dirty condition. He had hit upon one of the depositories where in earlier times household refuse was dug in to the ground rather than disposed of by collection or in another manner.

What interested the noble Lord was the wording which showed up in ridges on one of the bottles. It read: H E Wooster MPS Chemist Haverstock Hill NW.

Discounting at once the possibility that Bertie had been born into a family in trade, Lord Scott had a passing thought that perhaps this chemist had once supplied medications to a passing Wodehouse. Haverstock Hill is not known, though, to have been a haunt of the young Plum, the nearest point which he is known to have frequented being Lord's Cricket

Ground a mile or two to the south-west. Not impossible, therefore, that he knew of the shop, but no evidence to suggest it was likely.

H E (Herbert Edward) Wooster practised his trade or profession from his premises at 85 Haverstock Hill for a lengthy period, being listed in the *Kelly's Directories* for both 1907 and 1937. So we are free to fantasize that between the wars his dispensary would have been an ideal place, close to central London, for young men with a morning head or a run-down feeling to send their valets to buy their Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo.

As the name 'Wooster' is not uncommon in the UK, it is inevitable that its association with the varied trades and professions of its family members may be found. If readers are aware of other examples, please let the editor know at the address at the foot of page 24.



# Good Morning, Bill

Roderick Ogley saw the revival at The Little Theatre, Bolton

Even in the North of England, Wodehouse fans could hardly be called an endangered species, but they were rarely seen there congregating in any numbers until, a couple of years ago, Mark Reid established something of a nature reserve at Bolton's Little Theatre, where, in the mellower months, modest flocks can, on occasion, be observed.

They were there again on May 17th, to proclaim that, though you might not have thought it from the weather, spring was with us again. This year the nature reserve offered the additional lure of a well-stocked bird-table, in the form of a week-long run of Wodehouse's play, *Good Morning, Bill*, and, in the afternoon preceding its last performance, the chance to learn more about the play, and about the trouble Wodehouse had with the then theatre censor, the Lord Chamberlain, when it was first put on in 1927.

*Good Morning, Bill* was, according to *Plum Sauce*, 'adapted from the Hungarian', and Wodehouse later made a novel, *Doctor Sally*, out of it. In a very entertaining talk, Tony Ring told us of the many alterations Wodehouse had to accept, including the replacement of "Good God!" with "Holy Smoke!", before the Lord Chamberlain was satisfied that it was not in danger of 'corrupting the morals of the audience'.

The play has a feminist theme. A woman who is a competent professional wants to be treated as such, even if she happens to be beautiful. A man's absorption in his work impresses her more than the intensity of his romantic feelings. "If I ever love a man," says Doctor Sally Smith, "I shall inform him of the fact, simply and naturally, as if I were saying 'Good morning' ", which, in the end, she does – hence the play's title.

It is the most frequently revived of Wodehouse's plays, and makes for a delightful evening. Not surprisingly, the biggest laugh came when, in the course of a medical examination, the hero is bluntly



Adam Berlyne as Bill Paradene and Andrew Close as Lord Tidmouth in *Good Morning, Bill*

asked about his sex life. "I have had . . . er . . . experiences. There have been women in my life," he admits. Sally is at the stethoscope again. "Say ninety-nine." "Not half as many as that."

Casting feeble young men, the producer told us, was easy. Adam Berlyne, as Bill Paradene, and even more so Andrew Close, as Lord Tidmouth, were in their different ways as endearingly feeble as anyone could wish. Beverly Cutler gave Lottie, with whom, at the start of the play, Bill is involved, a delicious bounce and petulance. It was easy to see why Sally would have regarded her proprietorial attitude towards Bill with some distaste.

As Sally herself, Lorraine Kelly, gorgeous enough to make Bill's first-glance infatuation comprehensible, took us convincingly along her complicated emotional journey, from amused disdain, through anger at her frivolous midnight call-out, to the point of being touched into love by his expertise with alpha-separators and his familiarity with the bacteria of milk.

But it was Michael Howarth, as Bill's snobbish, artful and golf-obsessed uncle Sir Hugo Drake, who gave the performance of the evening.

Now I am on the look-out for any bird-tables where I can peck at some of Wodehouse's other nineteen plays? Any offers?



# Another Angle on PGW's D. Litt

## Simon Frazer finds a Tribute in a Contemporary School Magazine

P G Wodehouse's award of D. Litt at Oxford almost exactly 64 years ago, on 21st June 1939, was accompanied by a rousing speech by the University's Public Orator, in Latin of course. Various translations have been attempted over the years, but Simon Frazer has discovered an alternative approach: a précis rather than a translation. He writes:

These lines were the Editor's Tailpiece in the Magazine of King Edward VI Grammar School, Morpeth, for the Summer Term 1939. My elder brother entered this school in 1939. The Grammar School is no more, but the staff of the present comprehensive school kindly supplied a copy of the magazine. My brother thinks that the Editor was J Robinson, Senior English Master.

The tocsin has sounded, the call has gone forth,  
The word has been given – oh golly!  
That now is the moment for all men of worth  
To honour the master of folly.

Young Bingo, young Catsmeat and Gussie Fink-Nottle  
And even young Fotheringay-Phipps  
Are already anxious to uncork the bottle  
And chirrup their "What ho! Pip-pips."

The Empress has wiggled, Lord Emsworth has said  
That no underhanded skulldugger  
Shall nobble her intent to be at the spread  
Complete with the old bib and tucker.

The Mulliner mister has given his word,  
And this is no nolle prosequi,  
That all absentees will have richly deserved  
A spell in the can or the chokey.

Psmith has implied that in case of default  
By anyone – even the Glossop –  
He will in persona wreak b. and assault  
And will not stop short at a toss-up.

The M.C. of M.C.'s of course will be Jeeves,  
He'll hand the right stuff to the élite;  
And Bertie the Wooster will spread the rose leaves  
To honour the queer fish – a D. Litt.

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## Do You Believe in Concidence?

*If you do, you may enjoy this example*

No sooner had the March issue of *Wooster Sauce*, in which we announced the publication of *A Prince for Hire*, been despatched, than we were contacted by Christopher Certa, an American who had an interesting story to tell about the history of the 'obscure American magazine' mentioned within, *The Illustrated Love Magazine*.

The story begins in the 1920s. My great-aunt, Catherine McNelis, worked for Woolworths and published promotional material for the retail chain. Eventually the idea was expanded, and in November 1929 Tower Magazines launched the first issues of the monthly *The Illustrated Detective Magazine*, *The Home Magazine*, *The New Movie Magazine* and *The Illustrated Love Magazine*. These were sold through subscription (worldwide), newsstands and at Woolworths in the USA and Canada. As time went on, there were other ventures into publishing, to include recipe pamphlets and other items marketed to the female audience of the 1930s. Titles included *Reducing the Right Way* and *The New Movie Album*. Later, *The Illustrated Detective Magazine* changed its name to *Mystery*, *The Illustrated Love Magazine* was discontinued, *Tower Radio*,

*Serenade* and *Tiny Tower*, a magazine specifically for children, were added.

My grandfather, Francis McNelis, was the managing director of *New Movie* during the latter part of 1934 and throughout 1935. The last issue of any of them was that of September 1935, when publication was stopped, following federal charges of mail fraud due to misrepresentation of circulation numbers in advertising. What is unclear is exactly why publication was stopped. One suggestion is that there was a mutiny of staff. For mail fraud a fine could have been levied on the company, whereas my great-aunt was convicted and sent to jail. She was a stubborn woman, and wasn't prepared to let anyone take her publications away from her.

An unusual story, and this little piece of history shows again how widely Plum's works were disseminated. The April to August 1931 issues of *The Illustrated Love Magazine* carried instalments of *A Prince for Hire*, while the October 1933 issue reprinted *The Good Angel* (from *The Man Upstairs*) under the title *Roses for Gentlemen*. This story featured Elsa Rossiter, who had also appeared in the one on which *A Prince for Hire* had been based.



## Wellington as Blandings?

*In March, Jeffrey Preston promoted the cause of Wellington as a possible source for Market Blandings Station.*

*Norman Murphy presents his considered reply.*

Mr Preston's article had me worried because, although there were three more important factors that supported my claim for Shifnal, I am fully aware that for many people the railway timings are the deciding factor.

In his favour, Wellington and Shifnal are both about the same distance from Wodehouse's home at Stableford. But the description I read recently of Shifnal being famous throughout the county for the number of pubs on either side of its main street (all demolished in the 1930s) makes it just the sort of place we want. Most important, we need somewhere which is five miles away from 'Blandings' (*ie* Weston Park).

Faced with Mr Preston's proposal, I took extreme measures. Starting with a model railway shop, I progressed through the labyrinth of that part of inner England that involves itself with railway

timetables to the steam railway people at Bridgnorth, and thence to Kidderminster Railway Museum.

I am delighted to announce that their timetables for 1902 show that three trains a day from Paddington did stop at Shifnal. Enthusiasts will remember that Lord Emsworth always advised guests on specific trains to catch from the Market Blandings stop. The Kidderminster museum informed me that the 6.30, 9.45 and 18.50 were the Paddington trains to Shifnal, and I think that may have put the idea into Wodehouse's head.

Wellington may also have been a frequent stop, which I am sure PGW used if he missed one of the Shifnal trains. But as a leading authority has confirmed that in a year in which we know Wodehouse travelled from Stableford to London he could do so on expresses stopping at Shifnal, my case remains intact.

### *Simon Gordon Clark adds:*

Jeffrey Preston's theory that Market Drayton is the model for Market Blandings is surely strengthened by the fact that, among a large number of public houses in Market Drayton, the most prominent is the Corbet Arms, the Corbets being the local landowners.

### **The Smile That Wins Favourite Nifties - 23**

For if we look askance at the wretch who sells himself for gold, how much more do we recoil from him who allows himself to be bought with pork pies.

From *Money in the Bank* (1942)

## *More from the Emsworth Correspondence*

This extract from a letter to Lily, his former housekeeper at Emsworth, was dated June 20, 1918, and was written from Great Neck, Long Island:

We had a Swiss couple over here, looking after us, but the man smashed up our car and the woman took two hours cooking an egg, so we didn't get on, and a week ago they suddenly announced they had got another job so now we are doing our own cooking and so on just as we used to down in Bellport.

I am working away just as hard as ever. I shall have five plays running in New York in the autumn, possibly six. I find I can do a lot of work here, as it is all so quiet, and there are no distractions. We have three dogs, two parrots and a canary! Only one of

the dogs really belongs to us. The other two are a French bulldog and an Irish terrier. The bulldog is rather a responsibility. It belonged to a friend of ours who lived in New York and wanted a country home for the dog. It is a prize dog, and they have refused £ 100 for him! So you can imagine how we feel when he rushes out and attacks motor cars in the road. It is like seeing a banknote fluttering away on the wind.

*Emsworth Museum is open until the end of October on Saturdays and Bank Holidays (and Fridays in August), from 10.30 am to 4.30pm, and on Sundays from 2.30 to 4.30pm. It is located at 10b North Street, above the Fire Station.*



# A Source of Misquotation

by Nigel Rees

As I have recently been staying at an actual Honeysuckle Cottage in an Oxfordshire village, my thoughts turn on this occasion to the subject of PGW's titles. 'Honeysuckle Cottage' was, of course, given to a Mr Mulliner story in 1925 and like most of them makes you start enjoying the tale even before reading it.

I find it interesting that PGW, though embellishing his work with so many quotations, did not, on the whole, use them when he was thinking up titles for his stories. There are exceptions – 'Rough-Hew Them How We Will', 'A Sea of Troubles', 'Those in Peril on the Tee' and 'A Good Cigar is a Smoke' are all obvious allusions. Among the book titles, I have always rather assumed that *Joy In The Morning* refers to 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning' from Psalm 30, verse 5.

Mostly, though, PGW played around with established phrases – when he was not creating his own, like *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, which presumably takes the prize for Best Original Coinage. Here are some observations on just a few of them:

'Good-Bye to All Cats' (1934): the memoir *Goodbye To All That* by Robert Graves had been published a few years before, in 1929.

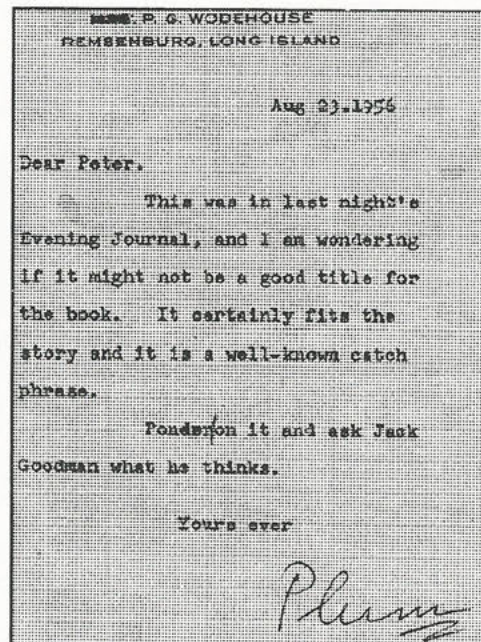
'Bramley is so Bracing' (1939): must allude to the slogan 'It's So Bracing!', that had been on posters advertising Skegness (with the jolly fisherman) since 1909ish.

'Came the Dawn' (1927): this was a stock phrase of romantic fiction (also 'comes the dawn . . .') in the early 20th century. It has also been reported as a subtitle or inter-title from the early days of cinema. CA Lejeune wrote that it was one of the screen title captions illustrated by Alfred Hitchcock in his early days in the cinema, 'in black letters on a white background.'

*The Butler Did It* (1957) (but known as *Something Fishy* in the UK): PGW came relatively late to this phrase, so redolent of detective fiction in its

1920/30s heyday. The earliest use of the phrase it is possible to give chapter and verse for is the caption to a *Punch* cartoon by Norman Mansbridge in the issue of 14 September 1938. Two policemen are shown standing outside a cinema that is showing *The Mansion Murder* and on the posters it asks "Who killed the duke?" One policeman is saying to the other: "I guessed the butler did it."

PGW was also inspired by a cartoon, as this letter and cartoon sent to Peter Schwed, his American literary editor, shows.



A footnote to all this. Ruth Fraser, a *Quote ... Unquote* listener from Norfolk, wrote to me recently: 'I was idly browsing at one of our local bookshops this morning when I came across a hardback with the intriguing title of *More Bacon Neville*. Thinking this might be a lesser known yarn by PG Wodehouse, or perhaps something about wartime radio comedy catchphrases, I picked it up and turned to the title page. It was, in fact, a collection of 16th century philosophical works by Sir Thomas More, Francis Bacon and Henry Neville!'

### Editor's Note:

Nigel Rees masterminds the *Quote . . . Unquote* website which provides information about the radio programme of that name, and lists many of the unsolved queries submitted to it.



## A Damsel in Distress

Audiotape reviewed by Adrian Vincent

Some Wodehouse narrators, or actors in dramatised recordings, appear to believe that by putting on a silly voice they will make Wodehouse funny – what heresy! The only result is that the character comes across as false, because the narrator is expecting us to only laugh *at* characters, not *with* them. But when listening to a Jonathan Cecil recording, and hearing the voices of Bertie, Jeeves, Mike, Psmith or Lord Emsworth, you know that it is really them speaking, and not someone impersonating them.

*A Damsel in Distress* is inhabited by characters almost identical to those in the Blandings stories. But Cecil has not spared himself; he has not reused any voices from his Blandings recordings. Lord Marshmoreton is given a less doddery voice than Lord Emsworth – and rightly, because Marshmoreton is only 48. Reggie Byng is given a less high-pitched voice than Freddie Threepwood, which rings true for a man with sufficient practical ability to repair a sports car.

A particular highlight is listening to Albert the page murdering Maud Marsh's favourite poem (Tennyson's *Mariana*). Reading the text cannot compare with hearing Cecil's delivery of it.

My one criticism is that, when Cecil speaks as the narrator, he sometimes speaks too quickly. A favourite passage of mine from the book is:

Besides there was no earthly chance of getting to know her. You can't rush up to pretty girls in the street and tell them you are lonely. At least, you can, but it doesn't get you anywhere except the police station.

I was playing this particular section whilst washing up, and I later realised that I had missed this quote completely. Audiotapes are often played whilst driving, when only half the brain can be devoted to the act of listening. If the narration is too rapid, the brain has insufficient time to catch every gem.

In order to check that it is Cecil who has sped up, not my brain that has slowed down, I played a narrative passage from *The Inimitable Jeeves*, which Cecil recorded in 1990. Admittedly, he is narrating in the persona of Bertie, but the speed of narration is certainly slower, with the benefit that, like sipping a fine wine, one can savour every mouthful.

*A Damsel in Distress* (CAB 2434) read by Jonathan Cecil. Audio Book Collection Freepost (BA1686/1) Bath BA1 3QZ. Freephone: 0800 136919. Website: [www.audiobookcollection.com](http://www.audiobookcollection.com)

## Wodehouse Playhouse

Anne Boardman comes to it fresh

I was only vaguely aware of this series when it was first shown in the 1970s, as I had not then discovered the pleasure of the Master's humour. So, on receiving these tapes for Christmas, I viewed them with considerable interest.

The stories are mainly based on the Mulliner tales and are very enjoyable although each episode varies in quality. The production values are very modest by today's standards, but to have the first series introduced by P G Wodehouse himself is a bonus. The signature tune is cheerful and the opening titles delightfully funny.



John Alderton and Pauline Collins throw themselves into their roles with gusto, although occasionally there is some overacting. I particularly enjoyed the performance of John Alderton's blond wig in *Unpleasantness at Bludleigh Court*. It was also interesting to see actors such as Simon Williams and Liza Goddard in early roles. The laughter from the audience is slightly irritating and, I feel, unnecessary. Wodehouse's humour does not need to be signposted in this way.

However, I agree with Murray Hedgcock that the tapes are worthy of a place in the collection of any Wodehouse enthusiast. But it would be absolutely fascinating to see the whole lot remade with today's actors and production methods.



# PGW's *A Prince for Hire* Reviewed

*Malachy Cornwell-Kelly, Clerk of Tynwald, Isle of Man, finds that the newly published novel was carefully crafted for the needs of a specific audience*

This is the most odd Wodehouse I have read, but it is an absolute 'must' for the serious student of his writing.

In the first place, although it undoubtedly comes from the Master's pen, it somehow *feels* as if it doesn't. In a blind tasting, such as one has with wines or beers, I would not have said that it carried the mark of the beast at all. There is something missing. I think that it is PG's incomparable ability to ridicule affectionately, to have us laugh at his characters at the same time as love them. And even to feel an identity with them. How often, in a tight corner, are we not eased out of it by calling on Bertie Wooster's philosophical, ironic way with moments of catastrophe? It releases the tension, doesn't it?

In *A Prince for Hire*, however, the characters are caricatures, fully in the Wodehouse mode, but without really being personalities. The sort of people you expect are all there: an American millionaire, an eccentric aunt, a beautiful girl with whom men fall helplessly in love at first sight, and plenty of New York gangsters; there is action, fast and furious, in the mean streets of the Big Apple, and in the dodgier parts of Europe, replete with fraudulent princelings and old world elegance.

But, somehow, *A Prince* is a serious book; a love story that engages the emotions. The carefully crafted flippancy we meet in the Jeeves novels, or the irrational eccentricity of Lord Emsworth, have no counterparts in the earnest, and almost real, people who move rapidly through the action. It is a good story, well told as you would expect, and perfectly adapted no doubt to the tastes of the readers of *The Illustrated Love Magazine*, in which the text first appeared in 1931 in five separate instalments.

This journal was published for sale within F W Woolworth's stores in Canada and the USA, which gives us a clue to the audience Plum was writing for. And it may explain perhaps why – with one minor exception – all the *dramatis personae* are Americans. Maybe Americans aren't as funny, or as ridiculous, as Europeans? Or maybe they don't like to laugh at themselves in quite the same way and our author, ever in touch with his readership, adapted his style accordingly?

This calls to mind the comment of the Foreign Office when advising against a knighthood for Mr Wodehouse that he (*most* undesirably) portrayed the



British character as typified by the membership of the Drones club.

In all this there is scope for scholarly reflection, well suited I imagine to the inclinations of Tony Ring, whose *Introduction* and *Appendices* give an intriguing account of how, from earlier material, this book finally emerged in the form in which we have it now. I won't begin to unravel here what is described as a 'complex bibliographic story', in which the reality of the world of publishing and writing appears more clearly – and worryingly – than I have been used to seeing it. You will love the contemporary illustrations, excellently reproduced.

*A Prince for Hire* by P G Wodehouse.

Limited edition publication by Galahad Books, 2003.

Paperback (800 copies) £14 + pp;

Hard cover with jacket (200 copies) £40 + pp

From:



# The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

## My Man Jeeves

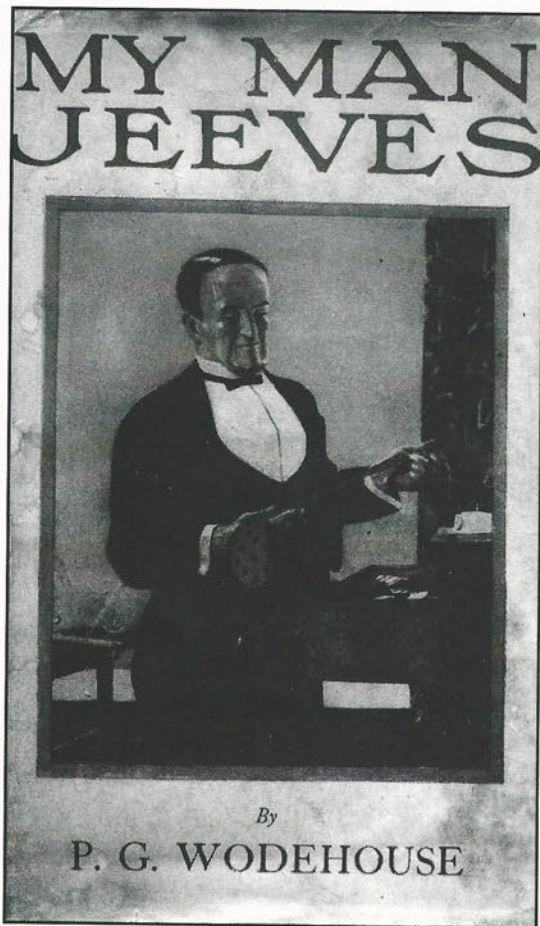
*My Man Jeeves* is something of a rarity among Wodehouse titles, in that the first three editions all had different illustrations on the dustwrapper. Furthermore, it was one of the first Wodehouse titles to appear in paperback, with yet another illustration on the cover.

The book and dustwrapper of the first issue of the first edition of *My Man Jeeves* are described and illustrated fully by *McIlvaine* (A22a and Plate 4).

Unrecorded by *McIlvaine*, a reissue of the first edition exists in which the front panel of the dustwrapper (see illustration) is subtly different.

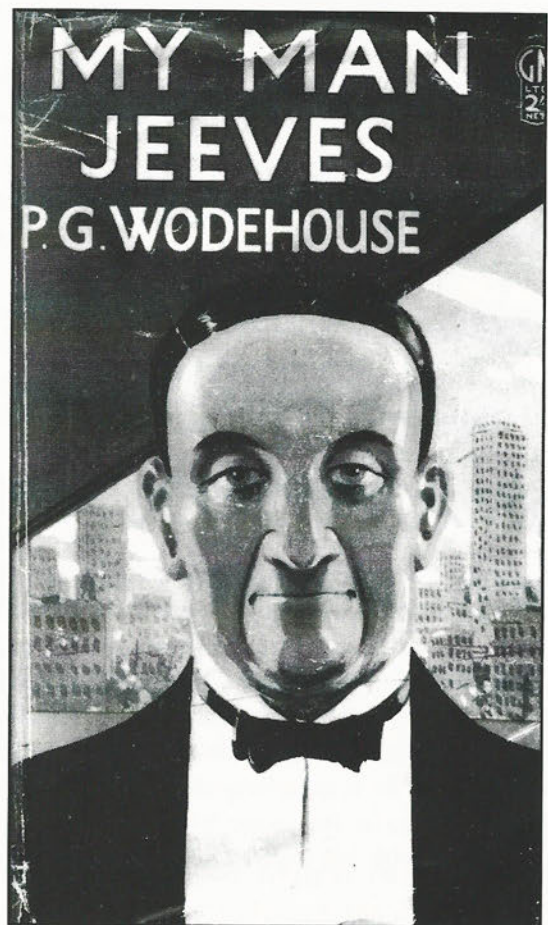
but on the reissue the price appears only on the spine, as 'net 2/-'. The back panel of the reissue contains an advertisement for *The Strand Magazine*, starting 'The Cream of Literature'. The front flap contains an advertisement for Newnes' Shilling Copyright Novels, listing 35 titles beginning with *Jess* by H Rider Haggard and ending with *Lady of the Barge* by WW Jacobs. The rear flap contains an advertisement for Newnes' Shilling Strand Library, listing 25 titles beginning with *Sally Bishop* by E Temple Thurston and ending with *Blue Bird's Eye* by George Edgar.

The dustwrapper described by David Braybrooke (*Wooster Sauce*, December 2002, p3) seems to be the reissue dustwrapper. I know of at least five copies of this, but only one of the first issue dustwrapper. This implies that the first issue dustwrapper had a smaller print run than the reissue. The book itself is identical for both issues. This reissue must be dated between May 1919 (A22a) and July 1920 (A22a2).



First edition dustwrapper - reissue

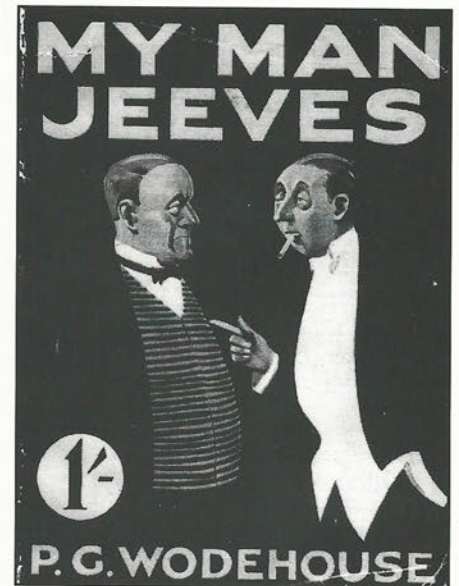
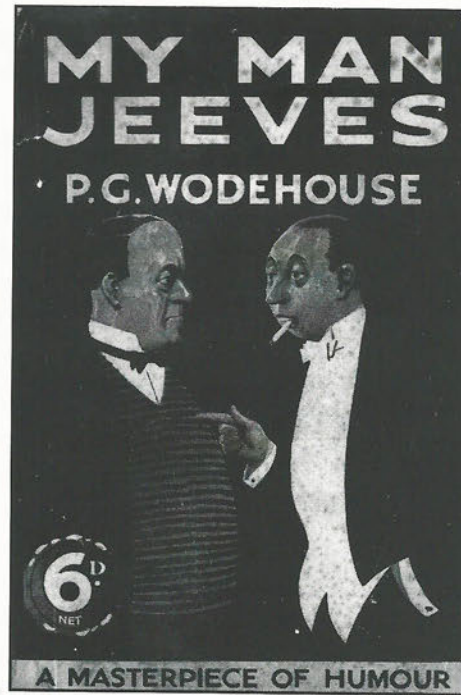
The first issue has the picture of Jeeves left of central, with 'by P G WODEHOUSE' to the right of it; the reissue centralises the picture of Jeeves and has 'By P G Wodehouse' beneath. Underneath the picture, the first issue dustwrapper has six lines of text describing the book, whereas the reissue has no text block here. On the first issue the price of '1/9D net' appears on both the spine and the front cover,



Second edition dustwrapper



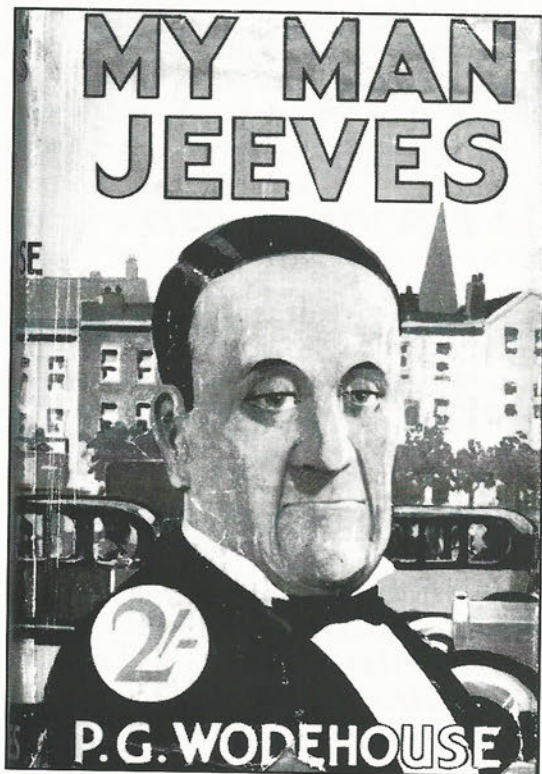
The second edition of *My Man Jeeves* is omitted by *McIlvaine*. It was published in blue boards of the same size as the first, with similar black adornments. However, it was slightly thicker than the first (26mm vs 18mm), and was printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney Ld (sic), whereas the first edition had been printed by Butler & Tanner. The title page is similar to that of the first edition, but additionally gives the address of George Newnes Ltd as Southampton St, Strand, WC. The advertisements on pages 253-254 are also different: page 253 features *Women in Health and Sickness* by Robert Bell, MD; page 254 *The Strand Magazine*, starting 'The Cream of Literature'.



To scale: The front covers of the first and second paperback editions

The dustwrapper (see illustration) is also different from that of the first edition. The spine has a price of 2/- net in yellow; the back panel advertises 4 titles by E Temple Thurston; the front flap lists 4 titles by H de Vere Stacpoole; and the rear flap lists 3 titles by J S Fletcher.

The next edition is recorded by *McIlvaine* (A22a2). This book was thicker again (33mm) and had yet another dustwrapper design (see illustration).



Third edition dustwrapper - reissue

Different states of both the book and the dustwrapper exist. With the book, one state contains advertisements on page 253 for *The Happy Magazine* and page 254 for *The Strand Magazine*, in the other state, the pagination of the two advertisements is reversed.

With the dustwrapper, one state advertises Newnes' 2/6 Novels on the back panel, Newnes' New-Size 2/- Novels on the front flap (30 titles beginning with *The Prince and Betty* and ending with *The Stolen White Elephant*), and *The Strand Magazine* on the back flap (listing nine contributing authors, beginning with Wodehouse and ending with Sapper).

The other state of the dustwrapper advertises Newnes' New-Size 2/- Novels on the back panel (32 titles beginning with *The Streets of Ascalon* and ending with *The Stolen White Elephant*), Newnes' 2/6 Novels on the front flap (23 titles beginning with *The Veil of Glamour* and ending with *A Bad Boy's Diary*), and *The Kid Glove Skipper* on the back flap.

The first paperback edition was published by Newnes, possibly in 1927 (A22a4), and the second in 1928 (A22a5). The earlier, which measures 5½" x 8¼", cost 6d while the later, at 5¼" x 7", was 1/-. There are minor differences between the two portrayals of Jeeves, and Bertie, who appears on the cover for the first time (see illustrations).

My thanks to Ian Piggott, John Graham and Tony Ring for providing the illustrations.



# *A Revival of Oh Clarence! in Bath*

*Cyril Hershon watched the Argyle Players at Blandings Castle*

*Oh Clarence!*, the play adapted by John Chapman from the Blandings stories in 1968, has enjoyed occasional revivals on the amateur stage. The latest production was staged from May 7 to May 10 at The Tovey Hall, Central United Reformed Church, Bath, by the Argyle Players. Unusually, this is the second time the Argyle Players have performed *Oh, Clarence!*, the first time having been some twenty years ago. Member Cyril Hershon attended the first night and reports as follows:

The Argyle players gave us an entertaining, if not entirely Wodehousean, evening in John Chapman's cleverly crafted play. The problem remains: if you've read the book, do you have a preconceived notion of the characters?

Given that your reviewer saw the show on the first night, with all the attendant problems, he must point to a general lack of stage discipline, some dire miscasting and often an unfamiliarity with the words. Lorna Burgess' direction was towards entertainment and we were treated to her interpretation of the familiar denizens of Blandings. As Clarence, Gordon Turner played the role as if he were a retired choleric colonel, totally unaware of life revolving around him, but his interpretation was acceptable because his vagueness and misunderstanding often made the audience laugh. Not so his sister: Elizabeth Twine's Lady Constance

was too often a 'pussy cat' instead of the virago Plum intended her to be and she often looked helpless instead of determined. Howard Crowe, as Freddie, was perhaps the most successful as the typical twenties' silly ass. However, his fiancée, Jane Rentall, did not really look the part and would have made a better Connie.

Beach is not Jeeves and Tegid Peregrine played him successfully for laughs, though perhaps he was too self-effacing as he directed his staff of one, Jean Fell. The two young lovers, Gertrude and Rupert, amused, though one cannot imagine 'Beefy' Anthony Scott being a rigger blue nor Cathy Adeane as the shy, retiring 'Wibberly' by name and nature. Régine Wilds as Dame Daphne dominated by her stage presence and gave us a frustrated but predatory headmistress. Tony Ashworth, as Sir Gregory, sometimes forgot that he was meant to be nasty but he held the stage well, supported by Michael Burgess' incompetent private detective disguised as a medico. The real doctor, George Williams, as Sir Eustace Chalfont, looked suitably distinguished.

The set worked well and the rooms looked suitably shabby from years of neglect. Jane Gove's costumes were excellent and some even spectacular. The music was appropriate and two of the songs in the second half even commented on the plot. All in all, it was a lively evening and well worth turning out for.

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## *Please Help Us Help The Drones Club*

Our friends at the Drones Club in Belgium have invited members of all the Wodehouse Societies to put forward their views on three questions, which the Drones will use as the theme for their dinner on October 25th (for an invitation to which, see page 7 of the March 2003 *Wooster Sauce*).

We have until the end of July to compose our reply, so would welcome comments by say the 20th July. They should be addressed to the Editor by mail to the address at the foot of page 24, or by e-mail to

The three questions are:

- 1 What is a good definition of a gentleman?
- 2 Which three Wodehouse characters would you select as gentlemen on your definition?
- 3 Was P G Wodehouse a true gentleman?

Question 1 relates to a definition appropriate to the peak era of Plum's writing, ie the 1920's and 1930's. Explanatory comments are requested in respect of questions 2 and 3.

Members are invited either to create a full definition for our reply to question 1, or offer suggestions as to the qualities that a gentleman should possess.

Maybe you believe that his attitude to woman is the key, or to his old school mates. Perhaps you think his demeanour towards more distant acquaintances is more important, or to servants, or tax officials. Should a true gentleman exhibit the same qualities towards members of his close family? Just in public, or in private as well? Let us have your thoughts, and your suggestions as to which of Plum's characters best fulfil your chosen criteria.



## 57 Wodehouse Titles on CD-Rom

Nick Townend reports:

A CD-Rom containing 57 pre-1923 pieces by Wodehouse has been produced by SpinSmart Software (4717 S Hydraulic, Wichita, KS 67216, USA). This is within US copyright law.

The CD contains 24 novels or short story collections (including *The Swoop* and the first six school stories), seven collections of pieces from *Punch*, and many individual short stories, some of which have never been republished. Among the scarcest are *The Military Invasion of America* (a re-working for *Vanity Fair* in 1915 of *The Swoop*) and *Signs and Portents*, a cricket story only published in *Stage and Sport* in 1906. The CD therefore represents a great opportunity to acquire some rare pieces at a fraction of the price which the original magazines would command.

The CD contents are in both HTML and Microsoft Reader format. It is available on [www.eBay.com](http://www.eBay.com) (search for 'Wodehouse 57') for \$6.99 using the 'Buy It Now' facility. Airmail to the UK costs \$4.50.

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### *Famous Swedish writer inspired by Wodehouse claims Anna Lalic*

'There is no Swedish author who writes in the same style as P G Wodehouse. I think I can fill that vacant space.'

These words were said by one of Sweden's most famous writers – Gösta Knutsson. He wrote books for children (most enjoyable for adults too) in the 1930s and 40s about a tailless cat and his adventures in the city of Uppsala – an old charming academic town, almost like Oxford and Cambridge. Gösta Knutsson was also a great personality in the early days of radio, often leading tricky quizzes for an older audience.

Obviously Gösta Knutsson was a fan of Wodehouse. He revealed his writing plans in an interview in 1968. He wanted to write a book in the same witty manner about the academic life in his hometown Uppsala, filled with gossip about professors, composers, archbishops and other ordinary people in his circle of acquaintances.

Unfortunately he never realized his plans. The stories about the tailless cat Pelle and his friends are all we have. But many of the cats have similarities to Wodehouse's characters. So maybe – behind Pelle, the cat with no tail, hides a Bertram Wooster and behind the evil black cat named Måns we might find Roderick Spode.

## Forthcoming Publications

*Broadway Jeeves?*

Patron Martin Jarvis kept a journal of the build-up of the planning of the 2001 production of *By Jeeves* in the USA. His resulting book, *Broadway, Jeeves?* records the roller coaster year, from the snow of Pittsburgh via the impact of 9/11 to the glory of the Great White Way.

It will be published as a hardback by Methuen, on September 19th, and we expect to be able to arrange an offer for members on favourable terms..

*Everyman Series*

The next four titles in the Everyman series of uniform Wodehouse, to be published in the autumn, will be:

*A Damsel in Distress*  
*Leave It To Psmith*  
*Mulliner Nights*  
*Thank You, Jeeves*

This brings the total number of titles which will have appeared by the end of 2003 to 28.

*The Complete Lyrics of P G Wodehouse*

The latest news of this long-awaited publication by Barry Day is that it will be published in November in the United States by Taylor Trade Publishing. The publisher will make copies available within Europe through a distributor.

The book includes every lyric by P G Wodehouse that it has been possible to trace, whether it was finally used in a show or not. They are linked by a thoroughly-researched commentary from Barry Day, and the book will have between 50 and 100 illustrations. ISBN: 1-58979-054-5

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### *PG W on British Library CD*

The British Library has released two audio CDs of The Spoken Word. One features Poets, including Robert Browning speaking in 1889 and Tennyson's own rendition of *The Charge of the Light Brigade* in 1890. Its ISBN is 0-7123-0517-3.

Of more direct interest to members is the second CD, featuring Writers and including an extract from the second of P G Wodehouse's Berlin broadcasts in 1941, which it is believed is all that survives from any of them as a sound recording.

The CD is available from the British Library, online at [www.bl.uk/services/publications/onlineshop.html](http://www.bl.uk/services/publications/onlineshop.html), or through UK bookshops at £9.95. Its catalogue reference is NSACD 12; its ISBN is 0-7123-0516-5.



## Recent Press Comment

*Weekend Australian Magazine*, October 19, 2002  
(from Murray Hedgcock)

Included a four-page article by Paul Pottinger about PGW's life, and the centenary of his first book.

*The Oldie*, February

Enthusiastically reviewed *Anything Goes* at the National Theatre, giving a fair summary of PGW's involvement with the show.

*London Review of Books*, Feb 20 (from Jan Kaufman)

In a review of *Old Thunder: A Life of Hilaire Belloc* by E S Turner, Turner mentioned Belloc's gift of 'choosing the right words and the putting of them in the right order, which Mr Wodehouse does better, in the English language, than anyone alive'.

*The Observer*, March 1 (from Peter Wightman)

Mark Lawson, writing on Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, brought Wodehouse in twice:

When Greene outlined an Indo-Chinese work in progress, commenting that it was a relief not to write about God for a change, Waugh replied "Oh, I wouldn't drop God if I were you. It would be like P G Wodehouse dropping Jeeves halfway through the Wooster series."

Lawson adapted this in his conclusion that 'to write a serious and believing novel about Catholicism these days would be like Wodehouse making Jeeves a rabbi halfway through the Wooster series'.

*Bats and Balls* (Journal of the Cricketers Club of London), March (from Bob Miller)

An article by William Hall (*The Game's Afoot*) reported the 2002 cricket match between the Society and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London.

*Daily Mail*, March 15

The *Weekend* section featured 'Art Deco' and one of three pieces was by Hal Cazalet, writing about PGW's life in the twenties and thirties.

*Washington Post*, March 30 (from Dan Cohen)

Michael Dirda gave a positive review to the Overlook (US) edition of *P G Wodehouse: In His Own Words*, commenting that it was 'a perfect comfort book, at once soothing, funny and touching'.

*Radio 4*, April 24

*The Wodehouse Notebooks*, a half-hour programme, was presented by John Bird, assisted by Tim McInnery and interviews with Edward Cazalet, Robert McCrum and Norman Murphy.

*Radio 4*, April 28 (from David Taylor)

In *Letter from America*, Alistair Cooke spoke of the impact of the threatened strike by service workers in

apartment blocks. He reported that as he went to bed on the Tuesday night there had been no settlement, and his gloom 'was only slightly lifted by reading again the threat to the reputation of old gents of Kent and Sussex and other counties of Galahad Threepwood's decision to write his memoirs of his early wild days on the town'.

*Radio 4 (Today Programme)*, May 5

James Naughtie interviewed Tony Ring about the publication of *A Prince for Hire*.

*Radio 4 (You and Yours)*, May 9

Wodehouse's contribution to the British Library CD (page 21) was featured.

*The Times*, May 10

An editorial on research in California which has led to the opening of 'brain gyms' for the local population pointed out that the British got there long ago, with the cryptic crossword. It added:

For batty mental gymnastics are already part of the British idiosyncrasy. In his only letter to *The Times*, P G Wodehouse complained that it was gall and wormwood for him to read that the Provost of Eton completed *The Times* crossword in the time taken to boil his breakfast egg. And the Provost liked his egg soft-boiled. While Wodehouse had been wrestling for an hour over a non-flying bird of three letters ending in U. (Not ostrich.)

*Independent on Sunday*, May 11 (from Hilary Bruce)

In an article on *Humour* contributed by Craig Brown to the *Building a Library* column, he wrote of PGW:

P G Wodehouse is the Mozart of humour. Most humour eventually grows stale, but with each passing day he becomes fresher than ever. This may be because he has the most melodic ear of any English prose writer, as well as a supernatural ability to harmonise two wildly contrasting ideas in a single sentence: "He felt like a man who, chasing rainbows, has had one of them suddenly turn and bite him in the leg."

*National Review*, May 12 (from Daniel Love Glazer)

S T Kernick gave a long and very positive review of the DVD release in the USA of the first series of *Wodehouse Playhouse*. 'Laughter may not be the best medicine, but it is a fine tonic for a worried soul.'

*The Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 14 (from Prof Reibman)

Writing about the medieval historian Prof Edward Peters, John Shea explained that Peters handed out informative and frank protocols to his students, including from PGW: 'You need dynamite to



## Recent Press Comment, cont

dislodge an idea that has got itself firmly rooted in the public mind.’ Peters added his own corollary: ‘You need five times more dynamite to dislodge an idea that has got itself firmly rooted in the academic mind, in textbooks, and in pop journalism.’

*The Times*, May 15

Prof Brewer, referring to the leader on May 10 (above), pointed to a second letter from PGW to *The Times*, about Bertie’s receding chin, published on November 30, 1937.

*The Spectator*, May 17

Gerald Warner wrote a lengthy article on the history of monocles, a product under the threat of extinction. He pointed out that PGW (‘a more significant writer than Proust’) was the author whose characters were most commonly portrayed with monocles adding, correctly, that Bertie often has one added by acclamation though it eludes detection in the text.

*Daily Telegraph*, c May 17 (from Iain Sproat)

Bill Deedes did not find the omission of PGW from a list of favourite authors surprising. Emsworth has been kicked out of the Lords and Blandings swallowed by inheritance tax.

*Sunday Times*, May 18

An article in the property section by Joseph Connolly mentioned that he wrote a number of books including a biography of PGW while living at The Flask Bookshop in Flask Walk, Hampstead.

*New York Times*, May 19 (from Susan Cohen)

A serious and somewhat frightening article about North Korea by B R Myers included a paragraph which started:

The glorification of spontaneous violence, sweeping hatred of the American people, and a budding nuclear capacity: the combination is liable, as P G Wodehouse would say, to start a train of thought . . .

*The Times*, May 19

Simon Barnes managed to bring a Wodehouse reference into his analysis of the football season just ended. Comparing the variant skills of Thierry Henry and Ruud van Nistelroy, he wrote:

Each man plays the way he does because of what he is and who he is, and you can’t go about changing them any more than you could have got P G Wodehouse to write like Dostoyevsky.

*The Times*, May 24

The *Court Circular* reported the dinner held by the Society’s Committee for the retirement of Norman Murphy as its Chairman (see page 1).

*The Observer*, May 25

The *Books* section carried a very positive review by Jonathan Bouquet of the recently published *A Prince for Hire* (see page 17)

## Poets’ Corner

### Paradise

If comfort you are fixed on,  
Just take any course, do.  
Go straight over to Brixton.  
That is the place for you.  
Don’t talk about the ‘Cecil’,  
Do not drag in the ‘Grand’.  
They’re good hotels; but this’ll  
Beat any in the land.

The food is really splendid;  
Of that there’s not a doubt.  
The port may be commended  
To those who know not gout.  
No stint of works of fiction  
The convict’s pleasure mars.  
Life runs with little friction  
Behind those prison bars.

If e’er you’d give an order  
You press the nearest bell,  
And instantly a warder  
Waits on you in your cell.  
Obsequious is his glance; he  
Is so polite and nice.  
You tell him what you fancy,  
He brings it in a trice.

So, friends, take up your jemmies  
Your drills and keys of crime,  
Who labours hard with them is  
Bound to succeed in time.  
Of surplus make a clearance,  
Your social qualms dismiss,  
A little perseverance,  
And then – consummate bliss.

From *Daily Chronicle*, 19 January, 1903

(Written following a report in *Household Words*, which says of Brixton Gaol that a wonderful amelioration of the convict’s lot has taken place of late years.)

## I Say!

### Favourite Exchanges - 26

“Where are you stopping these days?”

“Nowhere just at present. I thought of taking one of those self-contained park benches.”

From *Indiscretions of Archie* (1921)



## FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

June 29, 2003 – Cricket against Sherlock Holmes

A match at West Wycombe, Bucks, between The Gold Bats and The Sherlock Holmes Society of London, starting at 11.30. Dress up in period costume, bring a picnic and come along to support the team.

July 8, 2003 – The Savage Club

The Savage Club is in the premises of The National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London, and members gather from around 6pm. Nicola Beanman of Persephone Books will speak about Plum's friend Denis Mackail's book *Greenery Street*.

July 17, 2003 – Golf at Exeter

The Cow-Creamer Challenge will be held at the Exeter Golf and Country Club on July 17, starting between 11am and noon. For details, contact

July 26, 2003 – Pig Racing at Bocketts Farm

A Society visit to this Leatherhead Farm for pig-racing, goat-milking and a hog-calling competition. See page 7.

August 8 to 10, 2003 – TWS Convention, Toronto

The next convention of The Wodehouse Society will be held in Toronto. There will be a cocktail evening, cricket match (under special TWS rules), banquet, Sunday brunch, a programme of talks on a wide variety of Wodehousean topics and other attractions. Stay at the Sutton Place hotel or in College. Contact for more

details and booking information.

September 6, 2003 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Join the by-then-ex-Chairman on the last of his famous walks round Wodehouse's London of the season. Contact him to arrange your booking and the meeting-place and time.

October 14, 2003 – The Savage Club

The Savage Club is in the premises of The National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London, and members gather from around 6pm. Sally Muggerridge, niece of the late Malcolm, will speak about the relationship he enjoyed with P G Wodehouse. See page 4.

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## EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

Congratulations to member Ronald Harwood, who won an Oscar for the Best Adapted Screenplay for *The Pianist* at the ceremony at the end of March.

Congratulations also to Hal and Polly Cazalet on their marriage on 31st May, at St Giles's Church, Shipbourne, Kent. The reception, for 230 guests, was held at Hamptons, near Shipbourne.

Gwendolin Goldbloom has kindly volunteered to help with the proof-reading of *Wooster Sauce*, bringing the number of staff outside the editor's family to one. Many thanks to Gwendolin, whose eagle eye is already helping to keep mistakes to a minimum. Those that remain are, of course, down to the editor.

The *Saga* Magazine for May included an article entitled *My Ten Most Stately Homes* by Hugh Massingberd. One of the ten was Penshurst Place, Kent, chosen by the BBC in the 1960s as the setting for Blandings Castle in the successful but long-lost TV series in the late 1960s, which starred Sir Ralph Richardson and Stanley Holloway.

Simon Frazer has noted that one of the stories in the anthology *Exciting Escape Stories* ('Action-Filled Adventures and Death-Defying Stunts'), Octopus Books, 1980, is *Jeeves and the Impending Doom*. He wonders in which of the two categories it falls.

Publishers of Wodehouse books are not required to show they have a relevant address. Nevertheless, we have come across two recently which set the standard. Hilary Bruce noticed that Overlook Press, publishers of the Everyman series in the USA, are based at 141 Wooster Street, New York, NY 10012. And in 1977 Sphere Books, which published five PGW paperbacks in the UK, also published two in India through India Book House Pvt Ltd, Rusi Mansion, 29 Wodehouse Road, Bombay 400 039.

The *Merchant House* in Ludlow, Shropshire has been voted the world's best restaurant for Outstanding Value. One item on a typical menu is 'Loin of pork with braised haricots and black pudding from free-range Berkshire pigs reared locally'. Was that what the Duke of Dunstable had in mind for the Empress?