



WOOSTER SAUCE

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

Number 63

September 2012

Nuts and Wine A new view of an old revue

by Terry Mordue

Terry submitted this article back in September 2011, and like so many others it took its place in the queue. Sadly, he did not live to see it published, passing away unexpectedly earlier this year. As with all of his work, this piece is of the highest quality of scholarship. An obituary of Terry is on page 8.

In 1913, one of P G Wodehouse's friends, Charles Bovill, invited him to collaborate on a theatrical revue which Bovill had been commissioned to write for the Empire Theatre, in London's Leicester Square. The two men had been colleagues on *The Globe* newspaper, and had both written lyrics for the musical play *The Gay Gordons* in 1907. Although Wodehouse had worked on a few theatrical productions, in 1913 his most successful years still lay a few years in the future, whereas Bovill, three years his senior, was already a successful lyricist and revue writer with many credits, including *By George* at the Empire (February 1911), *Peggy* at the Gaiety (March 1911, 270 performances), *Everybody's Doing It* (1912, co-written with George Grossmith), and the pantomime *The Sleeping Beauty* at Drury Lane (1912).

The Bovill-Wodehouse partnership bore two fruits: a series of six short stories that appeared in the *Strand Magazine* between April and September 1914 and were later collected as *A Man of Means*; and the 1914 musical revue *Nuts and Wine*. The stories – at least in book form – have enjoyed modest success, but the revue is now all but forgotten. There are good reasons for this: the show was not a huge success (though, as I hope to show, it was not a huge failure either); the subject matter was too topical to have lasting interest; and, as the individual contributions of Bovill and Wodehouse cannot be identified, it has attracted little interest from Wodehouse scholars.

Indeed, the show has never risen beyond the status of a passing mention in the many Wodehouse biographies. David Jasen, who devotes several

paragraphs in *P. G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master* to the partnership with Bovill, dismisses *Nuts and Wine* with the comment that it “opened at the Empire Theatre on the 4th January 1914” and, two paragraphs later, describes Wodehouse going with Bovill in May 1914 “to see the latter’s successor to *Nuts and Wine* at the Empire Theatre”. (This is almost certainly a mistake; the show that was playing at the Empire in May 1914 was *The Mixed Grill*, with which, so far as I have been able to ascertain, Bovill had no connection. *The Mixed Grill* closed on 6 June and was replaced on 11 June by *Merry-Go-Round*, for which Bovill did write the lyrics.)

Not surprisingly, Jasen’s *The Theatre of P. G. Wodehouse* provides rather more information, including credits, a cast list, a list of scenes, and – setting a precedent for future commentators – the terse comment: “4 January 1914 (7 performances)”. (Thanks to Tony Ring for pointing out that I had overlooked this.)

Frances Donaldson’s biography has more information than most on Wodehouse’s relationship with Charles Bovill, but she does not mention *Nuts and Wine*; nor does Benny Green in his *P. G. Wodehouse: A Literary Biography*.

Lee Davis (*Bolton and Wodehouse and Kern*) limits himself to the comment that the revue “opened to warm notices at the Empire on January 4, 1914”, a statement that is somewhat at odds with Barry Phelps (*P. G. Wodehouse: Man and Myth*), who describes the review in *The Times* – accurately – as merely “lukewarm”. Phelps considers the revue to have been “the biggest flop of Wodehouse’s theatrical career”, adding that it “ran for just seven performances at London’s Empire Theatre in January 1914”.

Robert McCrum, Wodehouse’s most recent biographer, offers no new information on this topic: “Their show, *Nuts and Wine*, opened on 4 January 1914 at the Empire Theatre, but closed after only

seven performances.” He does, however, make the novel suggestion that *A Man of Means* and *Nuts and Wine* were based on a single idea that, both writers felt, “could be made simultaneously into a theatrical show and a magazine series . . . in what would now be termed synergy”. It is difficult to see where the synergy arises as there are no points of similarity between the two works. *A Man of Means* narrates the adventures of a young man who wins a lot of money in a sweepstake and, being threatened with marriage, endeavours to get rid of the money, but only succeeds in increasing his wealth. *Nuts and Wine* offers a surrealistic view of several traditional English institutions, such as Eton College, the offices of a daily newspaper, and a music hall, through the eyes of Mr. Punch.

Despite the relative lack of attention given to the show, almost all scholars are agreed that it opened on 4 January 1914 and closed after only seven performances. As I shall show, neither statement is correct.

First, the date. The 4th January 1914 was a Sunday, a day when theatres in England were prohibited by law from giving paid performances; except for a brief period during the Second World War when, by special dispensation, the London theatres were permitted to open on Sundays, this legal prohibition remained in place until 1972.

That alone would be enough to cast doubt on the date of 4 January, but more conclusive evidence exists, in the form of classified advertisements in the newspapers of the period. On the front page of *The Times* for Friday, 2 January, the Empire’s advertisement reads: “No Performance To-Night. Tomorrow, at 8, Selected Varieties. Followed at 8.30 by the First Performance of the Empire’s New Revue ‘NUTS and WINE.’” The following day, the advertisement reads: “TO-NIGHT, at 8.30, First performance of ‘NUTS AND WINE’, The latest revue by C. H. Bovill and G. P. [sic] Wodehouse. Music composed and arranged by Frank E. Tours.”

VARIETIES, &c.

EMPIRE. **NUTS AND WINE.**

TO-NIGHT, at 8.30,
First performance of

“NUTS AND WINE,”

The latest revue, by
C. H. BOVILL and G. P. WODEHOUSE.
Music composed and arranged by **FRANK E. TOURS.**
Additional numbers by **GUY JONES and MELVILLE GIDEON.**
Modern dresses, hats, head-dresses, lingerie, by **PAQUIN (London and Paris).**

Staged by **JULIAN ALFRED.**
Preceded, at 8, by Selected Varieties.
“England v. The Rest,” Rugby Match, on the Bioscope.
Tele., Gerrard, 3527. **EMPIRE.**

Advertisement for the opening night of *Nuts and Wine* from *The Times*, Saturday, 3 January 1914

The Times reviewed the show on 5 January (which may explain the erroneous belief that it had opened the night before), and it must be said that if

the show had flopped, no-one would have been less surprised than the anonymous reviewer, who wrote: “*Nuts and Wine* seemed to us to present a number of clever artists for the most part making good fun out of material that was not very funny” and “for lack of wit in the treatment, some of the best things miss fire”.

Other newspapers confirm that the show opened on Saturday, 3 January 1914: an advertisement in that day’s *Daily Express* stated “To-night first performance”, while the same paper’s review on the following Monday referred to the performance “on Saturday night”. Finally, *The Observer* (then, as now, a Sunday paper) reviewed the show in its issue of 4 January.

So much for the date. What about the number of performances? The only writer to have raised any doubt about the figure of seven performances is Barry Day (*The Complete Lyrics of P. G. Wodehouse*), who noted that “this is the most often quoted number, but the existence of a theatre program dated in March suggests that the run may have been slightly longer”. Day was right to be sceptical; newspaper advertisements provide clear evidence that the show did not close until 28 March 1914. In *The Times*, for example, there was an advertisement for *Nuts and Wine* every day from 2 January until 28 March. For the first few weeks after it opened, these trumpeted: “Nuts and Wine – Brilliant Success of New Revue”. On 23 February, the advertisement changed: another piece, *The Dancing Master*, was added to the theatre’s programme from that evening, and the description of *Nuts and Wine* was shortened to “the Best Revue”. Beginning on Tuesday, 24 March, “Last Week” was added after *Nuts and Wine*, changing to “Last Night” on Saturday, 28 March. On Monday, 30 March, a “New Production entitled ‘A Mixed Grill’” was advertised for that evening.

EMPIRE. GRAND NATIONAL and the BOAT RACE on the Bioscope: NUTS and WINE (Last Night). MAIDIE HOPKINS. VIOLET LLOYD, BABELLE, ROSE HAMILTON, PHYLLIS BEDELLS, LES GLORIAS, FRICHTHORNE, JAMES GODDEN, ALBERT LE FRIE, NELSON KEYS, FRED PAYNE. THE DANCING MASTER, with PHYLLIS BEDELLS and ESPINOSA: and VARIETIES. Evenings at 8.

Advertisement for the last night of *Nuts and Wine* from *The Times*, Saturday, 28 March 1914

On the assumption (confirmed by the daily advertisements) that the Empire did not give matinee performances, but opened every evening except Sundays, the show ran for 73 performances, not seven. Hardly a roaring success, but by no means “the biggest flop of Wodehouse’s theatrical career”.

Further light is cast on the show’s history by one of its performers, Phyllis Bedells, who was the Empire’s principal danseuse. In her autobiography, *My Dancing Years*, she says that the management of the Empire Theatre changed hands at the end of March 1914 and that *Nuts and Wine* was taken off because the new management wished to put on its own show. Ironically, that show – *A Mixed Grill* –

only lasted ten weeks, a fortnight less than its predecessor.

Miss Bedells also says that after the introduction of *The Dancing Master* (writing 40 years after the event, she gives the date as 13 February, though it is clear from contemporary advertisements that it was 23 February), “a condensed version of ‘Nuts and Wine’ was put on with ‘The Dancing Master’”, a comment which may suggest that *The Dancing Master* was the more important of the two pieces. This is not borne out by a theatre programme from March 1914, in which *The Dancing Master*, described as “A Ballet Divertissement in One Tableau”, occupies little more than half a page – it only lasted 40 minutes – sandwiched between a Bioscope, *The Making of an Army*, and a musical overture, Mendelssohn’s ‘Ruy Blas’; by contrast, *Nuts and Wine* occupies three complete pages. (I am indebted to Tony Ring for providing me with a copy of this programme.)

Miss Bedells’s view is understandable, however. While she was the undisputed female star of *The Dancing Master*, she performed only two dances in *Nuts and Wine* (reducing to one after the revival of *The Dancing Master*) and faced competition from an American tango dancer billed as ‘Babette’. From Phyllis Bedells’s perspective, *The Dancing Master* was the more important piece.

From the same theatre programme, it seems that what Miss Bedells described as a “condensed version” of *Nuts and Wine* involved the loss of just one of the show’s six scenes: one scene was dropped altogether, two others were combined, and a new scene (written by Sewell Collins) was added. There may have been other changes, but as the titles of some of the scenes in the programme do not correspond with those given in the press reviews after the opening night, it is difficult now to know how far the changes extended.

In any case, by the time these changes took place, Wodehouse was no longer involved with the show. He had sailed for New York on 18 February and did not return to London until after the show had closed. In his absence, the first episode of *A Man of Means* appeared in the April 1914 issue of *Strand Magazine*, and he was back in New York by the time the final episode, in the September issue, brought to a close the brief partnership between himself and Bovill.

Charles Bovill continued writing revues until 1916, when he was commissioned in the Coldstream Guards. Though subsequently declared medically unfit for active service, he remained with his battalion as entertainments officer, in which capacity he was serving in north-eastern France in March 1918 when he was severely wounded by a stray shell. He died of his wounds a few days later. *The Times* described him as “the author of many popular revues”, while *Era* magazine remembered him as “perhaps the neatest and most polished” of revue writers.

Everyman: An Update

NORMAN DODSON writes: “In the past you included info on forthcoming publications in the Everyman series but of late I have not seen this in *Wooster Sauce*.”

Well, er, yes – quite. It appears your Editor slipped up a bit, for which apologies to all members. Since announcing the publication of Everyman’s 69th and 70th Wodehouse titles in our June 2010 issue, I failed to keep a record of their subsequent editions. So, with thanks to Tony Ring (who does keep track of these things), here is what has been published since 2010 (including titles 69 and 70):

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2010: | A Pelican at Blandings
A Prefect’s Uncle
Service with a Smile
The Pothunters
The Girl in Blue
The Man Upstairs |
| 2011: | The Gold Bat
Ice in the Bedroom
Love Among the Chickens
The Old Reliable
The Adventures of Sally
Mike at Wrykyn |
| 2012: | Bachelors Anonymous
Tales of St Austin’s
The Head of Kay’s
Company For Henry |



The latest Everyman book

The Everyman Wodehouse books are published in hardback and feature distinctive original covers. The books can be bought at all major retailers and via Amazon.

Society News

November Meeting – Questions Needed!

Our last meeting of the year will take place on November 13 at The George, and it will feature the Society's AGM, led as usual by Chairman Hilary Bruce. She will be especially keen to get through the business as swiftly as possible, because we have a real treat in store: Oxford don Sophie Ratcliffe will be interviewed by Paul Kent regarding her experiences researching, editing, and annotating her superb book *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*.

Because we don't want to waste a moment of what is really a golden opportunity to ask Sophie the questions you might like to ask her, Paul is soliciting questions beforehand. Thus, whether or not you will be at the meeting, if there are aspects of Wodehouse's letters and what was entailed in putting the book together that you'd like to ask Sophie about, then email them to Paul at wodehousefeedback@live.co.uk, and he will select some of the more interesting ones for his interview.

If you plan to attend and have a copy of the book, feel free to bring it along so that Sophie can sign it for you. If you'll be there and you *don't* have a copy yet, then get thee to the nearest bookstore and snap one up before the 13th! The meeting starts from 6 p.m., and the conviviality will continue even after the AGM and the interview with Sophie. Do come!

A Washed-out Cricket Season

Our more alert members may have noticed that the weather has been a little – er – wet this year, to say the least. It has, in fact, been the rainiest year in Britain since records began, or so they tell us. Consequently, the Gold Bats' two official games of the season, against the Dulwich Dusters and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, were rained off for the second year in a row. This has been a huge disappointment for all of us, and we can only keep our fingers crossed that Next Year Will Be Different. Start your prayers now! Meanwhile, team captain Bob Miller has reported that the Gold Bats did manage to play – and win (by 92 runs) – a match against the Mount Cricket Club on July 1: "After the game everyone commented on what a pleasure it was to play the game in the right spirit and the result was a secondary feature. The Gold Bats

About Your Subscriptions

Thank you to all those members who have renewed at the new rate – from our point of view, everything seems to have gone very smoothly. Those members who haven't yet done so will find a renewal form enclosed herewith, and are cordially invited to refresh their membership now.

Members paying by Standing Order earned a year's grace on the subscription increase, so their subs go up at the next renewal, in June 2013. To alter the subscription, we have to ask members to replace their existing Standing Order Mandate, and because dealing with everything is going to be quite a job, we need to start now.

Consequently, Standing Order payers will find a replacement mandate enclosed with this *Wooster Sauce*. Please, please complete and return the form to us as soon as you can – we will have about 600 of these to deal with, so we really need to get started right away. Getting the forms in early will make life much easier and save us many hours of work, so we'd be very grateful for your co-operation with this.

Thank you.

were immediately invited to return next year, and this was graciously accepted."

An Editor's Apology

Members will note that, in addition to our special colour supplement reporting A Weekend with Wodehouse in Norfolk, there are four pages of related reports and photos inside *Wooster Sauce* itself. What with those pages, two lengthy obituaries, reviews, and so forth, other material in the queue could not be printed due to lack of space, including an account of our highly enjoyable meeting at The George in July. That will be published in December along with, we hope, a number of articles from contributors who have been waiting quite a while to see their pieces in print. Thanks for your patience!

Wodehouse on the Olympics

The 1908 Olympics in London was a much smaller affair than the Games of 2012, and was regarded much more light-heartedly (even though Team GB then won more gold medals than all other countries combined!). P. G. Wodehouse attended many of the events and gave the following advice in a 'By The Way' column entitled 'Five Minutes at the Olympic Games - Hints to Young Competitors'.

- A good way of practising jumping is to look at your wife's millinery bills.
- If the hurdles bother you in the Hurdle Race, run around them.
- If you see somebody photographing you as you are finishing in the Quarter Mile, don't forget to look pleasant.
- Even if running makes you thirsty, don't stop for a lemon-squash during the race.

(From *The Globe By The Way Book*; thanks to JOHN DAWSON)

The Forthcoming Blandings TV Series on BBC1

An adaptation *from* Wodehouse; not an adaptation *of* Wodehouse

by Tony Ring

At the time of going to press, there has been no news of the transmission date for the first episode in the new BBC comedy series *Blandings*, starring Timothy Spall as Lord Emsworth and Jennifer Saunders as Lady Constance Keeble. It is therefore premature to present a lengthy preview of what we might expect to see. The release to the public of details about the series is in the hands of the BBC and Mammoth Productions. However, occasional PR releases about other cast members have indicated that some are playing the roles of supporting characters who did not appear in the source stories, and this has already caused a few raised eyebrows in some circles.

The reasons for the creation of new characters are wholly understandable in the context of the modern approach to the creation of a comedy series, which is expected to attract a wide audience for whom continuity of a group of major characters is important. Having identified who those major characters are to be, the adapter has had to ensure that each has a sufficiently active role in each episode, and in some cases this has required the development of new scenes – and new characters – in keeping with a contemporary take on Wodehouse’s humour.

As will be appreciated, the vast majority of the expected audience will have read little or no Wodehouse – and will not be able to appreciate many

of the nuances and subtleties of the stories and Wodehouse’s language. Those familiar with the works should put aside any preconceptions and judge the programmes as self-standing examples of today’s family-orientated comedy entertainment which are adaptations *from* Wodehouse’s stories rather than faithful adaptations *of* his texts.



Jennifer Saunders as Lady Constance and Timothy Spall as Lord Emsworth

Every reader of *Wooster Sauce* is aware that Wodehouse’s writing is great enough to retain the interest of a high proportion of those who try it, and the Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate have authorised the project in the hope of attracting a new generation of young readers to the books through the first television series for about 20 years – just as, we dare to say, a number of you found Wodehouse through Granada’s *Jeeves and Wooster* series in the

1990s.

When the transmission dates are known, a more detailed introduction to the series will appear on the Society’s website: www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk. It is recommended that members read it to obtain a far more detailed explanation of the evolution of the series than is permissible at present.

Editor’s note: Rather than a formal review of the Blandings series, we will publish members’ impressions. Please send your comments – no more than 50 words – to the Editor (address on page 24).

Time Warp

I recently finished reading *Ring For Jeeves*. I have read it several times before, but this time I was struck by an incongruity that did not occur to me before. The story is about William, the ninth Earl of Rowcester, and good old Jeeves, who is temporarily serving him since his master Bertie has to do without a manservant for some time.

Now, it is generally understood that the period of Wodehouse stories is the early 20th century – say between 1915 and 1930 or ‘35 at the most. Indeed, the Master rarely, if at all, dated his plots, right from *Something Fresh* (1915) till *Sunset at Blandings*. But for once, the period of this particular novel is the mid-1950s, as made clear therein. There is a mention of a television set and also of the Second World War. I

find it bit disconcerting that Bertie of the 1920s gets somersaulted to the 1950s.

Another small matter of age. If the period of Bertie and Jeeves stories is to be taken as the 1920s and ‘30s and that Bertie is understood to be around 30, he would be born near the turn of the century. In this novel that would make him in his mid-50s (as is Bill, the Earl), and Jeeves would be in his 70s – pushing 80! Bit odd, I say, what?

Why not accept Bertie and Jeeves in the 1950s just like in the 1920s? I find it difficult.

Stephen Fry says: “You don’t analyse such sunlit perfection, you just bask in its warmth and splendour.” I couldn’t agree with him more. But there it is.

– DILIP JOSHI



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Christopher Bellew

It is supposed that “mummy porn” [e.g., *Fifty Shades of Grey*] is a new phenomenon. In ‘The Amazing Hat Mystery’ (*Young Men in Spats*, 1936) “old Lady Punter had gone up to her boudoir with a digestive tablet and a sex-novel”. So what’s new?

From Mark Taylor

As a lifelong fight fan, I can assure you that boxing, as distinct from prizefighting, was never illegal in Britain. (‘Betting on Bertie’, part 1, June 2012 issue). Prizefighting was always a big betting sport, as was cricket during the mid-19th century.

Norman replies: It is a fine point. If a man advertised for people to come and pay to watch a boxing match, he would be brought before magistrates and charged with a breach of the peace. That is why such matches could only be held in private clubs like the Pelican, the National Sporting Club and private boxing clubs. It wasn’t illegal to box, it was illegal to stage public boxing matches for money.

From Susan Deniou

One of my favourite bits of Wodehouse is ‘Rodney Has a Relapse’, in particular the description of this erstwhile poet as “virulent” and “the sort of man who would produce a slim volume of verse bound in squashy mauve leather at the drop of a hat”.

I had assumed that this was a Wodehouse invention, calculated to indicate just how ghastly Rodney’s stuff was; surely only a very bad poet would be associated with such a nauseating object. I never expected to see one. However, recently a neighbour donated to the village second-hand book sale, for which I had the honour to be chief sorter and box-lugger, just such a volume.

The verse is Longfellow’s ‘The Legend Beautiful’, part of the ‘Laurel Wreath’ series, published in London by Ernest Nister, in New York by E.P. Dutton, and printed in Bavaria, no date supplied. It is indeed a very slim volume – a mere 39 pages, most containing fewer than 25 words. Its binding is of mauve leather and extremely squashy.

I found no reference to sunsets or pixies. Whether Longfellow is to be considered a virulent poet I leave to those better qualified to judge.

From Barry Chapman

I was very interested to read Yasmine Gooneratne’s article on ‘The Wooster Family Tree’. Quoting indirect evidence, Professor Gooneratne points out that “Clarence, 9th Earl of Emsworth [and his two sons] are possibly related to the Woosters.” Whereas that may well still be the case, against that conclusion is the following.

In ‘Jeeves Takes Charge’, Bertie Wooster’s then-fiancée, Lady Florence Craye, when speaking of his Uncle Willoughby’s rather racy reminiscences, refers to a “dreadful” story in them concerning Lord Emsworth when young. Bertie replies:

“Lord Emsworth? Not the one we know? Not the one at Blandings?”

A most respectable old Johnnie, don’t you know. Doesn’t do a thing nowadays but dig in the garden with a spud.

This does not sound like a reference to an actual Wooster family relation, but rather to just a member of their social circle.

From Mark Taylor

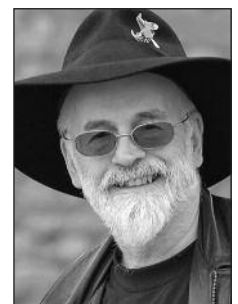
I have just been rereading ‘Bramley Is So Bracing’, with Freddie Widgeon twice accidentally leaving young Algernon Aubrey Little in the Rev. Aubrey Upjohn’s study. Now I read about the Camerons accidentally leaving their daughter in the pub. I believe both Freddie and David went to Eton. I’ve heard Cameron compared to Flashman – perhaps he should be put up for the Drones Club, too!

From Yasmine Gooneratne

You may be interested to know of a recent Book Club meeting in Colombo [Sri Lanka] that took the form of ‘An Evening with the Drones’. Part of the entertainment on offer was a live dramatisation of the scene in which Jeeves mixes Bertie’s first hangover cure. Our host (a local consultant physician) played Jeeves, and his talented grandson played Bertie. Needless to say, a very good time was had by all. My own contribution to the jollity (as invited ‘Resource Person’) was a brief talk about Wodehouse, Jeeves, and Bertie.

The Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize

In May, the 13th Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize was awarded to Sir Terry Pratchett for his novel *Snuff*. The annual prize is given to the book that best captures the “comic spirit” of P G Wodehouse, and many who are fans of both authors would agree that Pratchett, who has been known to inject sly references to the Master in his Discworld books, deserves it. Congratulations to Sir Terry, who received a case of champagne, a complete set of the Everyman Wodehouse books, and the honour of having a Gloucestershire Old Spot pig named after his winning book. (*Snuff* will probably take a lot less ribbing than his fellow porcine winners, who include *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* and *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*.)



Second Row, Grand Circle

Rexton S. Bunnett reviews Tony Ring's new book

Do not let the title of Tony Ring's very readable and enjoyable book put you off. A reference guide it is, but it is one of those rare ones that can be read cover to cover and, perhaps even more importantly, give an insight to P G Wodehouse, the man, as well as his work.

Tony makes it clear that this book is to fill the void of information about Wodehouse's non-musical theatre attempts. His success as a musical theatre librettist and lyricist will certainly be his legacy to the theatre, and where his important place in 20-century theatre remains is well documented elsewhere. This book, while not being able to totally ignore his musical theatre success, does concentrate on his attempts – successful and unsuccessful – at what Tony calls the 'legitimate' stage.

Tony has managed, over a great number of years, to collect and read Wodehouse plays (published and not) as well as partly formed pieces. Much of this work was in collaboration with others, including his longest, the masterly Guy Bolton and some farces with George Grossmith and Ian Hay. However, much of Wodehouse's work was also taking plays of others to improve and to translate into English.

Many letters that give much background to the book show an insecurity when Wodehouse was working alone, but with a considerable amount of optimism. It is also interesting and fascinating to read of the different ways a book and play are constructed. Wodehouse's attempts to rebuild his career after the Second World War show even more insight. Not only had the world he wrote about changed, he was still very conscious of his own position during the war.

The book is structured in sections starting with a more general overview of theatre and the impact of censorship upon it. It gives the reader a background that provides depth when introduced to the actual plays. We then set out on a journey through the plays produced in the West End and on Broadway or

elsewhere. Then there are the incomplete and unproduced plays where a script was not always available, but comments have been taken from Wodehouse's own letters to friends and relatives. In most cases, Tony has managed to produce a play synopsis.

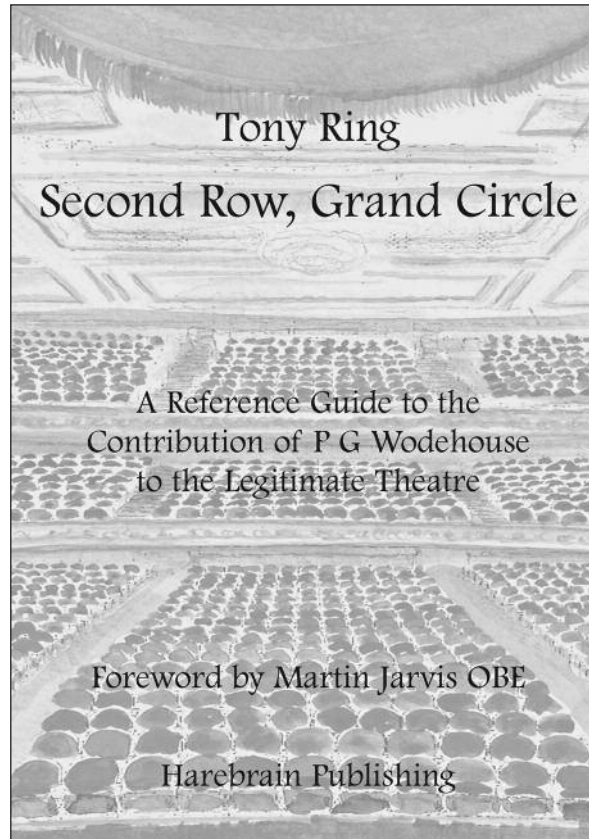
For those of you who simply love the wit of Wodehouse, you could do no better than to delve into the 'Nifties' – one-, two-, or three-liners from the plays which are a joy after reading the synopsis and character backgrounds.

The word 'legitimate' in the title indicates dramas, but on stage Wodehouse was not involved with many of these. Of course, Tony is technically right to use the word, but I feel Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse would have questioned it. Wodehouse's gift with the more humorous side of life is well served here, and Tony's book will become an important reference for those eagerly wanting to know more about

the man and his work.

I doubt if anyone other than Tony Ring could have written this important work.

Second Row, Grand Circle – A Reference Guide to the Contribution of P G Wodehouse to the Legitimate Theatre, by Tony Ring, with a foreword by Martin Jarvis OBE, is available directly from the author.



The cover for Tony's book was designed by Tom Young.

It was a poetic drama, and the audience, though loath to do anyone an injustice, was beginning to suspect that it was written in blank verse.

(From *Jill the Reckless*, 1921)

We Remember

Terry Mordue, 1948–2012

Gentleman and Scholar

On February 25, many in the Wodehouse world were shocked and saddened to learn that Terry Mordue, a true “Wodehouse man” of sharp wit and meticulous scholarship, had passed away unexpectedly at the age of 63. He had been hospitalized on February 14 for heart tests, but his condition was not thought to be life-threatening.

Terry was an avid collector of Wodehouse for over 40 years. On his retirement in 1999, he began to create a large body of scholarly work consisting of book annotations, numerous articles, and an expertly annotated bibliography that received universal praise. His widow Helen writes: “He had a very inquiring mind and always wanted to research as much as he could about any subject that caught his fancy.”

P. G. Wodehouse caught Terry’s fancy. He wrote: “Only those who can recognize the very many allusions and quotations with which his work is packed can fully appreciate his comic talent.” Terry’s website, *A Celebration of P.G. Wodehouse* (<http://www.terry-mordue.co.uk>), features much of his annotation work and his wonderful bibliography, which traces the books and short stories through their various incarnations while correcting earlier bibliographical errors. His recent masterful annotations of the *Parrot* poems (see <http://bit.ly/Oe9HV>) are essential for those wanting to learn the fascinating history behind them.

Terry was a co-founder of the popular internet discussion group Blandings (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/blandings>), where he entertained and edified a wide array of Wodehouse fans with his wit and astute commentary. He was always willing to share his findings with other group members. A few years ago he set out to improve the then-lamentable Wodehouse Wikipedia page, and his contributions there under the nom de Plum of ‘Jimmy Pitt’ vastly improved the page’s content and accuracy. Terry’s painstaking annotations are also to be found on the Madame Eulalie site, which has agreed to incorporate his site within its main pages. (Thanks to Helen, Raja Srinivasan, and Ananth Kaitharam for keeping Terry’s work alive for new generations to enjoy.)

Terence Anthony Mordue was born on May 10, 1948, in Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, and was “a true White Rose man of Yorkshire.” He graduated from Kings College, London, in 1969 with first-class honours in Geography and joined Royal Dutch Shell as a systems designer. From 1979 until retirement, he

worked for the Commonwealth Development Corporation, which took him to New Guinea, Tanzania, Botswana, Thailand, and Zambia. Terry’s adventures over the course of a well-lived life carried him to every continent except Antarctica. He enjoyed nature, gardening, golf, cricket, rugby (“a bigger obsession than Wodehouse”), and classical music (Wagner and Liszt), and he was a “voracious reader of everything” including traditional crime fiction and military history.

Terry and I shared a mutual passion for Wodehouse’s early body of work in London newspapers and magazines. A little over a year ago, when I received permission from the Wodehouse Estate to annotate PGW’s *Money Received for Literary Work* (1901–08), I immediately asked Terry to collaborate with me, recognizing that his knowledge, resourcefulness, and scrupulous attention to detail would be invaluable to the project’s success. To my everlasting gratitude, he accepted. One of the first things he spotted as he reviewed PGW’s notebooks was his erratic arithmetic: “It’s a good thing he was a great writer, because he was a lousy mathematician.”

Terry and Helen married in 1970 and are the parents of daughters Jennifer and Laura. Although our loss cannot compare to theirs, we share their happy memories of our “Gentleman of Leisure” and remember the erudition and generosity that made him a beacon of Wodehouse scholarship and earned him many friends. You are missed, Terry.

– JOHN DAWSON

Terry’s was a multifaceted personality in the real sense of the word; he was almost a genius. He loved maths and was among the select few who could claim to have read (and understood) Bertrand Russell’s *Principia Mathematica* fully, from start to finish. Philosophy was another favourite subject. He was a keen word lover, and everything that has to do with the English language interested him.

The creation of the Blandings Yahoo group devoted to Wodehouse is a separate story. Terry, Charles Stone-Tolcher, and I are the ‘founding fathers’ of this popular international forum. For more than ten years, I had an almost daily interaction with Terry. What impressed me most was his humility and desire to stay away from limelight. We learned a lot from him – the beauty of language and how to read books and enjoy music like a real connoisseur – but most of all, he taught us the meaning of true, selfless, and pure friendship, irrespective of age or nationality.

The world has indeed lost a gem in the passing of this great man. Terry Mordue, we love you, old top.

– HARSHAWARDHAN NIMKHEDKAR



We Remember

John Fletcher, 1929–2012

A Man of Letters

It was with great sadness that I heard of John's death on June 11. I knew he had not been well, but the news still came as a shock. He was a founder member of the Society, became our first website editor, created the still-going-strong Wodehouse Quiz, and became a well-known figure among Wodehouse enthusiasts worldwide.

Born on September 27, 1929, John had two careers. After Wellington and Queens College, Oxford, and then a short time in Singapore shipping rubber, he joined ICI for many years before becoming a lecturer and teacher of English. In 1973 Duckworth published his *The Interview at Work*, and in 1979 the Institute of Chartered Accountants published his collaborative work with D. F. Gowing that was re-published in 1987 as *The Business Guide to Effective Writing*.

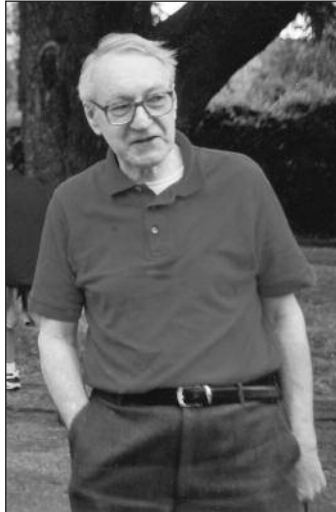
That's the official side of things. I first met John in 1982. A fellow lecturer had brought *In Search of Blandings* to his attention, and John had liked it so much that he and two friends invited me to lunch. From memory, the two friends had little to say or, rather, had little chance of saying anything at all since John had so many questions and I was so voluble in my replies. That meeting set the pattern of our friendship: heated discussions on abstruse Wodehousean points, usually ending in agreement but occasionally in a cheerful agreement to disagree.

John came on the 1989 Pilgrimage, which initiated the close and happy relationship between the UK and US Societies, and he was invaluable in helping with that tour. In 1991 he decided to become a publisher himself, earning the gratitude of Wodehouseans everywhere by re-printing *A Man of Means* and going on to publish Tony Ring's *Wodehouse Millennium Concordance* and several other equally important works.

I was delighted when John agreed to publish Gally Threepwood's *Reminiscences*, but I became slightly apprehensive when I received a series of queries on what I considered minor, even unimportant, matters of style. Since my wife Charlotte had made her living as a proofreader and sub-editor, I passed John's queries over to her. The result was a long series of telephone calls with words like *anacoluthon*, *catachresis*, *hendiadys*, and *meiosis* winging down the wire in both directions. I seem to recall both parties quoting Fowler's *Modern English Usage* at length, but that led to queries on which edition the other was

using. I think Charlotte came out on top eventually when she pointed out a phrase John didn't like was a straight quotation from Arthur 'Pitcher' Binstead and then read him the note Wodehouse had added in a letter to me that Binstead was "a master writer". But that didn't affect our friendship, and Charlotte agreed that it was a pleasure to argue about correct English with someone who knew what he was talking about.

When the UK Society was formed in 1997, John played a vital part, particularly in taking on the website editorship. In 2000, he came on the Millennium Tour and, as part of the in-coach entertainment, read us the immortal prize-giving scene from *Right Ho, Jeeves*. Like everybody else in the coach, I thought I knew the scene backwards. As John read it, I realised I didn't. What he did was to read it slowly – and pause at certain phrases. That sounds banal, but, by slowing the whole thing down and making us listen to *every word*, the whole scene acquired a new significance. John's reading made me appreciate, for the first time, not just Wodehouse's choice of words to make his point but the importance of the *sound* – the rhythm of the words he



used. I recall I bought John a drink that night, and I remember him saying: "Yes, with Wodehouse, it is always worthwhile reading him aloud to yourself – even if people stare at you in railway carriages."

At John's funeral service, his son mentioned some little-known facets of John's life, such as his empathy with horses and ability to calm them down. This was news to most of us, but I should have realised by then that John was a man of many parts. At the age of 63, I decided to take lessons in tap-dancing; I wasn't all that good, but I enjoyed it. At the Wodehouse Convention at Houston in 1999, someone started playing the piano and went into what I seem to recall was an old Fred Astaire number. Carried away by the music, I went into my very basic tap-dance routine. To my surprise and delight, Margaret Slythe joined me, and then, to our even greater surprise, John joined in as well!

It was one of those splendid little incidents that make life worthwhile; the three of us hammering away until Margaret and I got tired and stopped. But John carried on and finished in grand style by dancing down the steps (much more difficult than it looks) in perfect Astaire style. I've never forgotten that. Yes, a man of many parts.

Our condolences go to Tana and his children Mark, Didi, Katy, and Ally, but I am sure they remember John as happily as I do: a friend, publisher, and Wodehouse enthusiast but, above all, a true man of letters.

– NORMAN MURPHY

The Empress of Blandings Revisited

by Elin Murphy

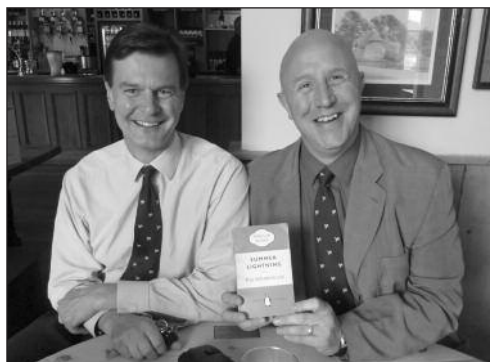
No, not a Berkshire sow in a pigsty, but a pub in Copythorne, Hampshire. Four years ago (see *Wooster Sauce*, December 2008), I reported on a visit that Jean Tillson and I made to Copythorne, where we enjoyed a terrific lunch at the Empress of Blandings. Earlier this year, David Hoare, Retail Director of the Dorset brewery Hall & Woodhouse, and Managing Director Anthony Woodhouse invited Norman and me to come and have a look at the newly refurbished pub. This was too good to refuse, so on a lovely day in late May, we wended our way Hampshire-wards.



Hall & Woodhouse bought the onetime restaurant in 2005, and in making it over into a pub, David, a lifelong Wodehouse fan, came up with the idea of naming it after our favourite porcine heroine. The pub's roadside sign (see photo above) features a picture of the Empress based on one in *The Pig* by Sanders Spencer. During their refurbishment, Hall & Woodhouse inserted a cheeky joke into it (look closely).

When Jean and I visited in 2008, the only complaint we had was that, despite the pub's name and a Wodehouse quotation prominently featured on an outside wall, there was no reference to Wodehouse himself to be seen anywhere. David subsequently saw to it that PGW's name was added to the outside quote, but in the recent refurbishment he has outdone himself. The entire pub is now practically a shrine to Wodehouse and to pigs – all sorts of pigs, but especially Berkshires – and, as a result, it is even more of a delight to visit.

For starters, the PGW quote on the outside is now accompanied by a drawing of a pig. Another pig greets you on a wall at the entrance, and underneath it



Our hosts, Anthony Woodhouse & David Hoare

is information about PGW's Empress, "owned by the doting Lord Emsworth". Inside, many of the walls are covered with photographs, including quite a few of Wodehouse and pigs of all descriptions. In one section, there are two walls devoted to the enchanting Everyman edition book covers, with a clever joke inserted among them (I won't say what it is – you will have to find it for yourself). Those walls that don't have photos are often lined with bookcases, filled to the brim with books for patrons to read. And, of course, there are plenty of Wodehouse tomes, including a complete collection of Everyman books and several first editions – although those are out of reach.

Everywhere about the pub, inscribed into the beams or painted on walls, are quotes of a porcine or pub-centred nature. They include some quotes from Wodehouse – naturally! – but one of my favourites is the W. C. Fields observation: "If I had my life to live over again, I'd live over a pub." Me too, especially if it were *this* pub!



One of the pub's many decorative features



Everyman book covers adorn the walls.

There is more I could say about the wonderful decor – including a delightful collection of pigs, painstakingly amassed by Claire and Rod Darrell-Brough – as well as the pub's warm and welcoming atmosphere and excellent food, but I don't have the room. So all I can do is encourage you to see it for yourself. More photos, directions, a menu, and other information can be found on the Empress of Blandings's website: <http://empressofblandings.co.uk/>.

And if you do go, bring a copy of *Wooster Sauce* with you. Presenting it will entitle you to 20% off your meal – a special offer from Hall & Woodhouse, just for Society members!

What a Weekend!

A special four-page colour supplement with this issue of Wooster Sauce celebrates the wonderful time enjoyed by all those who participated in A Weekend with Wodehouse in Norfolk, 24–28 May. Packed full as the weekend was, there are inevitably some side stories to share, as well as many more photographs (pages 12 and 13) of three truly memorable days.

A Message from Stephen Fry to the 2012 Norfolk Tour

Our Patron, a famous resident of Norfolk, was unable to greet us in person and therefore kindly sent this message, which was read by Tony Ring on the coach.

What ho, what ho, what ho –

Welcome to the Wodehouse Society’s visit to Norwich, a Fine (as you will notice as you push through the turnstile) City. The words of George Borrow, not mine. You won’t need me to tell you about Plum Wodehouse’s friendship with the Le Strange family of Hunstanton in Norfolk. Word has it that he was writing of Gussie Fink-Nottle and the orange juice while sitting on a punt in the moat, his Royal typewriter on a plank over his knees and manfully ignoring the uproar of butterflies in the adjoining meadows.

Norwich, aside from having the finest football club in Britain (although, as Psmith might have said, they do not *always* propel the sphere between the uprights with sufficient assiduity) is a fine mix of medieval and later architectural styles; she boasts the second highest spire in Britain (to have the highest would be boastful, a quality not often found in Norfolk people, we leave that to the churls of Salisbury) and a castle from the walls of whose Norman keep many a rebel has hung in chains. From Boudicca or Boadicea onwards, by way of Jack Kett and Alan Partridge, the citizens of Norfolk and Norwich have found it difficult to bow the head under the yoke of tyranny, whether from despots of the Roman, Plantagenet, or BBC dispensations.

From Mother Julian to Delia Smith, Norwich’s fertile womb has been delivered of powerful women. It was the former, of course, who offered the world the happy hopeful belief that all shall be well, all manner of things shall be well. A sunny outlook shared by Voltaire’s Pangloss, by Plum, by Bertie, by Fred Ickenham, Ukridge and – well, me too. Mostly.

I wish I could be with you, conducting you personally about the capital capital capital city of East Anglia (forgive me, like Lord Emsworth

I’m a man who, once he starts saying “capital”, finds it difficult to stop). I would take you to the site of the Scientific Anglian Bookshop in Benedict Street, within whose unlikely purlieus I found the dozens and dozens of second-hand Wodehouses, many of them first editions on sale for five or six pence, that formed the basis of my collection of the works of the Master. Why, I might even have invited you to tea at

my house the other side of Swaffham, although I should most certainly have counted the spoons and locked the bookcases. I’m a trusting man, but when it comes to collections, I know that the cow-creamer mentality of Aunt Dahlia’s Uncle Tom, the dread Bassett, and yet dreader Spode will turn the most blameless of citizens into conniving burglarious villains. Not you, of course, not you . . .

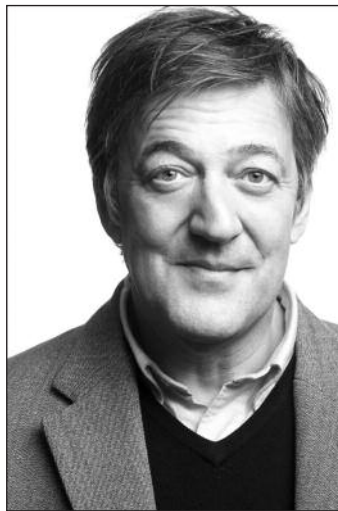
I send this from about as far away from you as a chap can get without falling off the world: Wellington, New Zealand. This is why I cannot be with you, not without breaking my contract with the president of Superba-Llewelyn Pictures at the very least. And you

know how tough those buzzards are.

So pip pip and tinkerty-tonk and kiss the paving stones of Norwich for me . . .

Stephen Fry

© Stephen Fry



(Photo by Claire N. Williams)



Weekenders head to Norwich Cathedral



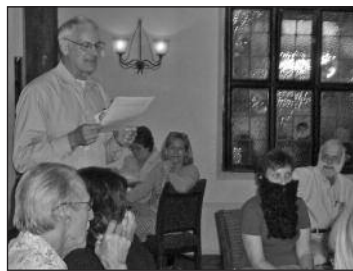
l-r: Frank Hammerle, Jill Hammerle, Betty Hooker, Joan Clevenger, Ken Clevenger, Tom Hooker, Esmé Hammerle, Murray Hedgcock



Chris and Sue Reece



Edward Cazalet welcomes the Weekenders



Ken and Masha performing 'The Clicking of Cuthbert'



l-r: Robert Bruce, Larissa Saxby-Bridger, Norman Murphy, Hilary Bruce



Norman gleefully shows off the old pigsty at Hunstanton Hall.



Sandringham (photo by Masha Lebedeva)



Michael and Charles Meakin



Michael Meakin and his son Charles had this footbridge across the moat specially built prior to the Weekenders' arrival, and also cleaned it out, enabling us to not only see but also go inside the Octagon (left). (Photo above by Masha Lebedeva)



Tamaki shows us what to do when escaping an angry swan. (Photo by Masha Lebedeva)



l-r: Carey Tynan, Christine Hewitt, Amy Plofker, Tim Richards, Josepha Olsthoorn, Gloria Nakamura



Big Dave, our superb coach driver



Our fearless leader, Hilary Bruce



l-r: Bob Rains, Lesley Tapson, Andrea Jacobsen, Jonathan Hopson



Lord Howard, genial owner of Castle Rising



Castle Rising, where the first known Wodehouse, Sir John, was Constable. (Photo by Masha Lebedeva)



Blickling Hall (photo by Masha Lebedeva)



l-r: Elizabeth Findlay, Karen Shotting, Elaine Ring, Ed Jacobitti, Barbara Jacobitti, Tony Ring, Caroline Franklyn, Arthur Findlay



Amara El Gammal and Uschi Knieper



Lunch at the Green Dragon, Wymondham



Mr & Mrs Buxton, who hosted us at Kimberley Hall along with their son Robbie



Vladimir Brusiloff makes a surprise appearance.



A moment's rest at Kimberley Hall



l-r: Christopher Cox, Masha Lebedeva, John Loojestijn, Paula Loojestijn, Ian Alexander-Sinclair, Tamaki Morimura



Cheerful tearful goodbyes

Two Postscripts from the Tour

Fiddling About

by Caroline Franklyn

As I suspect that I may be one of a tiny minority of PGWS members who happen to play the viol, I would like to correct an erroneous assumption on the part of some non-viol-playing members.

In ‘Jeeves and the Impending Doom’ (from *Very Good, Jeeves*), Bertie Wooster and the Right Hon. A. B. Filmer are aggressively attacked by a territorial swan protecting its nest. They escape by climbing to the roof of the Octagon, a small building on an island in a lake, and are later rescued by Jeeves.

PGW came across the Octagon when visiting Hunstanton Hall in the 1920s. It was built by Hamon Le Strange in 1640 and was intended by his wife as a retreat, suitably distant from the house, in which he could practise the viol. I, along with many other PGWS members, had the huge pleasure of visiting Hunstanton Hall and the Octagon on the recent Weekend with Wodehouse in Norfolk.

The erroneous assumption from which I would like to rescue PGWS members – and which is also shared by the vast majority of people – is that for ‘viol’ one should read ‘violin’ or ‘viola’. In the story, PGW himself refers to the ‘fiddle’.



In fact, there are obvious differences between the viol and the violin. The viol and its bow are shaped differently and are often rather more ornate. It has frets and six strings, tuned in Perfect 4ths, with a Major 3rd between the central strings. Also, it is played on the lap or between the knees, and the bow is held the opposite way round to that of the violin or cello (see picture above).

The viol family was not the precursor to that ‘other’ string family, as seen in any modern orchestra, but ran parallel in popularity for many years. It saw its beginnings in 15th-century Spain, when musicians tried playing the guitar with the North African ‘rabab’ bow. In the current resurgence of interest in Early Music, the viol, along with other Renaissance instruments, is gaining in popularity.

Post-Weekend Musings

by Bob ‘Oily Carlisle’ Rains

After Sweetie and I bade a fond farewell to our fellow Plummies at the end of the Norfolk Weekend Bash, we hot-footed it to Glaston, where we stayed with old friends for a couple of days. On our departure from Glaston, we stopped at Uppingham to obtain the necessary oof from a hole-in-the-wall. Our friends then took us to the Goldmark Art Gallery, which was featuring lovely etchings by some fellow named Rembrandt. These proved to be a little bit out of our price range, what with the need for eating and such.

But, in a back room, we espied prints from Sir John Tenniel’s original wood engravings for *Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. They were fantastic. I kept being drawn to a particular print of the Walrus and the Carpenter, which dredged up fragments of Lewis Carroll’s poem. It was pricey, and we had already bought too many books on our Wodehouse short break. So I was strong and manfully headed to the door. But, like Oscar Wilde, who could resist anything but temptation, I was unable to leave without buying it. After all, they gave me a £25 discount for taking the print with me so they didn’t have to ship it. Fortunately, I also took the print with me the next day on the plane from Heathrow to Dulles, as my suitcase decided to remain behind, perhaps wishing to catch the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.

As soon as I got home, I found my mother’s old copy of *A in W and T the L G*, which fell open to the exact page with that image of the Walrus and the Carpenter. I immediately found the dimly remembered stanza of the poem, the one that begins, “‘The time has come,’ the Walrus said, ‘To talk of many things: Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—Of cabbages—and kings—” And, of course, I saw why my Plummie heart needed that print, as the stanza ends, “And why the sea is boiling hot—And whether pigs have wings.”

A postscript to this postscript: At least two books take their titles from this one stanza, *Cabbages and Kings* by O. Henry (1904) and *Pigs Have Wings* by the Master (1952). Is this a record? Do any other books take their title from this stanza? Is there any other stanza from any poem that can equal or best this claim? Clearly additional research is indicated.



Profile of a Committee Member

Jeremy Neville

If a certain former Prime Minister had met your Society's treasurer, he may well have described him as "A modest man, with much to be modest about" (even if *he* never actually said it about *him*). However, being an avid fan of *The Master* puts him in the best of company.

Jeremy Neville's first introduction to the oeuvre was, as a child, listening to the BBC radio production of *Summer Lightning* sometime in the early 1980s. It is probably due to this that he still maintains that Blandings Castle is far and away the most delightful part of the world that Wodehouse created (other views on this are tolerated, naturally, although they are wrong).

It wasn't until 2008 that Jeremy joined the Society, looking for something to while away the long winter evenings while doing a short stint in Scotland. (There's a gag there somewhere about a ray of sunshine, but it's probably been done before.) Returning to the metrop. a year or two later, he answered the committee's desperate plea for a treasurer and stepped into the breach. Whether or not this was the right decision on the committee's part remains to be seen.



Married for two years to Becky and (by the time you, gentle reader, read this) father of a delightful four-month old, Imogen, Jeremy no longer lives the gay, debonair life of the carefree bachelor, but enjoys his existence in a Bingo-esque state of marital harmony with the ever-suffering but patient wife and baby who, contrary to received wisdom and expectation, did not arrive looking like Churchill, a Chinese gangster, or Edward G. Robinson.

Any Society member who happened to be passing the wedding reception venue on 1 June 2010 would have approved of proceedings, as the table names were all Wodehouse characters. The top table, needless to say, was Jeeves, while guests were greeted with such names as Reginald "Kipper" Herring, Rev. Harold "Stinker" Pinker, Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright, Frederick

Altamont Cornwallis Twistleton, etc. One can be sure that much sweetness and light was spread that day!

Jeremy's other interests include singing (doing), rugby (watching), and tending nerves relating to his upcoming acting debut at the Society's Formal Dinner in October.

Sporting Stories before Bedtime

by Ellie King

Late on Friday, 10 August, I toiled off to the Criterion Theatre to see *Sporting Stories before Bedtime*, part of the theatre's two-week *Playing the Games* season during the Olympic Games. This event featured Brian Blessed, Eddie Izzard, and Stephen Fry, all doing readings from various sport-themed pieces of literature. The reason for this review is that Stephen Fry had chosen to read one of Wodehouse's golf stories. You might raise the perfectly reasonable point that golf is not an Olympic sport; however, since Brian Blessed's extract was about mountaineering – a sport that would be somewhat challenging to recreate in the East End of London – the sporting theme was clearly an all-embracing one. Having said this, golf will apparently be making a return to the Olympics in 2016, after a short hiatus of 112 years.

You may well be wondering when I am going to stop rambling and start reviewing, but believe me this is nothing to the world-class waffling Brian Blessed engaged in before commencing his reading! If waffling were an Olympic sport, I would bet on him for gold every time. His reading (when he did finally begin it!) was highly entertaining, however. He read from W E Bowman's "The Ascent of Rum Doodle" and

punctuated it with numerous asides, the content of which was based mainly on his own mountaineering experiences – he has attempted Everest three times.

Next up was Eddie Izzard, doing a piece from Tim Moore's *French Revolutions*. His feat of running 41 marathons in 53 days for charity in 2009 with only five weeks' previous training meant that Izzard could probably relate better than most to the very funny story of a man setting off on the Tour de France route with little previous experience of cycling and a minimal amount of preparation beforehand.

But the highlight was, of course, Stephen Fry reading 'The Clicking of Cuthbert'. It was wonderful to hear such an accomplished narrator (and Society Patron) reading one of my own favourite Wodehouse stories, particularly when it came to such memorable lines as "I spit me of Nastikoff!" The introduction and conclusion involving the Oldest Member and a disgruntled golfer had been cut for brevity's sake, but this certainly did not diminish the telling of the tale in any way. I had forgotten how divinely funny this story is, and Stephen's reading reminded me all over again why I love Wodehouse's work so much. A pure delight from start to finish, and you can say I said so.

Betting on Bertie

or

Wodehouse and Horse Racing (Part 2)

by Norman Murphy

Concluding Norman's presentation to the 2009 convention of The Wodehouse Society.

As I mentioned earlier, Wodehouse was once a racing tipster. He probably didn't mean to be – but he was. So here goes. In Britain and America, certain jockeys seem to dominate the racing world at various times. America had Willie Shoemith, Eddie Arcaro, and Tod Sloan before them. In the UK, the jockeys we remember are Fred Archer in the 1890s, Steve Donoghue in the 1920s and 30s, and Gordon Richards in the 1930s–50s. Now, by 1953, Gordon Richards had been champion jockey 25 times and was universally admired for his honesty and skill, *but* in his 35 years as a jockey and 27 attempts at the Derby, he had never won it. 1953 was the Coronation Year of our Queen, and in the Honours List, two days before the Coronation, the Queen, who knows more about racing than most of us, gave Richards a knighthood because of the respect in which he was held and his influence in making racing respectable too. He was the first jockey ever to be knighted, and everybody thought it was a splendid idea.

The following Saturday, Sir Gordon, as he now was, rode out for his 28th – and last – Derby.

Well, to everyone's delight, the fairy tale came true and Richards at last won the Derby on Pinza. And the point of all that is – cast your mind back to *The Return of Jeeves*. The hero wanted Ballymore to win the Derby, but, if you remember, Wodehouse told us the race was won by Moke the Second, ridden by Gordon Richards. The book came out in the UK on April 22, 1953, seven weeks before the Derby. If you had followed Wodehouse's tip and bet on Richards right away, you would have got yourself a winner at odds of 10-1 or better.

Now, I am sure you all recall The Great Clothes Stakes, which Mustard Pott ran in *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*. In a letter to me, Wodehouse said that was based on the Great Hat Stakes, which he had read in Arthur Binstead's book *A Pink 'Un and a Pelican*. It was a true story from 1902, when two men ran a book on what hat would be first through the doors of the Criterion Bar in London after the clock struck eight o'clock. It was won by a Turban worn by the Hindu waiter bringing in curry from the Indian restaurant next door. So – fact in 1902 became Wodehouse's fiction in 1939, and in 2005 it became fact again in the Queen's Hat Ascot Scandal, which equals anything Wodehouse wrote.

In 1995, a UK bookmaker named Paddy Power initiated a new fun bet for Ladies Day at the Royal

Ascot race meeting. This is the very posh meeting where the Queen arrives every day from Windsor Castle and drives down the course in a horse-drawn landau. The bet Paddy started was – what colour hat will the Queen wear on Ladies' Day, the third day of the meeting, when every woman attending tries to outshine everybody else? It was just a fun bet, a pound here, five pounds there, and everybody enjoyed it. Other bookmakers started doing it as well, and it was a pleasant little diversion till 2005 – when *somebody got inside information*. Paddy Power's firm realised something was happening on Ladies' Day, when the betting on brown was so heavy, the odds went from 12-1 to 8-11 against in two hours. William Hill, the UK's biggest bookie, was happily taking bets of £50 and £20 on brown, but when someone tried to bet £1,000 in cash, they closed the betting.

Two hours later, the Queen duly drove down the course wearing a brown hat. Power said it had cost him about £10,000 and added: "If it had been a horse race, we would have asked for a stewards' inquiry!"

I want to finish with a Wodehouse story we all know: 'The Great Sermon Handicap'. It is clear this was Wodehouse's memory of listening to long sermons at school when he and his fellows would pass the time by betting how often the vicar would sneeze, how often the new curate would say 'Err', or, as in that story, how long the sermon would take. The obvious question is – what was the clerical equivalent? What did clergymen bet on in similar boring circumstances?

I found the answer in some old newspaper cuttings I thought I had lost years ago.



I should explain first that, every ten years, every Anglican/Episcopal bishop from around the world comes to London to attend the Lambeth Conference chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is a very big event in the Episcopalian calendar.

Now, most of you have led sheltered lives and are too young to know what a properly dressed bishop looks like, so the picture at the bottom of the previous page shows Anglican – that is Episcopalian – bishops at the Lambeth Conference of 1948.

Look at them closely. The frock coat, the purple apron over their chest, then the breeches, and below that – gaiters, buttoned up the sides. Let's have a closer look at those gaiters (picture to right).

Long, black, thick material, buttoned up the sides. Got the idea now? Those gaiters are what bishops and senior clerics bet on in what I now name as the Great Gaiters Handicap of 1958!

In February 1970, there was a series of letters in the London *Times* about correct clerical dress. Swept along by the social revolution of the 1960s – when, in *my* view, the world started to go to hell in a handcart – bishops and senior clerics had started to wear the dull grey suits we know today. One bishop wrote to deplore this growing informality in clerical dress and said how few bishops or dignitaries now wore the correct dress of frock coat, apron, knee breeches, and gaiters. He felt it detracted from the dignity of their high office, and he believed it was because so many were “spindle-shanked” and could not “carry their gaiters”. He also said how warm the



Archbishop Fisher

long, thick gaiters could be during Evensong in a cold, unheated English cathedral.

In reply, the Archbishop of Wales wrote: “I became Bishop of Swansea and Brecon in 1954 and never wore gaiters at Lambeth meetings or anywhere else.” He said that the then Archbishop of Wales reproved him for it and tried to get the Archbishop of Canterbury “to rebuke me as being improperly dressed”.

He then came to the nub (*italics are mine*):

I am inclined to think that the Lambeth Conference of 1958 marked in more senses than one a climactic moment. The weather became very hot and bishop after bishop shed his gaiters.

Two or three of us drew up a list of five or so of the likely diehards *and put our money on* (I use the episcopal titles) Canterbury (Fisher), Rochester (Chavasse), Exeter (Mortimer), Wales (Morris), Meath (McCann) and one other whose name I forget.

We were right in (nearly) all of them, but were disconcerted by the eleventh hour arrival of a Canadian bishop in full attire. He turned out, however, to be a freak as he had been bidden to a fashionable wedding!

And, although he could not be certain of the ultimate winner, he is pretty sure that it was the Archbishop of York who “remained gaitered to the end”.

Well, there you are. I am sure you all appreciate by now that the clear moral of this talk is – always remember that no matter how funny or how unlikely the events Wodehouse described may seem to us today, somewhere, sometime, someone has done something just as funny, just as unlikely in real life.

Mastermind Quiz 6: The Jeeves and Wooster Short Stories

by David Buckle

Only two Wodehouse audiobooks, courtesy of AudioGo, are left up for grabs as prizes in this quiz (though the quizzes will continue). The competition will be fierce!

1. What is the title of Wodehouse's first Bertie and Jeeves short story, first published in 1915 and then in 1917 in the collection *The Man With Two Left Feet*? (Note: Jeeves's appearance is brief!)
2. Which clergyman wins 'The Great Sermon Handicap'?
3. Which of Bertie's friends is 'the laziest young devil in America' in 'The Aunt and the Sluggard'?
4. What item of clothing is Bertie forced to give up at the end of 'Jeeves and the Kid Clementina'?
5. Whom does Lord Yaxley, Bertie's Uncle George, end up marrying in 'The Indian Summer of an Uncle'?
6. Father and son Edward and Everard Fothergill, who appear in 'Jeeves Makes an Omelette', share what profession?
7. In 'Jeeves and the Yuletide Spirit', who swap rooms at Skeldings Hall so that Bertie's act of puncturing a hot water bottle receives a less than warm reception?
8. In 'Comrade Bingo', upon his becoming a Communist, with whom does Bingo Little fall in love?
9. Who is the unbidden guest in 'Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest'?
10. What is unusual about the short story 'Bertie Changes his Mind'?

Further Details Will Be Provided

by Tony Ring

6 – The Episodic Novels

This final article providing additional explanations to entries in *The Simplified Chronology of P G Wodehouse* concerns his two ‘episodic novels’, *Indiscretions of Archie* and *The Inimitable Jeeves*. Virtually all the material included in them had previously appeared as self-standing stories in magazines on both sides of the Atlantic. But Wodehouse worked hard to adapt the individual stories as he thought necessary to create books that bore more features of novels than short-story collections.

Indiscretions of Archie

This book was made up of 11 short stories, all of which appeared in the *Strand Magazine* in the UK, but, oddly, only 10 made the pages of *Cosmopolitan* in the USA. And equally strangely, the run in the *Strand*, from March 1920 to February 1921, did not include the Christmas issue, which instead featured the golf story ‘Sundered Hearts’.

The recommendation to members would be to read the book, rather than try to find all the individual magazines and piece together the stories in the form Wodehouse finally reached. By doing so, of course, you will not have the illustrations, but the story evolves in a well-constructed manner.

Apart from cosmetic changes to many of the individual episodes (most of which were turned into two chapters in the book), the most important creative aspect of Wodehouse’s revision was to thoroughly combine the scenes of two of his original short stories, ‘Paving the Way for Mabel’ and ‘Archie and the Sausage Chappie’, so that together they became the four chapters 17–20 in the book edition.

The Inimitable Jeeves

This book was also made up from 11 short stories, four of which were included in the book in single chapters, while the other seven had two chapters each. This can be exceptionally confusing when trying to follow the history as, for example, the story ‘Aunt Agatha Takes the Count’, which first appeared in the *Strand Magazine* in April 1922, was retitled ‘Aunt Agatha Makes a Bloomer’ in *Cosmopolitan* six months later, and divided into two chapters, ‘Aunt Agatha Speaks Her Mind’ and ‘Pearls Mean Tears’ for the book’s purposes.

This particular story, also, was radically rewritten – for the better, in my opinion – for *The Inimitable Jeeves*. In the original magazine version, which was adopted for the 1931 *The Jeeves Omnibus*

(and later short-story omnibuses in the UK), Bertie goes to Roville at Jeeves’s suggestion to escape his aunt’s wrath after upsetting Sir Roderick Glossop, and he more or less falls in love with Aline Hemmingway at first sight and of his own volition. In that version, Aunt Agatha never meets her, let alone promotes her as a suitable wife for Bertie, so when Jeeves retrieves Aunt Agatha’s pearls from Aline’s possession, their return is not accompanied by any second element of embarrassment on Agatha’s behalf.

Wodehouse hit upon the idea of strengthening the entire plot by having Aunt Agatha summon Bertie to Roville and, while there, to introduce him to Aline Hemmingway as a prospective bride she has found for him. At the end of this revised version, Bertie (through Jeeves’s skills) is able to deal Aunt Agatha a double blow, not only by returning her pearls but by stressing that it was Aline and her brother who had stolen them.

This change necessitated a revision in the order of appearance of the stories when *The Inimitable Jeeves* was published. ‘Aunt Agatha Takes the Count’ (to give it its original title) was inserted before ‘Scoring Off Jeeves’ and ‘Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch’, the two stories dealing with Bertie’s potential romance with Honoria Glossop, each of which had appeared earlier in the magazines.

On the opposite page is a table showing, in the order of the stories as they appear in *The Inimitable Jeeves*, (a) the titles of the equivalent story in *Strand* and *Cosmopolitan* (or *Saturday Evening Post* in the case of ‘Jeeves and the Chump Cyril’), respectively; and (b) the titles and chapter numbers of the stories as they appear in *The Inimitable Jeeves* and *The Jeeves Omnibus*.

It should be noted, however, that ‘Jeeves and the Chump Cyril’ was, chronologically, the first of these stories to be published (in 1918 – more than three years earlier than any of the others). Otherwise, the only part of *The Inimitable Jeeves* which is out of order, as explained above, is the revised story in chapters 3 and 4, originally ‘Aunt Agatha Takes the Count’.

Note to Members

Members who have acquired a copy of *The Simplified Chronology* and would like to have this series of six articles in electronic form so they may print a set to keep with the publication may obtain a set by sending an e-mail request to ring.tony@yahoo.co.uk.

<i>The Inimitable Jeeves</i>		<i>The Jeeves Omnibus</i>		<i>UK Magazine</i>	<i>US Magazine</i>
Ch	Title	Ch	Title	Strand Title	<i>Cosmopolitan [or Saturday Evening Post] Title</i>
1	Jeeves Exerts the Old Cerebellum	2	Jeeves in the Springtime	Jeeves in the Springtime	Jeeves in the Springtime
2	No Wedding Bells for Bingo				
3	Aunt Agatha Speaks Her Mind	5	Aunt Agatha Takes the Count	Aunt Agatha Takes the Count	Aunt Agatha Makes a Bloomer
4	Pearls Mean Tears				
5	The Pride of the Woosters Is Wounded	3	Scoring Off Jeeves	Scoring Off Jeeves	Bertie Gets Even
6	The Hero's Reward				
7	Introducing Claude and Eustace	4	Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch	Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch	Jeeves and the Blighter
8	Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch				
9	A Letter of Introduction	7	Jeeves and the Chump Cyril	Jeeves and the Chump Cyril	[Jeeves and the Chump Cyril]
10	Startling Dressiness of a Lift Attendant				
11	Comrade Bingo	11	Comrade Bingo	Comrade Bingo	Comrade Bingo
12	Bingo Has a Bad Goodwood				
13	The Great Sermon Handicap	12	The Great Sermon Handicap	The Great Sermon Handicap	The Great Sermon Handicap
14	The Purity of the Turf	13	The Purity of the Turf	The Purity of the Turf	The Purity of the Turf
15	The Metropolitan Touch	14	The Metropolitan Touch	The Metropolitan Touch	The Metropolitan Touch
16	The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace	15	The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace	The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace	The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace
17	Bingo and the Little Woman	16	Bingo and the Little Woman	Bingo and the Little Woman	Bingo and the Little Woman
18	All's Well				

Results of the June Mastermind Quiz

Fears that the June Mastermind quiz, centered as it was on the lesser-known school stories, would perhaps be too tough for contestants, proved unfounded. Eight brainy members sent in responses, with most apparently finding the quiz a breeze. However, question number 10 was a tough one for three entrants, who were given a second chance to find the correct answer; two succeeded, but one (who shall remain nameless) did not.

Of all those who provided correct answers, the names of Simon Frazer and Graham Johnson were drawn out of a hat to receive Wodehouse audiobooks, generously donated by AudioGo – congratulations to Simon and Graham!

Kudos as well to Steve Griffiths, John Looijestijn, Brian Porter, Mark Taylor, and Nick Townend for submitting correct answers to what was probably our most difficult quiz.

Postscript: Along with his answers, Nick Townend pointed out a number of errors in the quiz: “St Austin’s is always spelled St Austin’s, never Saint Austin’s (qns 1, 8 and 10); St Austin’s is a College, not a School (qn 1); Wrykyn is correctly spelled Wrykyn, not Wrykin (qns 3 and 6).” The Editor, who should know better, is ashamed of herself for not catching all this during proofreading and extends her apologies to all you purist Wodehouseans.

Answers to the June Quiz

1. *The Pothunters* was PGW’s first published novel, set at St Austin’s.
2. Captain Kettle is the Tabby Terror.
3. Sir Eustace Briggs is the mayor whose statue is interfered with in *The Gold Bat*.
4. *A Prefect’s Uncle* is set at Beckford College.
5. Kennedy is the prefect who becomes Head Prefect of Kay’s House.
6. At Sedleigh, Mike Jackson meets Rupert Smith, or Psmith.
7. Joe Bevan trains the boxer R. D. Sheen.
8. Florence Beezley is also known as the Dragon.
9. Dimsdale, Scott, Simpson, Morrison, and Robinson are all fags.
10. Tuppy Glossop is the Drone who attended St Austin’s.*

* - The answer is found not in *Tales of St Austin’s* but in ‘The Ordeal of Young Tuppy’ (*Very Good Jeeves*), wherein Tuppy says, “I generally turn out on Saturdays for the Old Austinians”, and later mentions plans to wear his Old Austinian shirt in the rigger match between Upper Bleaching and Hockleycum-Weston. (He probably comes to regret this decision as the shirt, light blue with orange stripes, attracts perhaps too much attention from the opposing team.)

I am a man who can read faces, and Chuffy’s had seemed to me highly suggestive. Not only had his expression, as he spoke of Pauline, been that of a stuffed frog with a touch of the Soul’s Awakening about it, but it had also turned a fairly deepish crimson in colour. The tip of the nose had wiggled, and there had been embarrassment in the manner. The result being that I had become firmly convinced that the old schoolmate had copped it properly and was in love.

(From *Thank You, Jeeves*, 1934)

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

The Adventures of Sally

Identifying the true first edition of a Wodehouse title can sometimes be a tricky task. Often even book dealers do not always identify editions correctly, and it can be an expensive mistake to buy a book advertised as a first edition which, on closer inspection, turns out not to be so. Of course, reputable dealers should refund the purchase price on being informed of their mistake, but this is still a time-consuming process, particularly if the book has to be posted back to the dealer.

The early Wodehouse titles published by Herbert Jenkins are among the most difficult to identify correctly. *The Adventures of Sally* will be used as an example to illustrate the difficulties.

For the early Jenkins titles (a dozen in all, from *Piccadilly Jim* in 1917 to *Carry On, Jeeves* in 1925), the first editions do not explicitly state that they are first editions, and the reprints (up to c1926–27) do not explicitly state that they are reprints. On both firsts and reprints, the publishing date of the first edition appears in Roman numerals on the title page. This means that for the uninitiated there is no way of distinguishing between a first edition and a reprint, and, given the date on the title page matches the date of first publication, this often leads to book dealers incorrectly identifying reprints as first editions.

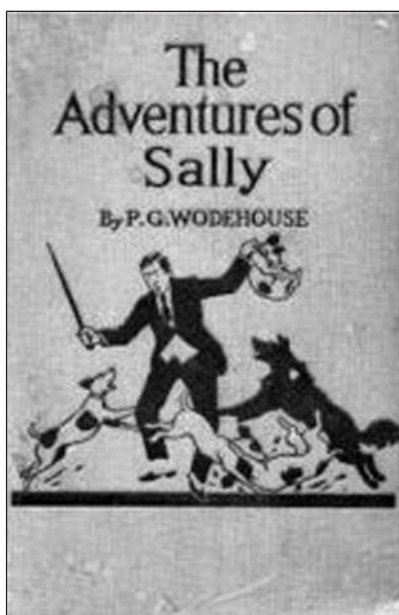
The way to identify the relative order and approximate date of the various editions is from the number and names of the other Wodehouse titles listed on the ‘What This Story Is About/By The Same Author’ page. By identifying the latest Wodehouse title listed, it can be presumed that the edition was issued after that title was published and before the next new Wodehouse title was published by Jenkins.

The Adventures of Sally was first published in October 1922, although it was post-dated as MCMXXIII on the title page. The boards were orange, with the lettering and drawing on the front board and the lettering and decoration on the spine being brown. Although not described by *McIlvaine* (A29a), the drawing on the front board depicts a be-

suiting and be-spatted character breaking up a dog fight involving five dogs. *McIlvaine* also fails to mention that the spine bears the early Jenkins logo of a winged horse between the letters H and J. The ‘By The Same Author’ section lists nine titles, beginning with *Piccadilly Jim* and ending with *The Girl on the Boat*, which was the previous Wodehouse title published by Jenkins in June 1922.

The second edition (A29a2) is different to the first edition in only the following aspects: the lettering and drawing are in red (rather than brown); the ‘By The Same Author’ section lists twelve titles (rather than nine), the last being *Leave It to Psmith*; and the book itself is ¼” thinner. Like the first, the second has the early Jenkins logo of a winged horse between the letters H and J on the spine, a detail omitted by *McIlvaine*. This edition is tentatively dated by *McIlvaine* to 1923, no doubt due to the inclusion of *Leave It to Psmith* (published in November 1923) in the list of titles, coupled with the absence of *Ukridge* (published in June 1924) from the list.

The third edition (A29a3) is different from the first edition in only the following aspects: the ‘By The Same Author’ section lists twelve titles, the last being *Leave It to Psmith*; the book itself is ¼” thinner; and there is no logo or H and J on the spine. Like the first, the boards are lettered in brown. Unless one has both the second and the third editions side by side, it can be difficult to judge whether the lettering on any particular copy should be described as brown or red, so the distinguishing feature between the second and third editions then becomes the presence of the logo on the spine of the second and its absence from the spine of the third. *McIlvaine* dates the third edition to March 1925, but, given that the twelve titles listed are the same as those listed in the second edition, it is unclear what her evidence for this is. Incidentally, *McIlvaine* states that the ‘By The Same Author’ section appears on page [iii] in the third edition; this is a misprint for [ii], as it actually appears on the reverse of the half-title page, as correctly stated by *McIlvaine* for both the first and second editions.



Oh, Ginger, this English country! Why any of you ever live in towns I can't think. Old, old grey stone houses with yellow haystacks and lovely squelchy lanes and great fat trees and blue hills in the distance. The peace of it! If ever I sell my soul, I shall insist on the devil giving me at least forty years in some English country place in exchange.

(From *The Adventures of Sally*, 1922)

Poet's Corner

Caution

Oh, read my melancholy rhyme,
Peruse my mournful ditty.
Two men there dwelt upon a time
Within a certain city.
Both were distinctly men of parts,
Well versed in their respective arts.

To fell diseases of the kind
That everyone who can shuns,
One of the pair had on his mind,
The other's forte was mansions.
They were, as you'd no doubt expect,
A doctor and an architect.

The latter, when but twenty-nine,
Planned a Titanic building,
A house of wonderful design,
All marble, stone and gilding.
Said he: "My fortune's made, I wis,
Men can't resist a thing like this."

With eager hope his heart beat high,
He took his plans up boldly,
And thrust them in the public eye:
The Public viewed them coldly.
"Pray take that rubbish right away,
You're far too young for us," they say.

The doctor next, a gifted man,
Whose brain-pan teemed with umption,
Discovered quite a novel plan
For dealing with consumption,
By treating each consumptive wight
With hard-boiled eggs last thing at night.

He told the Public of his scheme,
But met with stern denial.
"Absurd," said they, "we shouldn't dream

Of giving it a trial.
Apparently you quite forget
That you are barely thirty yet."

The years rolled on. The doctor's schemes
Soared annually higher.
His fellow-sufferer covered reams
With plans that found no buyer.
The Public eyed with gentle smiles
These energetic juveniles.

More years rolled on. The hapless pair
Found life no whit the gayer.
The medico's luxuriant hair
Grew gradually greyer.
The architect's was nearly white,
(Through sitting up too late at night).

And then – the Public changed their mood!
Their hearts began to soften.
They felt the doctor's cures were good –
(They'd had that feeling often).
They also chanced to recollect
The merits of the architect.

"Come, plan us mansions, bring us pills."
Their cry no answer rouses.
No one alleviates their ills,
No one designs their houses.
Upon enquiry it appears
Each has been dead for several years.

From *Punch*, 11 March 1903

(Written to a leading article in *The Times* asking,
"How many a doctor or architect must own that
his professional life consisted of two periods, one
in which he was too young to be trusted, the other
in which he was too old to be efficient?")

Favourite One-Liners

The uncle had written Muriel a letter so dripping with the milk of human kindness that if he hadn't known Mr Worple's handwriting Corky would have refused to believe him the author of it.

(*The Artistic Career of Corky*, 1925;
submitted by Adrian Vincent)

After all, as she reasoned with not a little shrewd sense, a gibbering artist is just as good as a sane artist, provided he makes no charge for painting portraits.

(*The Man Who Gave Up Smoking*, 1929;
submitted by Jonathan Bacchus)

"That's all, except the Choir Boys' Hundred Yards Handicap, for a pewter mug presented by the vicar –

open to all whose voices have not broken before the second Sunday in Epiphany."

(*The Purity of the Turf*, 1922;
submitted by John G. Rudge)

The matinee over, he had begun to experience that solemn joy which comes to camels approaching an oasis and stage-door men who will soon be at liberty to pop around the corner.

(*Summer Lightning*, 1929; submitted by Barry Chapman)

There is nothing sadder in this life than the spectacle of a husband and wife with practically identical handicaps drifting apart.

(*The Purification of Rodney Spelvin*, 1925)

Recent Press Comment

Metro, May 2 (from Carolyn de la Plain)

Ben Felsenburg's review of Michael Frayn's novel *Skios* claimed "Like the work of P G Wodehouse, its characters bear only the most tenuous relationship to reality."

Waitrose Weekend, May 3 (from Larissa Saxby-Bridger)

Michael Bond, creator of Paddington, selected *The World of Blandings* as the first of his five favourite reads.

The Times, May 5

In Philip Howard's 'Literary Quiz', he asked: "And now, Jeeves, mes gants, mon chapeau et QUOI?" The answer is "le whangee de monsieur".

The Times, May 15 (from Leila Deakin, Mark Taylor, and Nigel Wodehouse)

A letter from Charlotte Bubb (née Wodehouse and a first cousin twice removed of PGW) sought to defend him against a comment by Libby Purves, who had called the show *Top Hat* at the Aldwych Theatre "a Wodehousean meringue of heavy-handed misunderstanding and corny wisecracks". Charlotte wrote that he "may have been otherworldly, a fantasist and perhaps a little misogynistic, but he was never 'corny'".

Australian Broadcasting Commission, Classic FM Radio, May 20 (from Barry Chapman)

During the programme 'Weekend Breakfast', broadcaster Colin Fox mentioned the musical comedy collaborations of Wodehouse and Jerome Kern.

The Guardian Crossword Blog, May 24

Included as number 9 in its review of crosswords in fiction PGW's 'The Truth About George', though it took issue with the inclusion in that story of 'Disestablishmentarianism' as a solution to a clue, on the grounds that no grid would ever be large enough to accept it.

The Times, May 25 (from Peter Gooday)

The *Register* included in its report of the death of PGW's one-time literary agent Hilary Rubenstein this comment: "[PGW] is my pantheon of dream authors, those who are productive, professional, modest, never testy, and generous in their appreciation."

Publishers Weekly, May 28

Carried a favourable review of Martin Jarvis's abridged audio recording of *The Code of the Woosters*, recently issued in the USA.

Daily Telegraph, May 29 (from Carolyn de la Plain)

Robert Colville's *Notebook* column 'Don't Give Your Children Silly Names Just for the Buzz' includes the comment: "Some friends, or friends of friends, are coming up with names that wouldn't be out of place in a P G Wodehouse novel. It's not quite reached the Bertram Wilberforce (or even Pelham Grenville) stage, but it's getting there."

The Guardian, May 30

One of a number of papers to report that Sir Terry Pratchett had won the annual Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize with his Discworld novel *Snuff* (see p.6).

The Atlantic, June (from Ian Michaud)

Carried a review of P. G. Wodehouse: *A Life in Letters* by Isaac Chotiner, who noted that Wodehouse "was

fundamentally an observer. This hints at a certain passivity, but as these letters show, he could turn his observations into gold."

The Hindu Business Line, June 6

Sudipti Sarangi, Professor of Economics at Louisiana State University, wrote about one of PGW's 'futurist' stories - 'An International Affair', a school story published in *The Captain* in 1905. He compares the story - about the local teashop facing competition from the American supermarket chain Ring's Come-One Come-All Up-to-date Stores (run by its owner Oliver Ring) - with the present-day traumas of small stores facing the might of Walmart or Carrefour. "The peculiar advantage of Ring's Stores," wrote PGW, "is that you can get anything you happen to want there, from a motor to a macaroon, and rather cheaper than you could get it anywhere else."

The Evening Standard, June 7 (from Mark Taylor)

The reviewer of Martin Amis's book *Lionel Asbo: State of England* commented: "This is a verbally inventive comedy that has about as much connection with real life as P. G. Wodehouse's Eggs, Beans and Crumpets in the Drones Club."

The Times, June 9 (from Murray Hedgcock)

A review of Anthony Lejeune's book *The Gentlemen's Clubs of London* referred to Wodehouse's comment that apart from its lack of a swimming pool, Buck's was the nearest thing to his idea of the Drones Club.

The Australian, June 10 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Reporter Luke Slattery paid his first visit to India, and found himself attended by a butler in his hotel in Jaipur. Adding that although this was the only real butler he has actually met, he has met others vicariously, starting with Jeeves, and showered praise on him, his employer, and his creator.

Private Eye, June 15-28

(from Sandy Kinnear and Caroline Franklyn)

A cartoon showed three gleeful, tuxedo-clad men pelting a fleeing fourth with breadrolls. The caption: "Bertie Wooster hit in drone attack."

The Seattle Times, June 18

Their 'Critics' Picks' included the new Norton editions of five Blandings stories.

The Dominic Winter Auction Catalogue - Results, June 20

Two signed contracts from 1916 and 1919 concerning the stage version of Wodehouse's *Piccadilly Jim* to be performed in the USA sold for £620 (plus buyers' premium) compared to the estimate of £200-300.

The Guardian, June 21

Sam Jordison introduced their 'Reading Group' feature on Graham Greene's *Travels with My Aunt* by referring to the Wodehouse collection: "In novels, aunts rarely do things by half. They can be as different in character as Bertie Wooster's aunts Dahlia and Augusta . . . [yet] they're tough: 'It isn't often that Aunt Dahlia lets her angry passions rise, but when she does, strong men climb trees and pull them up after them.'"

The Guardian Football Blog, June 22 (from Nirav Shah)
Writing about the European championships, the contributor referred to the player James Milner, who, he said, “runs a lot”. He expanded on this comment, referring to the habit as a quality the English take for granted, and suggested that to the new England manager Roy Hodgson Milner had become his “rock, his Jeeves, his faithful hatstand”. [Make of that what you will!]

The Hindu, June 25

An article on Wimbledon began with Evelyn Waugh’s quote: “The gardens of Blandings Castle are that original garden from which we are all exiled. [Wodehouse] has made a world for us to live in and delight in.” The writer said Wimbledon “evokes similarly warm emotions”.

Broadwayworld.com, June 28

Reported that First Folio Theatre would be staging *Jeeves Takes a Bow*, an adaptation by Margaret Raether, from 1 February to 3 March 2013.

ESPN Cricinfo, June 29

Introduced an article about two international cricket matches between New Zealand and the West Indies (June 30 and July 1) to be played in Florida by commenting: “Americans have previously claimed P. G. Wodehouse is American. Over the next two days, the claim they’ll lay to a sport Wodehouse wrote extensively and endearingly on will be of a slightly different nature.”

The Times, June 30 (from June Arnold)

A clue in the crossword was ‘Wodehouse character abused this MP (6)’; the answer was ‘Psmith’.

Bibliofile, July

Carried quotations from PGW at the head of two categories of books for sale: ‘Travel and Places’ and ‘Humour’.

The Times, July 5 (from June Arnold)

A report of the death of Eric Sykes referred to a comment by Eddie Braben, writer of many Morecambe and Wise scripts: “Like Spike Milligan and P. G. Wodehouse, he was a great British man of comedy.”

The Lincoln Journal Star, July 5

Reported that the Nebraska Repertory Theatre would be staging seven performances of *Jeeves Intervenes* by Margaret Raether, between July 6 and August 3.

The Spectator, July 6 (from Christopher Bellew)

In the column ‘Wild Life’, Adrian Hartley described his pride and joy in his new pedigree Boran bull, but noted that it has given him the same anxiety about cattle rustlers as Lord Emsworth had about Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe.

The Scientific American, July 9 (blog)

In an article entitled ‘Lessons from Sherlock Holmes: How do you kill your hero?’, Maria Konnikova started by quoting a PGW verse:

Oh, Sherlock, Sherlock, he’s in town again
That prince of perspicacity, that monument of brain.
It seems he wasn’t hurt at all
By tumbling down the waterfall.

The Browser, July 16

Interviewed about her choice of books by and about Wodehouse, Sophie Ratcliffe included *The Inimitable Jeeves*, *Summer Lightning*, *Blandings Castle and Elsewhere*, *Wodehouse on Wodehouse*, the McCrum biography, and

two critical essays in Auden’s *The Dyer’s Hand* that discuss why humour like Wodehouse’s matters.

Nouse (Univ. of York online student newspaper), **July 18**

Tom Witherow wondered whether Wodehouse’s beautifully imaginative prose deserves a place in the hearts of today’s bookworms. He concluded that it does, adding that despite Colonel Murphy’s condemnatory comment that “although Hugh Laurie was by far the best Bertie Wooster we ever had, Wodehouse doesn’t work on the screen, it can’t be done”, it is “the small screen that allowed Jeeves and Wooster to gain the renown they now enjoy”.

The Times, July 20 (from Iain Anderson)

A report on the Open golf championship mentioned the chosen attire of Graeme McDowell, and referred to PGW’s story ‘The Magic Plus Fours’, in which “the hapless Wallace Chesney becomes a scratch golfer once he buys a hideous new outfit of ‘curious vivid pink [with such variety of] chessboard squares of white, yellow, violet and green that the eye swam as it looked upon them’.”

The Times, July 24

The obituary of Simon Ward referred to his appearance as Eustace in ‘The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace’ in the 1966 BBC TV series *The World of Wooster*.

The Times, July 24

In his review of the opera *Falstaff* at Holland Park, Geoff Brown reported that at one point, “We tumble into P. G. Wodehouse’s dainty old England stocked with curates, scouts and gents in cricket whites”.

Metropulse, July 25

Carried a long article with numerous interviews concerning the latest meeting of the Knoxville, Tennessee, chapter of The Wodehouse Society.

The Times, August 7 (from Keith Alsop)

Oliver Kamm’s ‘The Pedant’ column cited Bertie Wooster’s correct usage of the word ‘specious’ in *Joy in the Morning* to indicate that Bertie, although regarded by Jeeves as mentally negligible, was always precise in his use of language.

The Times, August 8 (from June Arnold)

In her ‘Radio Choices’, Sarah Vine referred to Quentin Letts as “the P G Wodehouse of our day, a brilliant minter of sparkling similes, a Gillette Fusion Pro-Glide-sharp satirist of pretension and pomposity”.

Daily Mail, August 8 (from Terry Taylor)

Published an extract from *Lord’s Ladies and Gentlemen: 100 Legends of the 20th Century*, in which the author, Graham Lord, relates a visit and conversation with PGW in Remsenburg, when Wodehouse was 89. Lord writes particularly touchingly of Ethel, who described her husband as “a lovely man”.

The Daily Telegraph, August 9

The second leader paraphrased the best-known PGW quotation as “It is never difficult to distinguish between Sir Mervyn King at a press conference and a ray of sunshine”.

The Observer, August 12 (from Murray Hedgcock)

In a piece on how the years are taking their toll of Madonna, Victoria Coren wrote: “Give her another five years, and she’ll look like P. G. Wodehouse.”

Future Events for Your Diary

November 13, 2012 Society Meeting and AGM

We will meet in the upstairs room of The George, 213 Strand, from 6 p.m.. After the always-entertaining AGM, Paul Kent will be interviewing Sophie Ratcliffe, editor of *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*. See page 4.

October 25, 2012 Dinner at Gray's Inn

Due to a greater demand than usual, there are no more seats available for our biennial dinner. For those lucky enough to get tickets, prepare for a night full of fun!

February 19, 2013 Society Meeting

The Society's first meeting of 2013 will take place in the upstairs room of The George, 213 Strand, from 6 p.m. This promises to be a particularly fun gathering as a game of Wodehouse Bingo is proposed. Stay tuned for details in the December *Wooster Sauce*.

March 14-16, 2013 *Carry On, Jeeves* in Lincoln

The Common Ground Theatre Company in Lincoln will be staging a production of *Carry On, Jeeves*, an

original play with music that comprises three PGW stories. Further details will be published in the December *Wooster Sauce*.

July 9, 2013 Society Meeting

We will meet again at The George from 6 p.m. The entertainment is not yet settled – another pub quiz or balloon debate? Time will tell.

October 18-20, 2013 TWS Convention in Chicago

The Wodehouse Society's 17th biennial convention will be held at the Union League Club in Chicago, Illinois.

October 29, 2013 Society Meeting and AGM

Another rollicking good time at The George, complete with an AGM – who could ask for anything more? Details in a future *Wooster Sauce*.

Wodehouse and the Muppets: Ever since Wikipedia achieved worldwide prominence as an internet resource, there have been imitation websites that have sought to specialise as a source of knowledge, inevitably adopting 'Wiki' as part of their name. One of these is Muppet Wiki, a site that puts facts in the context of the Muppets. Amazingly, there is an entry for Wodehouse, which briefly describes who he was and what he is best known for. This is followed by a 'References' section detailing the Muppets' connection to Wodehouse, including several occasions when the characters mentioned Jeeves. We also learn that in segments of the U.S. children's television show *Sesame Street*, Muppet characters Sherlock Holmes and Watson travelled to Blandings Castle, and also visited Aunt Agatha's home, where the butler was named – Wodehouse! (Thanks to TAMAKI MORIMURA)

CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 1 | <i>Nuts and Wine: A New View of an Old Revue</i> | 12 | Pictures from A Weekend with Wodehouse |
| 3 | Everyman: An Update | 14 | Fiddling About |
| 3 | Wodehouse Ephemera for Sale | 14 | Post-Weekend Musings |
| 4 | Society News | 15 | Profile of a Committee Member: Jeremy Neville |
| 4 | Wodehouse on the Olympics | 15 | Sporting Stories before Bedtime |
| 5 | The Forthcoming Blandings Series on BBC1 | 16 | Betting on Bertie, Part 2 |
| 5 | Time Warp | 17 | Mastermind Quiz 6: The Jeeves & Wooster Stories |
| 6 | Letters to the Editor | 18 | Further Details Will Be Provided: 6 – The Episodic Novels |
| 6 | The Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize | 19 | Results of the June Mastermind Quiz |
| 7 | <i>Second Row, Grand Circle</i> (book review) | 20 | Bibliographic Corner: <i>The Adventures of Sally</i> |
| 8 | We Remember: Terry Mordue | 21 | Poet's Corner: <i>Caution</i> |
| 9 | We Remember: John Fletcher | 21 | Favourite One-Liners |
| 10 | The Empress of Blandings Revisited | 22 | Recent Press Comment |
| 11 | What a Weekend! | | |
| 11 | A Message from Stephen Fry to the Norfolk Tour | | |