



WOOSTER SAUCE

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

Number 57

March 2011

Patrick Armine Wodehouse 1920–2011

Born in London, Patrick Wodehouse was taken to India by his parents. However, because of the climate, he was later brought back to England, where he went to school, first at Bexhill-on-Sea and then at Cheltenham College. He entered Imperial College but joined the RAF in 1939 and worked on the new radar project. After the war, he married Joyce Champion and returned to Imperial College, graduating in 1949. He continued to work in electronics and spent some 20 years in Rome with the European Space Agency. After his wife died, he married Nancy Kominsky, the well-known artist, in 1983. They returned to England in 1994 and settled down in Wimbledon. Patrick, who was a Patron of the Society from its inception, died on January 29.

I think it must have been around 1977 that I first met Patrick, when I went down to Wimbledon to meet his mother, Nella. She was the widow of Armine, P G Wodehouse's elder brother, and had lived for a time with PG and Ethel at Remsenburg.

I recall vividly the delight in meeting two members of Wodehouse's family who were happy to pass on those small personal anecdotes that brought him to life in a way no one else could. Thinking back, it must have been a trifle disconcerting being questioned about one's famous relative rather than oneself, but both Nella and Patrick were proud of the relationship and happy to answer every query I put to them.

I remember Patrick and his wife Nancy attending the unveiling of the Wodehouse plaque in Dunraven Street by the Queen Mother in 1988 and the photograph Patrick sent me that he had taken of Nancy in



Patrick at the Dunraven Street plaque unveiling in 1988

her black hat and me in my bowler with the caption 'Two Black Hats'. I remember a group of us taking a taxi down to Wimbledon afterwards to tell Nella all about it and Patrick's obvious pleasure in plying us with food and drink.

I remember Patrick and Nancy staying with my wife Charlotte and me in Cumbria and his surprise and pleasure when his car broke down and the local garage man fixed it in five minutes and was reluctant to charge him.

I remember the Wodehouse Pilgrimage of 1989, when Patrick gave a superb speech at the dinner at Dulwich. Afterwards, one of the American pilgrims told me how all the speeches had been good, but Patrick had somehow made PG come alive in a way no other speaker had.

I remember how proud I was when Patrick asked me to find out certain family details he had been unable to trace. I remember his memories of his great-aunts, some just as fierce as PG drew them, memories of being carried on PG's shoulders on the beach at Bexhill (Wodehouse drew it as Bingley/Bramley-on-Sea), and his description of the occasion when Ethel Wodehouse decided to wash her canary.

I remember how kind he was, how gentle and happy he was. My condolences and those of all who knew him go to Nancy, his son Nigel, and his family.



Patrick & Nancy in Cumbria

—Norman Murphy

We Remember

Patrick Wodehouse

Patrick Wodehouse was really the last family member with first-hand memories of PGW in his prime. He was quite exceptionally kind to me when I was writing my biography, and cast a lot of very helpful light on the complex fraternal relationship between Armine and Plum. I shall always remember Patrick, with great affection, as warm, courteous, witty, modest, and thoroughly good. In his sweet, sympathetic nature it is not fanciful, I think, to catch a glimpse of his beloved uncle.

—Robert McCrum

Nigel Williams

It sometimes takes time to come to terms with the fact that the shining light of a beacon has been extinguished. To Wodehouseans, the unexpected death of the gentle, approachable, knowledgeable man who was Nigel Williams on December 24 last year, at the youthful age of 49, is such an event. It brings to mind a paraphrase of Wodehouse's own reaction when he learned of the death of his step-daughter Leonora — "We thought he and the shop were immortal." Our sympathies go out to his wife Sophie, who cheerfully worked with him at their book business for decades.

Nigel had traded from his home in south-east London for almost ten years, building a reputation for the quality of his stock (and appropriately, though not astronomically, high prices) before moving into London's Cecil Court, just off Leicester Square, in 1995. He issued a Wodehouse catalogue annually, although, as visitors to the shop will know, the range of his material covered children's books and many of the great English writers of the first half of the 20th century.

I had special affection for Nigel. When in the early 1990s he had the idea of reissuing 25 hard-to-find or previously unpublished Wodehouse stories in a limited edition series, he invited me to identify appropriate stories and prepare explanatory introductions. With the permission of the Wodehouse estate, they were published as *Plum Stones* under the specially created Galahad Books imprint. The success of this project encouraged us to offer two more publications: the novel *The Luck Stone* in 1997 and the novella *A Prince for Hire* in 2003 (see also p. 19).

Nigel and Sophie travelled extensively to antiquarian book fairs, particularly in the United States, and became personal friends with many of his



customers. Despite this, both he and Sophie managed to find time to pursue their individual musical careers, frequently returning to Ireland, where he had grown up and trained as a bass baritone, to perform and make recordings.

Nigel's death has resulted in his much-loved bookshop in Cecil Court closing down. The world in general, as well as the Wodehouse world, is a lesser place in 2011.

—Tony Ring

Trevor Bailey

Trevor Bailey is immortalised in the writings of PGW by the memorable account in *The Alleynian* of the July 1939 match at Dulwich College against St Paul's. "Bailey awoke from an apparent coma to strike a four," recorded Plum in the course of a report on "this frightful game, probably the dreariest ever seen on the school grounds."

The young Bailey was understandably hurt. "I had quite a good match," he pointed out half a century later, having made an unbeaten 41 and taking five wickets in the single innings game. And he had already made his name in 1938 when, at 14, he was a member of A. C. Shirreff's unbeaten Dulwich team.

Always thrilled at any sporting success by his old school, Plum sent Shirreff what he termed "a purse of gold to buy bats with". It was in fact a five-pound note, and Shirreff recalled: "We went to the Palladium and had a meal with it, and I still had change."

Born on December 3, 1923, at Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, Bailey was an Essex man through and through.



After service with the Royal Marines, he played for the county from 1946 to 1967, was county secretary from 1955 to 1967 — enabling him to continue as an amateur — and captained the side from 1955 to 1967. His cricketing fame was crowned by 61 Tests as an invaluable member of the England team, bowling fast-medium and batting with notable obduracy, although able to strike out when necessary. A backs-to-the wall innings at Lord's in 1953 helped stave off defeat and led to England's regaining the Ashes, held by Australia since 1934.

Bailey later spent 26 years as an appreciated Test Match Special commentator, offering succinct, wry, and informed insight. In failing health in his last years, he died on February 10, 2011, in a fire at his home. He was 87.

What a pity that Plum, who did not return to England after his 1939 visit, never saw the splendid chap that Dulwich boy-in-a-coma was to become.

—Murray Hedgcock

Society News

Society Subscriptions

Since the Society was founded early in 1997, our membership fee has remained the same, only £15 – a pippin of a bargain even then, and all the more so now when one considers how much costs have risen in that time. In particular, the cost of producing and posting *Wooster Sauce*, the foundation of Society membership, has at least trebled since the subscription was set. As a result of these rises, the Society made a small loss in the last financial year.

At their last meeting in January, the Committee discussed the Society's financial situation. We will be looking more closely into some of the money-saving ideas we had, but the Society already runs a pretty tight ship, and of course the Committee are all volunteers, so economies alone won't solve the problem. Inevitably, subscriptions will have to rise – the question is when.

The Committee decided that in the prevailing economic gloom, it would be tactless to increase subs in May 2011, and fortunately we have cash reserves to see us through this 'rainy day'. But members should be forewarned that it is highly probable that subs will increase to £20 in 2012, although those who renew by standing order will benefit from a year's grace.

Help Wanted: Treasurer

Society membership has consistently held at over 1,000 for some years now – very gratifying for the Society, but it means that our membership and financial records do take a bit of looking after these days. The treasurer's work seems to fall into two sections. The larger part involves maintaining our members' individual 'accounts' – ensuring, for example, that banks pay standing orders once a year, rather than once a month (surprisingly common) or never (even more common), and all sorts of general problem solving. The other part is the formal maintenance of the Society's accounts – paying bills and so forth, and keeping an eye on things like insurance and systems.

Andrew Chapman, who has been the Society's treasurer for a couple of years now, is finding that work and other commitments are inexplicably cramping his voluntary activities; he has told the Committee that he believes stepping down from this smaller but obviously crucial and officially required element of the role would solve the difficulty. Thus, we are wishing and hoping very hard for a member to volunteer. Our treasurer need not be a qualified accountant, although (of course) he or she does have to know what he or she is doing and be able to use a computer-based accounting system – indeed to, um, actually *own* a computer-based accounting system!

This key professional role is an 'Officer' position on the Society's Committee, which means that the incumbent helps make the decisions that affect the running of our Society. That said, we really don't expect that

Committee meetings and the Treasury work itself would take up a huge amount of time – so, please, if you have the abilities, do consider offering your services. Hilary Bruce would be thrilled to hear from you and talk things through.

Cricket 2011

This year's Gold Bats matches are listed in Future Events on page 24, but it is worthwhile bringing members' attention to the team's two official Society matches. First, on Friday, June 17, we will once again be hoping to defeat the Dulwich Dusters, the teaching staff of Dulwich College. The match starts at 4.30 p.m. and, as always, the Society will host the traditional tea, now rightly celebrated in legend and song. Come to watch and cheer your team on in the glorious surroundings of Dulwich College. If you'd also like to enjoy the legendary tea, please note that tickets are required; application forms are enclosed with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*.



Just two days later, we play our annual match against the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. This is played at the very pretty West Wycombe Cricket Club ground, just off the A40 (Oxford Road) in West Wycombe. Play starts at 11.00 a.m., there is a longish break for a bring-your-own picnic lunch, and at the end of the game, around 6.00 p.m., most people head off to the Swan Inn. This is always a hugely enjoyable event, played to 1895 rules and to some extent in costume of the period. The Holmesians make especial efforts in this regard and so provide a particularly decorative and striking feature. This is always such a pleasant and happy day, so do try to come if you can.

Next Society Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 12, and although we continue to search for a permanent home, it is likely that we will again meet at The George, 213 Strand. But do please check the June issue of *Wooster Sauce* for confirmed information on our meeting's location and our speaker.

Murphy's Wodehouse Walks This Year

The Society's Rembrancer, Norman Murphy, has advised us that he will conduct three Wodehouse Walks this year, on May 14, July 2, and September 3 (all Saturdays). The start time is 10 a.m., and as always there is no fee – just wear sturdy shoes and be prepared for a terrific Wodehousean experience. .

Follow Wodehouse to Emsworth

Latest Information and Outline of Events

by Linda Newell



The weekend of October 28–30 is one not to be missed by keen Wodehouse enthusiasts. The Brookfield Hotel is gearing up to offer a full weekend of events and activities, all connected with P G Wodehouse and Emsworth. We are very privileged to say that both Tony Ring and Norman Murphy have offered their services, so all who know them will know that the weekend will be a genuine celebration of this comic genius.

From Friday afternoon, the weekend will include ensuite accommodation, full English breakfast each day, evening meals each night with entertainment, and a Sunday brunch before departing late Sunday morning. Friday evening dinner will be preceded by a drink reception with introductory talk and followed by quotations and riddles designed by Messrs Ring and Murphy to help get the weekend off to an appropriately enjoyable start.

Saturday is fairly flexible, with guided and self-guided walks of the Wodehouse sites in Emsworth, a visit to the local Emsworth Museum (which has a dedicated display of the famous local resident and is the holder of some of his letters to Lillian, his housekeeper at Threepwood), and time to wander around this attractive little town to see what inspired Wodehouse. (In *A Damsel in Distress*, Chapter 7 describes the town very well in the guise of Belpher. See also the article by Roy Morgan, below.)

Saturday evening will be a gala black-tie dinner with entertainment and music to recreate the atmosphere that Wodehouse knew in the 1920s when he and his wife lived in London.

The Truth About Beach

by Roy Morgan

It may possibly be too much reliance on printed sources or the internet, but we notice that the same old errors keep cropping up (not in *Wooster Sauce*, of course). For the benefit of the innocent, P G Wodehouse lived in Emsworth, Hampshire, on and off from 1904 to 1914. He rented a house called Threepwood and was friendly with the people at Emsworth House School, which adjoined his garden at the rear.

Threepwood is in Record Road, and this is where problems arise. From its inception in 1897, it had been so called to celebrate the length of Queen Victoria's reign. Some reports have, however, said that when PG was there it was called Beach Road. It definitely was not. Emsworth is a coastal place, but Record Road does not link to the sea, though Beach Road, to the south, does. Beach Road is directly opposite the School and would have been used by pupils going down to the water.

During PG's residence in Emsworth, he squirreled away many local names and used them, particularly in *Something Fresh*, published in 1915: see Emsworth, Threepwood, Beach, Warblington, Bosham, Stockheath, Godalming, Southwick, Mant (local family), and Clovelly and Mount Anville (other house names in Record Road). Other books contain Havant (*A Gentleman of Leisure*, 1910), Hayling (*The Prince and Betty*, 1912), Liss and Southborne (*The Main Upstairs*, 1914); and from 1923 to 1949 there were 11 others, all names from the Emsworth area.



Threepwood in Record Road

Surely we are all thankful that PG did not live from 1904 to 1914 in Gravesend, Giggleswick, or Piddletrenthide and give the owner of Blandings one of these names. We in Emsworth are forever happy to be connected to Lord Emsworth, Freddie Threepwood, and Beach.

Announcing A Simplified Chronology of P G Wodehouse Fiction

During the last year, the Society has been working on a guide to the chronological order of the publication of P G Wodehouse's fiction. It is laughingly referred to as a 'simplified' guide, but nevertheless cannot be regarded as light bedside reading. Its objectives are stated to be

- a to provide a simple, yet accurate, chronological guide to the first publication of the stories to be found in books of fiction by P G Wodehouse (whether novels or collections of short stories) published during his lifetime; and
- b to identify the order in which these stories were first published, to help members wishing to use that approach to reading some or all of the works.

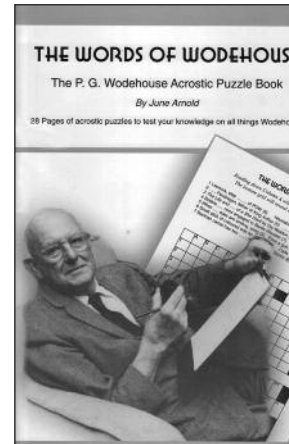
There is a great deal of information which is excluded from the *Chronology*, but which, if demand from our members required it, could be added at a later date. Its principal innovation is to list, in chronological order, the first publication — in magazines or books, in the UK or the USA — all stories published in Wodehouse books in his lifetime. Reference is made to posthumous publications authorised by the Wodehouse Estate, but not those produced in America and elsewhere under their unique copyright rules which may not be sold into the UK and Europe.

The Committee believes that the publication will be of value to members who have a reasonably serious interest in the bibliography of Wodehouse. It is produced in landscape A4 format, sirlox bound at the left margin, with a clear plastic cover and a card backing.

(For a related article, see page 18.)

Two Other Books of Interest

Since 2008, June Arnold has been entertaining members with her Wodehouse-based acrostics (see page 20 for her latest). Now you have the opportunity to enjoy even more. As



announced in our last issue, there are 28 all-new puzzles in June's new book, *The Words of Wodehouse*. If you haven't ordered one yet, what are you waiting for?

For those who enjoyed Ken Clevenger's article on Wodehouse and Dorothy Sayers in the March 2010 issue of *Wooster Sauce*, there is a chance to read even more of Ken's Wodehousean observations in his newly published book. *Rannygazoo* is a collection of 10 previously published articles, most having appeared in *Plum Lines*, our sister journal in the USA. While the book is not available in the UK, it can be purchased through Amazon.com for the delightfully low price of US\$7.99 plus shipping. A review will be published in the June issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

At the dinner table the spell which her companion was casting on Agnes Flack deepened in intensity. There seemed no limits to the powers of this wonder man. He met the head waiter's eye and made him wilt. He spoke with polished knowledge of food and wine, comparing the hospitality of princes of his acquaintance with that of African chiefs he had known. Between the courses he danced like something dark and slithery from the Argentine. Little wonder that ere long he had Agnes Flack fanning herself with her napkin.

(From 'Feet of Clay', 1950)

Joy in the Evening at The George

Reports of Two Society Meetings

November 1: The AGM

by Peter Thompson

The Society's AGM on November 1 took place, as Chairman Hilary Bruce pointed out, in a new venue but also an old one, the upstairs meeting room of The George on the Strand. Unfortunately, the Arts Club had given us notice to find another venue two days before *Wooster Sauce* went to press. Our Chairman, who opened and closed the AGM, was remarkably restrained in her observations about the powers that be at the Arts Club, more so than Aunt Dahlia would have been in similar circumstances.

Tony Ring informed us of the requests that the Society had received for a chronology of Wodehouse stories, as written rather than simply as published, and offered samples for £5. During the interval in proceedings, money was changing hands faster than at a Silver Ring Bookies' Convention. (See page 5 for more about *A Simplified Chronology of P G Wodehouse Fiction*.)

The Society now has 1,117 members, as reported by our tireless Membership Secretary, Christine Hewitt; the Plum Pie exhibition at Heywood Hill was directly responsible for a large influx. New members are attracted in many ways, but Christine said one of the most unusual was the person who Googled 'typewriter' and pulled up the Society's logo! Your reporter must also share with you the news divulged by Christine that our Chairman was invited this year to the Woman of the Year luncheon, and we all felt quite rightly so.

Andrew Chapman illustrated his Financial Report with characters from Wodehouse books and noted we shall eventually have to face up to the greater expense of running the Society with an increase in subscriptions (see p.3). Much of the expense goes into producing this magazine. Elin Murphy, the editor, fortunately has no shortage of contributions; she noted that clerihews in the recent competition reached a magnificent 130 from 18 people. Despite the abundance of articles, Elin would always welcome more, including reviews of plays or books and reports of Society events.

Jamie Jarrett, our website editor, thanked Chris Reece, without whom the site would not be as splendid as it is today. Our website is Number 3 when typing 'P G Wodehouse' on the Google engine,

so that speaks volumes. Go there at once! 65,000 people have already preceded you as at November 2010!

Election of officers resulted in all those wishing to stand again happily and unanimously voted in along with two new faces, Lesley Tapson and Paul Kent.



Our thoroughly entertaining speaker, Geoff Hales, with one of many admirers

The evening's entertainment was provided brilliantly by Geoff Hales, performing 'The Rehabilitation of Sebastian Beach', which included many Wodehouse quotes from many different works and Plum's own early life when under the care of the many aunts. It was hilarious, as you would expect, and those present thoroughly enjoyed it.

February 16: The Vicar

by Robert Bruce

If there is joy to be found in a drizzly and cold February evening, it is amongst friends in the warmth of a pub. And while not quite the Emsworth Arms, The George, opposite the Law Courts in Central London, suits Wodehouseans well for their social gatherings. And so it was that a joyful throng fortified themselves at the bar, talked with old friends, and awaited the entertainment.

They could have thought themselves in the wrong place, for a book festival, a sort of Hay-On-Wodehouse, was unfolding before them. Chairman Hilary Bruce waved book after book above her head and introduced authors eager to sign copies. First a book of Wodehouse acrostics, author June Arnold over there (see page 5 for details). Then committee member Paul Kent and *What Do I Know*, a book on what the great essayist Montaigne might have made of modern life, including the notion that he would have favoured Wodehouse for bringing joy rather than misery memoirs to us.

And certainly this concept was made flesh by the final author, one Andrew Rumsey, Vicar of Gipsy Hill in south London. His book, *Strangely Warmed: Reflections on God, Life and Bric-a-Brac*, is a book of daily reflections for Lent, but with plenty of room for Wodehouse. His talk was a very funny ramble around Wodehouse, illustrated with readings from his book. Rumsey has been an enthusiast since childhood and, coming from a family of clerics, easily

understood what he described as the “warmth and strangeness of the church which Wodehouse loved”. He talked of Wodehouse having created a world which welcomed you in and was nostalgic in tone. This was but a short hop onto the back of a bus with a reading about the scene when the last Routemaster bus to run arrived at Brixton bus garage, to have people “pat its bonnet as though it were a golden retriever”. Nostalgia was good for you, defined as “history after a few drinks”. Then he was off on some thoughts on bric-a-brac, “as I survey the wondrous dross”, linked to the contents of young Albert’s pockets in *A Damsel in Distress*. If Adam had been given a rib, he suggested, “he would have whittled it into a pipe-rack”. After that he mused on formality, manners and Wodehouse’s respect for what he described as ‘the steely mildness’ of the clergy.

Rumsey could, you felt, step straight into a Great Sermon Handicap with aplomb. Upstairs at The George, we felt truly blessed, and went straight to the bar for further oblations of a joyful sort.



Andrew Rumsey blesses his congregation with a splendid reading from his book.

The Word Around the Clubs

Drones Club Event Cancelled

In the December issue of *Wooster Sauce*, we alluded to a possible event being put on by the Drones Club at Dulwich College this spring. Unfortunately, a concatenation of circumstances has led to said event being cancelled. More than that we cannot say.

Nigel Williams Book Auction

For those members who may be wondering about the fate of the Wodehouse books owned and sold by the late Nigel Williams (see obituary on page 2), we have received word that the collection will be sold by Bloomsbury Auctions on either April 21 or May 12. Further information can be obtained by visiting Bloomsbury’s website at www.bloomsburyauctions.com or by calling 020 7495 9494; catalogues may also be ordered at this phone number.

More from Everyman

Following the publication of their 69th and 70th Wodehouse titles last spring, Everyman are continuing in their mission to spread sweetness and light. *The Man Upstairs* was published in September, followed by *Weekend Wodehouse* in December, while *The Gold Bat* is due out in March. Keep them coming, Everyman!

A Classic Publication

We recently received word that Penguin will be publishing 50 Mini Modern Classics, featuring extracts from classic works published over the last 100 years. One of the featured authors is, of course, PGW, whose *Heavy Weather* will be part of the series. Good news indeed! See <http://bit.ly/hnlfkO> for details of the series.

Wodehouse in Italian

Last year, Society member MATHIAS BALBI sent along a list of Wodehouse classic titles that have been published by the Italian editor Polillo under the

collective title of *Il Jeeves* (The Jeeves). Mathias has nearly all the books. Should any other members be interested in seeing his list, please contact the Editor.

Where’s Plum?

DAVID LANDMAN writes that “the first volume of Stephen Sondheim’s projected two-volume book, *Finishing the Hat: Collected Lyrics (1954-1981) With Attendant Comments, Principles, Heresies, Grudges, Whines and Anecdotes* (2010, Alfred A. Knopf, 445 pages) contains notices of such theatre lyricists as Oscar Hammerstein II, Dorothy Fields, Cole Porter, Ira Gershwin, Frank Loesser, Noel Coward, Lorenz Hart, DuBose Heyward, Fred Ebb, Irving Berlin, E. Y. Harburg, Kurt Weill, Alan Jay Lerner, Leo Robin, Sammy Cahn, Harold Arlen, Otto Harbach, Buddy DeSylva, Arthur Freed, Howard Dietz, W. S. Gilbert, etc. — but not one single word about Plum! Amazing, no?”

Amazing, yes, given Wodehouse’s proven importance in the theatrical world. David adds that “we must grudgingly give Sondheim credit for *Something Funny Happened On the Way to the Forum*” (but I’m afraid that’s all the leeway we’ll give him).

The Latest . . .

. . . in our occasional series ‘They Should Run in the Great Sermon Handicap’ comes, as before, from MURRAY HEDGCOCK, who offers this nomination:

The Rev. Alveen Thoresen, non-stipendiary minister Caversham St. Peter and Mapledurham (Diocese of Oxford) to be nsm Boxwell with Leigherton, Didmarton, Oldbury-on-the-Hill, Sopworth, Badminton with Little Badminton, Acton Turville, Hawkesbury, Westonbirt and Lasborough (Diocese of Gloucester).

Murray adds: “I do love the C of E!”

Porcos Virumque Cano

A Note on James Hogg's *Lord Emsworth's Annotated Whiffle*

by Dr Kelly Anspaugh

This article was originally published several years ago in the American journal Notes on Contemporary Literature. Dr Anspaugh lectures in English at Ohio State University, Lima, Ohio, and, with the journal's editor Dr William Doxey, has graciously given us his permission to reprint his thoroughly entertaining and edifying article.

“I can imagine,” claims Stanley Reynolds in his review of James Hogg's (edited) *Lord Emsworth's Annotated Whiffle* (London: Michael Joseph, 1991),

the relatives and friends of P. G. Wodehouse fans buying this in great numbers as a Christmas gift and then those friends and relations being terribly disappointed by this travesty of the great Augustus Whiffle on *The Care of the Pig*. . . . It is not Emsworth's Whiffle but a sorry imitation of Galahad's Pelican Club (“Pig Tales,” *Manchester Guardian* [15 December 1991], 28).

The reviewer is correct to see Wodehouse's Blandings saga as the immediate source of Mr. Hogg's book, yet in dismissing this performance as a sorry “travesty,” Mr. Reynolds reveals his ignorance of the long history of what I shall call the “porcine trope” in satirical literature. A travesty Hogg's book most certainly is, but in the neutral, technical sense of the term: a rewriting of a text which retains that text's characters and action but imposes upon it another style (Gerald Genette, *Palimpsests* [Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1982], 67).

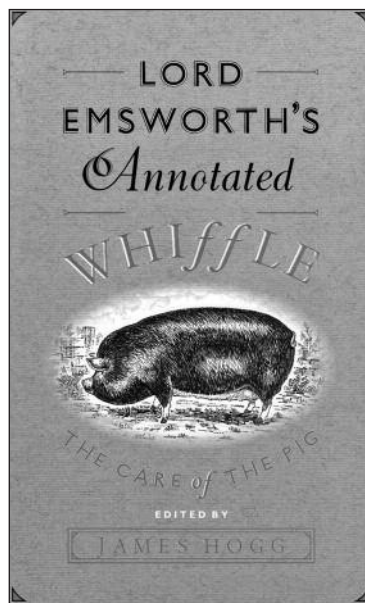
In opening the book, we read below the colophon that “the moral right of the author has been asserted.” Just who this author is, however, poses a problem — “James Hogg” being a bit *too* appropriate for the editor of a book on the care of the pig (the name also belongs, of course, to a 19th-century Scottish novelist famous for his literary hoaxes). Mr. Hogg offers a preface which begins: “When Lord Emsworth's annotated copy of *The Care of the Pig* came into my possession, its 756 pages seemed more than a little daunting” (viii) — the

conceit of the daunted and even reluctant editor is one we recognize, the most famous example, perhaps, being Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. Hogg persists in this conceit, telling us that he re-tailors his discovered text mostly by way of “drastic pruning,” cutting out much of the technical detail of pig-keeping: “There may be some *aficionados* of the pig who cannot have too much of that sort of thing, and will regret the loss. However I believe the general reader has been better served by my concentrating on the anecdotal and philosophical side of Whiffle's work” (ix). “If only,” the common reader cries, “*Moby Dick* had had such an editor!” Hogg also brings up the painful question of Whiffle's possible plagiarism of his “distinguished predecessors” (x) in pig science, commenting “We shall probably never know the truth” (x). Thus Hogg winks at his own debt *vis-à-vis* the genial P. G. [PiG?] Wodehouse, and then the preface concludes with a list of *dramatis personae*, all Wodehousian in origin.

Whiffle's text is divided into nineteen chapters with titles such as “The Pig Honoured in the Chase” (II), “Some Pig-Breeders of Note” (IV), and “The Pig in Art, War and Peace” (XIX). Here, clearly, we are advancing far afield, beyond the hospitable Blandings Castle and environs. The text is doubly annotated: Lord Emsworth's glosses are retained in his hand,

and Hogg's notes, less frequent, also appear in the margin. Such metacritical business is meant, I think, not simply to make us laugh (unlike Reynolds I find Emsworth's marginalia hilarious), but to place the book in a tradition of satirical pseudo-scholarship starting from Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* and extending — through Fielding, Carlyle, and Wilde — to the annotated “Lessons” chapter of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Hogg's book, although certainly appealing as light entertainment, is also written for readers closely acquainted with the history of Western literature, its modes and conventions.

That Hogg should draw upon Rabelais is perhaps inevitable, given that precursor's preoccupation with pork. In Book IV of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* the author offers us a



First published by
Popgood and Grooly, 1898
Revised edition, 1915
Edited by James Hogg, 1991

history of the battle of Pantagruel and his men against the wild Chitterlings — “chitterlings” being “the small intestines of pigs, cooked and eaten as food” (*American Heritage Dictionary*). Near the end of this battle there is an apparition:

From a northerly direction there flew towards us a great, huge, gross, grey swine, with wings as long and broad as the sails of a windmill, and plumage as crimson red as the feathers of a phoenicopter, which in Languedoc is called a flamingo. It had flashing red eyes like carbuncles, and green ears the colour of chrysolite. . . . The moment the Chitterlings saw the hog they threw down their arms and sticks, and all fell on their knees . . . as if in adoration (Trans. J. N. Cohen [London: Penguin, 1955], 538).

Hogg offers us a flying pig as well — only its flight, somewhat less mythic, results from its being booted off a parapet by a drunken Irish peer (“an incorrigible rotter,” comments Emsworth [48]).

It is a different scene from that of Rabelais, however, upon which Hogg draws most directly. Earlier in Book IV of *Gargantua*, Panurge, aboard ship, is insulted by the sheepdealer Dingdong. Apparently suffering these insults, Panurge pays Dingdong a very good price for a ram, which he proceeds to toss overboard: “Then all the rest of the flock . . . began to fling themselves into the water after him, one after the other. . . . It was impossible to keep them back. For, as you know, it is the nature of the sheep to follow the leader, wherever he goes” (466). Dingdong and his men, attempting to hold back the flock, fall into the water also, “where they perished miserably.” Hogg echoes this Rabelaisian scene in “Temperament and Behaviour” (Chapter XVI). “In the backward regions of Calabria,” Whiffle narrates, “the pigs learned to answer the call of the bagpipe” (100). One day a group of pirates stole a flock of pigs and, having driven them aboard ship, made off; the swineherd, however, “soon missed his charges and gave vent to a musical summons”:

At the well-known sound the pigs all rushed to the side of the boat nearest the shore. The sudden concentration of a horde of porkers in one spot caused the boat to capsize and the pirates to be flung into the sea, their hopes of banquets to come sunk along with their vessel. The pigs swam back to land, and rejoined the piping herdsman none the worse for their dip. (101)

Hogg’s substitution of pigs for Rabelais’s sheep is, I think, a stroke of comic genius, resonating ironically with Matthew 8.28, where Jesus drives unclean spirits out of two men from Gadarene and into a flock of swine: “the whole herd rushed over the edge into the lake, and perished in the water.” (Happily in Hogg’s revision of both Matthew and Rabelais the animals do not perish, although the fate of the absconding pirates remains uncertain.) Hogg

may be commenting obliquely on his rewriting of Rabelais when he has Emsworth note, at the end of the chapter preceding this one, “Galahad tells me Bendish gave up pigs a few years later and turned to sheep. There is no accounting for some people” (96). A more immediate literary predecessor for Hogg is the Irish satirist Flann O’Brien, in whose *An Béal Bocht* (1941) — translated as *The Poor Mouth* (NY: Viking, 1973) — pigs play a central role. O’Brien’s book is at once a parody of modern Gaelic autobiographies and a satire on the Gaelic League, whose members O’Brien referred to in a letter to Sean O’Casey as the “babybrained dawnburst brigade.” In Chapter 3 the “hero,” the Irish peasant Bonaparte O’Coonassa, tells the story of a “gentleman from Dublin travelling through the country who was extremely interested in Gaelic” (42). He carries with him a gramophone with which he hopes to capture the purest Gaelic speech. One rainy night, while sharing a smoky hovel with “at least a hundred old fellows,” the scholar records what he believes the best example, because “the best Gaelic of all is well-nigh unintelligible” (44). Bonaparte concludes the episode with the following comment: “I do not know whether it was Gaelic or English or a strange irregular dialect which was in the old speech which the gentleman collected from among us here in Corkadoragha but it is certain that whatever word was uttered that night, came from our rambling pig” (45). O’Brien is clearly troping on the “learned pig” of carnival tradition, and his text and trope are echoed at the end of Hogg’s chapter on “Temperament and Behaviour,” where Whiffle tells us that he has “attempted to compile . . . ‘a dictionary’ of the grunts and other utterances of the pig, with their meanings in porcine discourse” (104). Whiffle is indebted to “Mr. Walter Treadgold of the Natural History Museum” — an echo of O’Brien’s scholarship? — for providing phonetic spellings for sounds representing such emotions as contentment: “Mr. Treadgold believes that the oft-used ‘oink’ altogether lacks the richness of the actual sound. After much thought he renders the grunt of the pig at ease as ‘nghawghghnk’” (105). Shades here, perhaps, of Swift’s “houyhnhnms” as well.

“You may discover all that is necessary of a man’s character,” observes Sir Craster Whiffle, “from his attitude to pigs” (1). An equally effective touchstone, I think, is a man’s attitude toward Mr. Hogg’s skillful travesty, for *Lord Emsworth’s Annotated Whiffle* is deeper, more resonant, and finally *funnier* than anything Wodehouse ever wrote (the latter gentleman, for example, would never have had Emsworth straddle his sows to see if they were ready to breed, as Hogg had Whiffle do). Hogg’s book, consequently, should find a prominent place on the syllabi of college courses in contemporary literary humour. It should also find a place in the hearts of pig lovers and haters — for a fine line divides these — everywhere.

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Paul H. Tubb

To listen to some, you would believe that the invention of television is the factor most responsible for any decline in standards that is supposed to have taken place. Parents the world over try to dissuade and restrict their offspring's absorption of the medium, Roald Dahl wrote a wonderful rhyme in *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* highlighting its immorality, and apparently Mary Whitehouse made it clear that she could take or leave it.

Yet . . . I shall forever be in the debt of television (and my sister) for introducing me to the world of Wodehouse. Sunday evenings consisted of me sitting in front of the much maligned box watching Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie immerse themselves in the characters of a certain bachelor around town and his valet.

I mentioned my fondness for the show to my elder sister, who suggested I read the books that it was based on. I remember being ignorant of the fact that they were based on books, and my sister was horrified; she claimed she had a friend at university who thought the author of Jeeves and Wooster books to be superior to Shakespeare. This meant nothing to my 17- or 18-year-old self, and I continued about my business being ignorant of the works of Wodehouse (and Shakespeare) — until I turned 19.

On my 19th birthday, my sister purchased me a book called *Jeeves Takes Charge* — a collection which I have since discovered contains one story from *Carry On, Jeeves* and others from *The Inimitable Jeeves* and *Very Good, Jeeves*. I enjoyed this experience so

much that I decided to read more, beginning with the final J&W book, *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, before reading the rest of them in no particular order whatsoever.

I then decided to expand my Wodehouse reading beyond the world of Bertram Wilberforce Wooster and his trusted valet, and I approached these in a similar haphazard way. The first non-Jeeves PGW book I read was *Bachelors Anonymous*, which I later discovered to be one of the last books that Wodehouse wrote. And so it carried on — Blandings, the golf stories, Mulliner, Ukridge, etc. Chronology meant nothing to me as I stormed right ahead buying whichever Wodehouse book whose cover I liked. I read *The Luck of the Bodkins* before I read *Heavy Weather*, which I read before *Summer Lightning*.

I have since discovered the benefits of Richard Usborne's *Plum Sauce*, which explains and places the novels and stories in chronological order. I wonder if Mr Usborne had the same problem as me and therefore understood the necessity of such a book.

So we come to today, and my appetite for Wodehouse remains undimmed. A question that continually comes up when I read my own verses to children around Ireland is: "Who is your favourite author?" — to which I have no hesitation in mentioning the Master. I owe my thanks to Mr Fry, Mr Laurie, and most especially my sister Maryanne.

Paul has just published a new book of comic verse, Dublin's Lesser Spotted Creatures (Original Writing).



The Origin of Steggles?

In *The Observer* of 2 January, Robert McCrum discussed an author's claim to have solved the mystery regarding the source of 'The Great Sermon Handicap'. In *The Invention of Murder*, about crime in the Victorian era, Judith Flanders fingers a story by Arthur Morrison in which a gambling syndicate, which includes a character named Steggles, fix a race to their own advantage. Writes Robert: "This, claims Flanders, is case solved. Somehow, I doubt it."

So true, Robert, especially where Norman Murphy is concerned! Norman suggests that "it is more likely that Wodehouse remembered reading in his last year at Dulwich (1899), 'The Human Boy' by Eden Philpotts, school stories which had appeared in *The Idler* magazine. The first story is 'The Artfulness of Steggles', and the devious Steggles uses craft and guile to win bets from his trusting, gullible schoolfellows. We know that Wodehouse, even at school, knew he wanted to write and earned his first writing fee before he left Dulwich. He knew school stories from A to Z and it is most unlikely that he did not read Philpotts's popular 'Human Boy' series."

Norman suggests that both Philpotts and Morrison were expressing their dislike of a certain member of the Metropolitan Police. In the 1880s–90s, Inspector Richard Steggles took a stern view of minor social infractions. This included arresting one member of a famous banking family merely for urinating into the aquarium which stood in the window of Romano's Restaurant, 399 The Strand.

At Last! *Wodehouse at the Wicket* Is Being Republished

A very personal appreciation by Norman Murphy

It seems only last week that I first met young Murray Hedgcock. It was at Moor Park College in Surrey in 1973, when Richard Osborne led a weekend seminar on ‘The Works of P G Wodehouse’. Those of us who attended claim it was the first Wodehouse convention.

It was a splendid weekend; scholarly and humorous background material from Dick Osborne, heated discussion on the location of Blandings and similar topics, and we all had a whale of a time. I remember Murray and I travelled back to London together, and I recall I was slightly nervous when I found out he was a journalist. (I shouldn’t have worried. From memory, the worst thing he wrote about me was that I was ‘loquacious’. I still wonder what he meant by that.)

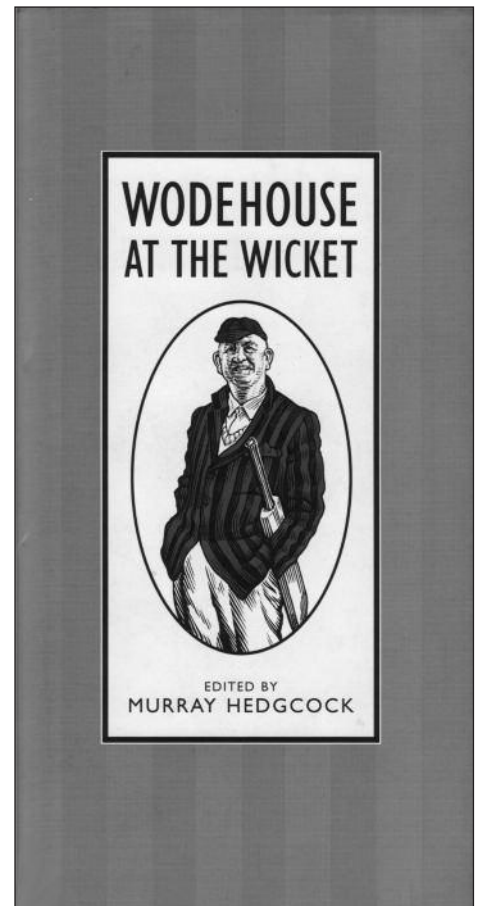
I do not remember the next time we met, but then I found out that he was a cricket enthusiast, and there was a period when we argued fiercely, but politely, on the dates and venues of Wodehouse’s cricket matches 1903–5. I have to admit now that he was always right and had an apparently endless supply of copies of scorebook entries to prove his point.

Of course, the mystery is – why, with his love of Wodehouse and knowledge of cricket, did Murray wait until 1997 to write *Wodehouse at the Wicket*? He will probably say something about ‘working’ or make some similar feeble excuse, but I think it was his journalistic background. My theory is that journalists become so used to writing newspaper articles in immortal prose that are then used to wrap round fish and chips 24 hours later, they get discouraged.

Well, I’m delighted that Murray at last managed to throw off this trauma to produce *Wodehouse at the Wicket* for us in 1997. For those unfortunates who do not know it, I should explain that it details Wodehouse’s cricket career from his days at Dulwich to playing with such legendary characters as C. Aubrey Smith and Arthur Conan Doyle to his last games in prison camp where a ball going through the wire would be prodded back by a guard’s bayonet. This is followed by some splendid cricket extracts from Wodehouse’s books and some equally delightful short stories by him on the same topic.

Copies of the first edition will cost you a shocking amount of money, so I am again delighted to announce that, perhaps prompted by Patrick Kidd naming it as ‘My Favourite Cricket Book’ in the January 2011 issue of *The Wisden Cricketer* magazine, Random House are to republish it in their Arrow paperback series on June 2. The new edition is revised and expanded, including new material under the heading of ‘Extras’. What else?

The revised paperback edition of Wodehouse at the Wicket can be pre-ordered on Amazon.co.uk for just £5.99 plus shipping — a bargain! Better yet, it will be that price even after the book’s publication in June.



The first edition, published in hardback in 1997

Meanwhile cricket continued to slip into the professional Wodehouse product, as in *Laughing Gas*, published in 1936, when Reggie, third Earl of Havershot, mourns his translation under the bizarre influence of dentist’s gas into the body of the juvenile screen idol, Joey Cooley. The young peer grieves for many reasons, not least the loss of his notable physique: ‘I used to go in for games, sports and pastimes to a goodish extent, thus developing the thews and sinews. What future have I got with an arm like that? As far as boxing and football are concerned, it rules me out completely. While as for cricket, can I ever become a fast bowler again? I doubt if an arm like this will be capable of even slow, leg-theory stuff. It is the arm of one of nature’s long-stops. Its limit is a place somewhere among the dregs of a house Second Eleven.’

These are cricketing deep waters: slow leg-theory was known to the young Wodehouse, but confused in the English mind of 1936 by fast leg-theory — a very different and fishy kettle.

(From the introduction to *Wodehouse at the Wicket*, 1997)

P G Wodehouse in the OED

by Robert McCrum

This article was commissioned by the Oxford English Dictionary for their online edition, to acknowledge Wodehouse's contribution to the evergreen variety of the English language. It should be noted that that variety is also celebrated in Robert's recently published book Globish – a word, he is proud to point out, that is now in the OED.

P G Wodehouse, born in 1881, came of age at the dawn of mass culture. He was an Englishman of that generation, shaped by the Education Act of 1870, for whom the written word was an intoxicating plaything – and a means of self-improvement. Also, as the son of a colonial civil servant, he was a junior member of an English establishment shaped by public schools like Dulwich, his alma mater. Wodehouse's inimitable style, its language and range of allusion, which is also the expression of his comic genius, profoundly reflects these two influences, the popular and the traditional.

As a boy, Wodehouse received a classical education at Dulwich. His instinctive command of the prose sentence, combined with a perfect ear for the music of English, gave him the confidence to trade in school slang (“oil”; “archbish”; “barge”; “biff”; “corking”) which would eventually morph into the lingo of his Eggs, Beans and Crumpets.

The Mayfair of the clubs was in the future. Dulwich College is rooted in the suburbs of South London, a genteel purlieu of sorrowful aspiration, a place of servants, landladies and clerks. It's Dulwich (“Valley Fields” in the Wodehouse canon) that connects the Wodehouse of the English shires to a mass audience of clerks, insurance salesmen and minor civil servants for whom “chassis” becomes slang for “body”, and “giving someone the elbow”, meaning “to reject”, possibly derives from the experience of taking a commuter train to the City. Such suburban clerks would also refer to a moustaches as “soup strainers” or jocularly describe a colleague's beard as a “fungus”. At their most uninhibited, they might address one another, as Ukridge does in some of Wodehouse's earliest stories, as “old horse.”

After Dulwich, Wodehouse had two unhappy years working in a bank. Although he disdained the City, he owed rather more to his fellow clerks than he acknowledged, appropriating the Pooterish Edwardian slang of “give me the pip” (irritate); “restore the tissues” (take alcoholic refreshment); “off his onion” (unbalanced); “old oil” (flattery); “pure applesauce” (fanciful nonsense) and “pip pip” (goodbye).

This was the Edwardian world whose slang – “cove”, “blighter”, and “snifter” – would pepper the conversation of Bertie Wooster and his fellow Drones. In this indolent milieu, the prince of the affluent young Edwardian was the “knut”, descended from the Beau, the Buck and the Swell, an amiable cove you could laugh at but hardly despise, given to absurd expressions like “Oojah-cum-spiff” and “Tinkerty-tonk”. Rupert Psmith (“the P is silent as in psalm”) is the quintessential knut, with a range of vocabulary (like his author's) that is matched by an instinctive love of quotation from the classics (“solvitur ambulando”) and from the kind of English poetry learned at public school. Psmith is never lost for words, his own or other people's.

Wodehouse, like all the greatest English writers, was always a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. Two youthful trips to New York before the outbreak of the Great War had a decisive effect on the emergence of his mature style. Throughout his heyday (approximately 1915 to 1939), Wodehouse could always count on selling his work twice over, first in magazine and then in book form on both sides of the Atlantic. “Zippiness”, “hotsy-totsy”, “ritzy”, “dude”, “lame-brain”, “syncopated”, “zing”, and “hooched” all bear witness to Wodehouse's love of the US vernacular.

In retrospect, his creative zenith (the years of the first Jeeves and Blandings stories) was the 1920s, one of the great alcoholic decades of the 20th century. Unique in the canon of English literature, almost none of Wodehouse's characters is indifferent to the temptations of a quiet snort. Wodehouse's Drones will make for the bar like

*His instinctive command
of the prose sentence,
combined with a perfect
ear for the music of
English, gave him the
confidence to trade in
school slang which would
eventually morph into the
lingo of his Eggs, Beans
and Crumpets.*

buffalo for a watering-hole. Their lexicon for “inebriated” includes: “awash”; “boiled”; “fried”; “lathered”; “illuminated”; “oiled”; “ossified”; “pie-eyed”; “polluted”; “primed”; “scrooched”; “stinko”; “squiffy”; “tanked”; and “woozled”. Every one of these words, and many other phrases, betrays their author’s delight in the vernacular.

Wodehouse himself, of course, was always completely in command of his artistic faculties. He was also lucky. His astonishing popularity came at a singular moment in British social history. For the first time, the nation was almost universally literate. Wodehouse’s polished and seemingly effortless combination of the suburban and the classical, matching popular storytelling with brilliantly allusive prose was perfectly suited to a mass audience and the elite Oxbridge readership within it. Newspaper critics, like Gerald Gould in the *Observer*, expressed a widespread opinion: “In the most serious and exact sense of the word [PGW] is a great artist. He has founded a school, a tradition. He has made a language . . . He has explained a generation.”

Shortly after these words appeared, he completed his masterpiece, *The Code of the Woosters*, a comic tour de force that contains some of his most celebrated felicities:

“He spoke with a certain what-is-it in his voice, and I could see that, if not actually disgruntled, he was far from being grunted”.

Or: “It is no use telling me that there are bad aunts and good aunts. At the core, they are all alike. Sooner or later, out pops the cloven hoof.”

Or: “You see before you, Jeeves, the toad beneath the harrow.”

The Code of the Woosters is the supreme example of Wodehouse’s marriage of high farce with the inverted poetry of his mature comic style. Today, he is more popular than on the day he died, and reference to his characters appear somewhere in the English-speaking world almost every day. The OED, for example, contains more than 1,600 quotations, from “crispish” to “zippiness”. In lightness and lunacy, life could become bearable, and the unexamined life, left to its own devices, could go like a breeze, especially if crowded with incident, orchestrated by butlers and valets, and dedicated to helping old pals. It was, finally, Wodehouse’s genius to execute his stories in a language that danced on the page, marrying the English style of the academy with the slang of the suburbs.

Emily, Armine, and Burke’s

In the June 2010 issue of *Wooster Sauce*, we published James Hogg’s article on his search for Emily Wodehouse, whose name was inscribed, along with a pressed flower, in an 1817 edition of Samuel Johnson’s *Rasselas*. James finally identified Emily as the wife of the Rev. and Hon. Armine Wodehouse, and he determined that this Armine had been PGW’s first cousin twice removed.

The article was passed on to Henry Wodehouse, himself a distant cousin of PGW through their mutual descent from Sir Armine Wodehouse, Fifth Baronet (1714–77); Henry forwarded a file containing the family tree he had compiled, illustrating this connection. It shows that Henry’s ancestor Sir John Wodehouse, First Baron (1741–1834) – father of Emily’s Armine – was brother to Philip Wodehouse (1745–1811), PG’s great-grandfather, proving James to be correct about the connection between PGW and the Emily in his book.

Norman Murphy, meanwhile, comments that this search into Emily’s background caused him to revise his ideas about Burke’s *Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage*, in which he had had a childlike faith for most of his life. Though Burke’s is mostly reliable for such genealogical researches, it appears that if a member of a family dies without issue, then Burke’s eventually ceases to acknowledge his or her existence. It is for this reason that Norman’s 1960 edition of Burke’s says the first Baron Wodehouse had three sons, rather than four; Armine having had no children with Emily, Burke’s simply dropped him. The first Baron also had two daughters, but they too were dropped for the sin of being childless. It was only by consulting an old, battered 1911 edition of Burke’s that Norman was able to determine the truth about the first Baron’s children. The moral of this story, he says, is: check, check, and check again.

Our thanks to Henry Wodehouse for sharing his family tree – and for your information, his great-great-great-great-great-grandfather was P G Wodehouse’s great-great-grandfather. Now try to figure out *that* relationship!

Last year Society member Kay Anderson sent this photo of her Wodehouse books, stacked high. Kay writes: “The paperback books from my PGW collection helped me to survive the commuting hell on the Underground for some years – and they often made me almost miss the stop I was supposed to get off.” Other Wodehouse readers can probably relate!





Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Ian Isherwood

Would you, old horse, care to inform your readership that April 29, the date of the Royal Wedding, is the same date as that in 1907 when the British Museum received the revised version of *Love Among the Chickens*? You see, I've got an idea – the best ever! My theory is that sales of *Love Among the Chickens* after April 29, 2011, will increase and at no expense! Not a flaw in it, old horse. Large profits, quick returns.

The Editor replies: Alas, there is one very slight flaw in this otherwise excellent scheme. What the British Museum received on April 29, 1907, was a re-issue of the first edition of June 1906. PGW rewrote the book in 1920 and published the revised edition in June 1921. However, if *McIlvaine* is correct, the British Museum never received *Love Among the Chickens* when it was first published; therefore, April 29 is certainly a day to celebrate, for that is when that serious oversight was rectified. So — how about gifting the Royal Newlyweds with a copy? Not a bad notion, what?

From Maggie Brockbank

I recently read Hilaire Belloc's wonderful introduction to *Weekend Wodehouse* (1940), and to lovers of PGW like myself, such verdicts as “the best writer of English now alive” and “the head of my profession”, especially by a very well-known and esteemed writer, are heart-warming and a joy to read. That was certainly the effect on me. One can never have too much of a good thing.

But another point struck me. Belloc gave his opinions, by his own reckoning, in 1937 or 1938. Although PGW had written some undoubted gems by 1937, think how much more he went on to produce in later life. Some might say that his best work was in fact from 1938 onwards. So if he was

“the head” of Belloc's profession when only halfway through his writing life, what even greater accolades might Belloc have bestowed on him 10 or 12 years on, before he died in 1953?

Just a thought. I always think the admiration of very good writers for other writers is especially interesting. It takes one to know one, perhaps? Waugh's famous words “Mr Wodehouse's idyllic world can never stale . . .” is a case in point.

From James Hogg

In his letter (published in *WS*, December 2010) about one of Arthur Ransome's novels, Nick Townend quotes an incident in which a young man had been jailed for grabbing a policeman's helmet. Quite rightly, Nick rejects fictional accounts as evidence that such misdemeanours really happened. However, he need look no further for confirmation that they did than an article of mine in the September 1997 issue of *Wooster Sauce*. In the course of duty, I had read *Money Talks* (1967), the autobiography of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross G.C.M.G., K.C.B., who had been the government's chief economic adviser in the 1930s. To quote from the article:

In a menu that tends towards the stodgy — international conferences, Keynesian theory in all its aspects and so forth — from time to time Sir Frederick unbends and serves up a soufflé as light as a feather. He doesn't actually say he was a Wodehouse fan, but I'd put money on it. He starts with an incident from his youth which could have come straight out of the memoirs of Bingo Little.

On Guy Fawkes night in 1907, when he was at Balliol, Leith-Ross and fellow Oxford

Cunning Clerihews

(See also page 21)

If Pelham Grenville W
Had wished to write a clerihew
Would he have ascribed it to the Blandings Clan
And left Reggie Jeeves as an also-ran?

– Don Balmer

Frederick had high tastes for the culinary
Fastidious, typically Mullinery.
Nurse Wilkins brought him down a few pegs
By boiling him two Very Nice Eggs.

– Fred Schroeder

If Lord Emsworth's favourite book
Were 'Whiffle on the Care of the Duke'
There would be a lot less remonstrance
From Lady Constance.

– Jenny and Susan Inglis

Lady Wickham's daughter Bobbie
Had a ruthless hobby:
To play a practical joke
On every courting bloke.

– Lennart Andersson

Wodehouse's Aunts,
All had a Gorgon-like glance.
They were ruthless, resourceful,
Reboant and forceful.

– James Linwood

Archie Moffam's
Name rhymes with Bluffinghame's,
Just as Bloomingdale's
Rhymes with Macy's.

– Charles Gould

undergraduates set off on a police-helmet-hunting expedition. As things turned out Leith-Ross went one better and seized an inspector's cap. During the ensuing struggle he managed to pass the cap to a pal, who made himself scarce while Leith-Ross was being carted off to the cells for the night.

When he appeared in court the following morning he found he'd been charged with taking a helmet, instead of the cap, and the inspector swore he'd seen him do it. Things would have looked bad but for the pal, who had managed to get the cap back into Leith-Ross's possession. With a flourish worthy of Sir Patrick Hastings the latter was able to produce it in court and force the inspector to admit it was his. The inspector fought back gamely by trying to have the charge amended to cap-stealing, but was routed in humiliating fashion when the request was turned down on the grounds that he'd already perjured himself. Leith-Ross was acquitted and left the court in triumph. This was a man, it should be

remembered, who went on to sit at the Prime Minister's elbow at conferences, feeding him titbits about the influence of exchange rates on the provisions of the Versailles Treaty.

From Erik Backer

Robert Bruce, in his review of *Peter Pan's First XI* (WS, September 2010), calls it a mystery that so little of Wodehouse's cricket experience turned up in his fiction. The explanation may be found in Wodehouse's poem 'Missed!', which was published in Alan Ross's *The Penguin Cricketer's Companion* (1960) and is all about the bungling of a catch in a cricket match. I cite:

Ah, the bowler's low querulous mutter,
Point's loud, unforgettable scoff!
Oh, give me my driver and putter!
Henceforward my game shall be golf.

Indeed, not cricket but golf would abound in Wodehouse's fiction. But let's hope there will be many poems on cricket (and golf for that matter) in the proposed book of Wodehouse verse.

Profile of a Committee Member

Elin Woodger Murphy

Elin Woodger was born in Port Chester, New York, and was probably barely out of diapers when her father introduced her to the works of P G Wodehouse. Every summer, as the family prepared for their holiday at Southold, Long Island, Elin and her four sisters trooped to the town library, where there was a splendid Wodehouse collection, and grabbed armfuls of books off the shelves. Each night at Southold, the house rocked with laughter as its occupants went to bed with PGW gems, and in the morning the sisters read favourite passages to each other over the breakfast table.

Fast-forward a few decades to 1990, when Elin was working for a publishing company in Boston, Massachusetts, and one day read of the existence of The Wodehouse Society. Before you could say "Jeeves", she had enrolled as a member, the first link in a chain of memorable friendships. In 1993 she took a trip to London with a TWS friend and met, first, Tony Ring, and then Norman Murphy, who took her on her first Wodehouse/London Walk, an extended version that took several hours and left her feet throbbing for weeks afterward. She attended her first TWS convention that same year and two years later was the primary planner of the convention in Boston. The following year she became co-editor of TWS's journal, *Plum Lines*, and in 1997 she joined the brand-new P G Wodehouse Society (UK).

By 1999 Elin was freelancing as a writer and editor. After the death of Norman's wife Charlotte, Elin and Norman began exchanging letters and phone calls, then discovered feelings that were deeper and warmer than those of ordinary friendship. They married in October 2001, just before The Wodehouse Society convention in Philadelphia, where they announced their union. A few years later, Elin succumbed to Hilary Bruce's subtle arm-twisting and agreed to succeed Tony as editor of *Wooster Sauce*.

Elin has published two books on American history topics but makes her living these days by copyediting – subediting to Brits. In addition to that and taking care of Norman, she fills her time with voluntary work that keeps her out of the pubs (sometimes to her regret). It is safe to say, though, that Wodehouse has been responsible for her current life in north London. She likes to think that Plum is looking down from heaven, pleased by a dashed good job of matchmaking.



At War with Wodehouse

by Ken Francis

The war clouds were thickening in the late 1930s when I caught the Wodehouse bug from my older brother. He had long been a devotee of PGW, and together we built up a joint collection of his books, which for some years solved the problem of what to give each other for birthdays and Christmas. Our family had a large library, and it was a time when it was considered indecorous to have dust-jacketed books on your shelves – a bit tacky, don't you know. I still wince when I recall the day we stripped our collection of its jackets and consigned the latter to the wpb. The denuded volumes, colourful in Herbert Jenkins red and orange, still grace my shelves 70 and more years later – innocent victims of teenage vandalism.

Then came the war, and for four years I roamed the Middle East with the RAF, ever on the move, visiting countless stations and transit camps from Libya to the Persian mountains. The top priority on arriving at any new location was to search out the library. However small and scruffy the selection of books on offer, I cannot remember ever failing to find at least one PG.

During those years my brother Ron sent me 40 long letters. They were humorous, anecdotal, and liberally sprinkled with PG quotes and phrases. It was an illustration of brotherly love – such as Anselm might have welcomed into his sermon – for Ron was vicar of a Bottleton-type parish in the Old Kent Road and the letters were bashed out on an ancient typewriter in any brief moment that came along between one bomb and the next. I still have all but two of the letters; the missing two were sunk by U boats. One other only just made it, stamped “Salvaged From Sea”.

I recently reread the 40th and final letter. It is only just readable, for by that time typewriter

ribbons were as rare as bananas. It reached me in the Sinai desert in 1944, and shortly afterwards I boarded the famous HMS *Ranchi*, homeward-bound. Two paragraphs of that letter are especially quotable:

Waddling off to Worksop. I breezed up to Worksop recently to visit the evacuees, and travelling by car, I took with me a small individual whose parents desired she should seek a sure refuge from present perils. She is a red-headed kid of some nine summers, whom I believe I mentioned in a previous letter in connection with the bombardment of zoo sealions with ginger pop bottles. By name Yvonne, she is one of the punkiest youngsters I know, and should develop into a first-class Wodehousian if no one interferes with natural metamorphosis during the next few years.

To start with, she suddenly yanked the bally old automobile out of gear “just to see what that thing did!” – which was somewhat disconcerting in the middle of traffic. Later on, while climbing a steepish hill, she lunged over the wheel and turned off the ignition. “Whatchewdunthatfor!” I asked. “Well,” she said, “you said you always turned orf the engine on ‘ills to save petrol, so I dun it for yer!” In the course of the journey the said infant consumed no less than five large bottles of tizer and two cups of tea, so as you can imagine the pauses in our progress were frequent. At one time, just outside Newark, we came to the Anglo-Catholic seat of learning, Kelham, with numerous behooded and black-cassocked figures moving devoutly about its precincts. At this point the child Yvonne asked me to stop, and disappearing inside the college gates proceeded to relieve herself among the holy shrubs. Possibly the only way she knew of expressing her theological views.

Whether or not this young lady became a Wodehousian we shall never know – unless, of course, she is now a Society Member. But I do just wonder – was her middle name Gladys? . . . and did she have a brother called Ern?



Ken (left) and his brother, Ron

Sounds Strangely Familiar . . .

“I tell you, Jane, that Number Seven, Nasturtium Villas, has suddenly – and on Sunday, too, which makes it worse – become a house of mystery. I shall be vastly surprised if before the day is out, clutching hands do not appear through the curtains and dead bodies drop out of the walls.”

(From ‘The Story of Cedric’, by P G Wodehouse, 1929)

“By the way, Marie,” he said, “there’s a little mix-up here. Number 1 King’s Avenue has suddenly become a house of mystery. I should not be surprised to see clutching hands coming through the curtains and bodies falling out of cupboards.”

(From *The Burning Court*, by John Dickson Carr, 1937)

(Pointed out by Arthur Robinson on PGWnet last summer. Some have suggested Carr’s books were written by PGW!)

Wodehouse on the Boards



Though this is too late for *Wooster Sauce* readers, we note that *By Jeeves*, the musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Alan Ayckbourn based on the works of You Know Who, recently enjoyed a run at the Landor Theatre in Clapham, south London. So popular was this production that its closing date was extended from March 5 to March 12. A review will be published in the June issue of *Wooster Sauce*, but if you can't wait, then go to the Society's website at www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk and read the review posted there. Here's hoping it will be revived again soon!

There's no other Wodehousean theatrical news in the UK that we know of, but over in the States, a new production of *Anything Goes* is playing at the Stephen Sondheim Theatre in New York. Performances began on March 10, and the official opening is April 7. However, it

should be noted that the more familiar book – by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, based on the original book by P G Wodehouse and Guy Bolton – has been replaced by a new book, written by Timothy Crouse and John Weidman. How close this version will be to Bolton and Wodehouse's version remains to be seen. The theatre's box office number is 212-239-6200 or 800-432-7250. Further information can be found online at <http://bit.ly/cMnK4y>.

Of more interest to dedicated Wodehouseans is the news from CAREY TYNAN that the Stage West Theatre in Fort Worth, Texas, will be producing *Jeeves in the Morning*, as adapted by Mark Richards, beginning June 23 and running through July 24. Mr Richards has proven himself to be a superb adapter of Wodehouse stories for the stage, so if you're planning to go anywhere near Texas between those dates, this should be a must-see on the jolly old itinerary. Further information can be found at Stage West's website: <http://www.stagewest.org/>. *Wooster Sauce* would welcome a review!

Passing References

From *Hugh Trevor Roper: The Biography*, by Adam Sisman (2010)

IAN ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR informs us that there are two references to Wodehouse in this book. The caption for a photograph of Trevor-Roper with his siblings, in which he is wearing plus fours and a matching check jacket, describes him as being "like a character from P.G. Wodehouse". The other extract describes Trevor-Roper's work for the Radio Security Service in 1941 and his coming across an exchange between Wodehouse and his New York literary agent concerning the former's radio broadcasts; the agent apparently "implored [Wodehouse] to stop".

From *Up and Down Stairs: The History of the Country House Servant*, by Jeremy Musson (2009)

ANTHONY DOBELL sent along two extracts from this book, which includes two references to PGW. The first appears in the introduction, where Jeremy Musson describes his research and the advice he received to "look very carefully at P.G. Wodehouse" – advice that proved to be spot-on because "Wodehouse has helped to form the image of the servant in the popular imagination. His stories are a study in upper-class life, of course, but for all their humour, it is that well-observed detail that makes them so effective . . ."

The second Wodehouse reference appears on page 259 and describes Wodehouse's childhood in which he

socialised with servants while staying with various aunts and uncles. Mr Musson notes that Wodehouse "learnt to laugh there, in the company of footmen and housemaids." Such experiences served Plum well, of course, in his later writing, with *Something Fresh* mentioned indirectly as the story in which two characters are observed "manoeuvring their way through the complex etiquette of the servants' hall."

From *How To Be a Hermit*, by Will Cuppy (1929)

TIM KEARLEY noted a few months ago that he was "pleasantly surprised" to find Cuppy references to Wodehouse place-names in this book. At one point, Cuppy is pondering what to name his little island shack: "In more literary moments I think of it as one of those P. G. Wodehouse places, but I never can decide between East Wobsley, Little-Wigmarsh-in-the-Dell, Lower-Briskett-in-the-Midden, and Higgleford-cum-Wortlebury-beneath-the-Hill."

From *The Cookbook Collector*, by Allegra Goodman (2010)

On PGWnet a while ago, LYNN VESLEY-GROSS pointed out this passing reference in chapter 16:

"Jess," said George as she taped clear plastic covers on a complete set of P.G. Wodehouse, "can I trust you?"

Lynn's succinct reaction: "*Complete set?*"

As far back as they could remember, Beach had always looked as if an apoplectic fit were a matter of minutes, but he never had apoplexy, and in time they came to ignore the possibility of it. Ashe, however, approaching him with a fresh eye, had the feeling that this strain could not possibly continue, and that within a very short space of time the worst must happen.

(From *Something Fresh*, 1915)

Further Details Will Be Provided

by Tony Ring

1 – Reggie and the Greasy Bird

On page 5 of this issue of *Wooster Sauce*, you will find details of a new *Society* publication: *A Simplified Chronology of P G Wodehouse Fiction*. ‘*Simplified*’ means what it says, but even though much detail has been omitted, it has still been necessary to explain some situations at length. There are half a dozen further complications, however, which the compilers thought might be of interest to members as a whole, and these will form the basis for a series of articles, of which this is the first.

The short story ‘Reggie and the Greasy Bird’, which had appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* on 28 November 1936, was described by Wodehouse in a letter to William Townend of 28 December as being

in that shape, rotten. I rewrote it like that because I had at last decided that I would start writing in America under another name, and then the tax matter was settled, and I sent it to the *Post* in that form, though knowing it was not so good.

‘The tax matter’ to which he refers was a dispute with the US tax authorities of such intensity that the Internal Revenue Service had issued liens to his publishers requiring any payments to Wodehouse to be redirected to the IRS. As was to be proved by a series of court decisions, neither party had interpreted all the relevant disputed tax laws correctly (and Wodehouse came out in rather the better position at the end of the day), but the imposition of this lien had an immediate and drastic impact on his cash flow from United States sources. At the time he was used to receiving approximately \$40,000 per serialised novel and \$4,000 per short story.

While the arguments were batted to and fro, he considered ways of circumventing the problem and, as he wrote to Townend, had concluded that he should submit stories under a pseudonym, in the hope that he would be able to receive immediate payment. Fortunately, this unlikely concept never

had to be tested, as the dispute was settled in August 1936.

Freddie Widgeon and other charismatic members of the Drones Club had been featured in a number of short stories, one of which was ‘The Masked Troubadour’, accepted by the *Strand Magazine* but not published until December 1936. Since its characters also included Barmy Fotheringay-Phipps, Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright, and other names familiar to Wodehouse readers, there could be no question of submitting the story in that form to the *Saturday Evening Post* for publication under a pseudonym.

So Wodehouse set about trying to keep the story funny (yet, even though ostensibly written by a first-time writer, so marketable as to be accepted by a hard-bitten US magazine editor), while being unrecognisable as coming from the pen of P G Wodehouse. Some of his simple basic changes can be tabulated, as seen below.

It is, of course, entirely in readers’ hands whether they agree with the judgements of Wodehouse and Townend that in the form published in *Saturday Evening Post* the story was inferior to the *Strand* (and book) version. Certainly readers would have been unfamiliar with the members of the cast in the *SEP* version, which for many would have been a telling difference. But as the story anyway incorporated two themes previously used by Wodehouse, maybe the changes of character were not of critical importance. The use of those themes, though, would hardly assist his attempt to retain anonymity!

The fact remains that a decision had to be made as to how to incorporate one or both of these stories into the *Chronology*. Since the ‘Reggie’ version was never included in book form, it did not qualify for inclusion — yet could there have been an explanatory note? It is clear from the length of this summary why no note was provided! So you will find ‘The Masked Troubadour’ given its appropriate place in 1936, with a cross-reference to the short-story collection *Lord Emsworth and Others*, the book in which it appeared in 1937.

<i>The Masked Troubadour</i>	<i>Reggie and the Greasy Bird</i>	<i>The Masked Troubadour</i>	<i>Reggie and the Greasy Bird</i>
Barmy Fotheringay-Phipps	Algy Vining	Egbert (Barmy’s cousin)	Percy (Algy’s cousin)
Bottleton (a village)	Bingleton	Freddie Widgeon	Reggie Mumford
Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright	Beano Bagshot	Lady Pinfold	Lady Rackstraw
Dahlia Prenderby	Mavis Jellaby	Lord Blicester	3rd Earl of Uppingham
Dora Pinfold	Constance Rackstraw	a seedy individual	a small greasy chap
Drones Club	Junior Rotters Club	Jos Waterbury	Sid Montrose

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

Galahad Books

The untimely death of Nigel Williams, reported by Tony Ring on page 2, has deprived us of a Wodehouse polymath. Not only was Nigel the premier Wodehouse book dealer; he was also a Wodehouse bibliographer and a Wodehouse publisher. Nigel's catalogues, website, and shop in Cecil Court, with its famous "Wodehouse wall" of books, were known and loved by many members of the Society. Bibliographically, both in person and via his erudite catalogues, Nigel added to the store of knowledge about Wodehouse's books; over the 11 years that I have been writing this column, the assistance I have obtained from his catalogues has been immeasurable. And as the publisher Galahad Books, he played an important role in making previously scarce Wodehouse stories available to a wider audience, via the publication of three titles.

Plum Stones – The Hidden PG Wodehouse was the first of the titles to be published by Galahad Books. It was a series of 12 booklets published between 1993 and 1995, making available 25 stories that had previously only appeared in magazine form in the UK. The stories range from Sherlock Holmes pastiches through detective, school, and sports stories to prototypes for mainstream Wodehouse plots and characters. The co-editors of the booklets were Nigel and Tony Ring, and each booklet contained a commentary by Tony Ring on the stories in the booklet.

The booklets were published in an edition limited to 250 numbered copies. Copies 1–16 were incorporated into an omnibus volume, bound in full leather, lettered A to P, and signed by Tony Ring. The remaining 234 copies were bound in plum card with gilt lettering on the front and back covers. On the back cover of each of the 12 booklets was a different quotation from the Blandings novels concerning Galahad Threepwood, thereby making it plain, even to the meanest intelligence, whence the name of the publisher was derived.

The second title, *The Luck Stone*, was again the first UK book publication of a story that had only previously appeared in a magazine, having been serialised in *Chums* in 19 weekly instalments from 16 September 1908 to 20 January 1909. Prior to its book publication in 1997, in its magazine form this atypical (for Wodehouse) blood-and-thunder school story was an item of almost legendary scarcity among his fans, copies of *Chums* being much more difficult to obtain than copies of *The Captain*, in which most of Wodehouse's other mainstream school stories were

serialised; as Richard Usborne noted in 1961, "You're fortunate to have discovered *The Luck Stone*. Read it" (*Wodehouse at Work*, p43).

The book contained an introduction by Tony Ring and seven of the original illustrations from *Chums*. It was produced in an edition limited to 250 numbered copies and 26 leather-bound copies lettered A to Z. The numbered copies were bound in red cloth, with gilt lettering on the cover and spine. There was no dustwrapper.

A Prince for Hire was the final book published by Galahad Books, in 2003. As with the earlier books, it was the first UK book publication of a story that had only previously appeared in a magazine, and it contained an introduction (dated December 2002) by Tony Ring. This was a title that was even scarcer than *The Luck Stone*, in that its existence had been

unknown until 2001 (see *Wooster Sauce*, September 2001, p1 for details), leading Tony to describe it in his introduction as "worthy to be added to the list of Wodehouse books to which the Collector must pay attention". The story was originally serialised in monthly instalments in an American magazine, *The Illustrated Love Magazine*, from April to August 1931. It was an extensive rewriting, virtually from scratch, of the 1912 US version of *The Prince and*



Betty (which itself had incorporated much of the action from the 1909 UK serial *Psmith, Journalist*).

The book was published in greater numbers and in greater variety than the first two titles from Galahad Books. There was a leather-bound edition of just 16 copies, uniform with the leather-bound editions of *Plum Stones* and *The Luck Stone*. There was a hardcover edition of 200 copies, bound in plum cloth with gilt lettering on the spine, with a dustwrapper featuring the cover of the April 1931 magazine in which the first instalment had appeared. Finally, there was a paperback edition of 784 copies, with a front cover similar to the dustwrapper of the hardcover edition.

Although Nigel is sadly no longer with us, the books published by Galahad Books very much are, and they play an important part in keeping alive our memory of both Wodehouse and Nigel Williams.

The Words of Wodehouse

by June Arnold

Solve the clues in the top grid, and then transfer the letters from there to the bottom grid, which will give you an extract from a Wodehouse short story. Reading down Column A will give you the title of that story. Answers will be published in the June *Wooster Sauce*.

If you enjoy these puzzles, then order June's book of 28 all-new Wodehouse acrostics. See page 5 for details.

Clues:

- 1 Percy _____, Lord Holbeton in *Quick Service* (7) / Alter (6)
- 2 Small tool used for cutting metal (7) / Having self-respect (5)
- 3 A gradual process of change and development (9) / Indian dress (4)
- 4 Julia _____, widow of a millionaire in *Hot Water* (5) / Shreds cheese (6)
- 5 Greek epic poem by Homer (7) / Disappear (6)
- 6 Alaric (Ricky) _____, engaged to Polly Pott in *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* (6) / Ardent love (7)
- 7 Imagine (8) / Once more (5)
- 8 Evangeline _____, 15-year-old cook in *Ring for Jeeves* (8) / Hit the _____; go to bed (4)
- 9 Reggie _____, a Drone who appears in *The Luck of the Bodkins* (8) / Flowed or leaked out slowly (6)
- 10 First _____, usually a valuable copy of a book (7) / Devils (6)
- 11 Charlotte Corday _____, a revolutionary's daughter in *A Gentleman of Leisure* (9) / Physical suffering (4)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1														
2														
3														
4														
5														
6														
7														
8														
9														
10														
11														

3I	5A	2G		4B	3B	7A	8B	9E	11D	10F	4C	8I		2D	1L	3H	11C	5D		
8F	5N	2B	9A		1I	2J	3C	9J	5K	7D	10G	4A		1A	5F	9C	2K	11A	8K	
4I	1B	7H		10B	3L	7N	6A	4K	1G	9G	2L	5E		9N	8C	7C	6B	3D	2E	
11F	2A	1F	5G		6J	10C	8A		6I	1D		10D	11G	8H		11K	10J	7J	6F	6M
1K	8G	5B		4G	5J	9L	10A		3G	6N	3F	11B		8E		7K	3N	4H	6C	10N
1N	5C	10K	7E		11H	9D	2M		4L	6E	10L	7G		6L	11N		7L			
5I	9K	11M	2C	4E		1E	1J	8L	4J		6K	11E	3E	9H	10M	5M				
8D	7M	8N	3A		1M	2F	9F		9B	3K	8M	11L	6D	10E	7B	4D				
10I	3M	1C	11I		7F		6H	5L	2I	9M										

Return of the Long Bar

. . . any of the crowd out along Bubbling Well Road or in the Long Bar at Shanghai could have told you that 'Bwana' Biggar had made more rhinoceri wilt than you could shake a stick at. *(Ring for Jeeves, 1953)*

STEVE MARSHALL writes: The legendary Long Bar of Shanghai Club fame, favoured watering hole of Wodehouse's intrepid explorer types like Captain Biggar and Major Plank, has re-opened. Shanghai's Waldorf Astoria Hotel, housed within the original Shanghai Club premises, has, using archive photographs and contemporary descriptions, restored the Long Bar to its former glory. The 110 foot mahogany-topped bar, once famed as the longest in Asia, is back, as is the dark timber wall panelling and rich, dark 'masculine' furniture so beloved of ex-pat Brits during the old colonial days. I wonder what Tubby Frobisher and the Subahdar would have to say?



Poet's Corner

The Happy Marriage

When Emerson K Washington
met Sadie Q Van Pott,
Her numerous attractions
bowled him over on the spot:
At first distinctly timid,
gaining courage by degrees,
He rushed into her presence,
and addressed her, on his knees:-

"Oh, Sadie Q, I worship you,
and not as other men;
My love had proved a worthy
theme

for Poet Shakspeare's pen;
My groans and sighs excite surprise,
whene'er I pace the street;
I really cannot sleep at all.
And, worse, I cannot eat.

"For ham and eggs (Virginia style)
I've ceased to care a jot;
No strawberry shortcake tempts
me now,
nor Boston beans, served hot,
The oyster-stew I wave aside:
I cannot touch a clam:
From these remarks you'll judge
in what a wretched state I am.

So do decide to be my bride;
oh, heed a lover's prayers;
Admit some sunshine to a lot,
which now is dark with cares.
But lest without reflection
you are tempted to decline,
I'll picture what will happen should
we form the said combine.

"Most husbands treat their wives
as dolls,
and, sorrowful to state,
Refuse to let them take a hand
in things of any weight:
Myself I mean to act

upon a widely different plan;
For Lovely Woman's duty lies,
I hold, in helping Man.

If you elect to marry me,
my angel-bird you'll be
As partner in my business
quite invaluable to me.
And what that business is,
without preamble I will tell:
You see in me a footpad.
And I'm doing very well.

"Way out in pleasant Oregon
my humble trade I ply;
Few highwaymen have got
a larger *clientèle* than I;
Think not that these are idle words.
With truth my claims agree;
You may have heard of 'Sand-
Bag Bill'?
Exactly. I am he.

"So, if my proffered heart and hand
you'll but consent to take,
You'll come with me on every
expedition that I make;
Together, hand in hand, my love,
at night we'll roam about
Entrap the guileless traveller,
and - briefly - clean him out.

His speech was scarcely finished,
when quoth Sadie, "Wal, I vum!
What, marry you, my Emerson?
I calculate! Why, some!
Stray travellers in Oregon
will soon be mighty sick
Ring up the parson on the phone,
and get it over slick."

The parson put the service through
without the least delay;
And Emerson and Sadie Q

were wed that very day;
Their happiness, I'm glad to say,
is wholly free from cares;
I never knew so prosperous
a married life as theirs.

For every night, when dinner's o'er,
and darkling shadows fall,
They take their knuckle-dusters
from the hat-stand in the hall,
And Emerson says, "Sadie,
have you cartridges, my pet?
Your iron, is it clean and bright?"
And Sadie says, "You bet."

And then through quiet streets
they prowl,
through dim-lit squares they
roam,
They intercept the passer-by,
as he is hurrying home;
And Emerson's destructive club
upsets him with a crash,
While Sadie's nimble fingers
gather in the needful cash.

So they go on from day to day,
as happy as can be,
And in this simple tale, I think,
a moral we may see:
The married state can never be
completely free from strife,
Unless a man's profession also
interests his wife.

From *Punch*, 9 December 1903
*Written following a report from
Portland, Oregon that two ladies
and their husbands had been
arrested for highway robbery. The
ladies used to stand beside their
husbands while the robberies were
being committed and help to rifle
the victims.*

Five More Cunning Clerihews

Reginald Jeeves
Firmly believes
The Junior Ganymede would be distinctly
Better without Brinkley.
- Norman Murphy

Bertie never learned the trick
Of moving from women double quick.
So in his life he oft eschewed
The ill effects of being wooed.
- Allyn Hertzbach

No one was crosser
Than Oofy Prosser
When the Drones club
Raised its annual sub.
- Jonathan Bacchus

Miss Madeline Basset
Truly believes that
The stars in heaven's domain
Are God's daisy chain.
- Geoff Millward

Edwin, the Boy Scout,
For 'Good Deeds' on the look-out;
Yesterday's good turn
Sees Bertie's cottage burn.
- Peter Thompson

Recent Press Comment

From *The Financial Times*, November 5 (from Bob Rains)
Nicky Haslam wrote on the resurgence of dining rooms; his article begins: “Hurrah! The P G Wodehouse dining room is back with a vengeance.”

From *The Daily Telegraph*, November 11
Featured a story about a Northumberland couple putting faces to the names of thousands of soldiers lost on the Western Front in the Second World War, and included both a picture of Percy Jeeves and a short note about him.

From *The Spectator*, November 13
In discussing the quest for the “perfect comic novel”, Marcus Berkman noted that he had “80-odd P G Wodehouses on my shelves, and a good quarter of those must be as near perfection as makes no difference”.

From *Nationalinterest.org*, November 17
Used a quotation from *Ring for Jeeves* to illustrate an article about why it would be foolish for the British to dispense with the monarchy as its occasional weddings are a selling point and help bring in tourist money.

From *Playbill*, November 18
Reported on a sold-out concert of Kern music on November 15, which included such PGW lyrics as ‘Nesting Time in Flatbush’, the original version of ‘Bill’, ‘We’re Crooks’, and ‘Go Little Boat’.

From *The Week*, November 20
(from Jo Jacobius and Edward Cazalet)
Quoted a PGW quote that was in *The Times*: “If it were not for quotations, conversation between gentlemen would be an endless succession of ‘what-ho-s’.”

From *Sunday Telegraph*, November 21
(from Jo Jacobius and Mark Taylor)
In a supplement on the royal engagement, there was a reference to events that “have a faint echo of P G Wodehouse”, including a Boodles Boxing Ball that Kate Middleton attended.

From *Sunday Telegraph*, November 21
Society member Mark Taylor wrote a letter to the editor suggesting the works of PGW as a set book in schools.

From *Times Literary Supplement*, November 26
(from Sir Sydney Kentridge QC)
Reviewing *The Spirit of England*, by Stephen Medcalf, Stephen Prickett discussed Medcalf’s essay ‘The Innocence of P. G. Wodehouse’, touching on the innocence both of Bertie Wooster and of Wodehouse himself.

From *The Observer*, December 5
In an article about the copyright and the rewards writers should be able to expect from their work, Robert McCrum quoted Wodehouse’s observation: “I should think it extremely improbable that anyone ever wrote simply for money. What makes a writer write is that he likes writing. Naturally, when he has written something, he wants to get as much for it as he can, but that is a very different thing from writing for money.”

From *The Times*, December 6 (from Edward Cazalet)
Richard Whitehead and Patrick Kidd’s list of the 50 greatest sports book included *The Golf Omnibus* (1973) by P G Wodehouse.

From *The Northern Echo*, December 8
Reported on a production by Gainford Drama Club of *Come On, Jeeves* and the problems caused by the heavy snow. Many cast members “trekked in from outlying farms to ensure that fans were entertained by the farce which was set in the 1950s”.

From *The Guardian*, December 14
In an article commenting on author Marcus Berkmann’s quest for ‘the perfect comic novel’ (and Berkmann’s revelation that he had about 80 PGW books on his shelves), Robert McCrum gave his opinion that some of Wodehouse’s novels are close to perfection, mentioning specifically *Heavy Weather*, *The Code of the Woosters*, *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, *Hot Water*, and *Thank You, Jeeves* as being touched with greatness.

From *The Spectator*, December 15
Under the title *Vladimir Putin’s Eulalie Moment*, referring to the recent occasion when Putin had sung in public, Alex Massie commented: “You can be dictator of all the Russias or you can be the kind of fellow who sings *Blueberry Hill* in public. But not both.” He added that Wodehouse is *immensely* popular in Russia and recalled: “Even Vladimir Brusilov admitted that Wodehouse, like Tolstoi, was ‘not bad’. And he would know.”

From *The Times*, December 20, and other sources
Referred to Martin Jarvis’s reading from the Cheltenham Festival of *Jeeves in Manhattan* on Radio 4 as one of the *Times*’s two radio choices for the day. ‘The Artistic Career of Corky’ was broadcast on the 20th and ‘Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest’ on the 27th.

From *The Guardian*, December 21 (from Bob Miller)
A review of the broadcast of ‘The Artistic Career of Corky’ (see above) described Martin Jarvis’s performance as “sparkling, cheering stuff”.

From *Church Times*, December 24/31
(from Simon Gordon Clark)
An article about the history of the Infant Samuel included Wodehouse’s reference to a terra-cotta figure of the I.S. at Prayer in *The Code of the Woosters*, which Bertie brings to Aunt Dahlia’s attention: “She thanked me briefly, and hurled it against the opposite wall.”

From *GQ*, January 2011 (from Ellie King)
A list of ‘Dumb and Dumber: 23 Eminent Idiots’ included, perhaps inevitably, Bertie Wooster, who placed second. Described as the “idiot’s idiot”, Bertie is further maligned while Jeeves is given credit for unravelling “the Gordian knot of social dysfunction” and restoring harmony to “Wodehouse’s perfect world”.

From *The Daily Telegraph*, January 1
Reviewing a book entitled *The Hungover Cookbook* by Milton Crawford, Bryony Gordon drew specific attention to the author’s recipes to relieve each of the six types of hangover identified by Wodehouse in *The Mating Season*: the Broken Compass, the Atomic, the Cement Mixer, the Sewing Machine, the Comet, and the Gremlin Boogie.

From *Daily Mail*, January 1 (from John Hodgson)
The *Daily Mail*’s Great British Pub Quiz was headlined with the question: What do Bertie Wooster, Captain

Hook and David Cameron have in common? Answer: They all went to Eton.

From *The Times*, January 3

(from Keith Alsop and John Hodgson)

Simon Barnes suggested that Jeeves was needed to sort out Liverpool FC: "Liverpool are in the soup and they want someone to shimmer, cough politely, exert the old cerebellum and make everything oojah-cum-spiff."

From *National Review Online*, January 5

In his 'December Diary', John Derbyshire referenced the film *The King's Speech*, about the stammering King George VI, and said the most memorable stutterer he knew was George Mulliner: "Like King George in the movie, Wodehouse's George was advised that if he couldn't get the words out by speaking, he should sing them. Does this ever work? (It failed disastrously for Wodehouse's George.)"

From *The Daily Telegraph*, January 6

Allison Pearson wrote about a well-publicised incident on the Radio 4 programme *The Archers*: "There is a wonderful moment in P G Wodehouse when Bertie Wooster is told that Jeeves has described him as 'mentally somewhat negligible but with a heart of gold'. It's a perfect description for dear departed Nigel Pargetter."

From *Orange County Register*, January 6

John Lithgow is touring parts of the USA with his *Stories by Heart*, which includes a recitation of 'Uncle Fred Flits By'. This was just one example of reports of the one-man show, all of which are excellent, and it included the comment that "Wodehouse . . . in his quiet way was one of his country's most devastating social critics". The writer concluded: "This is theater in its purest form. And it's got more thrills and satisfactions than anything Broadway's blockbuster makers could ever devise."

From *The Times*, January 8 (from Keith Alsop)

In writing about Victorian buildings that have been tragically demolished, Marcus Binney quoted PGW: "Whatever made be said in favour of the Victorians, it is pretty generally admitted that few of them could be trusted within reach of a trowel and a pile of bricks." Plum described Walsingford Hall (*Summer Moonshine*) as "a celebrated eyesore in all its startling hideousness".

From *The Times*, January 14

(from June Arnold and Keith Alsop)

In response to a column wherein Matthew Parry proposed "What ho" as a salutation for emails, a reader suggested that "pip pip" should be his choice of valediction – "P. G. Wodehouse would surely approve."

From *Metro*, January 19

(from Carolyn de la Plain and Mark Taylor)

Included a short review of the reprinted *Weekend Wodehouse* (Vintage).

From *The Scottish Daily Express*, January 28

(from Melvyn Haggarty)

Actor Simon Williams included *The Jeeves Omnibus* on his list of six favourite books.

From *Daily Telegraph (Review)*, January 29

(from Larissa Saxby-Bridger)

Carried an extract from Sebastian Faulks's *Faulks on*

Fiction, in which Faulks celebrated Jeeves. The BBC2 TV series of the same name featured Faulks's comments on Jeeves in the February 19 broadcast.

From *The Times*, January 29 (from Keith Alsop)

A article on tennis player Andy Murray quoted that oft-used Wodehouse gem about distinguishing between "a Scotsman with a grievance and a ray of sunshine".

From *Bibliophile*, February

At the head of its column offering for sale books on 'Art and Architecture' was the quotation from 'A Good Cigar is a Smoke' in *Plum Pie*: "As an artist he belonged to the ultra-modern school, expressing himself most readily in pictures showing a sardine tin, two empty beer bottles, a bunch of carrots and a dead cat, the whole intended to represent *Paris in Springtime*."

From *Waitrose Weekend*, February 3

(from Larissa Saxby-Bridger)

The *Wit and Wisdom* column provided the following quotation, which it described as 'P G Wodehouse, quoted in *First Things*'. "In all crises of human affairs there are two broad courses open to a man. He can stay where he is or he can go elsewhere." [If any member can provide a more specific reference for the quotation, that would be appreciated.]

From *The Daily Telegraph*, February 3

Published an obituary of Patrick Wodehouse, with references back to the time which he spent with Uncle Plum and Aunt Ethel. (See page 1 for the Society's own tribute and page 2 for an additional comment from Robert McCrum.)

From *The Spectator*, February 7

Under the title *The Great Dictator*, referring to Sebastian Faulks's reflections on Jeeves, Alex Massie describes Jeeves as a control freak and suggests that there are times when he overdoes things and could lighten up. He concludes, though, with an expression of relief that he never quite succumbed to the temptation of going rogue, like Baxter.

From *Financial Times*, February 11

One of a number of sources for a review of the 15th anniversary production of *By Jeeves* at the Landor Theatre, Clapham.

From *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, February 11

(from John Hodgson and others)

Each carried extensive news and obituaries about the death of cricketer Trevor Bailey, an Old Alleynian who was known to Wodehouse in the late 1930s. *The Times* obituary included the PGW quotation that Murray Hedgcock refers to in his obituary on page 2; it had been written more than a decade before Bailey obtained a reputation for slow batting on the international scene. The *Telegraph* referred to the same match as "probably the dreariest ever seen on the school grounds". But it adds that one year, when Dulwich won all their matches, Wodehouse treated the team, including Bailey, to dinner and a show in the West End.

From *The Times*, January 29 and February 12

Philip Howard's *Literary Quiz* asked: "Who eats broken bottles and conducts human sacrifices by the light of the full moon?"; and two weeks later: "Who was dependent on fish for stimulating his massive grey cells?"

Future Events for Your Diary

May 14, 2011 Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Explore Wodehouse's London with Norman Murphy! The start time is 10 a.m. and the walk is free.

June 17, 2011 Gold Bats vs. The Dulwich Dusters

Our annual match at Dulwich College will commence around 4.30 p.m. and will include the celebrated tea. *Please note that spectators must have tickets for the tea;* applications are enclosed with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

June 19, 2011 Gold Bats vs. Sherlock Holmes Society

Please note the change of date for our annual match against the Sherlockians at West Wycombe. The ground is just off the A40 (Oxford Road) in West Wycombe, and the match usually starts around 11 a.m., with a break for lunch (bring your own). For more information, see page 3.

July 2, 2011 Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Norman Murphy will lead another walk around Wodehouse's London. See May 14 for details.

July 12, 2011 Society Meeting

Tentatively scheduled to be held at The George; location and speaker to be announced in the June issue.

July 20, 2011 Cricket in Kent

Members of the Gold Bats will play together with the Siegfried Sassoon Society against the Matfield Cricket Club in Kent; the game will start at 2 p.m.

August 7, 2011 Gold Bats v Kirby Strollers

This annual charity match will take place in the grounds of Audley End House, near Affron Walden; start time is 1 p.m. For more about Audley End, including a map, see <http://bit.ly/bVgjH1>.

September 3, 2011 Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Norman Murphy will lead another walk around Wodehouse's London. See May 14 for details.

October 13–16, 2011 The Wodehouse Society Convention, Dearborn, Michigan

The Wodehouse Society will be celebrating P G Wodehouse's 130th birthday at its 16th biennial binge in Dearborn, Michigan.

October 28–30, 2011 Follow Wodehouse to Emsworth

The Brookfield Hotel, Emsworth, has put together a wonderful program of events to commemorate PGW's 130th birthday. See page 4 for details.

November 1, 2011 Society Meeting and AGM

Location and speaker to be announced.

CONTENTS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Patrick Armine Wodehouse, 1920–2011 | 12 P G Wodehouse in the OED |
| 2 We Remember: Patrick Wodehouse, Nigel Williams, Trevor Bailey | 13 Emily, Armine, and Burke's |
| 3 Society News | 14 Letters to the Editor |
| 4 Follow Wodehouse to Emsworth | 14 Cunning Clerihews |
| 4 The Truth About Beach | 15 Profile of a Committee Member: Elin Woodger Murphy |
| 5 Announcing <i>A Simplified Chronology of P G Wodehouse Fiction</i> | 16 At War with Wodehouse |
| 5 Two Other Books of Interest | 17 Wodehouse on the Boards |
| 6 Joy in the Evening at The George | 17 Passing References |
| 7 The Word Around the Clubs | 18 Further Details Will Be Provided: 1 – <i>Reggie and the Greasy Bird</i> |
| 8 Porcos Virumque Cano: A Note on James Hogg's <i>Lord Emsworth's Annotated Whiffle</i> | 19 The Bibliographic Corner: Galahad Books |
| 10 My First Wodehouse Experience | 20 The Words of Wodehouse (acrostic) |
| 10 The Origin of Steggles? | 20 Return of the Long Bar |
| 11 At Last! <i>Wodehouse at the Wicket</i> Is Being Republished | 21 Poet's Corner: <i>The Happy Marriage</i> |
| | 21 Five More Cunning Clerihews |
| | 22 Recent Press Comment |