

Ringling the Changes

The name of Tony Ring is not unfamiliar to Society members – if it is, then where have you been? In addition to being a leading Wodehouse scholar, Tony has been a key part of the engine that has kept our organisation thriving for the past 11 years. For 10 of those years, he served as the first Editor of *Wooster Sauce*, developing it into the high-class journal you hold in your hands today. Then, two years ago, he startled his fellow Committee members when he declared his intention to step down as Editor at the end of 2006. Though he had always said he would not serve longer than 10 years, we had all secretly hoped he was joking.

He wasn't. He meant it. Tony would still be a Committee member and would continue to edit *By The Way*, but it seemed impossible to contemplate *Wooster Sauce* without him. Nevertheless, the torch was handed on, an event your Committee could not let pass unnoticed.



Ann Davies, Richard Briers, Tony Ring, and Oliver Wise make merry following the tribute dinner for Tony, Editor Extraordinaire.

On 28 March, we gathered to embarrass Tony thoroughly with a tribute dinner, in the appropriate setting of London clubland – less rowdy than the Drones, but fully as convivial. Joining Committee members and their spouses were the Society's President, Richard Briers, and his wife, Ann Davies; our longtime Patron, Murray Hedgcock, and his wife

Petra; and our then newest Patron, Lara Cazalet, with her brothers David and Hal.

Following dinner, the tribute began with 'The Story of Rony Ting and Sooster Wauce', written and delivered by Tony's successor as Editor (and your correspondent for this report). Then Edward Cazalet took the floor, speaking eloquently about Tony's encyclopaedic mind and his innumerable activities promoting Wodehouse and the Society, including his several books produced over the years. Edward likened *The Millennium Concordance* to *Cruden's Concordance*, while suggesting that the latter is not nearly as funny as the former. He also expressed his insider's opinion that Plum would have been delighted with Tony's latest work, *The Wit and Wisdom of P. G. Wodehouse*.

The Society's Remembrancer, Norman Murphy, fulfilled his allotted role by recalling that he had first met Tony in New York at The Wodehouse Society's

1991 convention. "Things proceeded at breakneck speed, and it was a mere five years later" when they and others met to form the P G Wodehouse Society. Norman acknowledged Tony's years of dedication to *Wooster Sauce*, and commended him for coming up with the idea that our AGM should be "a 15-minute session, after lunch, on some social occasion". He suggested that a book be opened on The P G Wodehouse Society AGM Handicap, "the winner to be the member who forecasts the duration of the meeting most accurately" – a notion for which he gave Tony full credit.

Murray Hedgcock, a pioneer *Wooster Sauce* contributor, began by saluting Tony's wife, Elaine, on whom he felt we should confer, in retrospect, the title of managing editor. Indeed, we all acknowledged our

debt to Elaine, who, as Murray pointed out, provided "the encouraging setting in which Editor Tony could work". Murray went on to reminisce about editors he has known, and spoke highly of Tony, despite certain errors of judgment regarding the 1895 Laws of Cricket. But, said Murray, "we can forgive Editor Ring everything, for the manner in which he has tended

Wooster Sauce, taking it from a tender seedling, to a continuing peak of endless bloom”. There was applause for Murray’s conclusion that Tony “has contributed to our enjoyment, to our knowledge, and to an ever-widening appreciation of the work of Pelham Grenville Wodehouse – The Master”.

And of course Tony has done so much more for the Society than just edit *Wooster Sauce*. On occasions such as these, he usually arranges the entertainment. But not tonight: Hal and Lara Cazalet had the matter well in hand. First, Hal sang ‘Rolled Into One’, its lyrics specially tailored for Tony, “collector and scholar and author, reporter, and good egg rolled in one!” Then it was Lara’s turn to sing Tony’s favourite Wodehouse song, ‘Bill’ – but with a twist: “We love him, because he’s wonderful, because he’s Tony Ring.” Surely The Master himself, looking down benevolently from on high, must have approved these amendments to his immortal lyrics?

Finally, Chairman Hilary Bruce presented Tony with a framed, blown-up mock front page of *Wooster Sauce*, its lead story centring on the shockwave sent around Plum’s world when he announced his intention to resign as Editor. By this time, the usually unflappable Tony looked quite like a Wodehousean pink chap himself. But he recovered smoothly to express his gratitude, to set the record straight on exactly how he came to be elected Editor (as the only

Committee member whose computer had enough memory to handle desktop publishing) – and to announce that he would shortly be enrolled at Oxford, where he would be studying for his Ph.D. in English literature. The subject of his thesis? Why, Wodehouse, of course!

We clustered round Tony to wish him well, and then toddled homewards, happy in the knowledge that, while his association with *Wooster Sauce* has technically come to an end, his links with Wodehouse will continue for many years to come.



Tony and his personal managing editor, Elaine

Pursuing the Wolves

The June issue of *By The Way* contains the last set of Wodehouse quotations accompanying Masha Lebedeva’s just-concluded series on Russian references in the PGW canon. In her final article in the series, published in March, Masha related a story to which Wodehouse had referred several times, about a peasant in a sleigh on the Russian steppes who throws his children out to a pursuing wolf pack in order to ensure his own safety. Both Wodehouse and the American writer Rex Stout had referred to a painting of the story; Masha wondered whether it really existed, and if so – where is it? Readers were challenged to find out.

Only Geoff Hales took up the challenge, and he turned to his former Ph.D. supervisor, Professor Leone Ormond, for help. In a 1986 book entitled *Popular Nineteenth Century Painting*, she found references to two paintings with wolves chasing a sleigh as their subjects; neither, however, shows a child being thrown to the wolves. Professor Ormond writes: “What is tantalising to me is that . . . I am sure I came across the story, and a reference to Tennyson being fascinated by the dilemma about which child to throw. If I remember rightly, it was a mother with several children and she may have had to throw more than one! . . . Someone else said that there was a scene with a wolf and a sleigh in Dostoevsky’s *Brothers Karamazov*.”



When Masha undertook her own challenge, she first uncovered another small mystery. Readers may recall Wodehouse’s references to a mujik committing suicide. Thanks to Yulia Lomova, another member of The Russian Wodehouse Society, Masha now knows the Tolstoy story in which this happens – ‘Polikushka’ – though it is a garret, not a barn, in which the title character hangs himself. In addition, a movie based on the Tolstoy story was released in 1922, starring Ivan Moskvina and Vera Pashennaya, two great Russian actors of that time (see <http://tinyurl.com/3nbf22>). Masha adds: “I think it may be possible that Plum had seen this movie, more so than if he had read the story.”

Turning her attention to the sleigh painting, Masha searched the internet and, with some assistance from Tony Ring, came up with a few interesting possibilities. These included: *Troika Attacked by Wolves*, by Austrian painter Adolf Baumgartner-Stoiloff (1870–1924); and *Wolves Attacking Troika*, by the German artist J. Wolski (1901–2000), a less likely possibility given his dates. Finally, Russian artist Nikolai Sverchkov (1818–98) produced *Wolves’ Attack* (pictured) – is this the one? We may never know for sure, but readers are invited to continue the search.



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Murray Hedgcock, London

Congratulations to Arrow Books for a pleasing picnic launch of the PGW paperbacks, which happily entertained many old and quite a few new friends.

It was delightful to hear Hal Cazalet – as always – at his best, aided by two charming girl singers, and the Will Hyland Quintet. But, oh dear – what an opportunity was missed, as the quintet ignored the music of Plum’s day in favour of more modern stuff (“Miles Davis” whispered an informed colleague). Why not the melodies of Roy Fox, Ray Noble, Carroll Gibbons, Harry Roy, Fred Elizalde, Jack Payne, Lew Stone, Jack Hilton, the songs of Al Bowlly, even Ambrose and Henry Hall – and the sort of jazz America heard from the great cornetist (and Wodehouse fan), Bix Beiderbecke?

I leave this suggestion with Arrow for their next picnic – in the hope I shall be invited back, and not barred.

Editor’s note: The day of the picnic (10 May) was a great success, both for Arrow and for the Society. See page 8 for a report and pictures.

From Eric Coulton, Rhyl

Wodehouse was nothing if not well read – and it is always said that he wrote about what he knew, well filled out with allusions to literature he had read. I recently read Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers* (I seem to remember starting it at school but somehow never made it to the end!) and was struck by a description of a waiter in Chapter 50. Pickwick had arrived at the Old Royal Hotel and a waiter was hovering in anticipation of an order which was eventually given, and “the waiter imperceptibly melted away”.

Dickens then goes on to say: “Waiters never walk or run; they have a peculiar and mysterious power of skimming out of rooms which other mortals possess not.” I wonder if this had stuck in Wodehouse’s mind and came to the fore at some stage when he was thinking about Jeeves and gave him similar powers to the Dickensian waiter?

From Norman Dodson, Sutton Coldfield

I was rereading ‘The Nodder’ in Everyman’s *The Best of Wodehouse*, and the style of the interchange between Wilmot and Little Johnny Bingley (“Who won’t?” “He won’t.” “Won’t what?” etc.) rang a bell.

‘The Nodder’ was apparently first published in 1933, at which time Robb Wilton, English comedian and comedy actor, was in full flow, being particularly well known for his monologues. If you search ‘Robb Wilton’ on the internet, you will soon find a number of his monologues, but I quote from ‘I Should Say So’:

He said, “You don’t half look bad, you don’t.”

I said, “Who do?”

He said, “You don’t.”

I said, “I do?”

He said, “Yes you do, you don’t.”

He said, “You won’t live long, you won’t.”

I said, “Who won’t?”

He said, “You won’t.”

I said, “I won’t?”

And so it goes on, with a similar style and rhythm in many other monologues.

I have seen it suggested at times that PGW was naïve/unworldly, but it is clear from his writings that he was as bright as a button, so if he saw something he liked, then I am sure he might use it in his work. The bit in ‘The Nodder’ I refer to and the rhythm of Robb Wilton’s work are so similar – and 1933 is such a neat fit – that I am tempted to believe it is more than a coincidence. Any views on this Nodder/Wilton?

Incidentally, reading PGW is the only time I laugh out loud – not too loud – and not always in the most appropriate places. For instance, whilst enjoying ‘The Nodder’ again (I particularly like this one), I laughed at the same time as a soap on TV was showing a main character driving his car into a canal in an attempted suicide (failed, I am pleased to say).

Editor’s note: Norman Murphy says this could very well be right, as Wodehouse was certainly listening to the radio when Robb Wilton was at his peak. Further investigation seems to be called for!

Comedy Map of Britain

In our September 2007 issue, we reported on the late Anton Rodgers’s visit to Baylham House Rare Breeds Farm in Suffolk to film a segment for the BBC2 TV series *Comedy Map of Britain*. The three-minute segment, which finally aired on 17 May, featured Mr Rodgers’s visit to the Berkshire sow named Patience. He declared one of the greatest honours of his life was being made a sponsor of “this magnificent beast here” and described Wodehouse as “unsurpassable as a writer”. Tony Ring also appeared on the programme, explaining how Wodehouse had connected the black pig he had met at Hunstanton Hall with Fred Patzel, the great American hog-calling champion, to produce the Empress of Blandings’s first appearance in ‘Pig-Hoo-o-o-ey!’ There were also brief scenes of Wodehouse and some film clips. The short segment ended elegiacally: ‘Anton Rodgers 1933–2007’

Bertie and Jeeves, the Japanese Way

by Elin Murphy

For decades, Wodehouse enthusiasts have debated what Bertie Wooster and Jeeves look like. This debate is certain to be reignited with the publication of a new Japanese manga drawn by a talented young Japanese artist named Bun Katsuta.

In the June 2007 issue of *Wooster Sauce*, Hetty Litjens described the Japanese craze for the manga, a type of comic book catering to both adolescents and adults. Mangas are produced in book and magazine form, with dozens of popular themes, many of them reflecting the Japanese fascination for Western culture (as do the characters in the mangas, who are almost always Western, rather than Asian, in appearance). And as Hetty noted in her article, butlers have become particularly popular among manga readers.

So it was only a matter of time before Bertie and Jeeves attracted attention as a rich source for a manga. Enter Maki Shiraoka, senior editor at Hakusensha, a publishing house that produces more than 10 manga magazines and 400 comic books annually, including *Melody* (“Girls’ Comics for Grownups”), a bimonthly magazine of more than 500 pages. After reading stories featuring our favourite man about town and his valet, Maki perceived the possibilities for a new serialization. Another Hakusensha editor, Ayaka Tokushige, discovered Tamaki Morimura’s translation of *The Inimitable Jeeves* (published by Kokushokankokai) and recommended the book to Bun Katsuta, a critically acclaimed artist known for her ‘retro’ style.



Bertie and Jeeves on the title page of ‘Please Jeeves’
(Copyright © Bun Katsuta/Hakusensha)

Bun embraced the idea enthusiastically, so after Hakusensha obtained permission from the Wodehouse Estate, she went to work. The glorious end result of her labours was published in late February this year, when the April edition of *Melody* hit the sales racks. ‘Please Jeeves’ – described as ‘an idyllic comedy about a carefree master and his competent valet’ – takes up 43 of its pages.

The first Bertie and Jeeves manga was drawn from four Wodehouse stories: ‘The Pride of the Woosters Is Wounded’, ‘The Hero’s Reward’, ‘Introducing Claude and Eustace’, and ‘Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch’. Wodehouse fans need no Japanese to understand at once what is happening, because the story-lines and characters are easy to identify. Bun draws a particularly outstanding Aunt Agatha,

whose mere glance sends shivers down the spine. Though she has inevitably had to cut and rearrange the stories to fit the format, she knows them well and has worked hard to convey their full flavour. And she has succeeded, because the overall effect is superb. The manga ends with Bertie and Jeeves about to depart for New York, and following this there is an essay by Tamaki Morimura that explains all about Bertie and Jeeves and their beloved creator. She includes an apologetic note as well, since the manga refers to Jeeves as – *gasp!* – a butler (necessary because the Japanese are not familiar with the word *valet*).

Perhaps the first thing one notices about the Bertie and Jeeves manga is how young and attractive the two lead characters are – perhaps too much so for some Wodehouse purists. But this is typical of the genre and a small quibble when set against the humour and rich detail woven into Bun’s drawings. Such is the artist’s dedication to getting the details right that in March Bun came to London with editors Maki and Ayaka and translator Tamaki in order to do some research on Wodehouse’s England. This required having a well-informed tour guide, and who better for that purpose than Norman Murphy?



A very fierce Aunt Agatha (Copyright © Bun Katsuta/Hakusensha)

It was a whirlwind four-day visit, but full of rewards. On the first day the Fearsome Four, as Norman called them, besieged him with questions as he took them through Bertie Wooster's Mayfair – a special tour that included a look inside Buck's Club, the primary inspiration for the Drones. They then met Sir Edward Cazalet for lunch, and he was showered with gifts, including a copy of *Melody* with the 'Please Jeeves' manga. In the afternoon Norman took them through parts of Wodehouse's Early London and then on to the National Liberal Club for tea. This is about the closest modern London can get to Lord Emsworth's Senior Conservative Club, and the ladies soaked up the authentic atmosphere. The Fearsome Four then rewarded Norman and yours truly with dinner at Simpson's – a highly appropriate end to a Wodehouse-filled day.



You may not be able to read Japanese, but you are sure to recognise this episode from 'Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch'.
(Copyright © Bun Katsuta/Hakusensha)

The next day the four explored London on their own, including a visit to the Victoria & Albert Museum to look at clothes from the 1920s. On Saturday Norman again took charge, taking them to the picturesque market town of Saffron Walden and then to Audley End to see a proper Stately Home. Then, on their final day in London, the group insisted on going to Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park, despite perfectly foul weather – perhaps they were looking for Bingo Little in whiskers? They also viewed Wodehouse's house in Dunraven Street before heading to Hatchards in Piccadilly to buy books that illustrated clothing and furnishings from the 1920s. Finally, after lunch, the Murphys saw the intrepid Japanese – by then the Tearful Four – off in their taxi to Heathrow. They returned to Japan replete with photos and information, and many of the results of their researches were seen to great effect in Bun's second Bertie and Jeeves manga, published in late April.

At the end of this year, all four Bertie and Jeeves mangas will be collected into one volume. These serializations, along with an increasing number of book translations, are doing much to introduce Wodehouse to Japan. All we can say is – Carry On, Bun, Maki, Ayaka, and Tamaki!

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Tamaki Morimura in preparing this article. Thanks to Bun Katsuta and Hakusensha for permission to reproduce panels from the 'Please Jeeves' manga.



Colonel Murphy's new recruits after only two days' training: the Fearsome Four at Audley End on 15 March.

"Awfully sorry I barged into you," I said. "Wouldn't have had it happen for worlds. I was just dashing out to have a look into things."

He appeared a trifle reassured, and lowered the umbrella. But just then the most frightful shindy started in the bedroom. It sounded as though all the cats in London, assisted by delegates from outlying suburbs, had got together to settle their differences once and for all.

"This noise is unendurable," yelled Sir Roderick. "I cannot hear myself speak."

"I fancy, sir," said Jeeves respectfully, "that the animals may have become somewhat exhilarated as the result of having discovered the fish under Mr. Wooster's bed."

(From 'Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch', 1922)

Swan Park Is Not a Tourist Attraction

Tony Ring talks to Random House Art Director Richard Ogle, who reveals some trade secrets

When Random House decided in spring 2006 that they would pitch for the forthcoming contract for the rights to publish Wodehouse paperbacks, it was evident that a critically important aspect would be the design of the covers. If one marketing objective had to be to attract new readers, what would draw their attention to a series of almost 50 books? And how would the bookstores react?

Those were among the questions facing Richard Ogle, the Arrow Art Director, as he and colleagues from other Random House departments prepared for the critical presentation to the Wodehouse literary trustees. Richard described his view of the project's progress in discussion with Arrow Editor Kate Elton and me. At the start he was not familiar with the author's work at all, but when he began to read the books, he felt a familiarity as though they had become part of the English psyche by osmosis.

The first step in preparing his contribution to the proposal was to read *The Mating Season* and *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*. His earliest decisions were to try in some way to distinguish the look of the major series, and to use illustrations rather than photographs for the covers. The latter, he said, was a fairly straightforward decision as it is notoriously difficult to convey humour through photographs. Illustrations offer more flexibility, and his objective was to make the jackets attractive to a broad range of potential readers of both sexes and all ages, many of whom may never have bought a Wodehouse book before. At the same time, he wanted to find ways of distinguishing between the major series of books, i.e., the Jeeves and Wooster series on the one hand and the Blandings series on the other. This was achieved in two principal ways: by the contrasting symbols of a black pig on the spine and rear cover of the Blandings novels and a top hat and white gloves on the Jeeves and Wooster; and by using stronger, more vibrant tones as the background colours on the Jeeves and Wooster front covers than on the Blandings.

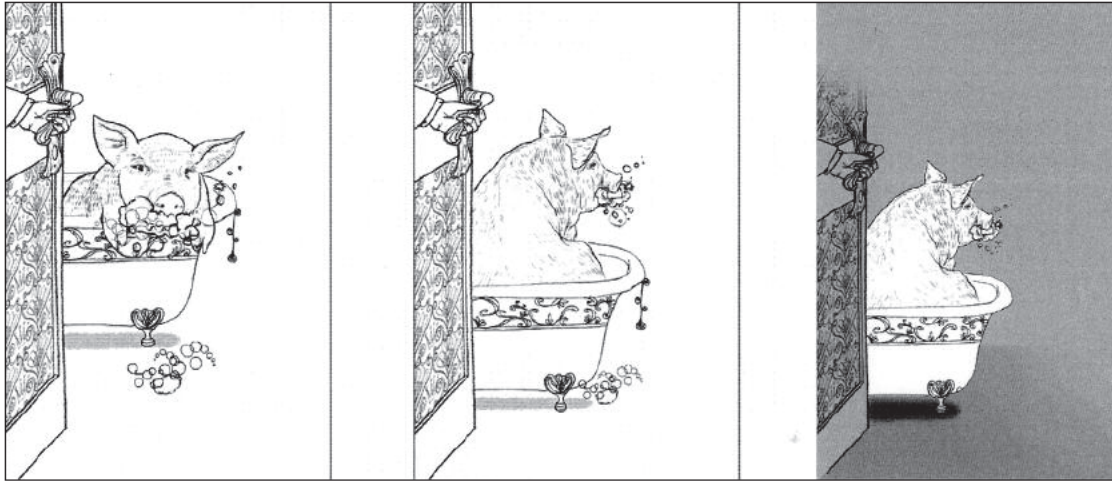
The next stage was to trawl through artists' agents and other sources for illustrators who could represent what Wodehouse was about and bring something new to the market. It was necessary to develop a contemporary and original look, which meant that finding an artist not known for book illustrations was a factor in the search.

Richard said that they had received samples from two other artists before choosing Swan Park, who, while demonstrating a feel that may be a little more

feminine than previous Wodehouse covers, importantly showed in the detail of her illustrations – shoes, bags, clothes and so on – that she could portray the Englishness of the 1920s and '30s period he was looking for. It might seem remarkable to us – let alone P G Wodehouse, had he been here to express an opinion – that the books of this classic English author are to be illustrated by a Korean artist, living in Korea, whose line of communication back to Arrow is by email, but it is evident that the brief provided for each cover has been very well judged. Richard also thought it was an advantage that although her work – including book covers – has been seen in many countries, she had never done any book covers in the UK, so would present a totally fresh style.

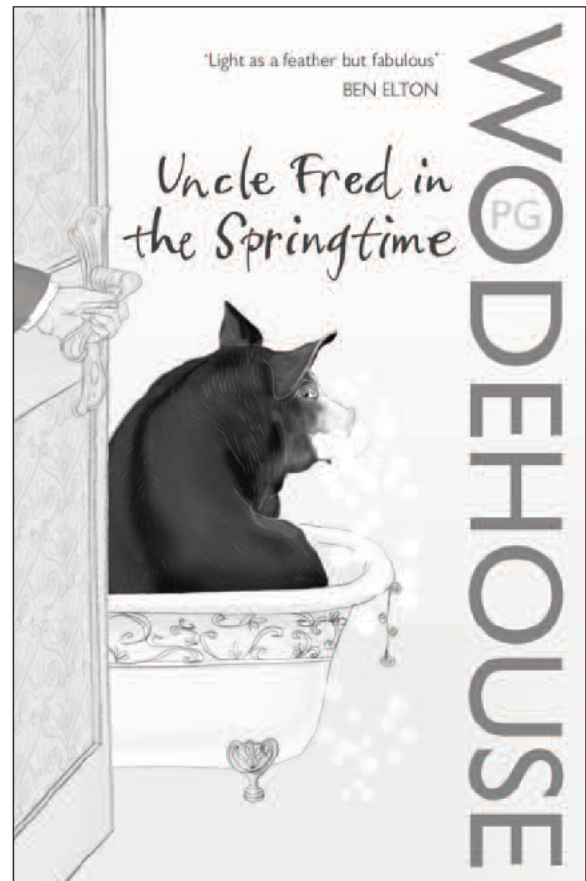
The first 'test' jacket to be commissioned was for *The Mating Season*, which was full of the sort of details Richard had been impressed with in the more abstract samples, and it was presented to the trustees as part of the pitch. This was followed by *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, which also impressed, and in due course agreement was reached with Swan Park to produce covers for all the titles in the 2008 programme. The logistical exercise for Richard's team to achieve all the covers in time for the books to be printed required the most extraordinary discipline. They had to read each book, decide which themes might make worthy illustrations, discuss their ideas with Tony Whittome (the most experienced Wodehouse editor at Random House), agree the detailed brief, and send it over to Swan Park. While awaiting the first rough design, the team would prepare the next brief for her to work on while they considered that rough. It was an intense period of work for all concerned, with Swan Park at one point completing up to two covers a week, and she should have completed the entire contract by the end of June.

The briefs that were sent to the artist included a synopsis of the story and the details of the theme they wanted to illustrate. Some of the designs were finalised in a single draft, but others required further clarification. Relatively few difficulties arose from the language problems, as Swan Park has worked in America and is at least familiar with English, but one notable problem arose in respect of the draft cover for *Joy in the Morning*, when they requested the main character to be a portly old man riding a bicycle while wearing a Sinbad-the-Sailor suit. There were not, Richard pointed out wryly, too many precedents which he could direct her to on the internet as examples of



Left: Swan Park's initial sketches for Uncle Fred in the Springtime.

Below: the final book cover



the effect he was trying to achieve! She had to rework various aspects of the draft over a period of three weeks before it was considered right.

Another minor hiccup arose in relation to *The Mating Season*, for which Richard requested illustrations of small newts in the water pouring out of the shoes being carried by a policeman. Her draft instead showed young men performing cartwheels in the background, her dictionary having directed her to the secondary definition of 'newt' as 'unruly gentleman'! Wodehouse can always be relied upon to raise a smile in the most unlikely circumstances.

The contribution of the Art Department both to obtaining the contract to publish this new edition and also to launching it on schedule has evidently been both critical and substantial. The whole story once again brings home the power of the internet to help create art in a way that Wodehouse could certainly never have envisaged, as well as showing how even the quirkiest of Wodehouse's ideas can strike a chord with an artist from a completely different cultural background.

What do you think of the new books? Please write a short review and send it to the Editor (address on p.28).

Havant Literary Festival

A talk by the Society's own Tony Ring promises to be one of the highlights of the first Havant Literary Festival, which takes place over the last weekend of September this year (see Future Events on page 28). 'The Art of Wodehouse' considers the man, the work, and the local connection with Emsworth, part of the Borough of Havant.

The works of other writers with Havant links will also be celebrated, notably the poet Keats, who wrote *The Eve of St Agnes* there, and the World War II novelist Nevil Shute, but the jewel in the crown, at least as far as Festival Director Lucy Flannery is concerned, is Plum. A fan for more than 20 years,

Lucy is thrilled at the chance to give some recognition to Record Road's most illustrious former resident, and hopes he would have approved the Festival programme. "Since beginning work on the Festival," says Lucy, "I have a recurring image of all our literary shades meeting together in a local hostelry, sharing a drop of the cup that cheers, and like the regulars with Mr Mulliner, looking to Mr Wodehouse for illumination in all matters of the human heart!"

A Whale of a Day

Norman Murphy reports on Arrow Books' Wodehouse Picnic in Russell Square, 10 May

Of course, the first worry, as always, was: what will the weather be like? In England one just can't tell, but this time we were lucky. Having had a week of heavy downpours, this was immediately followed by sunshine and record temperatures which, to everybody's great relief, meant the day of the Wodehouse Picnic was superb.

As all readers should know by now, Arrow Books are republishing Wodehouse in paperback and, to celebrate the occasion, decided to hold a picnic open to the public in Russell Square, just behind the British Museum. It was advertised as 'a fun day out for all the family, inspired by the humour of P. G. Wodehouse' – and it was.

Arrow had thought of everything. There were marquees for the band and various stands, there were rugs on the grass for people to picnic on, there was a small band playing Jerome Kern and Cole Porter, and there was pig-racing – only mechanical toy models, but their habit of stopping halfway down the course to wiggle their tails and mutter 'Oink Oink' endeared them to all. There was a small croquet ground for those who wanted to try that pastime, there was a running track marked out for the races, there was a table for the P G Wodehouse Society (UK) and another alongside where Foyle's were selling a large selection of Arrow Wodehouse paperbacks. And, just to make sure the public knew what was going on, there were enormous banners along the park railings, while a correctly dressed Jeeves in morning dress and black bowler made sure everybody leaving nearby Russell Square Underground knew about it too.



Singing by Sarah, Hal, and Eliza and dancing were just part of all the fun!



The Chairman and the Remembrancer greet prospective new members at the Society's table.

Undoubtedly it was the music that attracted people first of all. Supported by an excellent quintet, Eliza Lumley, Hal Cazalet, and Sarah Whalen sang Wodehouse songs throughout the afternoon as only they know how, and the crowds who gathered lapped it up. We know they were good because some even got up and danced, and one young Russian lady passing by in a bus was so impressed, she got off just to investigate. When she found out what was going on, she was even more

delighted since she turned out to be a Wodehouse fan and signed up as a Society member before you could say 'Dobriy dyehn'.

Arrow had races for all ages, including egg-and-spoon races with real eggs (lots of near misses but amazingly no breakages), sack races, and a three-legged race where Hal Cazalet and partner outdistanced their competitors by a mile. Someone had clearly read 'The Purity of the Turf'.

Our stand was a triumph for our Chairman, who had brought along *Wooster Sauces*, *By the Ways* and other Society memorabilia to make our presence known. Old friends turned up and exchanged news, members from all over England came up to introduce themselves, the Week With Wodehouse tea towel attracted a lot of attention (we got rid of all those we had brought), and an encouraging number of people who had picked up the membership leaflet hung around our stand, listened to all the chatter, looked at the list of forthcoming events – and signed up on the spot.

A good day for Arrow, a good day for the Society, lots of fun for young and old, lovely music and singing. A whale of a day all round.

Society News

Wodehouse Walk

Members planning to attend the Society's July meeting at the Arts Club (see Future Events, page 28) are welcome to join an abbreviated Wodehouse Walk with Norman Murphy prior to the meeting. The start time is 5 p.m.

Hollywood Cricket Club Match

As noted in the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, the Gold Bats will be playing the Hollywood Cricket Club – of which Wodehouse was once a member – on Sunday, 3 August, commencing at 2 p.m. The match will be played at the Metropolitan Police Sports Club Ground, Alderton Road in Bushey, Hertfordshire; telephone 01923 245963 for directions. A carvery at the Club will be serving between 12 and 2.30 p.m., and bar food will be available between 5 and 9 p.m. Society members are welcome to come and watch this special event.

For other Gold Bats fixtures, see Future Events on page 28.

Nigel Rees – Patron

The Society is pleased to announce that author and presenter Nigel Rees has agreed to become a Patron. In addition to his more than 50 books, Mr Rees is well known as the host of Radio 4's *Quote . . . Unquote*, and he is familiar to *Wooster Sauce* readers in particular for his occasional articles in these pages. Look for a profile of our newest Patron in a future issue.

Help Wanted!

The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) needs YOU! We are currently searching for an assistant treasurer to serve as backup to our treasurer, Alan Wood, with a view to replacing him in the top job in due course. No formal qualifications are needed, though being able to distinguish one side of a balance sheet from the other would be a good starting point. Alan has streamlined things enormously to reduce the tedious side of the work. It's a lot of fun and very rewarding to play a part in keeping the Society running (really!), although the rewards are purely spiritual. Members of the Committee are all volunteers who give some of their spare time to ensure the Society's continuing success. We're quite a jolly little group, and we welcome new blood, particularly anybody ready and willing to take on the post of assistant treasurer.



Diners enjoying themselves at the 2006 dinner
(Photo by Ginni Beard)

The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) Sixth Formal London Dinner

The Society's sixth formal London dinner is to be held on Thursday, 23 October 2008, at The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, London WC1. Dinner will be 7.00 p.m. for 7.30; dress code is black tie.

Members who attended previous dinners will be aware how quickly the places were all booked. Gray's Inn Hall has a capacity of about 120 diners. It is therefore strongly recommended that members apply for tickets by return on the form enclosed with this edition of *Wooster Sauce*.

Thanks to most generous sponsorship, it has been possible to restrict the cost to members to £85 per head. Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, although some will be reserved until 15 August for overseas members. In view of the possible need to restrict numbers, we regret that at this time the invitation must be restricted to members only. If places should still remain available at the end of August, a note to that effect will appear on the website and in the next *Wooster Sauce*, in which case partners and other non-members will be welcome to join us.

Several of our Patrons have already indicated an intention to attend, and as always, a tremendous programme of speeches and entertainment has been planned.

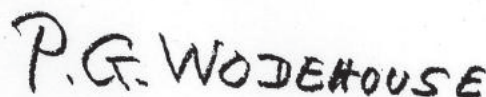
The Conundrum Continues

The mystery letter from P. G. Wodehouse to Godfrey Smith that was featured in our December 2007 issue produced a similar response from two readers, **John Hodgson** and **P. G. Wyndham-Brooks**. Both wrote to express their opinion that the letter could not possibly have been written by Wodehouse, and provided some strong arguments for this view.

Mr Hodgson is “convinced that it was written either by a child or by an adult who was semi-literate”. The support he gives for his conclusion is the spelling of *bracher* (rather than *bracer*), the letter’s overall sloppiness, the lack of an opening greeting or a title for Mr Smith, and the lack of a formal closing. Though he appreciates that the letter could be a draft or copy, he wonders why, then, would the writer bother to sign it? Mr Hodgson also researched published examples of Wodehouse’s handwriting in various stages of his life and is convinced that the signature in the mystery letter is not Wodehouse’s, leading to his firm conclusion that the letter is a fake.

This viewpoint was also expressed by Mr Wyndham-Brooks, who presented his arguments in the form of a dialogue between Bertie Wooster and Jeeves. Unfortunately, space does not allow us to publish his letter in full, but he focused on the calligraphic aspects of the letter, with Jeeves comparing the handwriting to examples published in Frances Donaldson’s biography – for example: “The Master’s normal hand always employed the Greek ‘ε’ and the simplified, stylized ‘g’ as in ‘egg’, ‘era’, and ‘everything’ in the 1932 letter in Donaldson. These are not evident in the page under query, yet there are further oddities in the dotting of the letter *i* and tailing of the letter *y*, all significant to the graphologist.” Jeeves goes on to point out that the signature – “the ultimate test of identity” – is inconsistent with signatures seen in the Donaldson book.

Mr Wyndham-Brooks himself ends his letter with the personal comment that the letter was “either a poignant last effort by an enfeebled P.G. or, more likely, an endeavour to mimic his humour by one of many weighed down by envy”. Subsequent research



Is it his signature – or isn't it?

by Mr Hodgson led him to conclude “the jury is still out”. He wondered whether Edward Cazalet, in whose archive the letter was found, could “throw any light on this conundrum”.

However, it was to Tony Ring that the Editor turned for enlightenment, since it was he who had uncovered the letter in the Cazalet archive. Tony replies: “I can understand their doubt, but I have no hesitation in saying that Wodehouse did write the draft letter. I have a lot of his handwritten letters – either originals or photocopies – and there is no doubt he wrote it. If you look at the *Sunset at Blandings* pages, his writing – in rough – sloped both up and down across the page. In one letter I looked at, he wrote a capital G in three different ways, including exactly how it appears on the Godfrey letter for ‘Godfrey’ and ‘P.G.W.’ In his handwritten work through the years, he has always mixed and matched Roman and Greek ‘e’s and there is absolutely no surprise that he does so in this letter.”

Another point to consider is that Wodehouse purportedly wrote the mystery letter – which was included among materials that came from his Remsenburg home – when he was of a very advanced age. Both handwriting and form are affected by age, so it is possible that Wodehouse would not observe the usual courtesies when drafting a letter, particularly something he did not expect to be published or reproduced years after his death. Thus, persuasive though Messrs Hodgson and Wyndham-Brooks’s arguments are, there is no firm evidence to prove the letter was *not* by PGW. Mr Smith can therefore keep the letter hung on his study wall, a belated communication from the Master that will continue to intrigue us.



Going my way?

Louis McCulloch spotted this road sign in Dorking last autumn.

Alan Coren’s Identity Problem

Shortly before he died last October, Society Patron Alan Coren completed work on a book of short essays, *69 for 1*. The book is worth reading for many reasons, but members might be particularly interested in the chapter entitled ‘Me and My Shadow’, in which Mr Coren laments the problems caused by identity theft. Referring to a possible consequence of the EU constitution, he wonders: “What, for example, is to stop a Pole from poaching my membership of the P. G. Wodehouse Society, spending a week at the Paris Ritz in spats and a monocle as Gussie Fink-Nottleski, and charging the whole thing to my account?”

Profile of a Patron

Shashi Tharoor

Born in London and educated in India, Dr Shashi Tharoor possesses some overwhelmingly impressive credentials. During a long career with the United Nations (1978–2007), his responsibilities included post-Cold War peacekeeping efforts and serving as Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information; in 2006 he came within an ace of becoming Secretary-General. Currently he is Chairman of Dubai-based Afras Ventures, and he has also gained fame for his 10 books (to date) as well as innumerable articles, essays, and book reviews in publications too numerous to name here. His writings encompass fiction and nonfiction and have been translated into nine languages. Most recently he published *The Elephant, the Tiger and the Cell Phone: Reflections on India, the Emerging 21st Century Power* (2007), a title that speaks for itself and has achieved great acclaim.



Dr Tharoor earned his Ph.D. at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, where he was the first Editor of the *Fletcher Forum of International Affairs*. Over the years he has received several awards and honours, including being named a ‘Global Leader of Tomorrow’ by the World

Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. He also serves on numerous boards and is currently International Adviser to the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva. His wife, Christa, is Deputy Secretary of the UN Disarmament Commission. He has twin sons, Ishaan and Kanishk.

Most importantly to Society members, though, Dr Tharoor is a longtime admirer of the works of P. G. Wodehouse. While attending St. Stephen’s College, Delhi University, he helped revive the Wodehouse Society there, at that time the only such society in the world. In an essay in *Bookless in Baghdad* (2005), he relates how he felt when he heard the news of Wodehouse’s death on Valentine’s Day 1975: “Three decades earlier, Wodehouse had reacted to the passing of his stepdaughter, Leonora, with the numbed words: ‘I thought she was

immortal.’ I had thought Wodehouse was immortal too, and I felt the bereavement keenly.” He goes on to discuss why Wodehouse became so popular in post-Raj India. (This article may be viewed online at <http://tinyurl.com/6mtdxz>.) With credentials such as these, we are delighted to welcome Dr Tharoor as a Patron of our Society.

The Old School Tie, Part 2

Society member **Barry Lane** has responded to Murray Hedgcock’s item in the March *Wooster Sauce* (p.15) concerning the presence of two Old Alleynians on England’s rugby team during the World Cup last October. Barry points out that in 1913 and 1914, Dulwich also had two members in the England Rugby XV: Cyril (‘Tich’) Nelson Lowe and J. E. (‘Jenny’) Greenwood. Further-more, in the 1913 match against Scotland, they played against another Old Alleynian, Eric Gordon Loudon-Shand. Loudon-Shand (Oxford) and Greenwood (Cambridge) also had the distinction of meeting as opposing captains in the Varsity match.

Barry adds: “Cyril Lowe gained 25 caps for England on the wing and scored 18 tries – a record which was eventually beaten by Rory Underwood, but it took him over 70 matches. Flight Lieutenant Cyril Lowe shot down enemy planes in the Great War and lived to be over

90.” Meanwhile, Greenwood played for England 13 times and was elected president of the English RFU in 1935.

Because of Cyril Lowe’s small size, he was known as ‘the flying midget’, and his appearance on the England team prompted Wodehouse, who knew him well, to write a poem about it for the *London Opinion*. Lowe’s father ran a small school near Dulwich and employed an eccentric master named Samuel Carrington Craxton. It was while visiting the Lowes that Bill Townend heard Craxton tell the story of his disastrous attempt at chicken-farming in Devonshire. We know it as *Love Among the Chickens*.

Intrigued by Barry Lane’s findings, Norman Murphy did some quick research and adds that Greenwood and Lowe played in the England team of 1914 that won the Grand Slam under the captaincy of N.A. Wodehouse, first cousin of you-know-who.

Wodehousean Wisdom

Recorded by Murray Hedgcock

Words of Wodehousean wisdom to the aspiring writer are most notably proffered in *Performing Flea*, where we are advised how to plan, produce and polish. But there is more Wodehouse advice to the novice or persevering student available in a little-known study, 'The Art of the Light, Personal Essay'. This gets straight to work:

The young writer seldom attempts, or is invited, to write in this vein. And yet there is none which, if steadily practised, can do more for him in the way of developing his faculties, and oiling the machinery of self-expression.

Over his set tasks in essay-writing, at school or at college, hangs as a rule the blighting shadow of impersonality. . . . The first person singular is (or used to be) tabooed. Humour of any kind is (or used to be) looked at dubiously, or askance. Set schemes of headings and sub-headings are (or used to be) regarded as a necessary prelude to the act of writing.

The result might have been foreseen. For the average student, the writing of the weekly or fortnightly essay resembles getting into a sort of intellectual straight-waistcoat. Even as he sits down to his subject, the fingers which grasp the pen, and the mind which directs the fingers, stiffen by a common impulse.

A deadly self-consciousness descends upon him, like that of an amateur about to step upon the stage. For an hour, or two hours, or three hours, as the case may be, he feels that he is called upon to play a part, to be something that is not himself – but what precisely, he does not know.

So there's the problem. Question: how to overcome it?

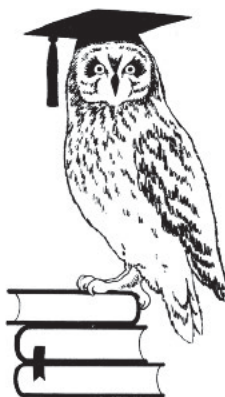
What the young writer needs, if he is to develop naturally, is liberty to write according to his bent – to be as comic as he likes, if he wants to be comic: to be as fantastic as he likes, if he feels that way inclined. . . .

This is the task of the personal essayist – to point out to us the things in our own world which we had never noticed: to reveal to us the magic stores of humour, and pathos, and beauty, lying hidden in myriad little aspects of life in which we had never suspected their existence.

Any student has full reason to be proud of himself who can, out of the resources of his own consciousness, turn out a bright and readable little paper on yesterday's dinner, or on a pair of old shoes, or upon having a cold in the head.

It is not, perhaps, typical Plum – for the simple reason that the writer was his older brother.

The book, *Selected Essays of E. V. Lucas*, was compiled by Armine Wodehouse and published in 1926 by Methuen. Armine was Professor of English Literature at Deccan College in the Indian city of Poona (now Pune). He sets out examples of E. V. Lucas's work, as a means of introducing his students to one of the most stylish and effective writers of the essay, in the hope that they might learn from him. Methuen thought the study worth reprinting as late as 1954, 18 years after Armine's death at 57, this time edited by one H. N. Wethered.



Remembering Kate Jones

by Norman Murphy

Those of us who were lucky enough to know Kate Jones were shocked to learn of her death on February 1, 2008, age 46. As Robert McCrum wrote in *The Guardian*, books were her life. After university, she had joined a literary agency, moved to Macmillan, and then became an editor at Hamish Hamilton.

I met Kate when she was masterminding Penguin's relaunch of Wodehouse and was immediately struck by her personality. She combined a deep knowledge of Wodehouse with a rare mix of charm, intelligence, and forcefulness. When she was talking to you, she made you feel as though you were the only author who really mattered, and she had the gift of seeming to appreciate



your worries as if they were her own. Like many others, I think, I had no idea Kate had been diagnosed with cancer in 1995, but I do know how happy she was when her marriage to John Tackaberry was blessed with the birth of her daughter Molly in 2000.

Some four years later, I had the privilege of seeing mother and daughter on a Wodehouse Walk. Both of them enjoyed it, helped along by a packet of Smarties bought in Piccadilly, which young Molly promptly offered to the rest of the group. Kate Jones was someone you were glad to meet, someone you were glad to know, someone who gave you good advice (as she did to me), someone who will be sorely missed.

Wodehouse Where Least Expected

by Peter Wightman

The *God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins, although a bestseller, is not perhaps an obvious place to find mention of P. G. Wodehouse. However, the noted atheist is clearly an enthusiast. “An atheistic world-view,” he writes on page 387, “provides no justification for cutting the Bible out of our education.” He then lists scores of biblical idioms, phrases, or clichés which are commonly used in conversational or literary English – and not just solemn and serious literature either. “P.G. Wodehouse,” he writes, “is for my money the greatest writer of light comedy in English, and I bet fully half my list of biblical phrases will be found within his pages. (A Google search will not find all of them, however. It will miss the derivation of the short-story title ‘The Aunt and the Sluggard’ from Proverbs 6:6.) The Wodehouse canon is rich in other biblical phrases

not incorporated into the language as idioms or proverbs. Listen to Bertie Wooster’s evocation of what it is like to wake up with a bad hangover. ‘I had been dreaming that some bounder was driving spikes through my head – not just ordinary spikes, as used by Jael the wife of Heber, but red hot ones.’ Bertie himself was immensely proud of his only scholastic achievement, the prize he once earned for scripture knowledge.”

A second PGW reference occurs on page 209 of the book in connection with *Laughing Gas*. Dawkins believes that mind is a manifestation of matter and cannot exist apart from matter. Joey Cooley and the Earl of Havershot therefore could not possibly move around between each other’s bodies. Wodehouse is simply using incorrect science to help his story along. Happily, Dawkins says that he can still enjoy it!

Profile of a Committee Member

Christine Hewitt

Christine joined the Society in late 2001 at the suggestion of a friend who had seen a report in *The Times* of Norman and Elin Murphy’s wedding. The friend said, “Look, there is a society for people like you who are potty about those books and talk in that odd language.” Christine joined along with another friend, Anne, and the first Society event they attended was the now-legendary and slightly alarming talk on hog-calling given by Norman Murphy at the Savage Club early in 2002. Luckily this did not put Christine off, and she says that she immediately had a warm feeling of being among friends.

A year or so later, after shyly suggesting that she might help out by perhaps counting the postage stamps or some such thing, Christine – much to her surprise – became Membership Secretary. She loves her Committee work and role as Secretary, and with her background in customer service and administration for the John Lewis Partnership, she helps to ensure that the Society is never knowingly under-organised.

In 2007 Christine joined the Week With Wodehouse and was very proud to lead the Wodehouse

Early London Walk. She also attended her first convention of The Wodehouse Society (U.S.) last year. She is a regular at the annual Dulwich cricket matches, though she understands tea much better than cricket, and has been to Wodehouse plays, pig racing, dinners, and the Royal Berkshire Show.

Having gradually collected a good number of reading copies of Wodehouse since joining the Society, Christine has recently embarked upon a read-through of the canon from *The Pothunters* to *Sunset at Blandings* (minus the gaps of books yet to be acquired). With reading time usually restricted to the daily commute and therefore interrupted by announcements about signal failures at Balham, this may take some time. Fellow Southern travellers are now quite used to the person squashed into the corner with a big goofy grin on her face clutching a series of odd-looking books.

When not at work or doing things for the Society, Christine enjoys travel, dance classes, pottering about, staring in dismay at her untidy garden, and, lately, starting a brave attempt to learn singing.



Christine on duty during last year’s Week With Wodehouse. (Photo by Tony Ring)

P. G. Wodehouse: The Dulwich Factor (Part 2)

by Margaret Slythe

In part 1 of this paper, a talk delivered at the Divine Providence convention in October 2007, Margaret introduced us to Arthur Herman Gilkes, the Master of Dulwich College, and described Wodehouse's entry into life at the College. We now learn more about Gilkes, Plum, and the Dulwich legacy.

So how did the great Gilkes and Plum connect? Boarders with detached families were by no means unknown to Gilkes. But the Wodehouse brothers were noticeable from Plum's first day. With Armine so closely modelled on his father, Gilkes was genuinely concerned to discover that Wodehouse minor seemed to be of little interest to either parent, and that neither brother had any knowledge of how Peveril, the eldest of the then three Wodehouse boys of public-school age, was faring at the school in Guernsey they had all attended. The Master 'took up' Plum in ways he might not have welcomed. For instance, Gilkes had established the Dulwich College Mission, in the Walworth Road, a club for deprived South East London boys, and nominated Plum as a monitor to raise and collect funds for it. Each Sunday afternoon, after at least two services at the Chapel – three if you were a chorister as Plum became – and a hearty roast dinner at midday, Gilkes would cycle to the Mission to teach the boys basic learning and social skills. If he had company – and he often had Plum with him – he would push his bike, five miles each way. Plum asked to cycle, too, but his deteriorating eyesight was of concern to Gilkes. The best thing about the Mission for Plum was getting into the boxing ring and teaching what he himself had been taught.



The playing fields at Dulwich (photo by Paul Abrinko)

Gilkes also monitored Plum's academic seesaw. Why did his place in class lurch from 4th to 25th so readily? Gilkes had no time for mark hunters but knew that he must send boys to university properly tuned for the academic disciplines ahead. It seems that Wodehouse minor performed poorly in tests principally because he avoided specific preparation. We know from Bill Townend that Plum talked on any and every subject for hours, then dashed off his prep. And of course he always had a pile of magazines bought at the railway station bookstall – also irksome to Armine, who no doubt spent his pocket money on classics texts. Well, it paid off for both of them. But then, apart from the odd 10-bob note thrust in the hand before returning to school after the holidays, all purchases were funded by the school Bursar and listed on the school fees account at the end of term. One could have few secrets.

As Plum's responsibilities in the school grew, Gilkes knew he could trust Wodehouse minor while high jinks went on in the boarding house or classroom, to make sure things did not get out of hand and no one was hurt or wretched.

It is no secret that Plum was proud of his school, which had national recognition and the respect of everyone he knew. He was, as Gilkes wrote in his final report, "an extremely useful boy around the school", and Bill Townend called him "one of the most important boys in the school". School is a place with structure and opportunities – Wodehouse understood this immediately and thrived. And the house system suited him, with boys both younger and older. Day boys rarely befriend boys in another year. It was, as he said, the closest he got to a normal family – except that there were no women, other than housemaids, whose instructions were to clean the boys' rooms during classroom hours.

So now we come to Plum not going to Oxford. We know that Gilkes called him to his study to tell him that he was of scholarship material but needed to do some serious work if he wanted the Master's support. And work he did, up at 5 a.m. with two petit beurre biscuits, as he told us. Just as today, schools built special

relationships with particular colleges, and Oriel was lined up for Plum. His programme was closely choreographed by Gilkes, with precise 3,000-word-length essays, presentations of set texts, individual interpretations – all were part of the weekly session in the Master’s study.

Almost as the examination approached, Ernest Wodehouse wrote to say that his son would not be going to university. Gilkes would have replied by return, or even telegraphed, to invite him to discuss this turn of events. In the Master’s armoury was that a scholarship came with tuition, full board, books, and stationery; in addition, the College Governors provided a minimum and negotiable £10 per term. Both Armine and Plum had won scholarships in the middle school of £10 a year, and this also continued through university – this at a time when the salary of an assistant master was £150 per year and that allowed for the employment of domestic help.

What is known is that Ernest did not come but instead sent Armine, who brought the stark message: their father was concerned about his diminishing pension and with four sons to bring up, another son at university was out of reach. Almost more shocking was that Armine, who was seen in the College that day, made no contact with his younger brother. When Plum was summoned to Gilkes’s study soon after, it was generally thought that one of their parents must have died.

So what must we conclude? That Armine, possibly the ablest classical scholar ever at Oxford’s Corpus Christi College, did not wish for the renewed distraction of Plum? Since Corpus Christi and Oriel Colleges are separate foundations, that hardly works. That Peveril, the eldest, and Richard, the youngest, might still need substantial support? Almost certainly. But the Oxford package for Plum – who was already earning small sums from his writing – would have made him self-sufficient. And once he was at the bank, his father readily matched his salary with £80 a year allowance. One thing is certain – Plum and Armine barely recovered from this cruel decision.

We know that Plum declared he would not have become a writer had he gone to Oxford. I don’t believe that – he had always written, from the age of five. But he would certainly have broadened his range.

In what both Barry Phelps and Robert McCrum describe as the “parental vacuum” that the three older Wodehouse boys found themselves in, with the constant uncertainty of where the next holiday was to be spent, their lonely and loveless family structure affected all of their friends and their friends’ families. Wodehouse was a noble family name with status and

substantial connections, but the normal invitations between boys seemed beyond Eleanor Wodehouse to organise. When the family was together and the boys accompanied their parents on visits, Armine would ask if he could play the piano, visit the billiard room or the library, and Plum would dive off to the servants’ quarters or round up the resident animals. On one occasion, when Armine was sent to ‘find Plum’ to join in some activity, as he came from the other side of the green baize door, Plum was heard to ask “Am I allowed to win today?” Very revealing. How different it would all have been if Plum had been the older.



Plum at Dulwich

I will end with the Centenary in 1981. At my interview for the position of Head of Library and Archives, the then Chairman of Governors, Lord Wolfenden, had said solemnly, “Dulwich needs to make reparation to PGW for wavering in their support of him when it was most needed.” In fact, I soon discovered that the school had behaved less badly in response to the wartime broadcasts than had been supposed. Any

honours boards bearing PGW’s name had been carefully stored away, until anger had subsided, and in due course they were replaced. His much-read and shabby autographed books were removed from library shelves and placed in brown paper covers in the archive. After the first few stunned weeks, the College had acted, through a number of Old Alleynians (OAs) on both sides of the Atlantic, as a catalyst for public support.

Dulwich boys are reared on a code of Fate – learn to take whatever life throws at you. Dulwich boys applaud with their feet and show disapproval of others or of their own actions, however intense, with total silence. But the struggle was not helped by Plum’s letter to the *Alleynian* in summer 1945. Desperate to make amends to his Alma Mater, and drastically edited for his own good, it is an uncomfortable reminder of Plum’s poor judgement of his situation. “But I see now, I was tricked into these talks” was a bitter blow to his friends and defenders who interpreted this as collaboration, albeit a manipulated one. Suddenly OAs felt that their loyalty had been greater than his. Before the broadcasts, Plum’s wretched experiences as a prisoner of war and his truly stoical qualities and leadership role had made him a hero to his Dulwich friends; OAs were concerned for him and proud of him. Now he had to convince them to stay with him – even if he had lost the regard of the British Establishment. And during the post-war years – and especially at the time when another remarkable Old Alleynian, Sir Hartley Shawcross, was leading the British prosecution at the Nuremburg trials – they

mostly did stay with him. The great affection, loyalty, and generosity Plum had shown to the school and especially to the cricket and football (rugby of course) teams before World War II was not forgotten; those on the touchline missed him – as did readers of the *Alleynian*, who enjoyed his knowledgeable and amusing contributions.

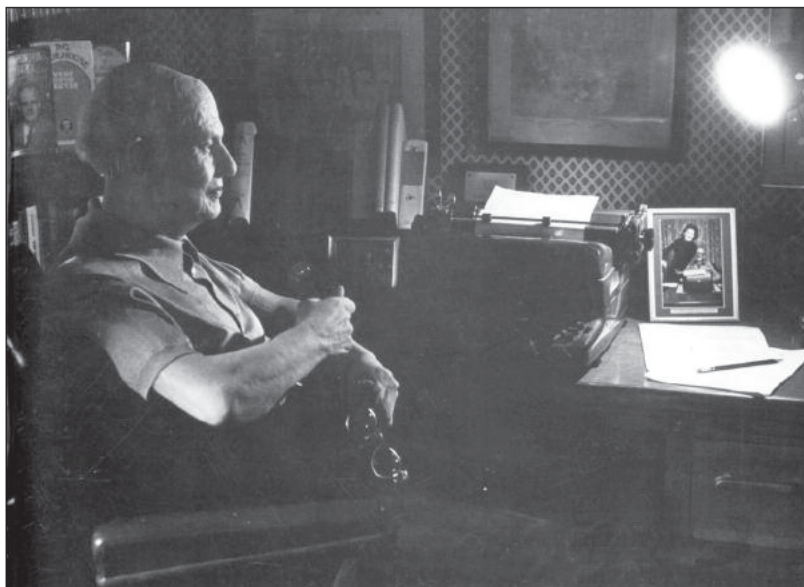
The Pierpont Morgan Wodehouse Centenary exhibition in New York, in spring 1981 – Ethel Wodehouse's last public appearance – was followed by an English version at the National Theatre in London. While the then Master of Dulwich College, David Emms, and I were at the London preview, reading the account book of Plum's earnings when still at school, his Herbert Jenkins publisher, Derek Grimsdick, stood beside us and said quietly, "That is among some things which I should like to hand to Dulwich College." When Herbert Jenkins was absorbed into Barrie and Jenkins, and after it seemed that Plum would never again return to London, Derek Grimsdick asked 'PG' what he should do with the office filing cabinet filled with his stuff. "Take it home with you," said Plum. Grimsdick thought little of the treasures he was guarding until Jimmy Heineman approached him for exhibits for the New York and London exhibitions. Derek Grimsdick was by then terminally ill, and I visited him at home several times. The Master at Dulwich invited him to lunch, and a quiet ceremony was held, handing over the precious account book, hundreds of Townend letters, typed manuscripts, pages of pencilled plans for stories and much else. At the same time, Barry Phelps offered his Wodehouse collection to the College on permanent loan. Already in the Archive were the many editions of PGW's full-length stories which his UK publishers have sent to the College since *The Pothunters* of 1902. We had truly become the Wodehouse Library.

Not only did I have Derek Grimsdick to ask about Plum but also two of the oldest OAs, Jack Le Tall and Bill Grey. Both officers in World War I, they were Plum's first defence over his not signing up for combat in 1914. His eyesight would have made active service impossible, they firmly stated. Also keen to tell me more recent accounts were some of the New York OAs whose reunion meetings Plum chaired until long after he had given up almost any other outings.

Dulwich College did not appear in PGW's will. But Ethel and her grandson, Edward Cazalet, acknowledged Plum's love of the school with generosity.

The Wodehouse legacy in 1981 was spent on two Upper School scholarships – one in PGW's name and one in that of Lady Wodehouse – and a complete overhaul and refurbishment of the Library and Archive. The desk and contents of Plum's Remsenburg study had been shipped to Dulwich in 1977 and installed in the school library. For the Centenary year, Madame Tussauds loaned the PGW waxwork of which he was so proud, and I placed him in his memorial study, seated in front of his favourite typewriter, with specs and pipe in hand. Imagine my astonishment when I heard his old friends Jack Le Tall and Bill Grey having a chat with him: "Well Plum, you and we have seen a lot; are you back with us now?" It was affectionate and extremely moving. Sadly, the model was melted down when it returned to Tussaud's.

Finally, in December 1981, Edward Cazalet formally opened the Wodehouse Library at Dulwich College, and also, if I may say so, the best Wodehouse exhibition ever – due to the personal items loaned by the Wodehouse family and correspondence and original artwork from each and every Wodehouse UK publisher – and we were treated to an amazingly mature performance of *Jeeves*, rewritten for the boys by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Afterwards, Edward said, "Well we've done it, it will all quieten down now." Largely due to this wonderful society, it hasn't.



The waxwork version of Plum sitting in his recreated study at the Wodehouse Library, Dulwich College, in 1981.

Berkshire Pork in Singapore

Oomen Thomas reports that when he and his wife Judy were in Singapore just before last Christmas, they dined at Tom Ton, a Japanese restaurant that specialises in serving black Berkshire pork. Oomen says: "Any Wodehouseans travelling through Singapore and seeking an opportunity to endorse the Emsworth Paradox would be well advised to stop by 'Tom Ton'!" (Their website address is <http://www.cfc.com.sg/tomTon.htm>.)

Bertie's Uncles George: A Response

by John Fletcher

Ever since I first met Mr Charles E. Gould, Jr, at the Boston or New York Convention (it was so long ago I have forgotten which) I realised he was among the brilliant stars in the Wodehouse universe. He is the only person I have heard try to answer the question "What is the meaning of 'Across the pale parabola of Joy'?" At any rate he replied so as to stop any further questions.



His article in the December 2007 *Wooster Sauce* includes the gem "I myself have remarked elsewhere that P. G. Wodehouse was the greatest Trick-Recyclist of his century." This is as good as Saki. Where, please, is "elsewhere"? I must catch up on Mr Gould's writings.

To buttress his thesis that Wodehouse made mistakes, Mr Gould refers to the early Jeeves books. But Wodehouse wrote these first as separate short stories in magazines, which he later collected into books. *The Inimitable Jeeves* is one book of 18 chapters compressed from 11 previously separate short stories, with Bingo's love-life as the link. This left many inconsistencies, within *The Inimitable Jeeves* and outside it.

If Mr Gould will open one of his *Jeeves Omnibus* volumes, unless it diverges from my Penguin, he will observe the differences at once. He may rely on the books, or prefer the short stories in the *Omnibus*, but he cannot believe both. I recommend the *Omnibus* version.

Uncle George Wooster and Uncle Tom Travers were one and the same. "Pop Stoker has only one daughter" in *Thank You, Jeeves*, you say, but that is not what Pop Stoker says. A man may have a second daughter whom he chooses not to mention. In the first sentence of Chapter 2 of *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* he explains about both daughters.

I have always assumed readers of *Wooster Sauce* would know all about the Peerage simply by a close reading of Wodehouse. PGW knew about it, and expounded it clearly. I suggest to Mr Gould that a copy of *Burke's Peerage* would be a help. Yes, indeed, a baronet can become a Lord, so Lord Yaxley could easily have been Sir George, as Lord Sidcup had been Sir Roderick. PGW was indeed the greatest Trick-Recyclist of his age, but he did not do it with mirrors.

My uncle George discovered that alcohol was a food well in advance of modern medical thought.

(From 'The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace', 1922)

Oh, Kay!

A Review by Merwyn Cunliffe

In March I went to see *Oh, Kay!* at the Sir John Mills Theatre in Ipswich. It was performed by the Gallery Players, an amateur group who specialise in musicals and have in the past put on *Marry Me a Little*, *Passion*, *Grand Hotel*, and *Flora the Red Menace*, to name but a few.

The book, written by P. G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton, sets the action at the time of Prohibition. An impoverished duke and his sister, Kay, smuggle illegal booze on his yacht; they stash it in the cellar of the seaside home of Jimmy Winter, who is normally away enjoying himself. When Jimmy returns unexpectedly with the girl he is going to wed, bootlegger Sporty McGee poses as a butler in order to keep an eye on the hooch. Jimmy recognises Kay from a previous encounter and falls in love with her; they make their feelings clear in the duet 'Maybe'. Left alone on stage, Kay sings 'Someone to Watch Over Me'. As with most Wodehouse plots, nothing is entirely straightforward, but after several misunderstandings everything ends happily, with Jimmy and Kay getting married.

The wonderful George Gershwin score features 'I've Got a Crush on You'; 'Do, Do, Do'; 'Clap Your Hands'; and 'Things Are Looking Up'. Although the lyrics are mainly by Ira Gershwin, some by Wodehouse are taken from the 1960 revival and are included in the show. These are 'The Twenties Are Here to Stay', 'Home', 'Stiff Upper Lip', and 'You'll Still Be There'.

The Sir John Mills Theatre is small and intimate, with not much room for choreography, but the cast made the most of the limited acting area. They interpreted the songs well, with such good diction that the audience could hear the lyrics clearly. If I had to pick out any of the actors for special praise, they would be Shelley Clempson as Kay and Phil Cory as Sporty, both of whom have fine voices and a good sense of comedy. It was heartening to come out of the theatre and hear some of the audience singing songs from the show, not something that happens very often with modern musicals.

There is an interesting story of how the show got its name. Wodehouse, Bolton, and Gershwin went to see Gertrude Lawrence, who was to star in the original 1926 production, and when they had auditioned some of the material, she asked, "What are you going to call it?" They asked what she thought of the material, and she replied, "OK, very much OK," whereupon Gershwin sang, "Oh, Kay, you're OK." (Editor's note: This story is probably apocryphal. Most sources indicate the show was named for Gershwin's friend, the composer Kay Swift.)

Come On, Jeeves

A Review by Steve Griffiths

PG Wodehouse's play *Come On, Jeeves*, co-written with Guy Bolton, began a three-month UK tour in Lincoln's Theatre Royal in mid-March. The tour was produced by Ian Dickens Productions Ltd with the play directed by Ian Dickens himself. The play, later developed into the novel *Ring for Jeeves*, boasts an all-star cast including Anita Harris as Mrs Spottsworth, Victor Spinetti as Captain Biggar, Derren Nesbitt as Lord Carmoyle, Richard Pocock as Jeeves, and James Cawood as Lord 'Bill' Towcester.

For those familiar with the book, but less so the play, Wodehouse made two significant changes: the play's hero Lord Towcester became Lord Rowcester in the book, while the Chief Constable in the play, Colonel Blagdon, became Jill Wyvern's father in the novel. Otherwise, the concurrent themes of Bill's need to sell the ancestral home to Mrs Spottsworth and his attempts, as a bookie, to avoid paying Captain Biggar's winnings are common to both.

The set was a typical theatrical scene in the main living room of Towcester Abbey, with many entrances, some lovely period furniture, a two-piece telephone and an array of Towcester ancestral portraits adorning the walls. The costumes were equally apposite, evoking the 1930s to perfection.

Viewed through the eyes of someone unfamiliar with the Wodehouse canon – my wife being the prime example – the play was great fun. It had plenty of visual and verbal humour, the former often supplied by Bill as he tried to explain his way out of tight fixes to avoid being exposed as Honest Patch Perkins, while the latter came from Lord Carmoyle, who had the best

lines and excellent comic timing as he inadvertently said the wrong things at the wrong moments to the maximum embarrassment of Bill.

However – and here I am being a very purist PGW aficionado – I have to express some reservations about the direction and casting of some of the main characters. For example, Victor Spinetti played the harrumphing Captain Biggar with gusto, but he was rather too old and sported rather more embonpoint than one associates with a big-game hunter. James Cawood's Bill was to me a cross between Mr Bean and Norman Wisdom with his constant rubbery body language, facial expressions, and hesitant excuses. The character was without doubt played very well and very amusingly, but was it a Wodehouse character?

Perhaps my biggest reservation applies to Richard Pocock's Jeeves. I cannot recall in the many Jeeves stories any greater emotion from Jeeves than the quiet raising of one eyebrow. Yet in the play he laughed at his own jokes, expressed the whole gamut of horror and disappointment seen in the other characters when their Derby favourite came second, and rather than shimmying in and out of the room, he sounded like an elephant with corns. His diction, his schemes, his advice, his dress were all Jeevesian, but his body language was that of any other comic butler.

That said, I would not want to appear to be curmudgeonly, as the play really was great entertainment. It was wonderful to see PGW alive and well in the local repertory theatre. And if it has introduced a new audience to his work, this will be no bad thing.

We Remember

We are saddened to learn of the deaths of four Wodehousean friends in recent months.

Tom Wainwright, who died in November 2007, was treasurer of The Wodehouse Society (US) from 1989 to 2001. A member of the Blandings Castle chapter, he was a regular attendee at TWS conventions and a frequent participant in his chapter's skits. He became typecast as Beach, a role he played in the very first convention skit, in New York in 1991. A scientist, he was well loved and greatly respected by all who knew him.

Frits Menschaar, born in Holland, took part in the Dutch resistance movement during World War II. Moving to New York in the late 1970s, he quickly collected a complete set of first editions. He subsequently became a book dealer specializing in PGW. He was a guiding force behind Jimmy Heineman's publication of a facsimile edition of *The Swoop* in 1993, and he was instrumental in TWS's sponsorship of the plaque at the

Little Church Around the Corner, commemorating the Wodehouses' marriage. He died in mid-February.

Bill Tyrwhitt-Drake was a regular attendee of UK Society meetings at the Savage Club, along with his wife Jean. Bill died on March 8 after a brief illness. Among many other accomplishments, he was a Trustee and onetime President of the Haileybury Society, as well as an outstanding cricketer. The Society extends its condolences to Jean and their three children.

Page Hearn, who died of a heart attack at age 48 on May 17, played Jeeves in Chicago's City Lit Theater Company productions of Wodehouse stories for nine years. According to *Chicago Tribune* critic Chris Jones, Mr Hearn was "the consummate Jeeves", an "elegant actor" with "a pitch-perfect English accent" who was much loved by City Lit audiences. So well known was he in the part that people recognizing him in restaurants frequently addressed him as "Jeeves".

An Interview with Ian Dickens

by Tony Ring

Ian Dickens, the Managing Director of Ian Dickens Productions, is responsible for producing and directing many of the plays which tour the theatres in the UK's major towns and cities. Apart from *Come On, Jeeves*, he is responsible for the current tours of *See How They Run*, *The Business of Murder*, *Daisy Pulls It Off*, and *Run for Your Wife*.

I asked him about the motivation for the present production of *Come On, Jeeves*, which has been touring a dozen or so venues and is the subject of Steve Griffiths's review on the opposite page. Ian commented that he had always loved the work of Wodehouse and decided to turn to him as a possible source when he was looking for a period comedy for the spring 2008 season. "Fortunately," he added, "I have been an avid buyer of plays from bookstores – often in the Samuel French editions – over many years, as it is increasingly difficult to find Wodehouse plays in published form." Ian's throwaway comment – that he reads up to a dozen plays each week – nonplussed me, as I can't see how he can find the time to produce and direct them as well! But included in his reading were four or five by Wodehouse, including *Good Morning, Bill*, *The Play's the Thing*, and *A Damsel in Distress* as well as *Come On, Jeeves*, before he decided that *Come On, Jeeves*, even without an appearance by Bertie Wooster, would have the greatest commercial potential.

Having selected the play, his second big decision was to set the play in the 1930s rather than the 1950s, when it was written. He found that despite the change of period, he had to make only negligible changes to the text, although it was essential to change the name of a jockey from Lester Piggott to Gordon Richards!

In setting broad parameters for his casting, Ian took cognisance of the fact that *Come On, Jeeves* is quite a 'wordy' play, which pointed to the desirability of recruiting experienced comedy actors such as Victor Spinetti and Anita Harris. He added the relatively

unknown Richard Pocock to the mixture as Jeeves, and selected the up-and-coming young actor James Caywood to take the part of Bill Towcester. Ian added that although the script was wordy, it was not prescriptive as far as visual comedy and running gags are concerned. "It was very pleasant," he said, "to be able to use my own and the actors' ideas to a significant degree in shaping the final presentation."

I asked Ian if he could identify any specific reason why the play never managed a West End production in the 1950s, though Wodehouse and Bolton had tinkered with the concept in various formats in order to find a formula for a viable commercial property. Ian commented that in his opinion, properly presented, it would have stood a good chance, as it had a nice period feel and occupied the middle ground of light comedy between farce and comic drama.

Ian feels that *Come On, Jeeves* is a well-balanced play for an amateur company to consider, with good parts for older and younger actors, both male and female. It may be a little on the long side for today's audience, running around two-and-a-half hours, but the excellent script is suitable for all the family. Providing a taste of the period, it encompasses three simultaneous plotlines: the financial problems of Bill Towcester's book-making business, the progress of Bill and Jill Wyvern's romance, and Rosalinda Spottsworth's desire to buy Towcester Hall. The presence of Jeeves as a catalyst to solve the problems is a bonus and acts as a convenient introduction to other Wodehouse stories for members of the audience encountering Wodehouse's work for the first time.

It was too early, at the time of writing, to know whether Ian's hunch has worked commercially. But the early reviews were favourable, and on 12 April it received from critic Benedict Nightingale the unusual accolade for a touring production of being included in the *Times* list of four 'Top Theatre' items. See page 25 for a list of the remaining performances.



Everyman Carries On

Collectors and fans should know that even as Arrow Books launches its line of PGW paperbacks, Everyman continues to publish fine editions in hardcover. In March they issued *Something Fishy* and *Bill the Conqueror*, while *Psmith*, *Journalist* and *Nothing Serious* are scheduled for the summer.

Jeeves and Fields

In an online blurb about a DVD, *The W. C. Fields Comedy Collection* (see <http://tinyurl.com/5hvc7g>), we find the following gem: "Fields wrote his own screenplays under names like Otis J. Criblecoblis and Mahatma Kane Jeeves (from a cliché in old English drawing room dramas: 'my hat, my cane, Jeeves!')." "

Jeeves Intervenes

Daniel Love Glazer reviews a production presented by the First Folio Shakespeare Festival in Oak Brook, Illinois, USA

Wodehouse devotees in the Chicago area have been mourning City Lit Theatre's abandonment a few years ago of its once-annual Wodehouse production. This season, the First Folio Shakespeare Festival has filled the breach by presenting *Jeeves Intervenes*, purportedly based on the story 'Jeeves and the Hard-boiled Egg' and adapted for the stage by Margaret Raether.

In the original story, Bertie, residing in New York, helps his friend Francis Bickersteth (Bicky), who depends on a monthly allowance from his uncle, the Duke of Chiswick, the 'hard-boiled egg'. Bertie has grown a moustache, to Jeeves's dismay. The Duke is arriving in New York to visit Bicky, who has led his uncle to believe that he (Bicky) is a successful businessman. At Jeeves's suggestion, Bertie loans his flat to Bicky to maintain the fiction. When the Duke sees how well-off Bicky is, he cancels the monthly remittance. Jeeves concocts the idea of charging tourists for the privilege of shaking the Duke's hand, but the Duke discovers the scheme and vetoes it. Jeeves saves the day by suggesting that Bicky sell the tale to the newspapers. The Duke, who loathes publicity, capitulates and gives Bicky his money. Bertie lets Jeeves shave his moustache.

Jeeves Intervenes retains a few elements of the original story, but 90 percent of it is a potpourri of themes and language deriving from other parts of the canon. In the play, Bertie's flat is in London, not New York. Francis Bickersteth has become Eustace Bassington-Bassington (Bassy), and the Duke of Chiswick is Bassy's uncle, Sir Rupert Watlington-Pipps. Also present are Aunt Agatha and her goddaughter, Gertrude Winklesworth-Bode, modeled on Florence Craye. Bertie incurs Jeeves's displeasure by sporting a scarlet cummerbund.

Some of Ms. Raether's borrowings from other stories:

Jeeves administers one of his patented pick-me-ups to Bertie.

In this matter of shimmering into rooms, the man is rummy to a degree. You're sitting in the old arm chair, thinking of this and that, and then suddenly you look up, and there he is. He moves from point to point with as little uproar as a jelly fish. The thing startled poor Bicky considerably. He rose from his seat like a rocketing pheasant.

(From 'Jeeves and the Hard Boiled Egg', 1917)

Bertie uses the expression 'far from grunted'. Jeeves lists the three branches (Shropshire, Hampshire, and Kent) of the Bassington-Bassingtons.

Bertie describes Aunt Agatha as wearing barbed wire next to her skin, eating broken bottles, and turning into a werewolf at the full moon.

Bertie tells Gertrude that someone (Bassy) loves her, and Gertrude, like Madeline Bassett, assumes the lover is Bertie and announces that she will be his wife.

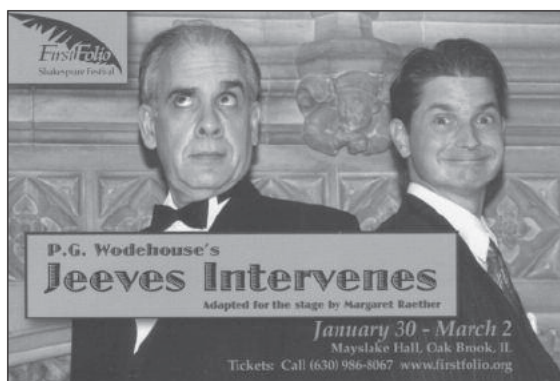
There is a reference to mastodons bellowing across primeval swamps.

Bertie applies to Bassy the line about the girls he has loved, if placed end to end, reaching halfway down Piccadilly.

Upon meeting Gertrude, Bassy immediately falls in love. She is engaged to Bertie, but Bassy wins her away by spouting passages from *Types of Ethical Theory* and Nietzsche, prompted by Bertie, who, hidden behind the couch, displays the texts for Bassy to read. Sir Rupert learns that the flat is not Bassy's, and he ends Bassy's allowance, but Jeeves uses the same threat of publicity to get the uncle to relent. Bertie forfeits the scarlet cummerbund.

The production was good, enlivened by some good physical comedy. As Bertie, Christian Gray was fine, though not in the Hugh Laurie class. Jim McCance as Jeeves was excellent but occasionally betrayed a kind of condescension to Bertie not present in the stories. Jill Shellaburger was superbly imperious as Aunt Agatha. Roger Mueller was the very model of a gruff Wodehouse military man, and Kevin McKillip was a properly cloth-headed Bassy. The one weak link was Lydia Berger as Gertrude, who fell short of the dominant persona called for.

The show was a delight, and the audience heartily approved. I hope that First Folio will do more Wodehouse in the future.



Plummy Acrostic

by June Arnold

Solve the clues in the top grid, then transfer the letters from there to the bottom grid; this will give you an extract from a PGW novel. Reading down column A in the top grid will give you the name of the novel. Answers will be provided in the September issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

Clues:

- 1 *The Luck of the* _____, novel by PGW (7) / Victor (6) / A safe boy's name? (5)
- 2 Not guilty (8) / _____ *Aren't Gentlemen*, novel by PGW (5)
- 3 _____ *at Blandings*, novel by PGW (7) / Golf club (6)
- 4 *The* _____ *Season*, novel by PGW (6) / _____ *Farm*, by George Orwell (6) / Days of _____ and roses (4)
- 5 _____ *Seventy*, PGW autobiography (4) / Male parent (6) / European country (6)
- 6 Bird (Hunt chat anagram) (8) / Didn't pass an exam (6)
- 7 ' _____ of the Dog McIntosh', from *Very Good, Jeeves* (7) / Hunting dog (5)
- 8 _____ *Men in Spats*, novel by PGW (5) / Discordant noise (3) / Romeo, for example (5)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
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2																				
3																				
4																				
5																				
6																				
7																				
8																				

3B	1K	7F		1G	7J			4D	8D			8G	6B	5C			6G	8L	7K	3N	2N	7A
8H	2B		3K	6D	1S			1A	4M	8C	5J			4H	2G	6O						
6E	1P	5D	6L	2E	7E	6C			5H	1I	4J	6M	4P	3A	7I	1R				1B	5M	
3D		7B	1M	1T	6J	4R	5Q	4C			4A	2J	8A									
2F	5B	3M	6A	7C	1F	4F			4B	5P	4Q			4K	2D	8B	1L					
6K	1N	5N	1E	8M	7G	7M			1J	2C			8N	4I	8E	3C	5G	2L	1C			
4O	2A	3L	6H		3F			5I	5A	3I	1Q	5F	3J	8K			3E	6N	5O	5K	6F	
4L	7L	3G		2M	5R	4E			2H	8O	2K	8I	1D	7D								

Answers to Plummy Acrostic, March issue

- 1. whiskers / Spanish / hat
- 2. easy / anathema / hunt
- 3. Lawrence / hail / kiwi
- 4. Llewellyn / youth / bait
- 5. Bolton / punish / width
- 6. Efficient / bath / Diana
- 7. Lehman / path / bush
- 8. Orwell / under / paid / aha
- 9. very / again / quack / dot
- 10. eggs / taught / Fido / both
- 11. Damsel / shout / Bingo

Quote: But it has been well said of pig men as a class that though crushed to earth they will rise again. You plot and plan and think you have baffled a pig man, but all the while his quick brain had been working and it has shown him the way out.

Character name: Wellbeloved

The Man Who Did Me Down

Bruce Montgomery reports on how even minor copyright infringements attract unfavourable notice

In the December 2003 issue of *Wooster Sauce*, Gus Caywood wrote about a copy of the U.S. edition of *Love Among the Chickens* that had recently been auctioned. It was inscribed by PGW to Charles Neville Buck, and Gus explained that Buck, like PGW himself, had been ‘represented’ by a fraudulent agent in the United States named A E (‘Abe’) Baerman, who had registered for himself the copyright of *Love Among the Chickens*. Gus deduced this in part from a Wodehouse short story, ‘The First Time I Went to New York’, which appeared in a 1935 anthology edited by the Hon Theodora Benson. In the story, PGW described the activities of ‘Jake Skolsky’, a pseudonym for Baerman.

About a year and a half ago, I was browsing (albeit without sluicing) in the PGW files of the A P Watt Collection at the University of North Carolina (UNC) in Chapel Hill. The A P Watt literary agency published PGW in the United Kingdom from 1935 to sometime just after the Millennium and somehow – no doubt for reasons a shrewd tax lawyer could explain – their business records are now archived at UNC. I passed along my research results to Tony Ring, who observed that file 371.19 casts further light on this murky topic.

First, the file includes a copy of a PGW short story, ‘The Man Who Did Me Down’, which appeared in the *Sunday Chronicle* on February 9, 1936. This piece is the blueprint for Wodehouse’s contribution to the Benson anthology and revolves, with wry regret born of personal experience with ‘Jake Skolsky’, around the business of publishing and literary agents. Second, it contains a letter from A W Gatfield, of the

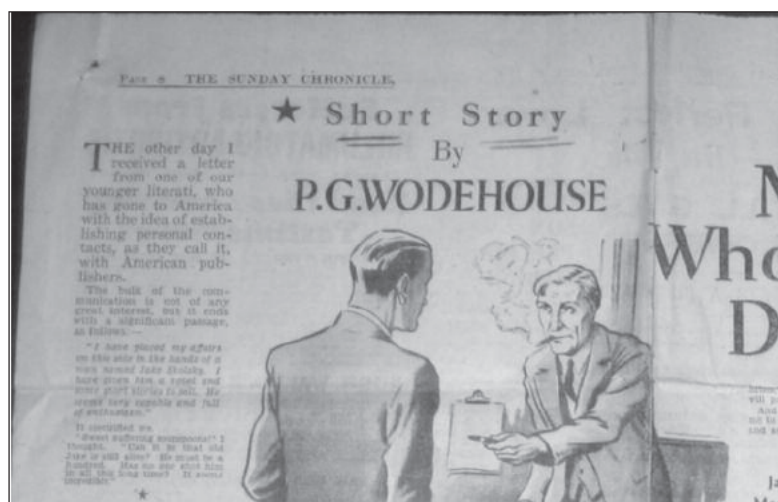
publisher Chapman & Hall Ltd, to W P Watt – tycoons in London as well as Hollywood evidently employed their heirs and in-laws – concerning “trouble over the article by Mr Wodehouse which appeared in The *Sunday Chronicle*”.

The Gatfield letter, dated 18 February 1936, explains:

The [book] was negotiated between The Hon Theodora Benson and ourselves through Raymond Savage Ltd, and the agreement gave us copyright in the book. There seems to have been a most regrettable misunderstanding between Raymond Savage and ourselves regarding the serial rights. Raymond Savage asked us if we would sell the serial rights in six of the articles to The *Sunday Chronicle* for twelve guineas an article. I was consulted about this and at once consented, assuming that as the enquiry came through Raymond Savage there could be no question about the ownership of the copyrights.

Unfortunately, I discovered afterwards that a member of my staff had completely put us in the wrong by stating, in a letter to Raymond Savage, that we possessed the serial rights in the book.

I would like you to tell Mr Wodehouse how grieved I am that we have caused him so much annoyance, and I can only hope that he will accept my explanation and apology. Of course, I will hand over to him the sum received from The *Sunday Chronicle* for his article.



The original Wodehouse story, as published in *The Sunday Chronicle*, February 9, 1906. (Photo courtesy of Bruce Montgomery)

Watt evidently forwarded a copy of this letter to Wodehouse, who replied on 5 March: “I’m sorry Gatfield was upset about that thing, as he is a nice chap. The fault seems to have been Theodora Benson’s. I think we had better just grab the twelve guineas and say no more about it. But this is the last time anyone gets me to write an article cheap as a personal favour.”

Both the short story and Gatfield’s letter are ammunition for those who believe that Wodehouse was far more conscious of financial matters and the business of publishing than his general reputation might otherwise suggest. It also shows just how complex the whole business of publishing and copyrights has always been.

Newtworthy News

Newts are hot news these days. From Matt Crawford's recent claim as saviour of the great crested newt on BBC Radio 4's *The Archers* to mentions of former London Mayor Ken Livingstone's favourite pastime, we just can't get enough of (as Jeeves put it) "the aquatic members of the family Salamandridae which constitute the genus *Molge*". On PGWnet, Society member **Sushmita Sen Gupta** brought up Ken's name and quoted the following exchange from an online article:



The endangered great crested newt

Question: How're your newts?

Ken Livingstone: Having a great old time because it's their breeding season. They're just wagging their tails and spreading their pheromones through the pool.

Sushmita notes: "Plum would have loved to see this." As would Gussie Fink-Nottle!

Several readers have submitted articles on newts. **John Fletcher** sent a clipping describing the problem posed by a colony of great crested newts near a proposed housing development at Pinewood Studios. The great crested is considered to be Britain's most threatened newt species, and legal obstacles over protection of the newts have caused greater headaches for Pinewood than the opposition of local residents.

Alexander Dainty sent a report from the *Daily Telegraph* concerning a couple who cannot move back

into their £1 million Wiltshire home – flooded out in last year's rainstorms – due to suspicions that some great crested newts are living in a blocked drainage ditch that continues to cause flooding. They are barred from unblocking the ditch until a study has been completed, which puts their house at ongoing risk of flood damage. All for newts that may or may not be there!

Alexander also cited the recent *Archers* storyline in which Pip Archer confronted Matt Crawford after he threatened to build on a newt breeding site. Pip won the day, and Alexander notes that the programme has received an amphibian award, 'The Great Newt Honours List'.

Finally, last November **Murray Hedcock** submitted an interesting item from the *Evening Standard*. Racing cyclists, displaced from their former track because of the 2012 Olympic Games, came up against the newts in their attempt to relocate to a replacement track at Hog Hill, in Hainault. It became clear that the new track "may not fully open until July, because only 41 out of 60 days required for the newt survey had been carried out. It has to be completed by the end of the month, before the newts go into hibernation. They will not re-emerge until March at the earliest, with the track taking a further two to three months to complete."

As Murray notes: "All you can say is that for looniness, it is right up to Fink-Nottle standard."

The Word Around the Clubs

Avuncular Priests

Recently **Alexander Dainty** attended the high church induction of a vicar in Clevedon. He writes: "It was attended by a plethora of high church priests who would have made ideal entries for the Drones Club Fat Uncle Contest."

A Personal Jeeves

Last autumn there were several articles in the papers concerning the rising demand for butlers, including a *Daily Telegraph* article from 15 November submitted by **John Moss**. In 'A Jeeves of My Own', Jasper Gerard describes how he acquired a butler. He begins with a quote from Wodehouse describing how Jeeves seems eager to place his fish-fed brain at his young master's disposal. Further into the article, he has this to say: "Like Jeeves, Robert (first names are now the norm, apparently) does not enter a room so much as shimmer into it. He takes in our messy hall and the filthy spaniel jumping on his striped trousers and pretends not to

notice. He oozes politeness, but we instantly see the children's scribbles on the cabinets and the half-chewed Weetabix under the table through the eyes of a man who has tended the Queen at Royal Ascot." Ah, but does Robert disentangle romantic entanglements?

A Latter-day Dunstable?

Ian Alexander-Sinclair sent an obituary from the *Daily Telegraph* describing a member of the aristocracy who sounds vaguely familiar. It begins: "Lord Michael Pratt, who has died aged 61, will be remembered as one of the last Wodehousean figures to inhabit London's clubland and as a much travelled author who pined for the days of Empire; he will also be remembered as an unabashed snob and social interloper on a grand scale. Pratt would arrive at country houses announcing that he was en route to another castle (or even larger) stately home, and was intending to stay for only one night. Quite often the 'night' would turn into weeks, and sometimes months."

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

A Wodehouse Introduction, Preface, or Foreword, Part 3

In the two previous Corners we reviewed Wodehouse's introductions to other authors' books up until 1963. In this Corner we complete the survey.

The year 1966 saw the introduction of an old friend's book, Guy Bolton's novel *Gracious Living, Limited* (McIlvaine, E137). The book was published by Herbert Jenkins, Wodehouse's own publisher. The rear cover of the dust wrapper was entirely given over to a blurb for Wodehouse's latest novel, *Galahad at Blandings*, with the blurb for Bolton's novel being relegated to the front flap of the dust wrapper.

In his introduction, Wodehouse poked fun at the nature of his own input into their successful collaboration: "Any time he has a good idea for a play, I am always ready to help him out. . . . It is not always convenient for me to stroll round the corner from my home to his and say, 'How are you getting on?' but I never fail him." But he claimed that it was a strong relationship:

What is remarkable about our collaboration is that after churning out theatre-joy for a discriminating public for forty years, we are not merely speaking to each other but are the closest of friends. If Guy saw me drowning, he would dive in to the rescue without a moment's hesitation, and if I saw Guy drowning, I would be the first to call for assistance. How different from most collaborators, who in similar circumstances would merely throw their partner an anvil!

Wodehouse had originally used these observations in his introduction to his 1956 play, co-authored with Bolton, *Come On, Jeeves* (C11a). Their recycling in 1966 is betrayed by the fact that Wodehouse omitted to update the comment about "churning out theatre-joy . . . for forty years [since *Miss Springtime* in 1916]" to mark the passage of another 10 years.

In the 1970s Wodehouse contributed to three books on subjects close to his heart. In 1974 he provided a six-page introduction, 'About My Friends' (stories of the various dogs he had owned) to Elliott Erwitte's book of 100 dog photographs, *Son of Bitch* (E140). He begins

knowingly: "We all have plenty to say about dogs, but very seldom are we allowed to say it. One of the familiar sights at any cocktail party is that of a man – call him Man A – trying to tell another man – call him Man B – all about the intelligence of his dog and the

other man cutting in and starting to tell him all about the intelligence of *his* dog." The introduction was recycled in 1998 in another book of photographs by Erwitte, *DogDogs* (E140b).

Second, in 1975 Wodehouse wrote an affectionate introduction to a reprint of a title by his old hero, Arthur Conan Doyle. For reasons perhaps best known only to the US publisher, Ballantine Books, it was published under the title *The Sign of the (sic) Four* (E139). Wodehouse was straightforward in stating his admiration: "When I was starting out as a writer . . . Conan Doyle was my hero. . . . I was a Doyle man, and I still am. Usually we tend to discard the idols of our youth as we grow older, but I have not had this experience with A.C.D. I thought him swell then, and I think him swell now."

Finally, a two-page foreword to John McAleer's *Rex Stout: A Biography* (E144) was published posthumously in the United States in 1977. Like the *Bindle Omnibus* (see Part 1 of this article), at 621 pages this title contains a lot of pages not written by Wodehouse. Wodehouse pays tribute to Stout's writing in terms which could equally well be applied to his own: "His narrative and dialogue could not be improved, and he passes the supreme test of being rereadable. I don't know how many times I have reread the Nero Wolfe stories, but plenty. I know exactly what is coming and how it is all going to end, but it doesn't matter. That's *writing*."

It is possible that there are further introductions still to be discovered. I have in my possession an intriguing letter from Wodehouse, dated 29 December 1948, to a Mr Risk, the first two paragraphs of which read as follows.

I was so glad to get your letter. Fancy you having forty of my books!

The list you enclosed looks complete to me. *Doctor Jill* must be *Doctor Sally*. *Sullivan at Bay*, if I remember rightly, was a book by Frank Sullivan, the American humourist, for which I wrote an introduction.

Wodehouse and Sullivan were regular correspondents (Robert McCrum, *Wodehouse: A Life*, p498) and extracts from the correspondence appear in *McIlvaine* (N53-55). *Sullivan At Bay* was first published in the UK in 1939. I have yet to come across a copy containing an introduction by Wodehouse (the first edition certainly does not), and would be delighted to hear from any reader who has such a copy.



Wodehouse on the Boards

We have no less than three theatre reviews in this issue (see pages 17, 18, and 20) – proof positive that Wodehouse is alive and well on the stage! This includes the touring production of *Come On, Jeeves*, which is now winding down. Following are the remaining dates for performances:

17–21 June: Gordon Craig Theatre, Stevenage
(08700 131030; <http://tinyurl.com/234hwd>)

24–28 June: Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton
(01823 283244; <http://www.thebrewhouse.net>)

1–5 July: Civic Theatre, Darlington
(01325 486555; <http://www.darlington.gov.uk/culture/arts>)

Check the Society's website (www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk) for further details of this and other theatre productions.

Across the pond, the March 10 issue of *Playbill* included an announcement of a future production of the 1926 Wodehouse-Bolton-Gershwin musical *Oh, Kay!*, rewritten by Joe DiPietro. It is currently scheduled for a fall 2008 première in Boston and a Broadway opening in 2009.

Wodehouse in Emsworth

In August the Emsworth Museum will be putting on a new exhibition devoted to P. G. Wodehouse, who lived in Emsworth from 1904 until 1914. This exhibition will show the town as it was at that time, with particular reference to places and residents that he knew and mentioned in some of his books. The exhibition is on from 2 to 31 August: on Saturdays and the Bank Holiday from 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. and on Fridays and Sundays from 2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Admission is free. The Emsworth Museum's address is 10B North Street, Emsworth PO10 7DD; it is located on the first floor of the building (situated over the Fire Station), and there is a stairlift.

Old Home Week in Moscow

As noted in the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, The Russian Wodehouse Society has organised a very special event: The Old Home Week in Moscow. The dates are 10–16 August, and the week includes visits to the Kremlin and the palatial Tsaritsyno; sightseeing around Moscow, both by bus and by foot; and visits to Tolstoy's Museum-Estate Khamovniki and Chaliapin's House-Museum. Participants will also have a unique opportunity to compare Blandings Castle with Moscow country estates—Chekhov's Literary and Memorial Museum (Malikhovo) and the country mansion of the famous Russian poet Lemontov (Serednikovo). The price is US\$650, fully inclusive except for hotel and meals.

Poets' Corner

The Pariah

My life's devoid of light and joy,
My pleasures wane and fail,
For all the servants I employ,
Are Cambridge tooth and nail;
The whole of my domestic suite
The darker azure ban;
I shrunk abashed whene'er we meet
For I'm an Oxford man.

They follow me where'er I go
With supercilious eyes;
They do not seem to hate me no
But merely to despise
To late at night from earliest morn
This Cambridge-backing clan
Look on me with consummate scorn,
For I'm an Oxford man.

My butler wears a light rosette
(E'en he has caught the craze);
Not soon, I trow, shall I forget
His cold, accusing gaze.
The page, the cook, the footman, too,
Their sporting ardour fan
With ribbons of the Cambridge hue
And I'm an Oxford man.

With lightest blue the chairs to deck
The weekly wage is spent,
My favourite kitten's ribboned neck
Proclaims a Cambridge bent;
Each sofa-cushion does the same,
And my hot-water can
Is daily pressed into the game
And I'm an Oxford man.

Oft times I vow I'll strive no more,
By flight I'll seek release,
Be happy on some foreign shore,
Find in Suburbia peace.
Perchance in Clapham or Tibet,
In Penge or Hindustan,
I might proclaim with less regret,
That I'm an Oxford man.

But then, I feel, it cannot last,
Once more will life be kay;
This state of things will all be past
On April's second day.
Aye, then, though Cam has won the race,
Or Isis led the van,
Once more I'll feel it no disgrace
To be an Oxford man.

From *Daily Chronicle*, 31 March 1903

Recent Press Comment

From *The Bookseller*, January 24

Reported some of the proposals for Arrow's launch of the new paperback edition of PGW.

From *Newspaper Network of Central Ohio*, January 26

A review of the use made in books of the town of Chillicothe, Ohio, mentioned it was both the home town of Joey Cooley in *Laughing Gas* and Rosalinda Spottsworth (née Banks) in *Ring for Jeeves*.

From *Bookforum*, Feb/Mar (from Ken Clevenger)

Alexander Waugh, writing about Kingsley Amis's books on drinking, said, "His style is always jaunty and cheerful, with something of a modern Wodehouse about it, even when launched on one of his famous tirades . . ."

References to comparisons between Boris Johnson, the new mayor of London and a Society Patron, and Wodehouse characters (particularly Bertie Wooster) have appeared in many places, including the *Ottawa Citizen*, *New York Post*, *Western Mail*, *American Chronicle*, *Jerusalem Post*, *The Age* (Melbourne), and *Sydney Morning Herald*, as well as most of the British papers. Thanks to all readers who sent clippings and website links.

From *The Knowledge* (in *The Times*), February 16 (from Anne Walsh)

Ben Schott's 'Archive Review of Alfred Hitchcock' included the suggestion made in October 1938 that "He understands the camera's unique powers of observation, its ability to perceive those tiny, unobtrusive clues . . . but Mr Hitchcock is also a humorist, a student, it would seem, of Mr P G Wodehouse, for the two Englishmen who move through his story . . . have the blood of Bertram Wooster in their veins."

From *The Times*, February 29

Douglas Brewer's letter regretted that correspondents did not seem to boast about the first hearing of the cuckoo in spring, but pointed out that were other birds. He promoted the case for the linnnet: "In P G Wodehouse's *Summer Moonshine*, Tubby Vanringham needs to know its song in order to keep an assignation. Fortunately the butler, Pollen, is a keen observer of birds and is able to inform him that the song of the linnnet is 'Tolic-gow-gow, tolic-joeey-fair, tolic-hickey-gee, tolic-equay-quake, tuc-tuc-whizzie, tuc-ruc-joeey, equay-quake-a-week, tuc-tuc-week.'"

From *The Independent Magazine*, March 1 (from Murray Hedgcock)

'The Weasel' wrote in his column on nostalgia: "Like Clement Attlee obsessed by the cricketing performances of Haileybury, or P G Wodehouse on tenterhooks about Dulwich ('Dulwich have a red-hot team this year', he wrote in 1928 when he was 46), an intense attachment to the old school provides an emotional outlet for buttoned-up individuals."

From *CBS Sunday Morning* (US TV), March 3 (from Liesel Wildhagen)

The programme anchor Charles Osgood was reviewing the problem for authors of choosing titles for their books and mentioned that Jeeves was named after "a British cricket player".

From *A Good Read* (Radio 4), March 4

(from Graham Johnson)

One book discussed by the panel was *Weekend Wodehouse*. BBC News presenter Mishal Husain said she had read Wodehouse as a teenager in Pakistan; she preferred the full novels. Author Kate Mosse had only recently been introduced to his work by her teenage son, and she was now a zealot. She thought that though frivolous, the stories were genuinely funny

without being cruel, and were being read by teenagers.

From *The Times*, March 5

In an interview, French actress Lou Doillon (daughter of Jane Birkin) said that she came from a crazy aristocratic family, and added, "There was something of a P G Wodehouse madness about it – wearing top hats to have tea."

From *Variety*, March 13

Reported that actor John Lithgow would be presenting a new solo show, at the Lincoln Center in New York for seven weeks from April 20; concluding with a one-man rendition of 'Uncle Fred Flits By'. (Members who have seen the production commended it.)

From *Independent* (Ireland), March 22

Sean Diffley reported that there are more than 115,000 registered members of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, about eight times the number of adult male rugby players in Ireland. He raised the spectre of PGW's quotation: "The more I see of women, the more I think there ought to be a law. Something has to be done about this sex, or the whole fabric of society will collapse."

From *Barnes & Noble Review*, March 26

Alexandra Mullen's long article 'Blithe Spirits: The Pleasures of Wodehouse', reviewing the latest Overlook collectors' editions in the US (equivalent to the Everyman in the UK), commented not only on the works of PGW but also on some comparable attributes of Emma Woodhouse.

From *Today Programme*, March 26

(from Jo Jacobius)

Reporting a story about newts, James Naughtie asked, "Gussie Fink-Nottle, where are you when we need you?"

From *The Times*, March 29

An editorial leader referred to Charlotte Green's seizure by giggles on the previous day's *Today Programme* as an event which unfailingly breeds laughter in others, "the sort of laughter that gives the impression, as P G Wodehouse put it, 'of a hyena which had just heard a good one from another hyena'."

From *The Independent*, April 8

Esther Walker reported on the production of *Speed-the-Plow* at the Old Vic, featuring veteran Hollywood actor Jeff Goldblum (*Jurassic Park; Independence Day*). She asked what he did in his spare time in London, and he replied, "I like P G Wodehouse! I've read every Jeeves story, Lord Emsworth, Blandings Castle, all the stories, every single thing that he wrote. I was very into it for a while."

From *Times Online*, April 13

In a report about proposals to require internet search engines to reduce the length of time for which they can hold information about users' choices, the EEC's Working Party under Article 29 of Directive 95/46/EC on data protection and privacy had selected the following illustration to make its point clear:

In order to correlate the actions of an individual user (and thus find out, for instance, whether suggestions made by the search engine are helpful), it is necessary only to distinguish one user's actions during a single search query from another's; it is not necessary to be able to identify those users. For instance, a search engine may want to know that User X searched for 'Woodhouse' and then chose to click on results for the suggested spelling variation 'Wodehouse', but does not need to know who User X is.

There have been numerous positive reviews in the local press of productions of *Come On, Jeeves* (see pages 18 & 19), some of which have included interviews with stars Victor Spinetti and Anita Harris.

From *The Guardian*, April 17 (from Steven Bates)

Marked the visit of the Pope and Gordon Brown to the USA by mentioning the PGW quotation about Scotsmen and rays of sunshine, and then drawing attention to the sartorial difference between "a rumpled Scottish prime minister and an immaculately dressed pontiff, clad all in white except his bright red slippers".

From *The Telegraph*, April 20

In an interview, Hong Kong businessman David Tang said that he always carried books by Wodehouse (for laughs) and the poems of T S Eliot.

From *Claremont Review of Books*, Spring 2008

An article by Cheryl Miller celebrated the joys of PGW.

From *Economic Times (of India)*, April 21

Commenting on a study which had found that animals were more reliable than celebrities when it came to endorsing products, it added that pigs were regarded as

having charm and character, and that Brits had an almost ludicrous affinity for them. Adding some details about the Blandings books and the Empress, it concluded:

Nothing could detract from the charm the Empress had for Wodehouse's Brit readers who could reconcile themselves to the loss of an empire on which the sun never set as long as they could tune in to the ambience of Blandings Castle and the tranquillity of its celebrated inmate. Britain may have lost an empire but it retained the Empress! Talk about the ultimate feel-good factor!

From *New Statesman*, April 24

One of a number of journals to review Ferdinand Mount's book *Cold Cream: My Early Life and Other Mistakes* (Bloomsbury) and comment on Wodehousean aspects of his style or personality.

From *Daily Mail*, May 6

Ben Clerkin wrote about the first navigation device for motorists, the Plus Four Wristlet Route Indicator from 1927, a sort of wristwatch map with rollers to move the route as you drove. The writer adds: "It also has a function to allow the wearer to keep golf scores, which indicates it would have been worn by a Bertie Wooster type of person from P G Wodehouse's famous novels."

From *Londonist*, May 7 and 12

Previewed and reported on the Arrow picnic in Russell Square on May 10 for the launch of the new paperback editions.

A Tickety-Boo Restaurant



Christopher and Joy Owen were on holiday in Malta last autumn when they happened to come across this restaurant in Medina. Christopher writes:

It occurred to us that young Mr Wooster might have inspired the establishment's name. Over a lengthy lunch we idly surmised that he might have branched out into the catering and hospitality business although with little success for, as you see, the For Sale sign is up.

Future Events for Your Diary

June 20 & 22, 2008 Annual Gold Bats matches

Our June 20 match against the Dulwich Dusters starts at 4.30 p.m. at Dulwich College. On the 22nd we play the Sherlock Holmes Society at the West Wycombe Cricket Club, 11.30 a.m.–6 p.m. Bring a picnic lunch!

July 6, 2008 Gold Bats v The Intellectuals

Cricket at the Charterhouse School, starting at 2 p.m.

July 8, 2008 Society Meeting

We will meet from 6 p.m. at the Arts Club, 40 Dover Street, London; nearest Underground station is Green Park. Our speaker will be Wodehouse biographer David Jasen. There is an abbreviated Wodehouse Walk prior to the meeting; see page 9.

July 23, 2008 Gold Bats in Kent

The Gold Bats will play together with the Siegfried Sassoon Society at Matfield, Kent, starting at 2 p.m.

August 2–31, 2008 P G Wodehouse in Emsworth

An exhibition at the Emsworth Museum: Saturdays and the Bank Holiday, 10.30 a.m.–4.30 p.m.; Fridays and Sundays, 2.30–4.30 p.m. For details see page 25.

August 3, 2008 Gold Bats v Hollywood Cricket Club

See page 9 for more on this special match.

August 10, 2008 Gold Bats v Kirby Strollers

This charity match will take place from 1 p.m. in the

grounds of Audley End House, near Saffron Walden; for directions, see <http://tinyurl.com/2ewtht>

August 10–16, 2008 Old Home Week in Moscow

A special tour of Moscow organised by The Russian Wodehouse Society. See page 25.

September 20–21, 2008 Royal County of Berkshire Show, Newbury

The Society sponsors the prize for the Berkshire Pig Breeders Club Champion of Champions; judging takes place on Sunday the 21st at 10 a.m. For further information, see <http://www.newburyshow.co.uk/>.

September 25–28, 2008 Havant Literary Festival

This new festival in Havant, Hampshire, will feature Wodehouse among other authors; Tony Ring will be giving a talk on Saturday, September 27. For more details and contact information, see page 7.

October 23, 2008 Society Formal Dinner

Our 2008 black-tie dinner takes place in the glorious surroundings of Gray's Inn. Application forms are enclosed with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*. See page 9.

November 18 or 19, 2008 Society Meeting

The exact date, venue, and speaker for this meeting will be announced in the next issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

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