



## The Fun of Flying

*Hetty Litjens discusses the Wodehouse Google Earth Project*

William Earl Johns, the creator of Biggles, was a contemporary of P. G. Wodehouse. Both lived in the heyday of aviation. However, the references to flying in Wodehouse's work are scarce. Bertie Wooster once "hopped on to a passing aeroplane" to get back home after an escape to Paris. Wodehouse himself never took a plane; my guess is that he did not really have a fear of flying, but enjoyed the quiet and ability to work on a steamer.

Biggles claimed that if you can fly a Sopwith Camel, you can fly anything. I'm not sure about that, but I would say that if you can't fly a Sopwith Camel, fly Google Earth. It is so bracing.

Last summer I downloaded the Google Earth programme from <http://earth.google.com> – and

looked up my own house first, of course. Then it struck me what could be done with it: a Wodehouse project, showing the most important sites where Wodehouse had lived and where he firmly located the characters of his books. Wodehouse lends himself perfectly for this kind of geographical survey: we know there was a distinct correlation with the places he frequented and the places he used for his characters. Norman Murphy showed us this correlation and provided all the material necessary to pinpoint the placemarks. But with Google Earth something could be added to the existing material: we could add internet links, panoramas, slideshows, images, and the occasional song or interview; you can even get

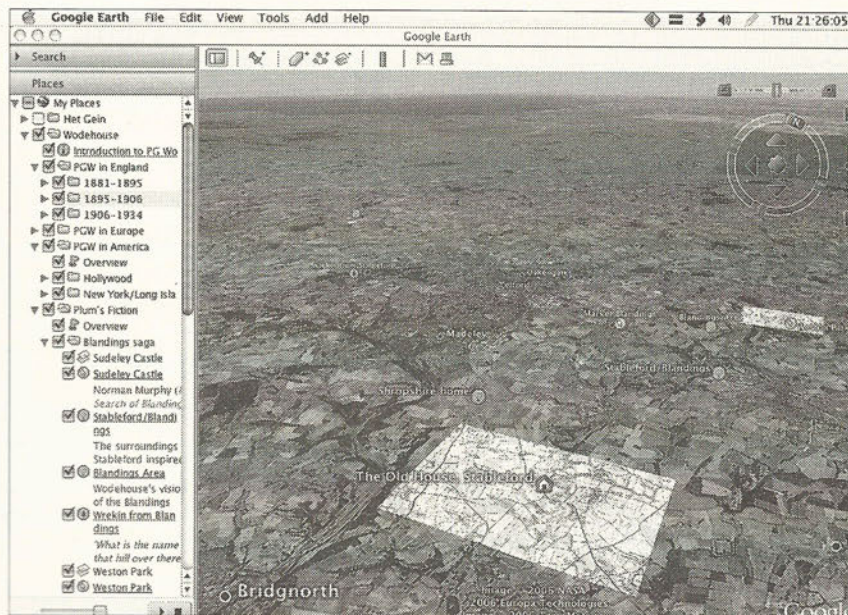
directions. And isn't it fun to skim over our earth and fly to interesting places?

Without *In Search of Blandings* and *A Wodehouse Handbook*, this project could not exist; it owes much to Norman Murphy. Then we also needed a comprehensive reference work like *The Wodehouse Millennium Concordance*, which provided references in the canon to the places, clubs, restaurants, etc., as well as relevant quotes. With all this available, we had clearance for lift-off and were airborne in a jiffy.

Having all this material, however, does not mean the task has been easy. Looking for the right spot can be daunting. Arrows on internet maps tend to point to the wrong buildings, and information you find can be very conflicting. You can be on a wild goose chase

for hours. Even GPS bearings are not always spot on (yes, we do occasionally use high tech). But there is always one man with expert knowledge who is willing to help out, and that is Norman Murphy. And the advantage of email is that you won't wake up someone in the middle of the night with an urgent question about Mario's.

While I was working on my first placemarks, I mentioned the idea in a few Wodehouse discussion groups and immediately received help. Among the first contributors were Terry Mordue, Ian Michaud, Elin Woodger, and a few others. At that moment I knew this was going to, um, fly. I still had no real idea how Google Earth worked, but as the saying goes,



Google Earth allows a close-up view of a location where Wodehouse lived or set a story. This photograph gives a general idea of how it looks on a computer screen.

“the road is made by walking”. That’s what we did and are still doing.

Soon the project grew and grew, and we were reaching the limits of the technical possibilities of our computers and Google Earth. Not everyone has a 1 GB internal memory and a speedy CPU, and the bulk was slowing down navigation. Fortunately for us, just when I was thinking of splitting the project up into two folders (Life and Fiction), Google Earth issued a new version that made much better use of memory. It is essential to have all subfolders checked to see them on the satellite view. If you set the memory cache in the Preferences window at 200–250 MB and the disk cache at 2 GB (if your disk can have it; 3 GB free in all), you will have a comfortable flight through four folders: PGW in England, PGW in Europe, PGW in America, and Plum’s Fiction.

As some satellite images are blurred, Terry Mordue came up with the brilliant idea of using overlay maps. The project gained momentum: I made a few changes to improve the text windows and decided that quotes from the books would describe

certain places better than anything else. So I asked the Wodehouse Estate for permission to quote. Happily, Sir Edward Cazalet and the Trustees were delighted with our enthusiasm. The crew got its wings.

We started in August 2006, and at present we have about 100 placemarks. The whole tour (at the recommended 5 sec. per view) currently takes you around the globe in about 35 minutes. Reading all text windows and surfing the links could keep you busy for a few hours. And we intend to expand our flight schedule to more territories.

Would it be exaggerating things too much to suggest that if Wodehouse knew about this, he would smile benevolently on us taking wing like the proverbial lark?

Note: If you don’t have Google Earth on your computer, you can download it from the website at <http://earth.google.com>.

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## The Word Around the Clubs

### A Peer for PGW

Robert Wells sent in the *Daily Telegraph* obituary of Lord Mowbray, Segrave and Stourton, who died on December 12th at the age of 83. The obit’s second paragraph provides yet another example of how much Wodehouse pervades our lives: “A cheerful, Wodehousian figure, known for his piratical eyepatch, Lord Mowbray was well-liked in the Upper House and, during his 40 years on the Conservative benches, seemed to progress almost seamlessly from Bertie Wooster to Lord Emsworth, contributing to a mixture of geniality and erudition to House of Lords Proceedings.”

### Send in the Marines

Murray Hedgcock spotted an item in *The Sun* of November 29th worthy of our attention. It describes how Royal Marines were sent to a pond near Normandy Barracks at Leconfield, East Yorkshire, to save a population of rare, great-crested newts who were being eaten by rudd, described as “killer fish”. The article notes: “Marines drained the lake before stunning thousands of fish with an electric charge, and moving them to a canal and lake, in a Snowcat military vehicle.” Was there a Captain Fink-Nottle leading this mission, we wonder?

### Remarkable

Robert Bruce has forwarded an article by Simon Jenkins in *The Guardian* of September 22, 2006, concerning the 100th anniversary of its Country Diary, claimed to be “the oldest newspaper feature in the world”. A collection had just been published in book form (*A Gleaming Landscape: A Hundred Years of the Guardian’s Country Diary*), and Jenkins’s praise includes a paragraph that has a truly Wodehousean flavour:

The longest and fiercest debate in the diary’s history was over which of the 28 species of woodlouse roll up when touched. I am also indebted to [editor Martin] Wainwright for unearthing two of the great opening sentences in Journalism, both from Guardian Country Diaries: “The emergence of newts from their winter hibernation tends to go unremarked” and, in September 1939, “I cannot help thinking that if only Hitler had been an ornithologist he would have put off the war until the autumn migration was over.”



# Another (Shorter) Letter from the New Editor

*With a Call for Letters to the Editor*

Dear *Wooster Sauce* readers,

As the song goes, where do I begin? This is the first issue of *Wooster Sauce* produced without Tony Ring as editor, and I offer it to you with a combination of trepidation and pride. You may detect a change here or there, including the addition of a table of contents on the back page. I hope that any alterations I gradually introduce over time will meet with your approval. In that regard, look for a new logo, starting (I hope) with the June issue. Let me know what you think about that and other changes, and I also hope that you will become a contributor to our journal.

Many of you were kind enough to write in response to my letter included in the last issue. Some submitted articles or short items of interest (if you don't see your contribution in this issue, you probably will in future ones); some offered helpful comments on the look and layout of the journal; and some provided suggestions for new articles and series, many of which will be acted upon in the months to come. Among these suggestions was the idea of having a section for letters to the editor "so that a wider range of members could offer their thoughts without being required to go to the extra sweat of writing an article". This strikes me as an excellent notion, and I'd like to give it a spin.

Now, I know Tony has encouraged letters in the past, but they have been few and far between. Perhaps you have been too shy or modest to write in. Pfuui, as Nero Wolfe would say – is that any excuse? If you have something to say, please say it, whether it is to raise a question, argue with or comment about something you read in an article, or simply share a thought regarding PGW and his works. Let's try it, and if I get enough responses, I'll start a regular Letters to the Editor feature.

And of course I will not turn up my nose at longer offerings as well. This is your call to action – send in your articles, your tit-bits, your ideas, your reviews, your comments (whether for publication or not), your favourite PGW quotes, and your photos! *Wooster Sauce* needs you!

Pip pip,

*Elin*

## More on Mrs Rorer

by Tony Ring



In the September 2006 issue of *Wooster Sauce*, I drew attention to the origins of Mrs Rorer, the American Mrs Beeton who was lauded in song

by Wodehouse in the show *Sitting Pretty*. I am now able to add a few more details, as well as reproduce an image of the lady herself.

Among the recipes she included in her *Mrs Rorer's Philadelphia Cook Book* were corned beef hash, pumpkin pie, planked shad and beef stew, all of which were mentioned in the lyric of *Mr and Mrs Rorer*. Strangely, chicken Maryland was not shown, despite chicken appearing in over 40 separate recipes! As fresh shad straight out of the lakes is

unlikely to be available to many members, I will not reproduce her mouth-watering recipe for that item, but instead offer her method for the more everyday 'Corned Beef Hash':

### *Ingredients*

- 1 pint of cooked corned beef, chopped fine
- 1 pint of cold boiled potatoes, chopped fine
- 1 tablespoonful of butter
- 1 teaspoonful of onion juice
- 1 cup of stock or water
- 3 dashes of pepper

### *Method*

Mix the meat and potatoes together, put them in a frying pan, add the stock, butter, onion juice and pepper; stir constantly until it boils. Serve on buttered toast.

# The Pre~Wodehousean History of Russia

by Masha Lebedeva

Following Masha's review of Wodehouse's references to Russian literature, she now moves on to his comments on Russian history.

Wodehouse's references to the period of Russian history before his birth concern only two historic characters: Catherine, Empress of Russia (don't confuse with the Empress of Blandings), and Napoleon. In the case of the latter, I have restricted myself to references to Napoleon during his Moscow campaign. Napoleon at Waterloo, also several times mentioned by Wodehouse, is not relevant to this investigation, but to ignore Napoleon near Moscow? It can't be allowed! . . .

Catherine of Russia is mentioned in five novels, only for describing women who are large and/or have commanding personalities (*The Small Bachelor*, *Spring Fever*, *Money for Nothing*, *Doctor Sally*, and *Ice in the Bedroom*). Wodehouse doesn't directly provide a portrait of Catherine, but according to his description of Mrs Waddington (*The Small Bachelor*, ch2), with whom she is twice compared in chapter 1, we may deduce that Catherine was a strong woman; not tall, but one who bulged so generously in every possible direction that, when seen for the first time, she gave the impression of enormous size.

However, in chapter 4 of *Spring Fever*, Wodehouse reports that Lady Adela Topping, though built rather on the lines of Catherine of Russia, is, by contrast to Mrs W, tall and handsome. He adds that Lady Adela also resembles the Russian Empress in force of character and that imperiousness of outlook

which makes a woman disinclined to stand any nonsense. This information is confirmed in *Money for Nothing*, ch4, where Wodehouse explains to his reader that Catherine, like Cleopatra, was definitely not a slim, slight girl with a tip-tilted nose. So it is understandable that a woman of this sort – as well as dozens of



Catherine the Great: a role model for several formidable PGW characters

the world's most wonderful women, such as Queen Elizabeth I or the already-mentioned Cleopatra – would be out of place in William Bannister's remote country-seat at Woollam Chersey (*Good Morning, Bill and Doctor Sally*, ch3). In other words, despite

many excellent qualities, Catherine of Russia was not everybody's girl.

Wodehouse tells us nothing more concrete about the excellent qualities of the Russian Empress, but we can see that during this thirty-year period his attitude to Catherine the Great had changed. While Mrs Waddington is not only voluminous but absolutely unpleasant, his description of Leila York in *Ice in the Bedroom*, ch4, as a large, hearty-looking woman in her early forties, built up on the lines of Catherine of Russia, is much more sympathetic.

The other historical character from nineteenth-century Russia who enjoyed a voluminous press from Wodehouse was Napoleon. Wodehouse used the image of Napoleon retreating from Moscow to describe characters who had suffered complete fiascos in his novels. There are numerous examples, such as Bill Hardy (*Company For Henry*, ch7), Lancelot Mulliner ('Came the Dawn' from *Meet Mr Mulliner*), Gordon 'Oily' Carlisle (*Cocktail Time*, ch13), Mr Duff and Mr Steptoe (*Quick Service*, ch10), Sidney Price, Tom Blake and Rev. Mr Hatton (*Not George Washington*, ch18), and even some of the ladies – Bill Shannon (*The Old Reliable*, ch3) and the minor character Connie (not Lord Emsworth's sister Constance!) in 'Uncle Fred Flits By' from *Young Men in Spats*. All of them are depicted as looking like Napoleon coming back from Moscow. The example from *Quick Service* will be sufficient to give you the idea:

In the aspect of the two men, as they shambled through the French windows, was a crushed defeatism which would have reminded Napoleon, had he been present, of the old days at Moscow.

And the aspect of other members of Wodehouse's cast can be even worse. In 'Helping Freddie' from *My Man Jeeves*, narrator Reggie Pepper reports:

Taking Tootles by the hand, I walked slowly away. Napoleon's retreat from Moscow was a picnic by the side of it.

In *Jill the Reckless*, ch2, there is a moving description of a cab drive that Jill Mariner, Freddie Rooke, Derek Underhill, and his mother Lady Underhill take in silence after dinner at Freddie Rooke's which suggests that Napoleon had enjoyed a mere holiday stroll.

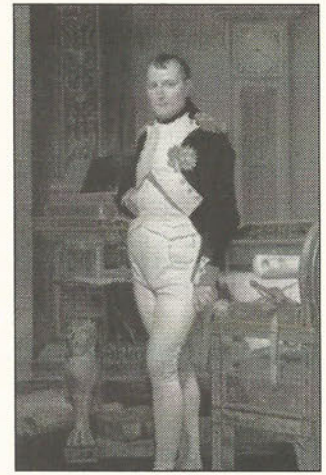
By the way, Ukridge, because of his indomitable but absolutely non-corroborated adventurism, is twice compared to the retreating Napoleon, in 'The

Debut of Battling Billson' and in *Love Among the Chickens*, ch23.

Some of Wodehouse's allusions help us to imagine Napoleon's state at Moscow. From *The Girl in Blue*, ch12, we learn that Napoleon made no secret of the fact that he did not enjoy his Moscow experience, just like Jerry West, who goes through the same sort of thing at Mellingham Hall, Mellingham-in-the-Vale. Had Napoleon been asked how he had managed to get out of Moscow, Wodehouse suggests he would have been a bit vague about it, as is Bertie Wooster after his unsuccessful attempt to persuade Ma McCorkadale to vote against herself in *Much Obligated, Jeeves*, ch18. And even if the name of Napoleon is sometimes not mentioned directly, we understand perfectly who is being referred to by the demeanour of the character involved (*The Little Nugget*, ch20; *Mike*, ch25).

Finally, it should be noted that Wodehouse selected Jeremy Garnet in *Love Among the Chickens*, ch16, and the stage doorman Mac in *Summer Lightning*, ch2, as role models to explain to us the virtue of tact. Garnet does not venture to break in on

Ukridge's thoughts, just as if he, Garnet, had been a general in the Grand Army, he would not have struck up a conversation with Napoleon during the retreat from Moscow. By contrast, Mac is held up as someone who, despite many admirable qualities, would still have tried to cheer Napoleon up by talking about Winter Sports at Moscow.



Close to 100 references to Napoleon can be found in the PGW canon.

A further instalment of Wodehouse's take on Russian history will appear in the next issue. Readers are reminded that some of the references Masha has identified in her ongoing series have been published in the June 2006 *By The Way*, and more will be published in June 2007 and June 2008.

## Pick Me Up No More

If you have ever been on a Wodehouse Walk, you will know that, for more than 150 years, Harris's in St James's Street, London, made a pick-me-up hangover remedy that, like Jeeves's famous cure, had the capacity of making eyes pop out. (See 'Hangover cures' in *A Wodehouse Handbook*, Vol. 2, for more information.) It was therefore a shock when **Christine Hewitt** called into Harris's in December to purchase a small bottle of the pick-me-up as a Christmas present, only to be told that they no longer make it! Their feeble excuse, apparently, is that they are no longer able to source some of the ingredients and so stopped producing it several months ago. Disappointing news indeed for Wodehouseans.

## No Delusions

**Jonathan Bacchus** informs us: "The eminent scientist Richard Dawkins, in his book *The God Delusion* (2006), calls Wodehouse 'the greatest writer of light comedy in English', summarises the premise of *Laughing Gas*, mentions Bertie's Scripture Knowledge prize, and quotes from the opening chapter of *The Code of the Woosters*." Further investigation has revealed that one of the PGW biblical references in the book concerns 'The Aunt and the Sluggard' (see Proverbs 6:6). This is apparently a very serious book in which, according to a BBC report, Dawkins "sets out to attack God 'in all his forms'". No doubt some Wodehouse was needed for light relief. If any member has read this book and would like to comment on the references to Wodehouse in it, please contact the Editor.

## I Say!

### Favourite Exchanges - from Gwendolin Goldbloom

"He made a noise."

"What sort of noise?"

This caused Mr Trumper to search his memory and ponder. He had not made any attempt till now to analyse the extraordinary sound which had proceeded from the interior of the wardrobe. Thus taxed, he rather rashly tried to imitate it, and found his companion eyeing him with open incredulity.

"It couldn't have sounded like that," said Lionel. "There isn't such a noise."

From *Money in the Bank*, 1942

# My First Wodehouse Experience

by Dr Joff Lelliott

Twenty years ago my English teacher suggested I read P G Wodehouse as light relief from the heavier texts of Shakespeare, the Brontës, and T S Eliot that I enjoyed so much. Having always been inclined to seriousness, I knew it was good advice but ignored it anyway.

As with so many of us, it takes a long time for suggested books to reach the top of my reading pile. In this case it was fifteen years.

The decade after leaving school was filled with attending four universities and some overseas travel, whilst my father advised I was taking the idea of ‘perpetual student’ a bit too seriously. In the mid- and late 1990s, I made several trips to Australia, before eventually moving to Queensland in 2000.

Few people really enjoy long-haul flights – the first twelve hours are great, but then the novelty wears off. By twenty hours I need to stretch out, run around, and scream. That presents the question of what to read on such long flights.

My first ideas were a disaster. A 900-page book on Israeli history was abandoned before I reached the founding of the modern state of Israel. A novel by Jean-Paul Sartre fared little better, and, to be honest, I didn’t know where the story was up to when I put it away.

Staying with my parents in Surrey between trips, I saw Jeeves and Wooster being given the wonderful Fry and Laurie treatment. This reminded me of Mr Ward’s advice all those years before and made me think Wodehouse might be what I was looking for. When I finally opened *Stiff Upper Lip*, Jeeves on the next flight, I entered a world I had been craving for most of my adult life.

For me, a historian of scientific thought in the 1920s and 1930s, Wodehouse gave colour to a world

I only saw via archives and long-forgotten science books and periodicals. I imagined JBS Haldane, Julian Huxley, Lancelot Hogben, AC Haddon and others reading Wodehouse on a day off from changing the scientific world. Unfortunately, whether or not

they had read him was never answered by my research!

After that flight I decided to keep Wodehouse exclusively for air travel; his books give me something to look forward to, aside from getting off the aeroplane at the other end. That, of course, was in the carefree days when going on a long flight came with the certainty of being allowed to travel with a book and escape into a more innocent and happy world.

Wodehouse is perfect for long flights – light and uplifting, but of such quality that I don’t feel guilty for

reading him. I do wonder, though, if people think I am a happy moron, still grinning away to myself more than twelve hours into a flight.

I must have one of the best-travelled Wodehouse collections in existence. Between them, my Penguin editions have visited England, Australia, Ghana, Mexico, Hong Kong, Brunei, Korea, and the USA amongst other places. On a trip to England last year, I picked up a first edition of *Thank You, Jeeves*, which is strictly not for reading.

But with at least sixty Wodehouse books on offer, I either need to take more long-haul flights or start reading them on other occasions too. Either way, I thoroughly enjoy my Christmas break back in Blighty – it’s always good to catch up with old friends, whether real or imaginary.

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# Society News

## A Week With Wodehouse

There's good news for those who feared they had missed out on this summer's Week With Wodehouse. Word from our chairman and tour organizer, Hilary Bruce, is that there are still places available to join this very special event celebrating the Society's tenth anniversary. The dates are July 8–15, and the week includes Wodehouse Walks in London and Dulwich; a meeting with other Society members, probably at the Savage Club (where Plum had been a member); a Tour of Lord's Cricket Ground; a day trip

to Guildford and Emsworth; a weekend tour of Wodehousean sites in Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire; and a splendid farewell dinner in London. You can enrol in the full week's activities (at a cost of £425 or £463, fully inclusive except for hotel and meals in London) or simply join the London events if you prefer (see also page 24).

## Cricket with the Gold Bats

Summer is approaching rapidly, and that means it's time for Gold Bats players to get themselves in shape for this year's cricket fixtures. First is our annual match against the Dulwich Dusters on Friday, June 15, at Dulwich College, commencing at 4 P.M. The usual 20 overs per side will be played, and between innings we will enjoy the sumptuous tea organized by Elaine Ring and lauded far and wide. Application forms for tickets for the tea are included with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*. As always we welcome all who want to attend the match, whether or not they are members.



London at the picturesque West Wycombe ground (near the location of the old Hellfire Club on the A40), starting at 11 A.M. This enjoyable match is played under the laws of 1895, and the Sherlockians are famous for attending in period costume. As players and spectators picnic alongside the pitch, both the game and the scenery are worth seeing.

Two other matches will be played, at Charterhouse and Matfield; see page 24 for details.

On June 24, our other annual match will be played against The Sherlock Holmes Society of

## Wodehouse Walks on the Wane

With much regret and some references to an ailing hip, the Society's Remembrancer, Norman Murphy, has announced that this will be his last year conducting Wodehouse Walks. If you have been planning to take the Walk with Norman but never quite got around to it, delay no longer since time is running out; see Future Events on the back page for remaining scheduled Walks.

But never fear, the loss of Murphy does not mean the loss of the Walks themselves. Your Committee is working on ways to preserve both the classic

Wodehouse Walk (covering Bertie Wooster's London) and a further walk that Norman has recently devised, covering Wodehouse's early years in London, in order to make them available to Society members. They also hope to provide members with at least one conducted Walk a year. Details to be announced when known, but in the meantime let's give three rousing cheers to Norman, who has been conducting the Walks entirely free of charge since the early 1980s (more than 100 to date), helping Wodehouseans look at London in a new light.

## The Smile That Wins Favourite Nifties

As I gave the cosh a suggestive waggle, Stilton's demeanour was that of an Assyrian who, having come down like a wolf on the fold, finds in residence not lambs but wild cats, than which, of course, nothing makes an Assyrian feel sillier.

(From *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*, 1954)

# A Tale of Two Evenings

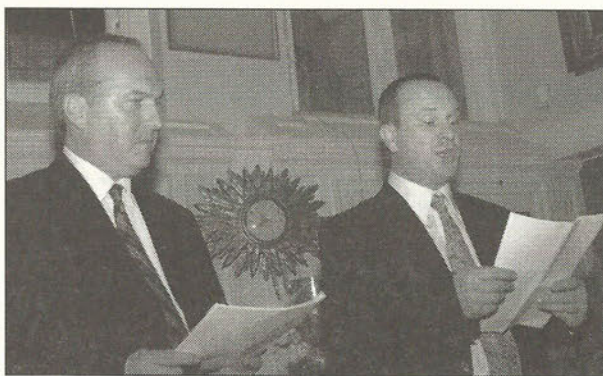
*In which we learn why our Savage Club gatherings are considered such dashed enjoyable experiences*

It was the best of times – and it was the best of times, as is always the case at the Society's Savage Club evenings. On November 14 we enjoyed not only our usual social sluicing and speakers but also our annual AGM. This was conducted by Chairman Hilary Bruce in a breezy manner that defied much of the serious purpose of her subject matter. Hilary reported on such things as current membership (in the region of a thousand strong), our cricket team's woeful performances in 2006, the Back the Berkshire campaign (going well), and news regarding the website and *Wooster Sauce*. On the former, John Fletcher stepped down as website editor at the end of 2005, and Andrew Woodger was co-opted to take over. On the latter, Hilary announced that Tony Ring was stepping down as editor (though he would continue on as a Committee member) and that Elin Murphy would assume the journal's management until a permanent editor could be found. (All you potential editors out there – let's hear from you!)

Before introducing other officers for their reports, Hilary saluted many of the Society's unrecognized heroes, including David Herboldt, Chris Reece, John Wilson, Elaine Ring, and the Wodehouse trustees. She thanked the Committee and all the Society's members for having made our organisation so successful, as evidenced in the reports given by Membership Secretary Christine Hewitt, Treasurer Alan Wood, outgoing *Wooster Sauce* editor Tony Ring, and website editor Andrew Woodger. There followed the election and re-election of officers and Committee members, with no surprises to report there.

General parish notices included more on the Back the Berkshire campaign – to wit, the availability of a handsome tie (modelled by the effervescent Paul and Mike Rush) for sale, with

the proceeds benefiting Berkshire pigs at rare-breed farms. (See page 13 for further details.) Hilary also updated members on the status of the Society's summer event to celebrate its tenth anniversary, A Week With Wodehouse; a further update on the event was provided at the February 13th gathering, more on which below.



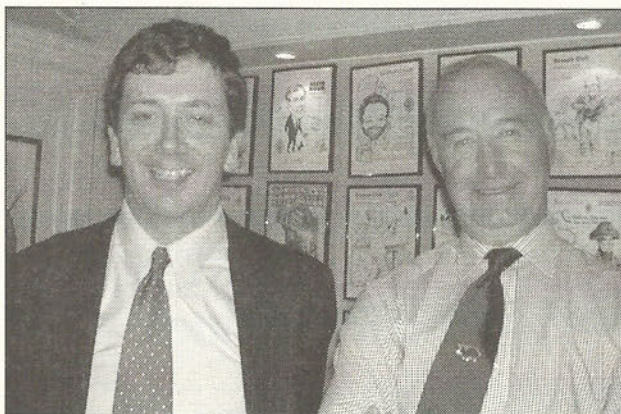
*Ken Clymont and Wayne 'Pickles' Norman perform at the November 14th Savage evening.*

With the business concluded, Hilary introduced the evening's main speaker, producer and director Ken McClymont, whose delightful adaptation of PGW's golfing stories, *The Coming of Gowf*, had short runs at the Old Red Lion in Islington, London, in

2001 and at the Edinburgh Festival in 2005; he had also adapted *The Clicking of Cuthbert* in 1995. Ably assisted by Wayne "Pickles" Norman, who despite his relatively young age had played the Oldest Member in the show, Ken described the trials and tribulations of staging a production that had 11 actors – several of them non-golfers – playing 41 characters (calling for very inventive costume changes) on a very small stage in Islington (only 4½ x 3½ m) which somehow had to accommodate an 18-hole golf course. But despite the logistical problems, the cast and crew had a ball, and those who saw the show adored it. When the possibility arose of staging *The Coming of Gowf* at the 2005 Edinburgh Festival, a subscription was raised for the necessary funds and Society members came to the fore (as it were), resulting in a triumphant production. Ken and Wayne hope to stage the show again at a future date, and if that

happens you will read about it in a future *Wooster Sauce*.

Just prior to Ken and Wayne's presentation, there was a brief discourse from the Society's Remembrancer, Norman Murphy, who tantalized members present with news of his then-about-to-be-published *A Wodehouse Handbook* (see reviews on pages 10–13). The February 13th Savage evening saw this selfsame



*Pat (Oliver Wise) and Mike (Mike Rush) did a cross-talk act (of sorts) at the Savage Club on February 13.*



Murphy as the main speaker, discussing his vade mecum in fuller detail – though he began with a complaint that most people appear to be reading it the wrong way round (Volume 2 first, then Volume 1). Norman described what motivated him to engage in this 26-year labour of love and the resources he drew on to write it, including enlisting the aid of many helpful individuals. There were tales of obliging strangers who imparted invaluable information, second-hand bookshops and antique stores that revealed things Norman didn't even know he was looking for, and *Telegraph* obituaries that provided incomparable backup to his thesis that Wodehouse's characters were not at all that unusual. Finally, he was joined by Oliver Wise (Pat) and Mike Rush (Mike), who read extracts from *A Wodehouse Handbook* that had members rolling in the aisles.

Well, they would have been rolling if there had been room. It was another packed evening at the Savage, and prior to Norman's talk, Chairman Hilary called for all present to raise a glass to Plum, who died on Valentine's Day 1975. She then provided a few parish notices, including the happy news that our database manager, David Herboldt, is moving to Australia to get married, with the unhappy side effect that we must now find another database manager. If you are computer-wise and interested, please get in touch with Hilary. With regard to the summertime Week With Wodehouse event, though it initially seemed like we would be overbooked for the tour, such is not the case, and there are places still available. If you want to have the experience of a lifetime, now is your chance. See page 7 for further details about this very special event.

## We Remember

The Society notes with sadness the deaths of two notable members.

John Millar, who died on December 1 at the age of 103, had enjoyed a successful business career that included procuring aircraft for the RAF during World War II. He was one of the first members of our Society when it was formed and made occasional contributions to *Wooster Sauce*. The *Times* of December 4, 2006, carried his obituary; this was followed by three further reminiscences in the *Lives Remembered* column.

According to a letter to *The Times* written by Tony Ring (published on December 6), Mr Millar's "most recent contact, in October, was an apology that he could not attend our London AGM, and [he asked] if we could provide him with a recording of Wodehouse's voice, as he had frequently dined with Plum and his family in London in the 1920s. I'm pleased to say we were able to oblige and received a charming letter of thanks [shortly before he died]." In addition, the Wodehouse world is indebted to Mr Millar for confirming that Wodehouse's manservant in the 1920s, Robinson, was as near to the original Jeeves as we will get. (See *Wooster Sauce*, June 2000, p. 18.)

Sidney Kitson, who died on December 13 in Bangalore, India, ran one of the three Wodehouse societies in that country. He was an informed and highly respected member of the worldwide Wodehouse community for many years, and his article on Wodehouse and boxing was published in the June 2005 issue of *Wooster Sauce*. The Society extends its condolences to his family.

Lord Emsworth had had a bright idea and it had taken his breath away. This always happened when he had bright ideas. He had had one in the Spring of 1921 and another in the Summer of 1933, and those had taken his breath away, too.

From 'Birth of a Salesman', *Nothing Serious*, 1950

# The Handbook to End All Handbooks

## Volume 1: *The World of Wodehouse*

Reviewed by Murray Hedgcock

We have watched. And waited. And wondered. And now it is here.

For those of us who have been privileged to be kept informed of the complex construction of *A Wodehouse Handbook*, it has been an ultimate test of patience. How long, O Lord, we asked – how long? But in the end, as in a Wodehouse story itself, everything has come right, and sweetness and light abound.

And what a marvellous new contribution the Remembrancer of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) has made to our world. Norman Murphy has done so much over so many years that it would seem improbable that he could go further – but in the words of Lord Bittlesham on the latest Rosie M. Banks epic: “You go from strength to strength. This – this is your bravest and best.”

For those of us who have faithfully assembled our Norman Murphy collection – three different editions of *In Search of Blandings*, and so on – it seemed improbable that there could be more to reveal about What Makes Plum Tick.

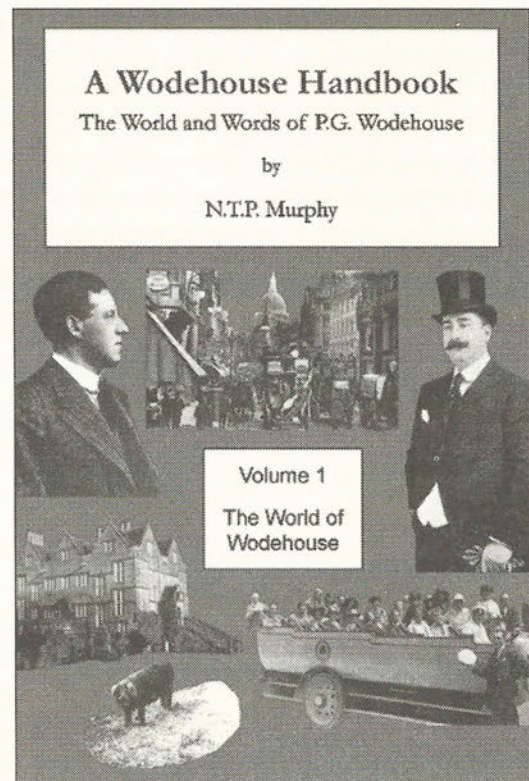
But here it is . . .

The immediate impression when the postman arrives is that we certainly get value for money. Each volume, in that expressive word of the book world, ‘hefts’ splendidly. At the same time, they add gravitas to the paperback genre, for the impressively chunky spine as well as for weight and looks.

The title is immediately spot-on – ‘a handbook’ carries the message that here is a book to accompany the Wodehouse buff down the passage of discovery, providing guidance and information along the treasure trail.

Volume 1, *The World of Wodehouse*, is so much more: it is in a very real sense a social history of a particular, evolving period of English life, running from the certainties of the late Victorian era to the considerable uncertainties of the Thirties.

Critics often talk, sometimes dismissively, of Bertie and Jeeves and Lord Emsworth and all the rest inhabiting a fantasy world, but as Norman has always argued, and indeed proved, this world did indeed exist, evolving across a half-century. No fewer than 41 chapter headings (from ‘Family’ to ‘Potty Peers’) indicate the extraordinary range of specific information available within. What is, of course, stunning is the research that has gone into the two volumes. If there are unturned stones left in



the Wodehouse edifice, then they are no more than miniscule pebbles.

But any reviewer worth his salt, or his huge fee, must find the odd quibble to record, or question to pose, if for no other reason than to set the author about the task of preparing the revised edition in due course.

For instance: as a Nonconformist of well post-PGW vintage, and coming from far over the seas, I am always unsure about the English marriage method. PGW does little to elucidate: there are references to special licences, while Wodehouse weddings are at least as likely to be at register offices as in fashionable Mayfair churches (about which there is more talk than action).

But some weddings do take place with surprising lack of organisation – or are planned that way. When Myra Schoonmaker rushes to town to wed her Bill Bailey at the Wilton Street register’s, even although this does not actually happen (thanks to confusion over Wilton and Milton), it does seem to be a penny-in-the-slot operation. Ring the register, turn up, and there you are, appears to be the method.

And what about the letter Maudie Montrose received from Sir Gregory Parsloe requesting her presence for a wedding at St. Saviour’s, Pimlico, at 2 o’clock sharp on June the seventh? Maudie was not required to do anything other than attend; there is no record of banns; and it was only Sir Gregory’s dodgy handwriting, actually proposing June the fourth, that sabotaged the ceremony.

*The two-volume A Wodehouse Handbook: The World and Words of P.G. Wodehouse was self-published by Norman Murphy in December 2006. Here two members give us their views on this latest addition to Wodehouseana.*

I should like to know how these fast-track events were arranged. Or were they not authentic, but PGW needed them for the plot, hurried over the formalities – and Norman has chosen to go along with the exercise?

Much more serious is the matter of Jeeves and his career role. We Wodehouse nuts spend our spare time writing reprovingly to newspapers which term any butler a ‘Jeeves’ or refer to ‘Bertie Wooster and his invaluable butler, Jeeves’.

But Norman takes it further – “Reginald Jeeves was neither a butler nor a valet” – and cites the man’s own definition to the policeman in ‘Jeeves and the Kid Clementina’: “I am in his employment as a gentleman’s personal gentleman.” Norman says the distinction is important, between one who provided a basic service for his employer, and one who virtually ran his life.

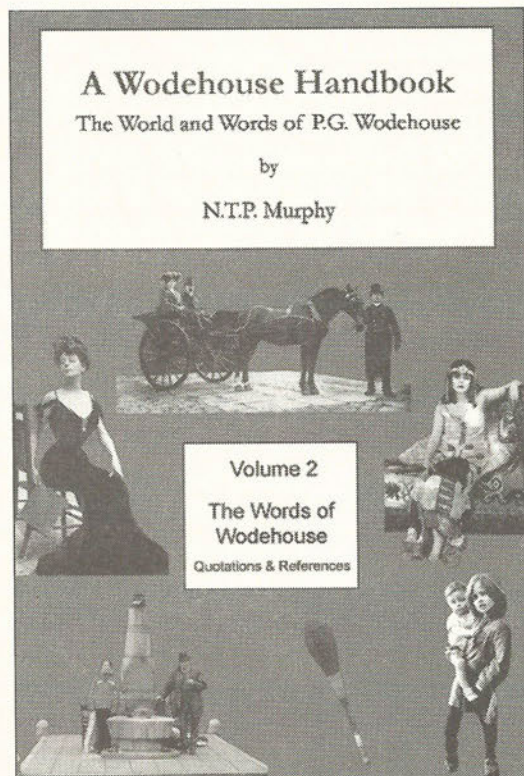
However – when we first meet this wonder-man in ‘Jeeves Takes Charge’, his announcement on the Wooster doorstep is: “I was sent by the agency, Sir. I was given to understand that you required a valet.”

So – does this mean that Jeeves began as a valet, and become a g.p.g? Or did he use the term as shorthand, possibly realising that Bertie, having had ‘a late evening’, was in no condition to work his way through the nuances of gentleman’s personal gentleman? Perhaps Bertie had never enjoyed the services of a g.p.g. in the past, being stuck with valets who clumped, snaffled silk socks, and so on.

But as Plum says, let carpers carp and cavillers cavil, and get on with viewing the big picture. It is truly a very big picture: I have pages of notes made for this study, taking me up to no further than the halfway mark of the 468 pages of Volume 1, at which stage I scrapped the exercise.

*The World of Wodehouse* would take an entire issue of *Wooster Sauce* to do it anything like justice – and there is so much else for *WS* to record about today’s continuing Plum pleasure that this, sadly, is impossible.

But if you consider yourself a PGW enthusiast, then this book, alongside Volume 2 (*The Words of Wodehouse*), must be on your shelf. Repeat – MUST.



## Volume 2: *The Words of Wodehouse* Reviewed by David Landman

before the publication of his marvellous, masterly, and monumental *Handbook*, Lt. Col. N.T.P. Murphy must have had more of it reading Wodehouse than anybody. Few of us – if any – can lay claim to such comprehensive cultural and historical command of an era as the author possesses.

Now, thanks to Col. Murphy’s labour of love, we lesser beings can partake of the rich and authoritative erudition that is certain to bring fresh relish to rereading Plum. Now you can impress your friends by knowing that the expression ‘cramped your style’ does not refer to muscle spasms but to riding in a hansom where you and your girl “were so tightly squeezed together that there was no room for any hanky-panky”. And you will score big on game shows by knowing that heavyweight boxer Bombardier (Billy) Wells was the “chap who bonged on the gong in the opening sequence of Rank Studios films”. I run no risk of stealing Murphy’s thunder when I quote these tit-bits; there are in the volume literally hundreds more equally fascinating examples awaiting your delectation.

Do not make the mistake, as I did when asked to restrict my comments to Volume 2, of thinking that

There is a saying that women derive more enjoyment from sex than men. Despite mild curiosity about how the research was conducted, I have my doubts about the finding. But when it comes to fun, there is one thing I can say with certainty:

the first volume contains all the meat and the second volume is a mere exercise in encyclopaedism. Volume 2 is every bit as entertaining, lively, and light-hearted (as is appropriate to a book on Plum) as the first. In it you will, of course, find in alphabetical order all the painstakingly researched information that adds to comprehension, but you will also find that it is presented unpedantically and is so laced with a vast array of personal anecdotes, idiosyncratic byways, ‘eureka!’ moments, recommendations for reading, leads for further research, passages of brilliant writing, and wry humour that you will find it as compellingly readable from cover to cover as Volume 1.

Col. Murphy has a flair for condensing complex things to a polished nutshell. Take, for example, his description of those ‘Try-Your-Strength’ carnival dodges, which he glosses as “a stall where one paid to have three goes at hitting a pivot-lever which, if hit hard enough, would project a ball up a column to hit a bell at the top”. Could it possibly be described more lucidly and succinctly?

Witty asides are everywhere to be found. Paris’s rescue from dire straits on the Trojan battlefield by the goddess Aphrodite (Murphy anachronistically says ‘Venus’, which is how the Romans knew her) is deemed “unsporting outside interference”. When thrown from his horse by the appearance of a divine light on the road to Damascus, the apostle Saul’s dramatic conversion is summed up neatly: “[T]his, as well as a few pointed remarks from the Almighty, altered his views considerably.”

There are in the text ample leads for those of scholarly bent to pursue, tantalizing allusions that Murphy modestly admits eluded his painstaking research. If you know the source of the phrase ‘baby’s sock is now a blue bag’, run, do not walk, to the nearest phone and let Col. Murphy in on it. And lest it be thought that I am overdoing praise for his relentless accumulation of facts, especially in a paragraph about instances where he drew a blank, consider the entry on ‘became him/her well’ where, describing his search for the source, Murphy says laconically, “I decided to have a look at the works of Ouida and Marie Corelli” – there being over seventy treacly novels between them. Talk about British understatement – and he found what he was looking for!

In a book of 569 pages there are bound to be instances where Homer nods (see p. 266). The

wonder is that in a book of these proportions there are so few. Venus for Aphrodite as noted above. A few slips with regard to Dickens’s characters. Perpetuation of the phrase “say it ain’t so, Joe” when what the lad said to Shoeless Joe Jackson after he confessed throwing the 1926 World Series was, as reported by reliable witnesses, “It isn’t true, is it, Joe?” And occasionally items are not explained as fully as they might be: the entry to ‘leaving not a rack behind’, for example, while locating the phrase’s origin in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, fails to define what a ‘rack’ meant to the Bard. Would it not have helped the reader to note that it is a cloud or a mass of clouds driven by the wind? Nor does Murphy tell us that ‘Cornish piskies’ are a variant of Cornish pixies. But these are minor quibbles.

On the other hand, one should not classify Murphy’s idiosyncrasies as errors. They are charming and bespeak the man. He complains of being unable to find Marmite in the USA, but, whatever he gains on the Marmite, he loses by calling the man-at-bat the ‘striker’. And the Colonel apparently has capricious tastes in women: Gina Lollobrigida and Lily Pons are ‘beautiful’; Hedy Lamarr is ‘gorgeous’, but Dorothy Lamour, Carole Lombard, Myrna Loy, Ida Lupino, and Marilyn Miller don’t rate an adjective.

There are nine photos chosen to give the reader a visual idea of some things; the one of slum children evoking Gladys and Ern in ‘Lord Emsworth and the Girlfriend’ is particularly haunting.

In sum, Col. Murphy has blessed us with an authoritative and indispensable vade mecum for the Wodehouse reader. But, that is not all. I have saved the best for last. The crowning glory of Col. Murphy’s book in its entirety is that it transcends its titular restriction to P. G. Wodehouse. Modestly calling itself *A Wodehouse Handbook*, it constitutes, in fact, a formidable contribution to social history, American as well as British. It places Wodehouse’s work within the wider context of over seven decades of cultural development. This is a terrific book that ought to be on the shelves of every academic library. It certainly should be by the bedside of every Plummie.

*A Wodehouse Handbook: The World and Words of P.G. Wodehouse, by N.T.P. Murphy, is published by Popgood & Groolley and available directly from the author. Please note the price has been increased since the last issue of Wooster Sauce. See page 20 for more information.*

### **An Extract from Volume 2**

**St Sebastian.** Like the picture of S.S. in the Louvre 36 p186; on receipt of the 15th arrow 51 p131; his reproachful look 65 p230. In 300 A.D., the emperor Diocletian ordered this Roman martyr to be shot to death with arrows. The incident was a popular subject for painters, and the picture in the Louvre is by Henner. (Sebastian recovered and went back to reproach Diocletian, who promptly had him beaten to death with clubs. I cannot help thinking that the saintly Sebastian was pushing his luck.)

# Backing the Berkshire

## Reports of a Porcine Nature

### Patience's virtue

At the Society's dinner at Gray's Inn last October, Sir John Mortimer was presented with the sponsorship of Patience, a Berkshire sow making her home at Baylham House Rare Breeds Farm in Suffolk. On November 24th, Richard Storer of Baylham House wrote to Chairman Hilary Bruce as follows:

We have had a few worried months with Patience, the Berkshire sow that Sir John Mortimer adopted. We unsuccessfully tried AI to get her in-pig and this was followed by many weeks away from home living with a boar who was never seen to pay her any attention. We then brought her back and had her scanned. 'Not pregnant' was the verdict. We decided that she really ought to go for sausages if she couldn't pay her way, but none of us could make the decision to organise her departure and thus we put off and put off the fateful day.

A few days ago we noticed that her udder was bagging up and so we got the scanner to come back. "She is pregnant," he said, "but I can't see many, probably just two or three. I should think they will arrive in about two weeks' time." This morning we went out to feed her and she didn't come out of her arc, so we had a look inside. There she was with a litter of six baby Berkshires, four gilts and two boars. They were put into a wheelbarrow and she trotted along beside whilst they were wheeled along to be put into a cosy stable with a lamp and lots of clean straw. Sir John might like to be reminded that he has first option to buy the piglets!

There has been no word on Sir John's reaction, but as Hilary notes: "It's certainly very pleasing that Patience

was as discreet as she was about her interesting condition, retained her modesty regarding her matrimonial activities, fooled the scanner and then, as if to cause everyone as little bother as possible, quietly had her piglets without mentioning it to anyone. A very Berkshire way of going about things, I can't help thinking."

No doubt the Empress would agree!

### News from Sussex

Ever vigilant, as all supporters of the Berkshire should be, Colin Beckett has written to advise us that he has spotted Berkshire pigs in Sussex. Writes Colin: "I know that it is an aim of the Society to keep the Berkshire on the menu, so to speak. So, hopefully, any members or readers who live in West Sussex can now buy and taste the Berkshire pig. Colin and Sam Chapman specialise in rare breeds, and the Berkshire is amongst them. Their address is Leythorne Farm, Vinnetrov Road, Runcton, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 1QB (just south of Chichester off the A27 bypass). Incidentally, this is not far from Emsworth, so any reader paying their respects to PG's house in Emsworth could easily pop along to the farm and buy some very tasty pork."

### Get your Back the Berkshire ties now!

As part of the Society's ongoing Back the Berkshire campaign, we are selling specially designed ties, the profits of which will go toward supporting Berkshire pigs at rare-breed farms. The ties are an elegant shade of purple with a picture of the Empress of Blandings in the centre and 'P G Wodehouse Society (UK)' at the bottom.



*An Empress in her own right, Patience serenely accompanies her piglets to their new home in a stable.*

**Support the Society's Back the Berkshire campaign!**

# The Lady and the Duke

*P G Wyndham Brooks offers intriguing ideas  
on the sources of two PGW characters*

How we all enjoy attempting to identify the real-life sources for Wodehouse's characters or locations. Little did I think that researching the families of English nobility would throw up not one but two people that I suggest provided the models for two supposedly fictional personalities. It suggests further that Plum had a keen interest in English history, or certainly those families that contributed so much to it.

Upon reading the 1905 poem 'The Rivals' in the September issue of *Wooster Sauce*, the name 'Lady Ermyntrude' leapt at me from the page. I happen to be compiling the lineage of the family Malet, one of the oldest in England and, in the words of Sir Anthony Wagner, Garter King of Arms, "the only family to possess a direct male line to the 1066 Battle of Hastings". William (Guillaume) Malet was aide to William the Conqueror, yet, strangely, he was cousin to King Harold's Queen, Aldith, thus being half-Norman, half-Saxon. One of his descendants, Sir Edward B Malet 4th Bt GCB GCMG PC (1837–1908), was a close confidant of Queen Victoria, awarded CB for 'courageous service', abolished importation of slaves to Egypt, and established good relations with Bismarck and the Kaiser when Ambassador to Germany. He declined a peerage but married the daughter, not of an earl as P.G. cunningly misleads us, but of no other than the 9th Duke of Bedford. She was Lady Ermyntrude Russell – Lady Malet (1856–1927), 19 years his junior. Lady Ermyntrude was of the right stuff for the Wodehouse creative mind, meeting Sir Edward as he arrived by shooting down a fire escape, arriving at his feet with her skirts over her head! They were married in Westminster Abbey in 1885, and their portraits can be viewed at Dillington House near Ilminster.

Lady Ermyntrude and Sir Edward built Westwood House at Bexhill and Chateau Malet in Monaco, and although Wodehouse teases us by suggesting their marriage was at St Peter's, Eaton Square, we can be quite certain of the provenance of his character as the Malets' London home was at 87 Eaton Square in 1905, when 'The Rivals' was penned. Was Plum acquainted with the illustrious couple or was it tongue-in-cheek social commentary? I would suggest a more intimate biographical knowledge of the Malet background as 'Marmaduke de Courcy, at present

big game shooting in the waste of Penge or Tooting' has the uncanny ring of Gilbert Malet (c1100 AD), son of the original William, who married a de Courcy (or Courcelly), from which Curry Mallet derives.

The second subject with genuine titled connections that I have come across was suggested some 25 years ago, so Tony Ring tells me, by Benny Green. I refer to the Marquess of Hartington (1833–1908) (note the similarity of dating to Sir Edward B Malet), who was nicknamed Harty Tarty and became the 8th Duke of Devonshire.

Quoting pages from *The Noble House of Cavendish* will leave you in no doubt as to which Wodehouse character for whom this is the genotype. Despite wealth and status, Harty was not an achiever but was held in high regard for his plain, common sense. He disliked the many high offices he held, three times refused to be Prime Minister, and was in and out of the Cabinet for 40 years. Neither quick-witted nor eloquent, not amusing or engaging, he had deep convictions and never compromised. Boring he may have been, but he was listened to as he had good judgement and was always right. He once apologised to the House for yawning during his own speech, which "was so damn dull". He would invite hundreds of guests to Chatsworth, but remembered none of them. When a guest admired the Duke's Pevensy Castle, he replied, "Pevensy? Whose is Pevensy?"

When his agent suggested he was spending too freely, he said, "Well, isn't there plenty of it?" His somnolence advanced with age, and he would fall asleep over dinner or during a speech. He once said: "I had a nightmare. I dreamed I was making a speech in the House and woke up to find I was."

Margot Asquith said of the 8th Duke that "he stood by himself and could have come from no other country but England. He had the figure and appearance of an artisan, with the brevity of a peasant and the courtesy of a King."

If the reader has not yet formed the link, it was said that he was not ambitious because he had nothing to be ambitious about, and the happiest moment of his life was *when his pig took first prize at an agricultural show*.

His dying words were: "The game is over and I'm not sorry." It is a game we shall all continue to enjoy in the company of Plum's endearing Lord Emsworth.

# The Jenkins Autograph Edition and the Logo

by Charles E Gould, Jr

Charles wrote the following article for his 25th Annual P.G. Wodehouse Catalogue (October 2006).

In the decade beginning in 1956, Herbert Jenkins reissued 41 Wodehouse titles in a uniform edition, bound in buckram in various colours, measuring 5 x 7½", with the Wodehouse facsimile autograph blind-stamped on the front cover. As of 1959, these books had coloured top page edges, in slightly varying lovely shades (like the Emperor's new clothes) of green.

The dust wrappers, also in various colours, are uniform, bearing a design formed from the publisher's initials "HJ" and the publisher's logo, which on the spine of *The Clicking of Cuthbert* and *The Inimitable Jeeves* (1923) seems to be distinctly a Hippogriff but elsewhere appears to be a Pegasus. In its earliest manifestations a little hard to identify surely, it appeared either printed or blind-stamped on the back cover (*A Damsel in Distress*, *The Coming of Bill*) and on the copyright page of Jenkins books. On the copyright page and back cover of *Meet Mr. Mulliner* (1927) it retains its original form; but with that title it begins to appear in a new variation on the spine, now with the head of a man and carrying a torch—a sort of winged Promethean Centaur, and as such it appears consistently on the spine through *The Old Reliable* (1951) and as part of the Autograph Edition dust wrapper design—though the original continued to appear on back covers through *Galahad at Blandings* (1965).

With *Something Fishy* (1957) the newer logo appears, much smaller, on the title page, where it remains through *Cocktail Time* and *A Few Quick Ones* (1959), then disappears altogether. This



The Jenkins logo, centaur style, as worn after 1927

muddle-headed mythic mixture of Chiron, Pegasus, Prometheus, and Buckbeak is typical Herbert Jenkins, of course; but Simon & Schuster's Simple Sower can't hold a candle to him. I used to kid Peter Schwed that the S&S S.S. looked more like a WWI Infantryman (as it might have been me) on the run, but

he always maintained that the poor son of a bachelor has his left hand in a bag of seeds, not elsewhere . . . perhaps, at second glance, the same thing. Don't Listen, Ladies.

Identifying the first issues of the Autograph Edition is a nightmare (and essentially pointless) because Hippogriff Jenkins, true to form, issued each title several times with many variations in dust wrapper advertisements and, probably, bindings, but (like "the difference between a duck", in the old joke) few of them aren't each the same.

## Elementary? Of Course, Watson!

A few months ago, Joff Lelliott spotted a piece in *The Guardian* (25 October 2006) entitled 'Beam Me Up, Scotty – and Misquote Me for Better Effect'. This article concerned *What They Didn't Say*, a book of misquotations recently published by Oxford University Press, and it includes the rather bold assertion that it was P G Wodehouse, not Arthur Conan Doyle, who coined the phrase "Elementary, my dear Watson".

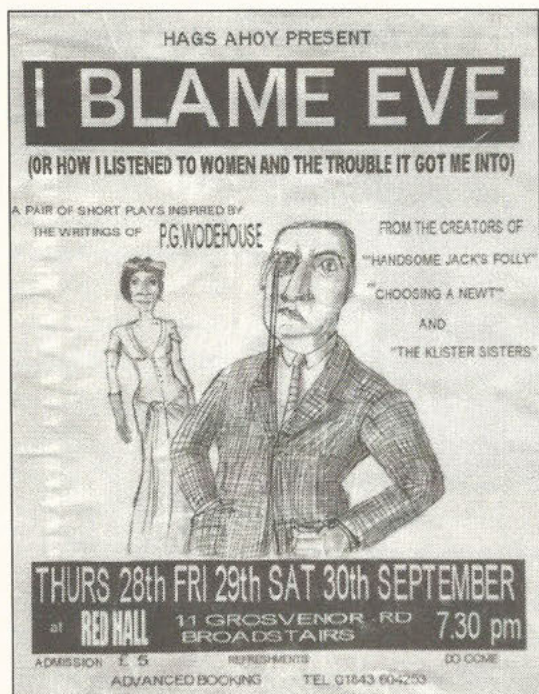
Writes the article's author, Martin Wainwright: "The nearest the fictional detective got to 'elementary' was a single use of the word in one short story, 'The Crooked Man', published in 1894. The full phrase was coined 21 years later by PG Wodehouse, in *Psmith Journalist*, whose hero tacks on the remainder of the phrase." Joff quite rightly

leaped on this statement and wrote to both Mr Wainwright and Elizabeth Knowles, the new book's author, pointing out that the expression had been used on stage and in film before Wodehouse wrote it. Ms Knowles replied that "Elementary, my dear Watson" does appear in the 1929 film *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, but "the Wodehouse usage (in the mouth of 'Psmith') is significantly earlier."

This is so, but Norman Murphy believes that Wodehouse was merely doing what he so often did, quoting a phrase already made popular by somebody else – in this case, William Gillette, the actor who made Holmes famous on the stage. What Wodehouse did was to be the first English author to put the phrase *in print*, a fact confirmed by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. So there it is – with knobs on.

# Playtime with Wodehouse

News of Wodehouse plays or Wodehouse-inspired productions can come from the most unlikely places. For example, Society member Eileen Allen spotted this poster for a play in Broadstairs last



September. *I Blame Eve (or How I Listened to Women and the Trouble It Got Me Into)* consisted of a pair of one-act plays ‘inspired by the writings of P.G. Wodehouse’. With a title like that, one can well imagine which PGW characters provided the inspiration!

Meanwhile, across the pond in Rockford, Illinois, a group called the Artists Ensemble put on an

## Anything Goes in Cambridge

Speaking of *Anything Goes*, Geoff Hales informs us that a production is to be staged by The Pied Pipers Musical Theatre Club at the Mumford Theatre, Anglia Ruskin University, on March 28th to the 31st (7:30 P.M. Wednesday–Friday, 2:30 & 7:30 P.M. Saturday). Geoff writes: “I have two cameo roles, which should bring the punters in!” Tickets are £8–£9 and can be obtained from Geoff or by calling the Mumford Theatre at 0845 1962320; their website address is <http://web.anglia.ac.uk/mumfordtheatre/>.

Though this is cutting it close for *Wooster Sauce* readers, if you attend the show and would be willing to write a review for the journal, please let the Editor know.

original play entitled *Jeeves and the Greensleeves Disaster* for several performances in December. In an interview published by the *Rockford Register Star*, the playwright, Margaret Raether, described this work as “a comedy based on P.G. Wodehouse characters, hapless Bertie Wooster and his unflappable manservant, Jeeves.” She also revealed that “reading a ton of P.G. Wodehouse as research for my play was great fun. I recommend *The Code of the Woosters*.” Ah, if only Ibsen had been so wise!

More recently, a church-based theatre group in Chicago, the Saint Sebastian Players, mounted a production of – of all things – *The Play’s the Thing*. Any Wodehousean who has seen this play knows how risqué it can be. The show ended its run on March 4th, and it would be interesting to learn what the Saint Sebastian Players have up their sleeves next.

And in New Port Richey, Florida, the Richey Suncoast Theatre had a three-weekend run of *Anything Goes* that ended on March 11. An online review of this production (<http://tinyurl.com/2862k2>) notes: “It’s hard to lose when a show has smooth, mellow and sometimes whimsical music and lyrics by the incomparable Cole Porter. But add a zany script based on the writings of English humorist P.G. Wodehouse, and you have a musical comedy that can’t be beat, the terrific *Anything Goes*.”

Few could disagree with this sentiment!

## At Wits’ End in Little Kingshill

by Tony Ring

Buckinghamshire and South Bedfordshire County Councils support a ‘Theatre in the Villages’ project, which brings live theatre to small village halls in the counties. On November 16, Susan Flannery and Michael Lunts presented *Wits’ End*, a “cocktail of wit and wisdom as served up by Dorothy Parker, Ogden Nash, George and Ira Gershwin, Cole Porter and other New York luminaries”, to an enthusiastic and full village hall in Little Kingshill, near Great Missenden.

The show was entertaining and imaginatively presented, and to my surprise incorporated two short poems by PGW from the *New Yorker*, ‘On the Bus’ and ‘Gargoyle’, with which I was not familiar. But this PGW is a Philip Wylie!

Susan and Michael present this show fairly regularly, and one booking next year is during the Ludlow Festival, at the Ludlow Assembly Rooms on July 5th at 7.30 P.M. The Festival Box Office number is 01584 872150; the website is [www.ludlowfestival.co.uk](http://www.ludlowfestival.co.uk).



# Wodehouseans, Arise!

*Jeff Coates encourages a protest movement*

Along with many Society members, I subscribe to the Everyman series of Wodehouse books. I think the Everyman Wodehouse books are wonderful. They look good, they feel good, the artwork is exceptional, and overall I think they make the best uniform edition of the great man's work that I've ever seen.

I wrote to Everyman a while ago asking how many books were to be included in the series and was told that they intended to issue 80 titles. I was rather disappointed in this because I was hoping that *all* of the books would be produced. However, I took it like an Englishman and bore my stiff upper lip with courage and fortitude.

But now my resolve has weakened and I believe it is time for action. Would Comrade Butt have taken it lying down? Would Sir Roderick Spode or Aunt Agatha have said "so be it"? I think not. We should act. I have written to Everyman today appealing for clemency. If other members do the same, then justice might just prevail. We can lobby our MPs, raise the question in Parliament, or organize a protest march through the streets of London.

This could be the last great act that our Prime Minister performs for this country. He is, after all, a Patron of the Society and, by definition, on our side.

*Editor's note:* Tony Ring informs me that some of PGW's works are not necessarily suitable for republication by Everyman – for example, *The Globe By The Way Book* and *Not George Washington*. Do you agree, or would you like to join in Jeff's protest and give the PM a truly worthy task for his final months in office?

## Wodehouse in Texas

by Toni Rudersdorf

The Drone Rangers of Texas saddled their horses and hit the dusty trail to Fort Worth on December 30th to refresh our spirits with laughter at Stage West, a little theatre group that was performing *Right Ho, Jeeves*, as adapted by Mark Richards. This group has performed three adapted Wodehouse novels in the past, and we have enjoyed each in their season.

Stage West's Jeeves, Jim Covault, was excellent, as was Kelly Thomas, who played Aunt Dahlia. We were delighted to see them again. Regan Adair as the new Bertie was amazing, hilarious and fiendishly clever – and his memory (he had millions of lines) was staggering. Dwight Greene as Anatole came close to stealing the show in the scene where the enraged French chef, clad in lavender pajamas, expresses his discontent in no uncertain terms.

The Drone Rangers are a tough audience, but this performance of *Right Ho, Jeeves* rendered us helpless with laughter. We returned to Houston and Dallas and parts west of Dallas weary but well satisfied, although a little woozy from the champagne we imbibed at the after-play party. Alas, we had no Jeeves to slip us a pick-me-up before joining our fellow Texans on the long road home.

## Everyman Books for 2007

Word on the street is that Everyman has now published *The Inimitable Jeeves* and *Money for Nothing*. Slated to be published later in 2007 are *Sam the Sudden* and *Big Money*. No word yet on future titles in the series. Stay tuned!

## All Credit to Wooster Sauce

In a letter to *The Telegraph* in Calcutta, **Sushmita Sen Gupta** took the editor to task: "This refers to the article 'Dreaming Up Delicacies' by Chandrima Bhaduri (Jan. 4, 2007). I have just been informed by Tony Ring, the editor of *Wooster Sauce* (the newsletter of the UK Wodehouse Society) that Albert Roux's recipe mentioned in the article has appeared once before – only in the September 1999 issue of *Wooster Sauce*. The author of the article should have credited the source. It would be fitting if *Wooster Sauce* can be given retrospective credit, by the author or by you, in the columns of your newspaper." Sushmita went on to note how Wodehouse fans can join the UK Wodehouse Society and praised *Wooster Sauce* as "a wonderful way to keep the Wodehouse flame alive". It is just this sort of recruiting spirit we like to see in our members! Alas, Sushmita received no response to her letter.

# The Saturnin Connection

*or, How the Drones Invaded the Czech Republic*

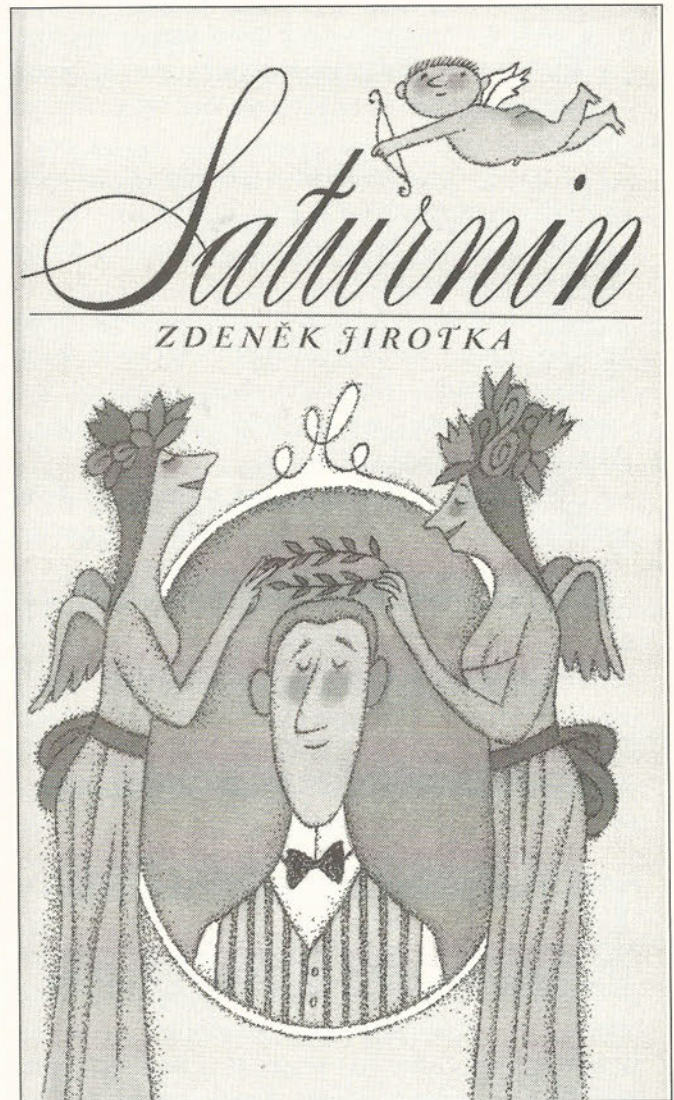
A few years ago, the American Wodehousean Marilyn MacGregor noted how the Café Imperial in Prague kept a bowl of the previous day's doughnuts available on a counter for customers to throw at each other. She wondered at the time whether the owner was a Wodehouse fan or whether the practice had been introduced by the Drones Club. The answer, as it turns out, is: no – and yes. **Alexander Dainty** has provided elucidation of this mystery by way of an article that explains not only the doughnuts but their literary source, with an indirect but fascinating connection to Wodehouse.

First, the doughnuts. The receptacle in which they are kept is called 'Saturnin's Bowl', and a notice by the bowl explains that they are served only to sober people over the age of 21 for a charge of 1,943 crowns (about £45 in summer 2006).

Now the source. In 1943 the Czech author Zdenek Jirotka published *Saturnin*, a work that remains the sixth most widely read book by Czechs in their own language. In 2003 *Saturnin* was finally translated into English, and in an essay published last year, the translator, Mark Corner, explained the source of its humour:

I was told from the outset that an important inspiration for Jirotká's *Saturnin* could be found in the writings of P.G. Wodehouse and Jerome K. Jerome. I could easily see why people might be reminded of Wodehouse. *Saturnin* is, after all, a humorous story of an idle young gentleman and his manservant. But there are differences too. Jirotká's book is a romantic tale of a dull but decent person who is drawn to a beautiful woman called Barbara who thrashes him at tennis on their first encounter. *Saturnin* has very clear ideas about how to deal with this. He sweeps his master out of his dull home and straight into a houseboat on the River Vltava, piping him on board, addressing him as 'Captain', and rigging up a makeshift tennis court to improve his forehand. In the meantime he spreads rumours that his straight-laced employer once killed a shark with a camera tripod and forces him into the front line of an attempt to recover an escaped lion.

All this is clearly the proper task of a manservant engaged in boosting his master's credentials as a potential lover, perceiving that capturing a lion might be a small step on the way to the larger task of capturing a woman's heart. However, *Saturnin* is capable of



spreading creative havoc in several directions at once. He teaches his employer's ageing grandfather jujitsu and takes him for what unfortunately turns out to be a literal spin in the old man's ageing jealousy. He gets rid of a difficult aunt, who insists on a prolonged visit to the houseboat, by convincing her that she must wear a mask of St. Nicholas in bed at night to ward off rats. With admirable dexterity he removes an unfortunate moustache from the aunt's foppish son by deftly burning it off with a cigarette while smothering the young scallywag in a blanket.

We can see from these examples that *Saturnin* is more roguish than Jeeves (though Jeeves has an undeniable roguish touch). *Saturnin* bursts into rooms where Jeeves has mastered the art of shimmering, and is much more likely to occupy himself on holiday with a practical guide to polar exploring than a

challenge to the grey cells like Spinoza's *Ethics*. The removal of the moustache would appeal to Jeeves, though the latter preferred offending objects like Bertie Wooster's loud blazers to be removed by consent. Aunt Catherine in *Saturnin* is certainly reminiscent of those terrifying Wodehouse aunts that call each other up like mastodons sounding across the primeval swamp, but she has her own distinct habit of quoting real and imagined sayings that prove a nightmare to any translator.

Indeed, Corner had numerous challenges in translating the text: "Though *Saturnin* does contain a plot which twists, thickens, unravels and eventually produces a happy outcome, the text is laced with enough puns and sharp exchanges to keep the task of any translator from ever being straightforward." (So, too, must translators of Wodehouse into other languages have headaches aplenty!) One of the most remarkable things about the book, according to Corner, was that it was written at a time when Czechoslovakia was deep in the grip of the Nazi occupation: "One form of resistance was to put the world created by invasion out of your mind and create another. Others did so in Czechoslovakia during wartime, such as Jan Drda and Eduard Bass, but none managed it as successfully as Jirotko." Was it, perhaps, a Wodehousean influence – a reluctance to acknowledge the evil of the outside world?

And was it a Wodehouse inspiration that led to the establishment of Saturnin's Bowl in the Café Imperial? Again the answer is no – and perhaps yes. Corner explains:

As for those famous pastries in the Café Imperial, they are referred to in the first

chapter of the novel, where we are told that there are two or perhaps three kinds of people in the world. On the one hand there are those who, when trapped inside the enervating world of a Central European café on a Sunday morning, simply stare mindlessly at a bowl of doughnuts on the counter. Then there are those who at least imagine what it would be like to turn them into missiles and hurl them around. There is, however, possibly a third and very rare class of person, one of those real movers and shakers we might admire nowadays for their entrepreneurial spirit. These are people prepared to dispel the ennui of a Sunday morning by taking aim and pelting the other customers. Such a one is Saturnin.

Clearly Saturnin, though a Jeeves by calling, is a Drones Club member in spirit. And perhaps we can conjecture that, as a possible Wodehouse fan, Jirotko may have had the Drones in mind when he wrote the opening chapter of his great novel. As Corner writes: "Through later times of conflict and oppression the pastries continued to fly around the Café Imperial, a form of stress relief that can doubtless take its place nowadays alongside smashing old cars and paintball. In this case, however, the source of the therapy was and is a work of literature, a comic masterpiece that has been taken to heart by the Czech nation and never given up."

*Thanks to Dr Mark Corner for permission to reprint sections of his article 'Saturnin', published in the British, Czech and Slovak Review, June/July 2006, pages 6–7. Saturnin can be purchased from the Charles University Press, Prague, through their website at [www.cupress.cuni.cz](http://www.cupress.cuni.cz).*

## **Little Nuggets**

### ***Bertie Wooster, OBE***

It will not have escaped eagle-eyed Wodehouseans scanning the New Year Honours List that **Hugh Laurie** has been made OBE. (Translation for non-Brits: he has been appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire.) No doubt this was for his superlative characterisation of Bertie Wooster!

### ***Banking on Wodehouse***

This past November, Western Union announced the opening of its 36,000th Agent location in India, where offices of the world money-transfer leader can be found in more than 3500 cities and towns. The new Agent location is in – wait for it – the Wodehouse Branch of the State Bank of India in Mumbai. Shades of the New Asiatic Bank!

### ***The Proper Spirit***

by Murray Hedgcock

St. Paul's Girls' School in West London is noted for the Paulinas it produces – informed, confident young women who expect to go on to great things, and usually do so. Required to study a list of five books for A Level English, students were recently advised by their English master (yes, a man) to tackle four standard works which, as he admitted, tended towards gloom and doom, depression and repression, and so on.

"Then for light relief, I told them to look out for the sheer joy and fun of P.G.Wodehouse – any Wodehouse, but recommending especially 'Jeeves and the Yuletide Spirit'."

Wise man . . .

# Wodehouse Book Publishing News

This past November, Random House, Rogers Coleridge & White, and the Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate announced that Arrow Books will publish 43 Wodehouse titles in paperback when the Penguin licences expire in 2008. According to a press release, “The books will be published in new editions within the space of a single year as part of a major campaign designed to revitalise the sales of one of the world’s greatest writers of humour.” The new series of paperback books will become part of the list of selected PGW titles published by Hutchinson and represented by the same sales team currently overseeing the hardback list published by Everyman.

This news broke a little too late to be included in Tony Whittome’s article on ‘The Future of Wodehouse Publishing’ in the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*. Tony, who is Editorial Director at Hutchinson and a Patron of The P G Wodehouse Society, announced: “Ever since we acquired rights in P.G. Wodehouse we have wanted to publish his major titles in Arrow, and it is a huge vote of confidence in the strength of our mass-market division that the time has now arrived.”

Sir Edward Cazalet commented: “We want to ensure that the magic of [Wodehouse’s] gentle humour and his unique style of writing continue to come to all generations. We are delighted with the proposals that Arrow has made. We feel, in particular, that these will ensure that the full range of P.G. Wodehouse’s work will become even more accessible to both young and old.”

Details on the titles to be published and the timing of publication will be provided in future issues of *Wooster Sauce* when known. Stay tuned to these pages for news on and special features associated with the Arrow publishing plans.

It was also announced that Hutchinson and Arrow have contracted with Sophie Ratcliffe to edit an authoritative new volume of *Selected Letters of P.G. Wodehouse*, to be published in 2009. This work will include a vast quantity of hitherto unpublished PGW material, something that will undoubtedly send shivers of delight through the Wodehouse world. Again, readers will be kept informed. Dr Ratcliffe will be speaking about the new book at the Society meeting on October 30th.

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## Books for Sale

**R**aymond Harris writes: “I have reached an age when I am trying to make life easier for my heirs by downsizing my book collection in the hope of finding a happy home where they may be more appreciated. It occurs to me that members of the Society may like to fill in their own collections.” He adds that none of the books may be of great monetary value, and he would be open to offers; a list follows.

**Books by PGW (all Herbert Jenkins editions, all in good condition with dust jackets)**

*Blandings Castle* (2nd printing, orange cover)

*Carry On, Jeeves* (7th printing, orange cover)

*The Coming of Bill* (17th printing, orange cover)

*A Damsel in Distress* (?1924, blue cover)

*The Inimitable Jeeves* (9th printing, orange cover)

*Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit* (First edition, 1954, orange cover)

*Piccadilly Jim* (20th printing, orange cover)

**Other books (all new, with dust jackets, except for Connolly)**

*A Wodehouse Companion* (Richard Osborne)

*P.G. Wodehouse* (Joseph Connolly; paperback)

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*P.G. Wodehouse* (Benny Green)

*The World of Wodehouse Clergy* (Published by Hutchinson, 1984)

*Thank You, Wodehouse* (J.H.C. Morris)

*Jeeves, a Gentleman’s Personal Gentleman* (C. Northcote Parkinson)

# The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

## *Sitting Pretty*

*Sitting Pretty* of 1924 was the sixth (and last) collaboration of Jerome Kern, P G Wodehouse, and Guy Bolton. Between 1917 and 1920, the three had created five musicals (namely, *Have a Heart*, *Oh Boy!*, *Leave It to Jane*, *Oh, Lady! Lady!!*, and *Sally*). These shows have become known as the ‘Princess Theatre’ musicals because of the long run of *Oh Boy!* at the Princess in 1917, followed by *Oh, Lady! Lady!!* in 1918. The Princess was a tiny theatre just off Broadway on 39th Street in New York City, seating only 299 people (its peculiar size is explained by the fact that fire licences were required for theatres with capacities of 300 or more).

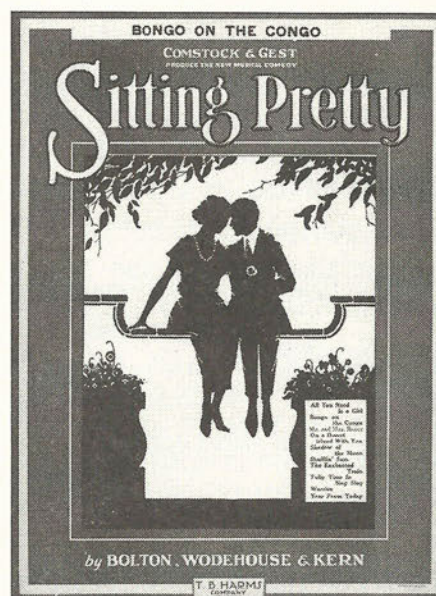
*Sitting Pretty* opened on 23 March 1924 in Detroit and received favourable reviews, Kern’s score being described as “evenly excellent”. The New York opening was on 8 April 1924 at the Fulton Theatre (*McIlvaine*, J27), and all the signs pointed towards a huge success. New York critics echoed the encomiums of Detroit. *The New York Times* described Kern as “America’s best writer of light music”. Wodehouse’s lyrics were also praised, both the comedy songs for their joyous cleverness and the love lyrics for being “soft without being mushy”. However, the show only ran for 95 performances.

The plot is classic musical comedy. It is a case of “boy starts off with wrong girl, meets right girl, loses right girl, but eventually wins right girl”. There is also a second love interest, which is another case of “boy meets right girl, loses right girl, but eventually wins right girl”. Some of the characters and plot were incorporated into *Bill the Conqueror*, which was serialised in *The Saturday Evening Post* from 24 May to 12 July 1924 (D59.53-60).

The New York production included the following lyrics, in the order shown, and most were also published as sheet music: ‘Is This Not a Lovely Spot?’, ‘You Alone Would Do’, ‘Worries’ (Gb157), ‘Bongo on the Congo’ (Gb11), ‘Mr and Mrs Rorer’ (Gb85), ‘There Isn’t One Girl’, ‘A Year from Today’ (Gb159), ‘Shufflin’ Sam’ (Gb122), ‘Days Gone By’, ‘All You Need Is a Girl’ (Gb3), ‘Tulip Time in Sing Sing’ (Gb142), ‘On a Desert Island with You’ (Gb102), ‘The Enchanted Train’ (Gb29), and ‘Shadow of the Moon’ (Gb120). Strangely, the title song, ‘Sitting Pretty’ (Gb125), was dropped from the New York production, as the singer was unable to pronounce ‘sit’ in a manner suitable for polite company!

The show was revived in April 1989 for concert performances at the Carnegie Hall, conducted by John McGlenn. This resulted in a recording in

September 1989, which was issued both as a double CD (New World Records 80387-2; SD3 in the *McIlvaine Addendum*) and as a double cassette (New World Records 80387-4; not listed in the *Addendum*). The cassettes’ sleeve notes merely contain a synopsis of the show, whereas the CDs contain a 44-page booklet, including cast list and biographies, an introductory essay by John McGlenn, plot synopsis, and full lyrics. Both the cassettes and CDs contain some extra tracks associated with the show but not used in the original New York production: instrumental versions of ‘All the World is Dancing Mad’ and ‘I’m Wise’, and ‘Just Wait’, which was dropped from Act One during the Detroit production.



The show is well worth hearing. For instance, *Bongo on the Congo* is an inspired piece of nonsense, and it contains some of Wodehouse’s most amusing lyrics.

Though on some nearby barren height  
The heat’s two hundred Fahrenheit  
Down in the valley it’s nice and cool.  
And yet . . . I don’t know why it is . . .  
The girls of all varieties  
Wear little but a freckle as a rule.

And something seems to urge a man  
To seek a local clergyman  
And start in marrying ev’rything in sight.

A more recent version of ‘The Enchanted Train’ can be heard on the Hal Cazalet and Sylvia McNair CD from 2001, *The Land Where the Good Songs Go* (Harbinger Records HCD1901; SD18).

# Recent Press Comment

*Edited by Tony Ring*

**The Australian**, October 21

Celebrated the adjacent birthdays (October 15 and 16) of Wodehouse and Oscar Wilde, and concluded a long article by suggesting their affinity was the ability “completely to comprehend a world and never take it seriously for a second”.

**Saga Magazine**, November (from Christine Draycott)  
Reviewed Christiansen’s *Complete Book of Aunts*, referring to Wodehouse’s childhood endurance of Aunts Julie, Nim, Mary, Loulie, Anne, Lydia, Edith, Constance, Alice, Jane, and Amy.

**Sun**, November 11 (from Paul Large)

Featured the 15 great-crested newts in Cheshire moved from the site of a proposed new road-junction at the cost of £312,000.

**Oxford Today**, Michaelmas Issue (from Simon Frazer)

Mentioned that the Public Orator had quoted both T S Eliot and Wodehouse during his speech at the Encaenia, conferring honorary degrees to eight distinguished recipients.

**Western Mail**, November 27

Introducing an article on the rise of gin and tonic, suggested it was Bertie Wooster’s favourite tippie.

**New Yorker**, November 27

Christopher Buckley wrote a pastiche dialogue between Jeeves and Wooster concerning the shake-up in the US administration following the mid-term elections. (Online at <http://tinyurl.com/34s3ao>.)

**Guardian**, November 28

A review of the surprise book hit *Amo, Amas, Amat ... and All That* by Harry Mount suggests he is always ready to digress entertainingly on the use of Latin in P G Wodehouse.

**CNN World News**, November 29

In reporting Tony Blair’s planned ‘statement of deep sorrow’ for the slave trade, Paul Sussman starts by reminding readers of Wodehouse’s nifty: “It’s a good rule in life never to apologise. The right sort don’t want apologies, and the wrong sort take a mean advantage of them.”

**Times Online**, November 29

In her review of Thomas Pynchon’s *Against the Day*, Sophie Ratcliffe suggests his fictional styles range from Rider Haggard to Wodehouse.

**The Other Paper (online)**, November 30

Previewed a meeting of the Ohio Historical Society at which Green Swizzles would feature during a form of historic pub crawl.

**Yorkshire Post**, December 4

Reported that the artist Phil Game had turned to Wodehouse to give a Jeeves and Wooster feel to the décor with a 60 foot mural at Harvilles, a restaurant in Fossgate, York, which opened in January.

**Western Mail**, December 15

One of a number of papers to draw attention to the comment by Bingo Little in ‘Comrade Bingo’ in *The Inimitable Jeeves* that “even baronetcies have gone up frightfully nowadays” in their discussion of the ‘peerages-for-cash’ scandal..

**Daily Telegraph** December 23, 27, and 29

Following a suggestion in their *Travel* pages that ‘Gieves and Hawkes’, the tailors, had inspired the name ‘Jeeves’, it published a firm rebuttal on its letters page from Norman Murphy and a reply from Robert Gieve.

**New India Press on Sunday**, January 12

Aruna Raghavan’s article on funding college courses told how she managed with early morning classes, an office job, and the knowledge that after paying college fees she still had just enough left over to buy a P G Wodehouse or two.

**Daily Telegraph**, January 16 (from Ann Close)

Published Dr Tim Healey’s letter reminding readers that Cyril Bassington-Bassington’s experience of spending time in a New York police cell (*The Inimitable Jeeves*) for not recognising a uniformed American as a policeman had preceded the experience of a Professor Felipe Fernández-Armesto (reported on January 11) by over 80 years.

**Times**, January 17 (from Timothy Kearley)

Michael Gove wrote in the style of Wodehouse to comment on Number 10’s advertisement for a ‘house manager’.

**Galway Independent**, January 18

Reported that a new Dry Cleaning collect-and-deliver service, Call Jeeves, has become one of Galway’s most promising new businesses.

**Chichester Observer**, January 25

Reported on a visit by Chichester University students to Emsworth Museum, with a guided tour of the Wodehouse exhibition, a question-and-answer session on Wodehouse and a short video about him.

**Daily Mirror**, January 27 (from Murray Hedgcock)

In an article entitled ‘British is now a Bertie Word’, Richard Hammond lamented the continuing power of the image of Bertie Wooster as representing Britishness.

*Daily Telegraph*, February 1

A column entitled 'Streetswise' in the Property Section described PGW's lifelong attachment to Dulwich and made reference to his wartime experience.

*Orlando Sentinel*, February 2

Used a PGW quotation to make the point that if you are trying to appeal to someone's vanity, warning them against looking silly would be a good way of doing it.

*The People*, February 11

Commenting on a new book published for Valentine's Day, entitled *Lovers' Wit*, the items quoted included PGW's "All the unhappy marriages come from husbands having brains. What good are brains to a man? They only unsettle him."

*Chicago Tribune*, February 13

Charles Leroux complained that the word 'eatery', which nobody uses, had appeared in his paper 40 times already in 2007. He noted that having (according to the *OED*) first been used in 1901, by 1923 it was (through Bertie Wooster) already taking on a negative connotation ("Why was he [Bingo little] lurching the girl at this god-forsaken eatery?").

*Star Online (Malaysia)*, February 15

Ralph Berry's 'Tribute to the Pig' contrasted traditional attitudes to pigs, in life and in literature, to the nobility of the Empress of Blandings.

*Scotsman*, February 17

In a review of a new biography of Edith Wharton by Hermione Lee, Michael Pye commented that she could "look like an aunt out of Wodehouse, a mix of professionalism, passion, dogma and bravura".

*New York Times*, February 18

Refers to Canadian columnist Russell Smith's writings about men's style. Invoking P G Wodehouse, Smith mentions an exchange between Bertie Wooster Jeeves: "There are moments, Jeeves, when one asks oneself, 'Do trousers matter?'" Jeeves responds: "The mood will pass, sir." Mr Smith takes the Jeeves line, arguing that trousers matter, and so does cloth, cut and, above all, footwear. "A \$20 tie from Wal-Mart is still pure silk," he writes. "But cheap shoes always look bad."

## Poets' Corner

### Exposed

*(The School Board of New Brunswick, New Jersey, has excluded the teaching of botany in schools on 'account of the polygamous habits of flowers')*

I used to love each flower that grows,  
Collect each kind of blossom;  
I plucked the buttercup and rose  
Whene'er I came across 'em:  
I gathered nosegays left and right,  
Whenever I could spot any;  
Putting it briefly, I was quite  
A perfect whale at botany.

If ever Chloe seemed to shun  
My manifest devotion,  
I'd send her flowers by the ton,  
As proof of my emotion:  
I gave her bouquets every day,  
I meant no impropriety  
It really never struck me they  
Weren't fit for her society.

But now I scorn their scents and hues;  
My confidence it shatters  
To learn how shaky are their views  
On matrimonial matters;  
However much they please the eye  
With superficial prettiness,  
To me their charm is cancelled by  
Their shameless Salt-Lake-City-ness.

Henceforward our curriculums  
We ought to start revising:  
Our babes must take to dates and sums  
In lieu of botanising.  
A flower's ways, as I have shown,  
All thinkers, who examine, hate:  
The subject must be left alone,  
It cannot but contaminate.

*(From Books of Today and Books of Tomorrow, July 1904)*

## Your Quoting Pleasure

Charles Park informs us that on December 20th, John Sergeant, on Radio 4's *With Great Pleasure*, chose as one of his readings Bertie Wooster's classic denunciation of aunts, good and bad, from *The Code of the Woosters*: "At the core they are all alike. Sooner or later, out pops the cloven hoof."

## Future Events for Your Diary

### April 7, 2007 Wodehouse Walk

Participate in one of the Society's famous walks round Bertie Wooster's London, starting from Green Park station. Telephone Norman Murphy to register interest and obtain details of when and where to meet.

### June 15, 2007 Gold Bats vs Dulwich Dusters

### June 24, 2007 Gold Bats vs Sherlock Holmes

See page 7 for information on our cricket matches. If you would like to play for the Gold Bats,

### July 1, 2007 The Gold Bats at Charterhouse

The Gold Bats will be playing against the Charterhouse Intellectuals at Charterhouse School, Surrey. Contact Bob Miller for details (see above).

### July 8-15, 2007 A Week With Wodehouse

The Society celebrates its 10th anniversary with a tour of Shropshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, and other sites. Places are still available! See page 7.

### July 10, 2007 Society Meeting

Join members and participants in this week's tour for the Society's summer meeting at the Savage Club, or at an alternative location to be announced, commencing at 6 P.M. The night's speaker will be announced in our June issue.

### July 15, 2007 Dinner at the Arts Club

A Week With Wodehouse ends with a fine Celebration Dinner at The Arts Club, Dover Street, London W1. *This dinner is open to all members and their guests, whether they have signed up for the tour or not.* The cost is £65 for those who are not part of the tour. To book a place at the dinner, write to Hilary Bruce

### July 25, 2007 The Gold Bats in Kent

The Gold Bats will be playing a match in conjunction with the Siegfried Sassoon Society at Matfield, Kent. Contact Bob Miller for details (see June 15).

### July 28, 2007 Wodehouse Walk

Norman Murphy offers another London walk. Call him for details.

### September 8, 2007 Wodehouse Walk

Norman Murphy's final full-length Wodehouse Walk; see page 7. Call Norman for details (see above).

### October 12-14, 2007 TWS Convention

The Wodehouse Society (U.S.) will be convening at the Biltmore Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island. If you are not a member of TWS and want to know more, write

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