

WOOSTER SAUCE



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

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NIBLICKS AND PLUS-FOURS AT TANDRIDGE



PG Wodehouse's green credentials were showing at Tandridge Golf Club on April 21 as, after an excellent lunch during which the Committee craftily held the first AGM, many of our members joined some of the locals for a most enjoyable round of golf. For reports of the two events, see page 15.

Dinner at the Inner Temple

With this issue of *Wooster Sauce* you will find an application form for a place at the Society's first formal dinner, to be held on October 15 – Plum's birthday – at the Inner Temple, at a cost of just £30.

Space at the Inner Temple is limited, so you are advised to apply for a reservation as early as possible. It promises to be an exceptional evening, with John Mortimer and Maria Friedman providing some entertainment.

Cricket at Dulwich

Following the golf day, a cricket match has been arranged at Dulwich College on July 2, at 4.30 pm, against the College Common Room.

See page 20 for more details.

First Regional Meeting

We are delighted to be able to announce the first meeting of the Society outside the south-east. This will take place on July 18, at the Uplands, on the north-west side of Birmingham. Uplands is a pub on the A4040, about a mile and a half from the junction of the M5 and A41. Turn east off the motorway on to the A41, then left on to the Birmingham Ring Road (A4040).

The meeting will last from 2pm until 6pm. (We hope that as many members as possible will use the pub's lunch facility beforehand.) There will be talks from Norman Murphy, Helen Murphy and Nick Townend, while Tony Ring will bring along a number of recently published books, CDs, audio-cassettes and videos. There will be plenty of time for discussion, and getting to know other members.

We look forward to seeing you there.

THOSE RUSSIANS ARE SUCH FRIGHTFUL ASSES

by Francis Wheen

The Guardian has very kindly granted Wooster Sauce permission to reprint this article which appeared in The Guardian on 18 March, 1998.

The novels of P G Wodehouse, which were banned in the Soviet Union 75 years ago, are now “required reading” for Russia’s rightwing intelligentsia, according to the *Sunday Telegraph*.

If so, this suggests that the rightwing intelligentsia have missed the point as surely as Lenin did when he added Wodehouse to the proscribed list in 1922 after taking offence at *The Clicking of Cuthbert*, a short story about a Russian novelist called Vladimir Brusiloff. True, in the early pages of the tale Brusiloff seems to be a grim and gloomy cove, and since he is a friend of both Lenin and Trotsky it might appear that Wodehouse is mocking the dourness of Soviet communism. By the end, however, he is revealed to be an immensely jolly golfing fanatic – and therefore, in Wodehouse’s view, a good egg. Far from mocking the Soviet Union, the story is a satire on Western misconceptions.

Although Wodehouse is usually treated as a reactionary simpleton, his politics were rather more sophisticated than that. When Bertie Wooster’s friend ‘Sippy’ Sipperley was arrested for nicking a policeman’s helmet on Boat Race night, he had the presence of mind to identify himself as Leon Trotsky – “which”, the magistrate commented when sentencing Sippy to 30 days without the option, “I am strongly inclined to think an assumed or fictitious name”. This was a double joke, of course, since Leon Trotsky was indeed an assumed name – even for Trotsky himself, who stole the moniker from one of his old jailers while escaping from Siberia with a false passport in 1902.

I can’t prove that Wodehouse was a keen student of Marxist history, but there is plenty of circumstantial evidence. The message of his 1910 novel, *Psmith in the City*, has been neatly summarised by the Wodehousean scholar Benny Green as “an irrefutable argument that most work is a distasteful necessity which nobody in his right mind would ever dream of performing unless he needed the money desperately”. This elementary fact of life – which has long been beyond the comprehension of economists, tycoons, headmasters, bishops and New Labour ministers – can also be found, almost verbatim, in Karl Marx’s Paris manuscripts of 1844.

Psmith himself was converted to Marxism while still a boy; when he was removed from Eton and thus deprived of the honour of playing cricket against

Harrow at Lord’s; thereafter he addressed everyone as ‘Comrade’. As Benny Green has pointed out, this was clearly a joke at the expense of H M Hyndman, the 19th century English Marxist and sometime batsman for Sussex, who (in Barbara Tuchman’s words) “adopted Socialism out of spite against the world because he was not included in the Cambridge eleven”.

But the real joke was on the Tories – as represented by Bickersdyke, a former red-hot radical who has become a repulsive and opportunistic Conservative candidate by the time of *Psmith in the City*. Psmith exposes Bickersdyke’s humbug by digging out minutes of a seditious speech he made to the Tulse Hill Parliament many years earlier:

Psmith looked across at him with a bright smile. “They report you verbatim,” he said. “And rightly. A more able speech I have seldom read. I like the bit where you call the Royal Family bloodsuckers. . . . Your political views have changed a great deal since those days, have they not? It is extremely interesting. A most fascinating study for political students.”

Indeed it is. Oddly enough, Tony Blair revealed a few years ago that Wodehouse was his favourite author – which leads one to wonder if Bickersdyke’s betrayal inspired the entire New Labour project.

Certainly Wodehouse would have been shocked by Blair’s eagerness to please the bullying Little Englanders of the Sun newspaper. His long-forgotten novel *The Swoop*, published in 1909, was a devastating satire on the “German invasion” scare-stories put about by the Europhobic demagogues and leader-writers of the day. (“The troops of Prince Otto had done grievous damage. Cricket pitches had been trampled down, and in many cases even golf-greens dented by the iron heel of the invader, who rarely, if ever, replaced the divot.”) In the 1930s, when appeasement was official policy and the Daily Mail was chanting “Hurrah for the Blackshirts!”, he sabotaged the pretensions of Oswald Mosley equally effectively by turning him into Roderick Spode, leader of the Blackshorts.

Our Prime Minister is happy to break bread with Max Mosley, who still reveres his fascist dad as a civilised and heroic figure. Perhaps Blair has never got round to reading *The Code of the Woosters*, in which Mosleyite authoritarianism is shown in its true colours.



KID BRADY ALL SET TO LIVE AGAIN — JUST IN TIME FOR BOXING DAY!

The Committee has much pleasure in announcing that it has received the consent of the Trustees of the P G Wodehouse Estate to reproduce the series of seven *Kid Brady* stories for the benefit of members. These stories of the boxing hero, published in the American magazine *Pearsons* between September 1905 and March 1907, have not, as far as we know, been republished and are extremely scarce in their original form. Kid Brady made a later appearance in *Psmith, Journalist*, and was mentioned in *Piccadilly Jim*.

We have concluded that the stories should appear in a similar format to *Wooster Sauce*, and will be published in December each year for distribution to all members who have *renewed* their membership of the Society during the year. This will mean that in their first year members will not receive a copy, but the intention is to reward the *loyalty* of members who have stayed with us.

But no members need miss a story. All qualifying members will receive their copies in the order of their original publication, no matter when they join. And no copies will be made available to the public by the Society.

We are excited about this opportunity to make scarce material available, and hope that members will appreciate the method we have chosen to thank them for their support.



Is This Really the Oldest Member?

Paul Rush, a member from Norwich, evidently found during the Society's golf day that the Oldest Member's stories and conversation can get a little tiring after a while.

THOSE RUSSIANS ARE SUCH FRIGHTFUL ASSES

(Continued)

"The trouble with you, Spode," Bertie Wooster announces when he finally confronts the would-be dictator, "is that just because you have succeeded in inducing a handful of halfwits to disfigure the London scene by going about in black shorts, you think you're someone. You hear them shouting 'Heil, Spode!' and you imagine it is the Voice of the People. That is where you make your bloomer. What the Voice of the People is saying is: 'Look at that frightful ass Spode swanking about in footer bags! Did you ever in your puff see such a perfect perisher?'"

But then Wodehouse was an instinctive anti-authoritarian who always sided with the underdog against self-important bossyboots such as Roderick Spode, Roderick Glossop, Aunt Agatha and the Efficient Baxter. His most eloquent political treatise, in my view, is the short story *The Aunt and the Sluggard*, in which Bertie is forced to fend for himself in a hotel without Jeeves's assistance. As the young master stands in his lonely bedroom, trying to tie his white tie himself, it strikes him for the first time that "there must be squads of chappies in the world who had to get along without a man to look after them. I'd always thought of Jeeves as a kind of natural phenomenon; but by Jove! of course, when you come to think of it, there must be quite a lot of fellows who have to press their own clothes themselves, and haven't got anybody to bring them tea in the morning, and so on. It was rather a solemn thought, don't you know. I mean to say, ever since then I've been able to appreciate the frightful privations the poor have to stick."

This is, I need hardly add, a perfect precis of *The Communist Manifesto*.

The Guardian ©

THE BOOK PG WODEHOUSE NEVER WROTE

Murray Hedgcock drew the Editor's attention to an article in the business pages of The European, concerning the arcane financial instrument, the tontine. There may be more to it than meets the eye, as Tony Ring found when he investigated the matter.

When in 1957 PG Wodehouse wrote *Something Fishy*, the 'enabling event' which formed the basis of the plot was the creation, some 25 years previously, of a tontine by ten millionaires at a dinner party hosted by JJ Bunyan. There was, of course, a certain give-and-take about exactly what a tontine was:

Mortimer Bayliss flashed a black-rimmed monocle about the table and glared through it at a harmless little man who looked like an overfed rabbit. "You!" he said. "Brewster or whatever your name is. Ever heard of Tonti?"

"Sure. He wrote a song called *Good-bye*."

"That was Tosti, my poor oaf. Tonti was an Italian banker who flourished in the seventeenth century and in the intervals of telling people that it would be impossible to sanction an increase in their overdraft invented the tontine. And if you want me to tell you what a tontine is . . ."

"I know that," said JJ Bunyan. "It's where a bunch of guys put up money and found a trust and the money goes on accumulating interest till they all die off and there's only one fellow left in, and he takes the lot."

The subject of tontines is by no means a stranger to literature. As long ago as 1777 Sheridan had one character in *The School for Scandal*, Crabtree, say about another, Charles Surface:

If the old Jewry was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman: no man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine; and that, whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

Robert Louis Stevenson based the plot of *The Wrong Box* on a tontine in the late nineteenth century and more recently, in 1955, the American author Thomas B Costain published a 930-page novel *The Tontine*, divided into six books, which traced the fortunes of a number of families following the establishment of a substantial tontine after the battle of Waterloo. It is a good story, its wide-ranging targets being of the type you could imagine BBC television snapping up for a period drama.

So perhaps it was not so much of a coincidence that in 1957 not only Wodehouse but also Agatha Christie used the existence of a tontine as a pivotal

element in a plot, in her case the murder mystery *4.50 from Paddington*. Wodehouse could not have copied her idea, for his book was published on January 3rd and it is equally unlikely that she would have had time to absorb *Something Fishy*. There must be a strong probability that both these prodigious writers had read Costain's book and seen in it the opportunity for plot-making of their own.

In August last year, Brian Reading wrote an article in *The European* proposing the reincarnation of the tontine, modified in a way that would attract the elderly at the start of their retirement. His intention was to overcome the difficulty, so astutely pointed out by Wodehouse, that by the time the final survivor scoops the pool, he or she would be too old to enjoy it.

In 1692, the UK Crown introduced a modified version of the concept to help service the national debt, selling tontine annuities, whereby subscribers bought an annuity for life. Interest continued to accrue on all the capital contributions made, however, and the whole interest was shared out among surviving members each year until the last member died. In the UK's case, this was 77 years later, by which time the final recipient was receiving an annual income equivalent to £4 million today.

Mr Reading suggested a further modification to enable pensioners, especially those without dependants, to pay for a higher standard of health care throughout their lifetime than otherwise might have been possible. The longer they lived, the higher would be their income as other members of the tontine died and their entitlements were redistributed. In this way, so Mr Reading thought, the problem of inflation could be overcome for the survivors.

Wodehouse returned passingly to the theme of a tontine in *Do Butlers Burgle Banks* in 1968 in a somewhat complex metaphor which is perhaps rather mystifying unless you are in the know:

Eustace Coleman . . . was a wary man, and these opening words sounded to him suspiciously like insurance. Soon, he anticipated, his visitor would whip a small book from an inside pocket and start talking about the company he represented and the benevolent practice of allowing the interest accumulating on the tontine policy to become a reserve fund with a clause permitting the accretion of both premium and interest.

PREVIEW OF SOTHEBY'S AUCTION OF THE HEINEMAN COLLECTION

Since he started collecting in the late 1930s, the late James Heineman amassed the most comprehensive all-round collection of Wodehouse material ever known. The quality and range of the lots offered at Sotheby's New York auction on June 26th reflects its importance.

The nature of the collection meant that the auction house faced a serious dilemma in deciding how to allocate the 6,500 separate items into lots. It was a problem which guaranteed criticism whichever approach they chose to adopt, and the comments below must be read with this point in mind.

There will be just 150 separate lots to dispose of the entire holding, including first editions of all titles. Sixteen lots each have over 100 items: these are essentially groups of letters, magazines, theatrical and cinema material, foreign translations and the odd omnibus lot. About half the remainder have fewer than ten items, some 22 being of a single first edition, presentation copy, manuscript or other piece.

The main consequence of selecting this parsimonious number of lots is that estimates are likely to frighten off all but the hardest collectors, and leave the field

open to dealers and, if they wish to participate, libraries. Only one or two estimates fall below \$1,000. Collectors' interests are not helped by a policy of grouping together virtually all the copies of a particular title in a single lot so that, for example, the lot (estimated at \$1,500 to \$2,000) relating to *Carry On, Jeeves* includes a UK first edition in jacket, a UK first without jacket, a UK second in jacket, a US first in jacket, a US reissued first and seven later editions.

The most spectacular single piece is a hand-written manuscript, though incomplete, of *Psmith, Journalist*, estimated at \$20-30,000. Six other typescripts have varying degrees of manuscript amendment or addition. There are also six lots of magazines, although the large number of bound volumes of *Captain, Punch* and *Strand* may make their acquisition impractical for potential UK buyers. It will be interesting to see if the apparently high estimates for several groups of letters, to Guy Bolton, Richard Usborne and others, are justified.

For more details of this important auction, and to obtain a catalogue (cost uncertain), contact Peter Selley at Sotheby's Bond Street on 0171 493 8080.

THE BOOK WODEHOUSE NEVER WROTE

(Continued)

How does all this relate to the book which Wodehouse never wrote? Well, many readers wish he had tried a full-blooded detective mystery, and he himself tried unsuccessfully to find a plot which could have brought together all or most of his major characters in one book. But doesn't yet another version of a tontine point the way?

Suppose that in the early 1900s, or possibly at the end of the 19th century, Watkyn Bassett, Tom Travers and the young Clarence Threepwood had been members of a group who created a tontine in relation to their respective collections of old silver. Perhaps all the other members would have died, leaving just the three with the possibility of collecting the lot. Clarence, of course, would have forgotten all about the arrangement. But if the tontine's rules had caused the forfeiture of one's entitlement in the case of theft, sale or emigration as well as death, what opportunity there would have been for oompus-boompus. Attempts to burgle Blandings or Totleigh Towers, perhaps, or a 'fake' financial crisis seeking to precipitate the sale of one of the collections,

or bungled attempts by Soapy Molloy or Charlie Yost to murder one of the contestants. Ukridge might even have planned one of his great schemes if he had heard about the arrangement.

Gally Threepwood would probably have taken the lead in the investigations, calling in Jeeves, a selection of resident popsies, and possibly even Lord Peter Wimsey if the book were to have been written jointly with Dorothy Sayers. Spode would have been one obvious suspect, trying to wheedle his way round Bassett, Baxter another, trying to ensure the collection enhanced the Blandings Castle library, and Dahlia Travers, acting as undisclosed agent for husband Tom, could not have been ruled out. Throw in possible complications caused by Bertie Wooster's bungling, attempts by say Stiffy Byng to blackmail whoever she thought was behind it all, the appearance of a really evil Aunt and even the actual but cleverly concealed guilt of a poetry-writing nephew, and the Epic was there to be written.

Alas, it was not to be.

WODEHOUSE AND ALL THAT JAZZ

by Katherine Lewis

No one seems to capture the joy and spirit of The Jazz Age, as well as the eras between the Wars, as does P G. Wodehouse. Bertie and his Drones Club friends frequented the best night-clubs and undoubtedly heard some of the great jazz music of the day, with jazz lyrics considerably cleaned up for the respectable British upper classes of the time. They would undoubtedly have heard some of the music of the great hot bands, and danced to that music with the Charleston or a toned-down version of the shimmy, both scandalous for their day. They would have fox-trotted to the lovely romantic and hot strains of the sweet dance bands as well, whose lyrics would also have been toned down for respectable white audiences long before the music reached London.

Several of the early great jazz bands, both black and white, went to England in the late 'teens and early 1920s. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band was in London in 1919. Several of the early great black bands began trips to England and the Continent at the same time. It is my contention that one cannot know either the depth of the works of Wodehouse, or his knowledge of the times and his grasp of its music, without knowing something about hot jazz of the 1920s and 1930s, the popular new music of the time. Jazz was and is the music of delight, joy, passion and vitality – in which even the blues are happy! While Wodehouse wrote on a more sweet and romantic note for stage musicals, he also heard and understood the jazz idiom, from which he derived a great deal of fun which he conveyed to his readers.

His plays on the jazz lyrics of *Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home?*, 1902, (not to be confused with *Baby Won't You Please Come Home?* of 1919 by Clarence Williams, pianist and one of the all-time great composers and arrangers of jazz) is one of the funniest of jazz references, showing up repeatedly in novels and short stories. He understood the depth of meaning (or the lack of it) that the jazz idiom conveyed. This was often a language of jazz musicians alone, whether black or white, who poked fun at the unique musical and sexual references with the sounds of the music (especially in the *double-entendre* lyrics that the uninitiated did not understand, because they did have a feeling for the music).

The joy that one encounters upon reading *Tried in The Furnace* is due to the hilarious Biblical juxta-position about how Abimilech begat Jazzbo and Jazzbo begat Zaccariah in the solemn and peaceful Sunday service! This takes the reader from the reverent to the irreverent as only Wodehouse can do. (Even the words 'jazz' and 'jazzbo' originate in black slang and are obscure, but are the latter is thought to mean 'jazz boy', a

complimentary name among black musicians for a good hot black jazz musician.) Wodehouse injects jazz references in almost every novel and short story that I have read, with earlier works containing more references of the times.

'Hot' jazz, or the upbeat tempos, (sounds vividly conveying feelings of joy, sorrow, blues – still upbeat in tempo – and sensuality) truly flourished on the South Side of Chicago, having travelled North on the river-boats up the Mississippi River from New Orleans, the cradle of jazz, during the 'teens, 1920s, and 1930s. With the migration of poor blacks came the best of the New Orleans musicians who found a welcome home in Chicago, a city of opportunity, a place where gifted black musicians could play hot jazz in small bands and later in large orchestras.

Some who began their careers in New Orleans as piano players in barrel houses and/or houses of ill-repute gained great reputations as they departed from ragtime or syncopated rhythms. From these more simple rhythms, hot musicians gained fame via incredible improvisations and faster tempos that seemed to speak directly to the listener's heart and soul, of passions that could speak of universal feelings of joy, lust, happiness, and blues, all within a few bars of music and brief, moving vocals.

Thus black jazz musicians of the South Side quickly earned their fame, and their playing attracted young white high school musicians from the West and North sides of the city. In the then highly segregated city of Chicago this was seen as outrageous, veering from classical and light classical music, and even ragtime and syncopated music, to that which was not considered acceptable by the 'respectable' white middle and upper class communities. But the young white musicians came and sat at the feet of their idols and learned the music note for note, and imitated their idols and their music as best they could.

Among the early black jazz greats of the 1920s was Joe 'King' Oliver (King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band and the Dixie Syncopators, the first really great jazz bands), who brought his protégé, Louis Armstrong, up from New Orleans. Louis rapidly surpassed his mentor, and with his Hot Fives and Hot Sevens recordings and his fantastic trumpet solos with various other hot black bands around the South Side (at the Dreamland Ballroom and the Sunset Cafe, among others) soon made not only Chicagoans but folks the world over jazz-crazy.

Jazz became a main attraction and multitudes of black, and later white, musicians played, improvised, and imitated the most successful musicians by stealing their

WODEHOUSE AND ALL THAT JAZZ

(Continued)

tunes and arrangements. Owing to the segregation of the South Side, most blacks went to all-black venues, and daring upper-class whites went to the 'black-and-tan' establishments. The South Side flourished as the cradle of hot jazz creativity. White musicians who sat in on jam sessions after hours with the all-black bands were highly regarded as talented musicians, and played with the same gusto and skill as the black musicians. Imitation became the highest form of flattery. Musicians devoted to jazz, whether black or white, lived impoverished lives and played to pay rent and to buy food. Young white musicians dropped out of high school and abandoned promising careers to play jazz. The excitement and passionate devotion that jazz inspired in all of the musicians never left them.

Among the earliest white bands were the Chicagoans, called The Austin High Gang, composed of Jimmy McPartland, Benny Goodman, Mezz Mezzrow, Eddie Condon, Frankie Teschemacher, and others, who went on to disseminate their own 'Chicago-Style' jazz with their own small bands.

The legendary Leon 'Bix' Biederbecke was considered by many the greatest white cornet jazz player who ever lived. Bands both black and white travelled to

England and the Continent, where an eager public took their music to their hearts, and where today the hottest music and lore of jazz is committed to memory and preserved in traditional hot jazz bands, some of which play the original music almost note for note as it was played in the original and authentic New Orleans and Chicago styles.

I strongly urge Wodehouse aficionados and nostalgia buffs to listen and enjoy the very best of the hot rhythms of early jazz that Bertie and his friends so eagerly enjoyed. I hope that it proves a musical voyage of discovery, filled with pleasure, to hear jazz and lyrics that will surprise and delight Wodehouse readers, to hear titillating music that will capture your spirit and make you want to dance. Hearing the background music of Bertie's world gives one a greater understanding of the humour that jazz brought to our favourite books and stories.

Kathy is an American member of The Wodehouse Society with a passionate interest in jazz. She can provide details of suggested recordings and relevant literature to anyone who would like to pursue this topic. Any reader who would like a copy should contact the Editor.

THE SMILE THAT WINS

Favourite Nifties – 3

Just as all American publishers hope that, if they are good and lead upright lives, their books will be banned in Boston, so all English publishers pray that theirs will be denounced from the pulpit by a Bishop. Full statistics are not to hand, but it is estimated that a good Bishop, denouncing from the pulpit with the right organ note in his voice, can add between fifteen and twenty thousand to the sales.

Cocktail Time, 1958

I SAY!

Favourite Exchanges – 6

"Make a note," he said to Dinty. "Baby for Miss Whittaker."

"Not if it's too early in the play, though, what?" said Barmy. "She isn't married."

Barmy in Wonderland, 1952

TOM LEHRER TRIBUTE TO PGW

Hilary Bruce reported that in the radio programme *An Evening with Tom Lehrer*, the satirical songwriter wrote of the glory of elegant rhymes, and paid a special tribute to PGW. He had been proud of his inventive rhyming of 'cyanide' with 'try and hide' in *Poisoning Pigeons in the Park*, until several years later he learned that Wodehouse had beaten him to it in 1924, in the opening number of *Sitting Pretty*.

TWO NATIONS DIVIDED BY A COMMON LANGUAGE

John Ross Phillips, a member from Northampton, has drawn our attention to a little book published in the United States in the mid-1920s, concerning the collision of English and American idiom. Entitled Spoken in Jest, and with a sub-title The Traveller's De-confuser (note the English spelling of 'Traveller'), it was published by E P Dutton of New York.

John has postulated the idea that Wodehouse may have been aware of the book, or even had a hand in its publication, for some of the humour, he suggests, has echoes of the Wodehouse style. We should bear in mind, though, that by the mid-twenties PG had already written seventeen novels and a hundred short stories for adults, many of which had either an American setting or American characters. He had also, by then, spent a considerable part of his adult life in the States and his musical theatre career on Broadway was all but over. So we can say with confidence that he would not have regarded this book, when published, as a terribly useful source. It does not seem to feature in Wodehouse's own library of books now at Shaw Farm.

Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly an interesting summary of the linguistic differences of the day. In the space available, we can do no better than to list a few of the examples which appear in its *Glossary*, and reproduce some of the brief explanations it gives for other expressions:

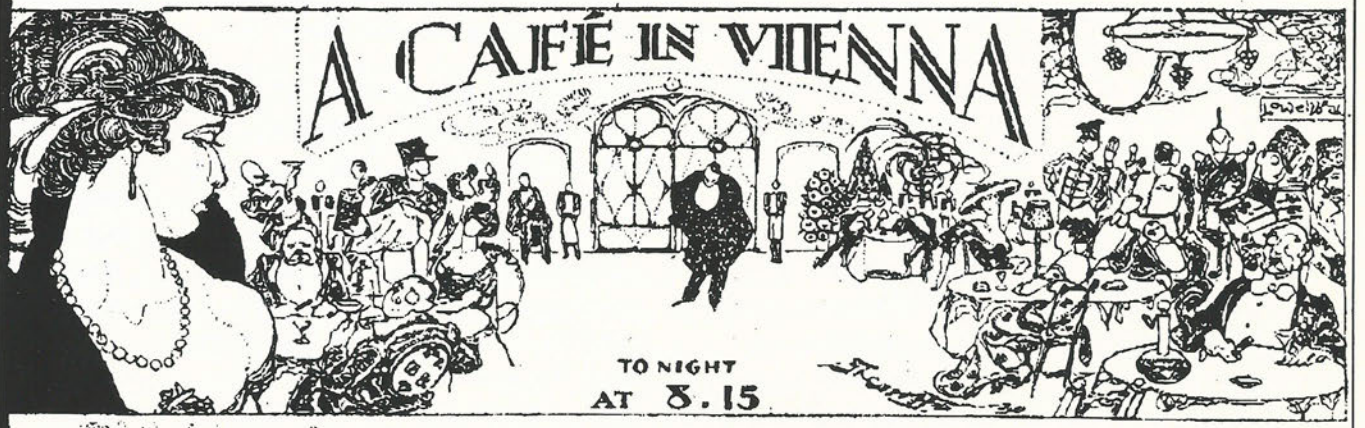
<i>American</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>American</i>	<i>English</i>
Beat it	Hop it	Lounge Lizard	Woozler
Bum	Rotten, poor, feeble	Nick	Pinch
Fresh	Cheeky	Piker	Near sport
Gee!	Crikey!	Prince	Corker
Grind	Swot	Quitter	Bad sport
Grouch	Grouse	Rough neck	Tough
Jolly	Rag	You betcha	Not 'arf
Ataboy:	Sometimes 'Atababy'. Means, if anything, less than the English 'What ho!'.		
Blighter:	Overworked English word meaning anyone who gets your goat.		
Bully:	American word with about the same meaning as 'Ripping', 'Topping' or 'Tophole' in English.		
Click:	A dandy English word, particularly for girls with whom you 'click' or make a hit.		
Cunning:	A cunning American girl is winning; a cunning English girl is tricky.		
Fire away:	The long way the English have of saying 'Shoot'.		
Fix:	If this word were eliminated from the American language it would render many people dumb. There is scarcely anything one can't fix. To bribe a Federal Agent and mix yourself a cocktail, you would have to 'fix' them both.		
Pep:	Something more than enthusiasm that has made America what it is.		
To ball up:	American way of saying 'To make a mess of' or 'To dish', not to be confused with 'To ball out', though a man who balls up is then usually balled out.		

The Glossary concludes by commenting that in the past, Great Men have been notorious for bad spelling. If the scheme for reorganising spelling in America gains ground, it continues, it will add to the present difficulties of discerning Great Men. One might add, sadly, that today's standards of spelling are such that there would appear now to be more Great Men and Great Women in the United Kingdom than otherwise.

LEONORA WODEHOUSE AND PLUM ON THE RADIO

Ann Ledgard, of the BBC Radio Collection, has provided a copy of the notification in Radio Times of the broadcast of ZARA on March 27, 1930. Book by Leonora Wodehouse and C Dents Freeman; Lyrics by P G Wodehouse; Music by Tony Lowry. BBC records show that the three contributors received the formidable fee of £ 30 between them for the twenty minute work.

MARCH 27, 1930.		RADIO TIMES		733
<p>8.15 LISTEN FOR VAUDEVILLE</p>	<p>THURSDAY, March 27 LONDON REGIONAL 842 kc's (356.3 m.)</p>		<p>9.35 GUNTHER RAMIN AT THE ORGAN</p>	
<p>0 THE GRANGE ORCHESTRA Conducted by HAYDN HEAD Relayed from THE GRANGE THEATRE CINEMA, SMALL HEATH, BIRMINGHAM (From Midland Regional)</p> <p>March, 'Old Comrades' <i>Parke</i> Selection, 'La Traviata' <i>Vendi</i> Fox-trot, 'My Fate is in your Hands' <i>Rasaf</i> Waltz, 'All that I'm asking' <i>Davis</i> Overture, 'Masaniello' <i>Auber</i> Selection, 'The Desert Song' <i>Bombert</i> Waltz, 'The Rosebearer' <i>Stratton</i></p> <p>0 A Ballad Concert (From Midland Regional)</p> <p>DENNIS GOODEYAR (Tenor) Trusting Eyes <i>Clarence Gartner</i> La donna è mobile (Woman is fickle) <i>Verdi</i> For you alone <i>Gesell</i></p> <p>ALICE COULMAN (Pianoforte) Toccata, Op. 111 <i>Saint-Saëns</i> Waltz, 'Thousand and One Nights' <i>Johann Strauss, arr. Goldstein</i></p> <p>BEA TOLLIVORTHY (Contralto) Bird Songs at Riverside <i>Eric Coates</i> Mifany <i>Dorothy Parker</i> The early Morning <i>Orchestra</i></p> <p>30 Light Music</p> <p>MAURICE TOUBAS and his ORCHESTRA Relayed from THE KIT-CAT RESTAURANT</p> <p>30-30 REGINALD NEW AT THE ORGAN OF THE BEAUFORT CINEMA Relayed from WASHWOOD HEATH, BIRMINGHAM (From Midland Regional)</p> <p>Ballet Music, 'Sylvia' <i>Delibes, arr. Tovar</i> Slow Waltz, 'Passion' <i>Romato</i> Liebesleid (Love's Grief) <i>Kreiser</i> Waltz, 'Nights of Gladness' <i>Antcliffe</i></p>	<p>5.15-6.15 DANCE MUSIC 'BILLY FRANCIS and his BAND Relayed from THE WEST END DANCE HALL, BIRMINGHAM (From Midland Regional)</p> <p>6.15 'The First News' WEATHER FORECAST, FIRST GENERAL NEWS BULLETIN</p> <p>6.40 'THE ROMANCE OF OIL'—IV Sir JOHN CADMAN: 'The Geographical Distribution of Deposits of Natural Petroleum'</p> <p>7.0 A Light Orchestral Programme THE MIDLAND REGIONAL AUGMENTED ORCHESTRA (Leader, FRANK CANTELL) Conducted by JOSEPH LEWIS TOPLISS GREEN (Baritone) (From Midland Regional)</p> <p>ORCHESTRA Overture, 'Ruy Blas' <i>Mendelssohn</i> Waltz, 'The Sleeping Beauty' <i>Tchaikovsky</i></p> <p>TOPLISS GREEN and Orchestra Aria, 'Now your Days of philandering are over' (' Figaro ') <i>Mozart</i></p> <p>7.25 ORCHESTRA Tone Poem, 'Carillon' <i>Elgar</i> Three Impressions, 'From a Young Man's Life' <i>Charles Huby</i></p> <p>La Gracieuse: Desire; Mirage</p> <p>TOPLISS GREEN Come, let's be merry <i>arr. Lane Wilson</i> The Arrow and the Song <i>Wulfe</i> To Anthem <i>Hutton</i></p> <p>7.55 ORCHESTRA Suite, 'Abandon Scènes' <i>Maanuel</i></p>	<p>8.15 A Café in Vienna Composed by REX EVANS</p> <p>(1) GRETA KELLER (Viennese Songs)</p> <p>(2) THE CAUCASIANS (Russian Balletlike Playors and Singers)</p> <p>(3) REX EVANS (French and English Songs)</p> <p>(4) MAURICE TOUBAS (Violin and Saw Solos)</p> <p>(5) 'ZARA' A Viennese Operetta Book by LEONORA WODEHOUSE and C. DENTS FREEMAN Lyrics by P. G. WODEHOUSE Music by TONY LOWRY Characters in order of speaking: An habituë of the Café The New Proprietor Fritz, A Waiter Zara Kerrigold, A famous Viennese singer Lord Michael Grange, an English diplomat The Old Proprietor An Austrian Secret Service Agent Count Wachen, an Austrian Nobleman Students</p> <p>Scene: A Café in Vienna Time: Present Day, and before the War The programme will be linked together by a selection of Viennese Orchestral Records</p> <p>9.30 Regional News</p> <p>9.35 Organ Recital by GUNTHER RAMIN Relayed from ALL SAINTS', MARGARET STREET</p> <p>Prélude and Fugue in C Pastorale (Hirtensmusik) in four } <i>Each</i> movements Passacaglia in C Minor</p> <p>10.15-10.30 'The Second News' WEATHER FORECAST, SECOND GENERAL NEWS BULLETIN</p>		



TO NIGHT
AT 8.15

London Regional programme listeners can receive the National programme by adjusting their sets to a wavelength of 261.3 metres, or to the wavelength of Daventry 5XX, 1,554.4 metres (see page 731).



PLUM and ROSIE – A Match Made in Heaven

The third part of Helen Murphy's Chicago talk



Perhaps the most notorious authoress of early popular fiction was Elinor Glyn. She is not to be despised, having made an enormous amount of money with her pen, fascinated great men and, later, done energetic work during the Great War, spending some time visiting the trenches. She also kept her looks and her lustrous red hair long after one would have expected.

Significantly, she toured Egypt, a country which, as her biographer Joan Hardwick reported, “had a strange effect on many of its Edwardian visitors”. De Grenville, in his book *New Egypt*, commented that there was something in the air of Egypt which seemed to excite almost everyone and “which almost maddens certain natures, especially of the weaker sex...” But it was on her visit to Italy that Elinor bought her first tiger skin. In those days, of course, conservation had not been invented, and anyone who went abroad, like the inhabitants of Bludleigh Court, went after anything, the bigger the better. If someone got in the way, either they were “only a native”, or if it was dear old George – well, he’d have wanted to go that way.

Elinor Glyn’s tiger skin became her trademark. Shortly after the publication of *Three Weeks*, in which an older woman displays herself to tremendous seductive effect, a rhyme was making the rounds:

Would you like to sin
With Elinor Glyn
On a tiger skin?
Or would you prefer
To err with her
On some other fur?

Tiger skins arrived from two of the great colonial administrators, the Lords Curzon and Milner – I suppose one each of the Indian and African species. Lord Curzon also used to correspond with the writer Ouida, of whom more in the next article in this series. Suffice to say that she popularised the tiger skin as an emblem of seduction, so that PGW could tell us that his young novelist Blair Eggleston, though possessing a tough, cynical manner, “had never actually found himself alone in an incense-scented studio with a scantily clad princess reclining on a tiger skin, but in such a situation he would most certainly have taken a chair as near to the door as possible and talked about the weather”.

Ethel M Dell was more respectable, and if the vicar’s daughter had borrowed one of her books from the housemaid she would have been less likely to shove it under the sofa cushions if in danger of discovery. But she was still in the middle of the respectability scale – as Murray Wilson pointed out in a recent *Plum Lines*, Nancy Mitford had been forbidden to read her novels. Apart from being obsessed with euthanasia, a line running through *The Keeper of the Door* and other works, she specialised in Bruised Blossoms and Broken Butterflies, the kind of girl who was often pretty near to the Blue Angel, or the tart with a heart who was dropping down the ladder rung by rung. Sometimes the only difference was that while the Bruised Blossom often ended up with the man, the Blue Angel never did.

The girl was likely to have been in the chorus, like Dolly Henderson, whom even Lord Emsworth remembered as “a little bit of a thing in pink tights, with the jolliest smile you ever saw”. PGW’s chorus girls were normally quite happy, of course. But the destination of Ethel M Dell’s girls, had they not been rescued by the hero, and the place where the aunts suspected that Wodehouse heroines would have ended up, is Destitutionsville. As the popular song reported:

See him in the House of Commons making laws to
put down crime,
While the girl that he has ruined trails her way
through mud and slime.

By a happy coincidence, the author of *Ragged London*, published in 1861, was John Hollingshead, who wrote it while he was, as he said, Mr Dickens’ “champion outdoor young man”, and later took over the Gaiety Theatre, haunt of the Pelican Club. And what did Mr Hollingshead introduce? The can-can – and girls in pink silk tights.

Ethel M Dell also liked to get her teeth into a bad baronet – so to speak – and she was not the only one. The aristocracy in fiction, as discussed in the Mulliner story *The Smile That Wins*, were renowned for evil, and the wicked squire – generally some nobleman or another – had been the staple of melodrama for years. But Ethel M Dell’s characters had fits of mad passion and stormed drunkenly about the manor house with riding crops, looking for their wives. The butler would say: “The master is not himself, your ladyship.” In one story, the hero

WALKING WITH WODEHOUSE by Robert Bruce

Robert Bruce is Accountancy Correspondent for The Times

There are times during a walk with the extraordinary NTP Murphy that you feel overcome with exhaustion. It is nothing to do with the physical exertion, though he does keep up a fearsome pace. It is to do with the rate at which information is being fired at you. Several times on Murphy's march round the Mayfair of Wodehouse you find yourself leaning weakly against the pillars of some imposing gentlemen's club with your brain flashing the message "Disc Full" down from its monstrously overloaded memory banks.

Not only are you knee-deep in Wodehouse places and events: Aunt Dahlia's house is identified, as is the Junior Ganymede (just opposite in Charles Street), and the Bath Club prototype for the Drones Club's exuberant races from ring to ring above the swimming pool, but you are also shown London's biggest totem pole, Henry VIII's cow shed, the spot where lawn tennis was invented, and a house pannelled with oak from a tree personally selected by William the Conqueror. You learn about the financial significance of the unobtrusive plaque which marks the centre of London, you learn that the huge wall between the Burlington Arcade and what is now the Royal Academy was built to its extraordinary height to deter people from the habit of throwing dead cats over it and you discover why the car depicted in the RAC Club's stone pediment is a Renault. In between times you note the flat where Wodehouse lived, the flat where young Threepwood lived, the real model for the Drones Club and the site of the club that Wodehouse himself enjoyed.

By the end of the afternoon, when you sink into the pub just past the Turkish Baths where Psmith in his City days felt the same sort of need for relaxation, your mind is feverish. But as the gin and tonic takes effect your mind rearranges its new information and you realise that you have a new mental map for navigating around Central London. And it is now incomparably richer.

* Norman Murphy will be conducting his next two walks on July 11 and October 3. No formalities: just be at the top of the escalators at Green Park Underground Station at 2pm.

* *By The Way* No 1 of March 1997 provided a description and map of some of the places mentioned.

A Match Made in Heaven – Part 3

(Continued)

began repairing his riding crop before confronting the villain – in this case an evil earl. The heroines also tended to be passed from one character to another like a shuttlecock as they gave her up for each other with no reference to her opinion at all, just as Barmy and Pongo renounced Angelica Briscoe in each other's favour after the school treat and the Mothers' outing. One of Ethel M Dell's books was entitled *Storm Drift*, and may well have inspired the title of Florence Craye's novel, *Spindrift*.

These authoresses had some influence on Rosie M Banks and the rest, but the definitive model was Ruby M Ayres. She was very respectable indeed, and Richard Usborne confirmed with PGW that that was where he had got the name, though I hope I have shown that others were involved. Richard knew Ruby well. She had started off as one of Lord Harmsworth's young women, like Barbara Cartland, and made a lot of money. He was the Lord Tilbury of his time. At one stage he sent Ruby M Ayres off to the South of France to think out a really big novel he could serialise. She took the advance and went off to enjoy herself, but eventually got a telegram asking for 13 chapters by the next week. She replied: "Bedroom door open or shut?" "Shut", they replied, and she got off 13 chapters and sent them back on time. *That* was Rosie M Banks.

Stage Performance of Summer Lightning

Dr Alan Davies of Andover has kindly provided the following information concerning *Summer Lightning*.

Salisbury Playhouse has selected this play as its Main House show for the Summer Season, running from Thursday 18 June (about the date you should receive this journal) to Saturday 4 July.

This adaptation, by Giles Havergal, made its debut at the Glasgow Citizens Theatre in 1992 when Helen Baxendale starred as Sue Brown. Our Patron Lucy Tregear took that part in the Harrogate production the following year, since when it has featured in the programmes of the Wolsey Theatre Ipswich and Clacton Amateur Dramatic Society.

WHERE IS THE BLANDINGS CRICKET PITCH?

asks Murray Hedgcock, in a summery frame of mind

Take down your copy of *Sunset at Blandings*, turn to the endpapers, and study the topography of Blandings Castle and its estate, as set out by the late Ionicus in 1977.

There are all the necessities and amenities of country house life – the stables, garages and stores, the kitchen gardens, the greenhouses, the paddocks and pigsties, and for relaxation and recreation, rolling lawns and gardens, the bowling green, croquet lawn and tennis courts.

All present and correct so far – but where is the cricket pitch?

If you feel the miscellany *Plum Pie* has indicated that cricket is played there, in the chapter *Sticky Wicket at Blandings*, be warned that the title is frustratingly figurative. It refers merely to the Hon Freddie Threepwood being on tenterhooks as his wife Aggie may ask awkward questions about his quite innocent relationship with one Valerie Fanshaw – and so on, as usual.

The point of the Blandings question is that the great houses of the English countryside almost as a matter of course found room in their rolling acres for a cricket ground which would provide amusement for family and guests, possibly with an annual house cricket week.

Or land might be leased to the village cricket club, younger members of the family turning out occasionally to add style and technique to the otherwise rural batting.

Psmith in the City, you will recall, begins with Mike Jackson in fine form at the Ilsworth cricket week run by Psmith Senior (R E Smith, as he preferred to be known), who has taken Ilsworth Hall and hurled himself into making the most of its ground.

The sole cricket reference suggesting the game to have any part in Blandings life comes in *Heavy Weather*, when Voules the chauffeur is recorded as being a man Ronnie Fish, Lord Emsworth's nephew, had known since boyhood "and one with whom he had many a time played village cricket".

This presumably was at Blandings Parva, just outside the castle's main gates – but there is no other reference to the local game, and Ionicus quite rightly decided he had no proof of its geographical placement.

The reason for this somewhat saddening absence is almost certainly the usual one in Wodehouse: the first Blandings novel, *Something New* (in Britain *Something Fresh*), was published in 1915, when the newly married PGW was based in Long Island, his sights firmly set on the US market.

Cricket emphasis would have been unnecessary and confusing to too many of his intended readers – and so Blandings the blessed, for all its charm and beauties, is forever denied that essential of the true country house, its own cricket pitch.

Murray Hedgcock edited Wodehouse at the Wicket, published in 1997 by Hutchinson.

COME AND PLAY IN THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL WODEHOUSE GOLF TOURNAMENT

A full report of the Society's golf day and AGM appears on page 15. One name missing from the ranks of players on that occasion was Henk J Meier, founder and President of the Dutch P G Wodehouse Golf Club (amongst other similar PGW roles), who was unable to play on that day.

Henk has suggested that there should be an *International Wodehouse Golf Tournament*, starting initially as a six- or eight-a-side challenge match between Holland and the UK.

Active consideration is now being given to staging this grand event *this autumn*, probably at Tandridge Golf Club (where we held the Society Golf Day), near Oxted in Surrey, close to the M25 and very easy to find.

Any golfers in the Society who would like to play in this match should contact

Profile of Two Patrons: Sir Simon and Lady Hornby



Photo: Barry Swaebe

Simon and Sheran Hornby represent one of the Wodehouse family connections amongst our Patrons. Sheran is the sister of Sir Edward Cazalet and daughter of Leonora (Wodehouse) and Peter Cazalet; therefore she is a step-grand-daughter of Plum. She and Simon celebrate their thirtieth wedding anniversary this year. Simon, whose great loves are gardening and the arts, is the better-known public figure. After Eton and Oxford he went into business, most of his career being with the W H Smith Group, of which he was the Chairman from 1982 to 1994. He has also been Chairman of a wide variety of other organisations including Lloyds Abbey Life PLC, the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts, the Design Council and the National Literacy Trust. He is currently President of the Royal Horticultural Society.

NEW PATRONS

We are delighted to announce that Martin Jarvis, Ned Sherrin CBE and Keith Waterhouse CBE have accepted invitations to become Patrons of the Society.

NEW RELEASES

Members may be interested to hear that the film *The Girl on the Boat*, a 1962 film based on the PGW novel has been released on video by Polygram (reference 046 622 3) and retails at just £6.49. Probably the film which stuck most faithfully to a Wodehouse plot, it starred Norman Wisdom, Millicent Martin, Bernard Cribbins, Sheila Hancock and a youthful Richard Briers, our President. Good value.

A reminder too, that Polygram have also recently made available *A Damsel in Distress*, starring Fred Astaire and Joan Fontaine (reference 055 3283)

Those interested in PGW's lyrics should try to hear *The Girl I Knew*, a CD by the American singer Lorna Dallas (Harbinger Records, HCD 1501) which contains two songs, *Nuts in May* from *The Cabaret Girl* (reportedly its first recording) and *London, Dear Old London* from *The Golden Moth*.

New unabridged audio recordings notified by Chivers are *Leave It To Psmith* (June 1998) and *Service With a Smile* (October 1998).

DID YOU KNOW?

Publishing Errors – 6

The back-cover blurb of several *Penguin* editions of *Young Men in Spats* referred to Mrs Mulliner, and misspelt both halves of Twistleton-Twistleton.

In which

Freddie Widgeon discovers the disadvantages of doing good deeds and loses Drusilla, a blend of Tallulah Bankhead and a police woman;

Cyril (Barmy) Fotheringay Phipps and Reginald Pongo Twisleton-Twisleton are reunited and Pongo visits the old family estates with Uncle Fred;

Percy Wimbolt and Nelson Cork encounter the amazing hat mystery of Alice in Wonderland Toppers;

The Angler's Rest consider Mrs Mulliner's nephew Archibald, Mayfair's foremost chicken-mimic, and Mordred the poet proves he has a way with paraffin . . .

JEEVES STORIES ON AUDIO-TAPE

Tim Andrew reviews two cassettes recorded by the late Edward Duke which he discovered recently in America

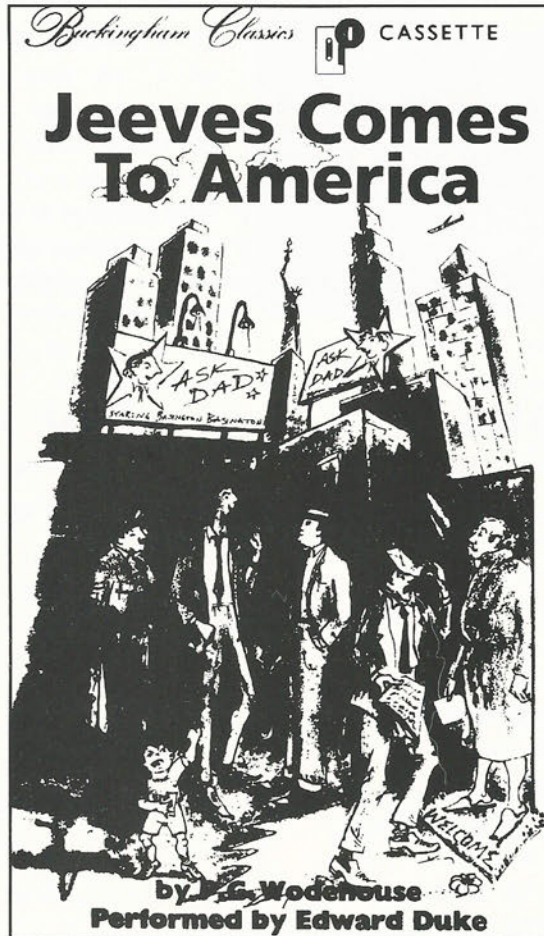
Among the many delights to be experienced at the biennial Convention of the American Wodehouse Society is the opportunity during breaks in the feast of reason and flow of soul to sample the ante-room in which there is an array of stalls with various items of Wodehousiana on sale and available for browsing – but, regrettably, not for sluicing.

Last year, at the Chicago Convention, in amongst the piles of books, watches and other items with some alleged connection with PGW, was a table stacked high with two audio tapes of Jeeves and Wooster stories performed by the late Edward Duke. The first, entitled *Jeeves Takes Charge*, contains recordings of the stories *Jeeves Takes Charge* and *Bertie Changes His Mind* from the collection published as *Carry On Jeeves*.

The second, entitled *Jeeves Comes to America*, contains *The Letter of Introduction* and *The Startling Dressiness of a Lift Attendant* from *The Inimitable Jeeves* (just *Jeeves* in America) – essentially a single story describing Cyril Bassington-Bassington's skirmish with the theatre, and more particularly Pop Blumenfield's son, in New York – and *Jeeves and the Hard Boiled Egg* from *Carry On Jeeves*.

To declare an interest, as a rule I don't take to adaptations of PGW on radio, the stage or the screen, although my interest in Wodehouse was first excited by the *World of Wooster* series with Ian Carmichael and Dennis Price in the 1960s. It is also true that there are some voices which I hear every time I read a character's words, for example, Ian Carmichael will always be the voice of Bertie Wooster for me and Jonathan Cecil has forever defined Boko Fittleworth in my mind. The problem is that dramatic adaptations tend to lose the authorial voice and somehow emphasise the silly-ass aspects of the characters, with the loss of the subtlety of the language and characterisation as well as much of the glorious prose.

On the other hand, being written in the first person, the Jeeves stories seem ideal for being read aloud, although, in my view, it still takes a lightness of touch to get the balance right. The quality then depends very much on who is doing the reading and the extent to which his or her intonation resonates with the voices already fixed in the listener's head.



The Duke tapes are very well produced, but in the first, *Jeeves Takes Charge*, there is some irritating fiddling with the text. For example, why is it necessary to change Jeeves's correct attribution of an Emerson quotation by crediting it to Marcus Aurelius? It is certainly something that Jeeves would not have done and does nothing to add any punch to the story. *Jeeves Comes to America* on the other hand, is more faithful to the original text and there are only the minor changes which would be necessary to make it more understandable to a wide transatlantic audience.

But it is Duke's treatment of the main characters which I find least satisfying. His Bertie plays up the silly-ass far too much; my vision of the character is much more that of an innocent abroad. Whilst Bertie's Aunt Agatha is famous for describing

him as 'vapid' that does not, surely, equate to his necessarily being an over-exaggerated upper-class twit. Jeeves, on the other hand, seems much too heavy and lugubrious and sounds far too old.

Nevertheless, the tapes are good fun and will while away a couple of hours in your favourite M25 traffic jam. Although I did not see it myself, I know that many people enjoyed Edward Duke's stage show and the tapes would also serve for them as a memento of that production.

Jeeves Takes Charge and *Jeeves Comes to America* are available from: B&B Audio Inc PO Box 100 Kenilworth Illinois 60043 USA

In October 1997, they cost \$10 each, plus postage.

REPORT OF THE SOCIETY'S FIRST GOLF DAY

John Wilson, the event organiser, reports:

James Kilpatrick, a local PGW enthusiast, took the role of the Oldest Member at Tandridge, Surrey, on 21st April to greet members and guests arriving to play in our first Golf Day, many dressed in 1920s/1930s attire. The prize for the most striking outfit went to Terry Blissett, a guest player from the home club.

Amongst the Society Members who attended the lunch and AGM were James Moxon, CBE, who had flown in from Ghana to meet us, Kit Evans, one of our French members, and Dennis and Judy Jenks, whose Canadian guests, Jim and Diana Ferrabee were signed up as Society members before they left.

The golf competition was a better ball three ball versus a generous bogey for each of the eighteen holes. Each of the eight teams included one lady member. Conditions for the competition were as near as possible to those existing when PGW wrote most of his golf stories, so no marking of balls on the green was allowed and 'stymies' had to be played. One team avoided the problem by having their third player cannon into the offending ball to knock it away; another skilfully lofted her ball over the one in the way, but stopped short of the hole thus laying a stymie in return; in a third case the stymied player potted the

blocking ball in best snooker fashion; and the Editor saw one outrageous 'gimme' when a stymied player 'allowed' a team member a blocking eight-foooter! Players were only allowed seven clubs and received shots when hickory-shafted clubs were included. Golf trolleys caused a three shot penalty.

The weather was dry and just right, if not obviously a day when "the whole of Nature cried 'Fore' ". The scoring was of a standard which suggested that no one had been put off by "the noise of the butterflies in the adjoining meadows". The winner of the individual prize received an umbrella from the hotel in America where PGW won his one and only golf prize and second was a pair of cuff-links, masquerading as a J H Taylor shirt-stud. Norman Murphy won a special prize for playing his first round in 25 years.

Jean Wilson, Derek Stanton and Campbell Paget won the team prize, with Wiggy Wilson, Richard Cockerill and Dennis Jenks as runners-up. Richard won the individual prize, with Martin Sankey second.

Much of the success of the day was due to the enthusiasm of all who took part, the support and welcome given by so many Tandridge members, and the excellent food provided by the Club for lunch!

GOLFERS: see page 12

AGM REPORT

The first Annual General Meeting of the Society, held at Tandridge Golf Club on 21 April was predictably uncontroversial, with brief reports from the Chairman, Editor and Treasurer/Membership Secretary. Members were informed that the Society's membership had reached about 280, that it was solvent and that to encourage annual renewals of membership a special Christmas publication would be produced (see page 9 for more detail). Officers and some committee members who subjected themselves to the elections required by the constitution were duly reelected, so your Committee until the next AGM will be:

- Norman Murphy (Chairman)
- Richard Morris (Vice-Chairman)
- Helen Murphy (Treasurer/
Membership Secretary)
- Tony Ring (Editor)
- Hilary Bruce
- Sir Edward Cazalet
- John Fletcher
- Oliver Wise

QUIZ RESULT

The opportunity was taken at the AGM to draw the prize-winner of the *Chivers*/Jonathan Cecil quiz which appeared in the December issue of *Wooster Sauce*. Irene Kilpatrick, wife of the acting Oldest Member at the Golf Day, drew the entry submitted by Nick Townend of Crewe, who wins three unabridged *Chivers* audiotapes of Wodehouse novels read by Jonathan Cecil. Congratulations to him and all the others who entered, each of whom had all-correct answers.

The answers to the questions were:

- 1 Sir Roderick Glossop
- 2 Gin and whisky
- 3 Rev James Bates
- 4 Spenser Gregson and Lord Worplesdon
- 5 John Bickersdyke

Those attending the AGM were invited to answer a quiz based on the Golf stories. This will be reproduced with an offer of appropriate prizes in the September issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

MORE EVIDENCE ROLLS IN ABOUT WODEHOUSE'S CONTINUING INFLUENCE ON LIFE!!

Readers may recall the reference in March's *Wooster Sauce* to an article in *The Times* in which Wodehouse's approach to bureaucracy, pithily summarised in the words *You Simply Hit It With An Axe*, was commended as a tenet for all business managers to follow.

In the last two months further examples of the ubiquitous influence which Wodehouse has on today's world have come to light.

Members who saw the show will be aware that towards the end of *By Jeeves*, Bertie received a replacement banjo, equipped with a set of ABDR (accoustically balanced and delayed resonance) strings, which meant that the sound cannot be heard within a certain radius of the musician. Yamaha were reported in *The Times* on 30th March to have

developed a range of stringed instruments, principally for practice, in which the sound is directed to headphones worn by the player, so that others cannot hear it. Sir Alan Ayckbourn has confirmed that he is not getting a royalty for his obvious contribution to the concept!

At our meeting at the Savage Club in October we toasted the Bulgarian people to celebrate the publication of their 30th translation of a Wodehouse book. Then in the March *Wooster Sauce* we asked members for unwanted paperbacks to send to our sister Society in Russia.

The MCC have evidently read about these ideas and shaken them about, for in their latest newsletter, they are putting out a plea for second-hand cricket equipment to be sent to Bulgaria!

ANSWER TO A READER'S QUERY

Phil Ayers, a long-time Wodehouse enthusiast wrote from Freeland, Washington, USA with the following poser:

In *The Gold Bat* chapter 2, Plum refers to 'the immortal Captain Pott'. I am afraid he may be immortal elsewhere but I don't recall hearing about him. Can you shed some light on who he was and why he is 'immortal'?

Norman Murphy kindly addressed himself to the problem and replies comprehensively as follows:

I'm not surprised Phil asked about Captain Pott. The reference has been puzzling me for a long time but I'd never bothered too much about it. The full quote is:

Like the immortal Captain Pott, Trevor was "a terror to the shirker and the lubber."

The name and the rhythm of the words sounded so like W S Gilbert from whom Wodehouse borrowed so often that I assumed it was his. When Phil's query came in, I realised it was time to check. It wasn't in any of the G&S operettas and it wasn't in Gilbert's *Bab Ballads* either. It wasn't to be found in the *Oxford* or any of my other dictionaries of quotations and it needed a trip to the British Library to find it.

The first instalment of *The Gold Bat* came out in October 1903. In 1900 the big musical comedy at the Gaiety Theatre was *The Messenger Boy* in which a character introduces himself in song as 'Captain Pott':

The terror of the shirker and the lubber.
I'm little but I'm steel and indiarubber
I run an ocean tramp, that's dirty also damp,
And shakes her rivets out when she's in motion.

Older readers will recognise why Wodehouse noted it all those years ago. 'Captain Pott' was an obvious parody of a fictional hero at the time, the pugnacious Captain Kettle, whose adventures Cutcliffe Hyne recounted from about 1890 to 1920. And Wodehouse used his name, too, in at least four of his early novels.

RECENT PRESS COMMENT

A truly phenomenal number of references to P G Wodehouse have appeared in the press since *Wooster Sauce 5*. Some, such as the article by Francis Wheen in *The Guardian* which appears on page 2, have been substantial pieces of journalism, others have commented on the attributes, real or supposed, of Wodehouse's work or its characters, and yet others have referred directly to the Society's activities. There have been the usual reviews of the London revival of *Showboat*. The lead article in May's *Book and Magazine Collector*, entitled *Weekly Wodehouse* was by Tony Ring. It discussed the novels which had appeared in magazine form and was accompanied by a dozen illustrations of relevant magazines.

Daily Telegraph 28 February

Max Davidson's report on the Society's meeting at the Savage Club took the form of a conversation between Bertie and Jeeves. Examples include: "Pongo Twistleton tells me that the society is the hottest thing since Alfred burnt the cakes. People came from far and wide to participate in its revels. Among those present at the Savage Club, I encountered an Australian, a Dane, a Sri Lankan, a Swede and – wait for it, Jeeves – a Bulgarian." He added "... the sheer intellectual horsepower needed to see me through the evening was extraordinary" and on the presence of the fair sex said "... the fair sex devour his books as if they were three-hankie romantic novels. I saw a woman there last night who might have been Honoria Glossop's younger sister. She was trying to improve her fiancé's mind and, if ever you saw a fiancé looking like a toad under a harrow, that fiancé was this fiancé."

Daily Telegraph Also on 28 February

Christopher Fildes commented on the uneasy relationship between the Chancellor, Gordon Brown and the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, Sir Terence Burns. In suggesting that each of their distinctive styles might be put out by a new economic crisis some time in the next five years he said "That is not so much a forecast as a matter of actuarial observation. I have seen it happen to so many chancellors. One minute they are bowling happily along like P G Wodehouse's Constable Oates, a policeman with nothing on his mind but his helmet. The next moment a terrier nips them, and they are off their wheels and in the ditch, upside down and looking for someone to blame."

Sunday Times 8 March

P D James described 'any of the Jeeves books' as 'comfort' literature which she rereads.

Evening Standard 19 March
(From Helen Murphy)

The whole of Patrick Hosking's review of the Budget Speech was also written as a conversation between Bertie and Jeeves. Example: "Even Bingo Little is pleased. He says he can easily afford the extra 20p on gaspers because he's cleaning up on child benefit."

Daily Telegraph 21 February
(From Murray Hedgcock)

Robert Philip wrote about the public face of the Newcastle United football manager: "The media have got it in for us," bleats Kenny Dalglish whenever we remind him that he has spent millions turning the club, premiership runners-up last season, into relegation challengers. The two never met, but P G Wodehouse's famous observation 'It is never difficult to distinguish between a Scotsman and a ray of sunshine' might have been coined especially for ol' sourpuss."

Independent 23 March
(From Murray Hedgcock)

Auberon Waugh reported on a news item about a man (call him 'A') being jailed *inter alia* for his involvement in a plot to shoot Sir Paul McCartney. 'A' was to ask him for his autograph while a co-plotter ('B') shot and wounded him. He suggested that the crux of the plot, that 'A' would then save Sir Paul, earn his gratitude and be handsomely rewarded, as belonging to Wodehouse rather than P D James or Ruth Rendell, and said that it made him wonder whether signing a petition some years ago to ensure Wodehouse books were always available in prison libraries had been quite such a good idea.

The Australian 16 March
(From Murray Hedgcock)

Frank Devine's article on proposals to modernise the British peerage began:

Bloody Tony Blair. I have wanted to be an earl since I encountered in one of P G Wodehouse's Blandings Castle stories Lord Emsworth's forceful endorsement of the position: "Earls are hot stuff." I started declaring myself uninterested in lesser honours at once, and was beginning to hope the continued absence of my name from New Year and birthday ruffraff lists of new knights and barons was a sign that word of my stance had got through to the Queen.

Now, thanks to Blair, it doesn't matter any more. He has made being an earl warmish stuff at best with his proposal that hereditary peers lose their right to sit in the House of Lords.

MORE RECENT PRESS COMMENT

Independent on Sunday 16 Nov, 1997

The late Frank Muir selected a book of Jeeves and Bertie Wooster stories as ‘a book that changed me’.

Sunday Times Wine Club Spring
(From Roger Collins)

In the lead feature, *Opportunity Knocks for Sherry*, the authors deplored the ‘Woosterification’ of the drink following a certain brand’s advertising campaign.

National Trust February
(From Vic Bolwell)

Reported that three dew-ponds in the South Downs are to be restored in a bid to save the great-crested newt and other endangered species. (Gussie Fink-Nottle take note.)

Private Eye April 29
(From Helen Murphy)

Carried an advertisement from the Folio Society (0171 400 4200) offering their recent set of six Jeeves and Wooster novels free to new members.

Sunday Times March?

George Perry’s review of the film *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* suggested that the atmosphere of 1930s London owed more to television adaptations of Wodehouse than an Orwellian perception.

New Yorker 16 February
(From Peter Cannon)

References appeared in two articles. A review of Martin Amis’s novel *Night Train* said it was as pointless trying to identify the ‘second-echelon’ American city in which it was set as it was trying to identify “the exact model for P G Wodehouse’s Blandings Castle”.

Richmond and Twickenham Times 3 April

Followed up Murray Hedgcock’s article about *The White Hart* in *Wooster Sauce* 5 with another piece on the pub as it is today.

Sunday Telegraph 15 February
(From Donald Daniel)

Conal Gregory, writing about the value of first editions, commented that copies of *The Pothunters* and *A Prefect’s Uncle* might fetch up to £400, but did not tell us where to buy one at that price.

The Times 27 March

The *Diary* column reproduced the *Society Spice Girls* photo on the front page of *Wooster Sauce* 5 with a summary of the accompanying article.

Sunday Telegraph 15 March
(From Robert Bruce)

Mark Inglefield and Molly Watson’s article *Russia Falls for Jeeves and Wooster on Web* which revealed that “PGW’s books, now available throughout Russia, have become required reading among the intelligentsia, some of whom have taken to aping the mannerisms of Wodehouse’s foppish English aristocrats.”, brought a response from Francis Wheen in *The Guardian* (see page 2).

Daily Mail 14 February
(From Murray Hedgcock)

In a Valentines Day feature, John Mortimer concluded: “Romantic love is still alive and can last a lifetime. Perhaps the most romantic story I know is about the elderly P G Wodehouse who, when he got up at dawn to write, spent the first hour of each day typing a long letter to his wife.”

The Times 16 February

Nigel Hawkes’s *Science Briefing* reported on a new analysis in the *British Journal of Nutrition* arguing that it was the ready availability of fish in the lakes of the African Rift Valley that made possible the evolution of the human brain, and suggested that Jeeves had been on to something.

The Times 9 March

The third leader commented on a report that pigs were to be subjected to tests to determine whether they could learn deception and guile, and affirmed that not only would Lord Emsworth have been apoplectic but that the Empress would never have been so mean-spirited.

The Times 1 May

Reporting the Memorial Service for John Wells at St Pauls, Covent Garden, it included among the very impressive list of attendees the Prince of Wales, Sir Edward Cazalet, Jonathan Cecil, Sir Nicholas Henderson, Richard Ingrams, John Mortimer, Norman Murphy and Ned Sherrin.

Radio Times 28 March

Carried an advertisement for holidays in Shropshire which quoted PGW as having said it was “the nearest earthly approach to Paradise”.

Writing Magazine January
(From Alison Lindsay)

Carol Townend wrote on P G Wodehouse in the journal’s *Literary Greats* series. Alison commented that the article was somewhat leaden.

. . . AND EVEN MORE!

The Times (Metro)

25 April

The cover pictured the ‘veritable icon of excess’, Lou Reed, with the caption “Dark Horse; Lou Reed in P G Wodehouse shock”. The main feature article, an interview between Reed and Patrick Humphries, concluded: “As I’m leaving, I hear that familiar velvet voice asking if someone could get him some Jeeves books to read on the Eurostar. It was a bizarre ending to an odd encounter. From Andy Warhol to Bertie Wooster and didgeridoos, all in the space of a rather exhausting morning. And so it was that, to quote P G Wodehouse: “I spent the afternoon musing on Life. If you come to think of it, what a queer thing life is! So unlike anything else, don’t you know.”

The Times

2 May

Lord Quinton adapted an extract from his new book *From Wodehouse to Wittgenstein* (Carcanet) entitled *Why is Wodehouse So Funny?*

There were many other references for which no space could be found. But the variety of allusion and subject-matter is quite extraordinary.

Please keep Press Cuttings flowing in.

CALLING ALL OVERSEAS MEMBERS

Any overseas members who are visiting the UK and would like to meet other Wodehouseans, please do not hesitate to contact the Chairman, Membership Secretary or Editor. We will do our best to help. Naturally, the more notice that can be given, the easier it is to make suitable arrangements.

A similar invitation is extended to members in the UK who find it difficult to attend our planned meetings. If you have to approach the old metrop. and would like to try to meet a few people, let us know.

And any member who would like to be involved in meeting visitors, again, please ensure that one of the three officers is aware of your interest.

WODEHOUSE ALLUSIONS IN BOOKS

Because there were so many press references which demanded attention this issue, space could not be found for a growing collection of references in books, some of them quite new, and some older, which readers might have forgotten or never have discovered. Apologies to members who have submitted quotations; they have been carefully stored, and will spring on to the printed page very soon.

Please don’t stop sending the examples! As with the press, they demonstrate just how widespread the Wodehouse world has become, and one of our duties is to ensure the tradition continues.

POETS’ CORNER

Consolation

Your looks, my friend, are auburn,
Yet do not be dismayed.
With misery no more burn,
Ashamed of such a shade.
Though street-boys call you “Ginger”,
And bid you get it shorn,
The comments need not injure,
No longer need you mourn.

For mark! the shrewd observer,
Who knows a thing or two,
Will greet the man with fervour
Whose head’s of such a hue.
For being so astute, he
Is very well aware
That souls of rarest beauty
Lie hid ’neath ruby hair.

Intensity of feeling
And purity of mind,
And lack of double-dealing
Beneath red hair you find.
The murderer, the robber,
The dissipated “spark”,
The fraud-promoting jobber,
Are men whose looks are dark.

So cease with aid of hair-dye
To bring a change to pass.
Regard not with a scared eye
Your image in the glass.
Let not the caustic bellow
Of “Carrots!” make you frown,
You’re twice as good a fellow
As he whose hair is brown.

This poem, which was a comment on a new report that character could be told from the colour of the hair, and that red hair denoted purity of thought and intensity of feeling, first appeared in the Daily Chronicle on January 22nd, 1903.

FUTURE EVENTS – FOR YOUR DIARY

June 26 – Auction

Sotheby's New York is holding an auction of the James H Heineman collection of Wodehouse material, including manuscripts, letters and innumerable first editions.

July 2 – Cricket Match

The Society has arranged a 30-overs-a-side cricket match at Dulwich College on 2nd July at 4.30pm, against the Dusters, a team drawn from the Common Room at the College. PGW himself took an XI back to the College on several occasions after he left, but this is the first match to be played in his name for several decades. Any member who would like to play should contact

Please come and support the team if you feel you cannot play!

July 11 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Join the chairman for one of his famous London walks. See page 11 for details

July 14 – Savage Club

An informal gathering of members and guests from 6pm. One or two surprises are being planned, including the provision of circumstantial evidence that Tuppy Glossop may indeed have dropped Bertie in the soup on one occasion. The Savage Club is in the premises of the National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Court, close to Charing Cross Station.

July 18 – Meeting at Birmingham

See front page for details

October 3 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Join the chairman for one of his famous London walks. See page 11 for details

October 15 – Dinner at The Inner Temple

See enclosed reservation form for details.

October 22-24, 1999 – US Society Convention

In Houston, Texas. Further details in due course.

EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

News comes from our members in the USA that the house in Remsenberg, Long Island, NY, in which Plum and Ethel Wodehouse lived for so long, has been put on the market at an asking price of \$750,000.

Philip Brownsey, a secondhand book dealer in Bristol, has recently broken a number of bound volumes of magazines from the early 1900s, some of which had Wodehouse stories. I bought the extracted *The Afternoon Dip* (Pearson's, Sept 1904), which doesn't look too bad, and will be happy to pass it on at £3.50, being cost plus postage. He offers at least two others from 1905 *Pearson's*: *A Corner in Lines* at £4, and *The Autograph Hunters* at £2.

New Patron Martin Jarvis is appearing in Mark Richard's stage adaptation of *Thank You, Jeeves* in Los Angeles from 17 to 20 June. One of his fellow actors, playing J Washburn Stoker, is Richard Riordan, Mayor of Los Angeles!

A draft of *The Millfleet Charter*, a short document setting out the Constitution of the proposed international liaison body for Wodehouse Societies has been circulated within Europe, and comments from Society Chairmen are awaited.

A hundred or so people, including a number of Society members, attended sessions of the Dulwich College Literary Festival. Jan Piggott spoke about *PGW's School Stories*, and Jonathan Cecil and Anna Sharkey entertained.

Murray Hedgcock pointed out that the previous work of Anne Dudley, the composer who won an Oscar for *The Full Monty*, included original music for the *Jeeves and Wooster* television series.

David Henderson of Scotland, who is not a member, scored 13 points during a specialist round of *Radio Mastermind* on his chosen subject, *The Jeeves Stories of P G Wodehouse*. If any reader knows where to contact him, his application for membership will be favourably considered!