



WOOSTER SAUCE

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

Number 68

December 2013



What a Year!



The year 2013 has surely been memorable for Wodehouse fans. In January we watched the BBC's *Blandings* television series. Though purists would not call this an auspicious start, it sparked a great deal of comment and thus interest in Wodehouse, and it was well enough received for the BBC to commission a second series.



Commissioned by the Estate and written by Sebastian Faulks, *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells* has received mixed reviews, but many Wodehouseans have

Then came the superb *Wodehouse in Exile*, broadcast on BBC Four in March. Starring Tim Pigott-Smith and Zoë Wanamaker as Plum and Ethel, this drama cast new light on the events leading up to and following the Berlin broadcasts.



In July we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the day Wodehouse saw Percy Jeeves play at Cheltenham and mentally filed the name away – a day which left its mark forever on English literature. (See page 16 for a review of the recent book on Percy Jeeves.)

Everyman's Library continued its laudable task of publishing a complete collectors' edition, and this autumn saw two more books added to the list, stories rarely seen or never before republished. (See pages 9 and 20 for more on this.)

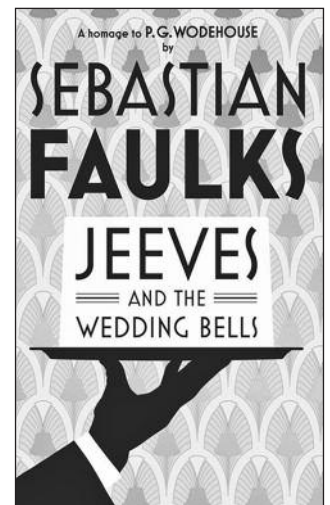
The year is closing on the highest note yet with two events for which the Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate deserve congratulations. Almost simultaneously, we have the publication of a brand-new Jeeves and Wooster novel and two of our favourite Wodehouse characters appearing onstage.



already reported being pleasantly surprised by the book. On page 2 are some recent reviews as well as reactions from readers. (There will be more about the book in the March 2014 issue.)

The greatest hit of the year, though, is undoubtedly *Perfect Nonsense*, the play-within-a-play starring Stephen Mangan as Bertie Wooster and Matthew Macfadyen as Jeeves (and many other characters); the excellent Mark Hadfield plays Seppings, Aunt Dahlia, and Roderick Spode.

Rapturously greeted by both critics and Society members – see page 3 if you don't believe us – *Perfect Nonsense* has put the finishing touches on making 2013 the Year of Wodehouse.



What lies ahead in 2014? Aside from the continuing success of *Perfect Nonsense*, we will see the second series of *Blandings*, and the spotlight will be thrown on PGW's poetry (see pages 4 and 15). And September 30, 2014, marks the 100th anniversary of the day Plum and Ethel Wodehouse tied the knot. Now, there's another good reason for celebration!

Jeeves and the Wedding Bells

Some views on the new book by Sebastian Faulks

Personal Comments

I have such an extreme prejudice towards Wodehouse pastiches and parodies that I have a policy of not printing any in these pages. So imagine my astonishment when I read the book and found myself rather . . . well, enjoying it. One shouldn't approach the book expecting pure Wodehouse – it is Sebastian Faulks paying homage to Wodehouse, and in that sense he does a jolly good job of it. Two disparate views of the book are given below. More comments are welcome, but please keep them short.

– The Editor

After reading an initial chapter, what sprang to mind was: “This is Wodehouse Lite.” Like cut-price foodstuffs which look much the same as the original, but have much of the essential quality extracted. A particular concern was the introduction of several new major characters; I think Faulks should have simply created a new plot with the old characters, and the reader would have felt so much more at home.

I was struck by Bertie's announcement (p.11) that he came into money when still at Oxford. Not so! We were informed in ‘Jeeves Takes Charge’ that he is “more or less dependent on Uncle Willoughby” for his finances. Did Faulks not notice this, or decide to rewrite Wodehousean fact? Shame on him either way.

To sum up – I feel the trouble is that PGW set the bar so high that it is simply asking too much even of the most gifted to reach his heights.

– Murray Hedgcock

Over the last 40 years I have read many imitations and pastiches, and all of them palled by the second paragraph. *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells* is in a very different league, and to my surprise, after a few pages I was hooked and read the book in one sitting. I was very impressed by Faulks's metaphors. For just one example, Bertie speaks of a lifelong friend: “Woody and I had seen more scrapes than a barber's strop.”

The use of quotations and, far more difficult, Bertie's misquotations is excellent. The plot is just as

complicated as *The Mating Season*, which I have always considered to be Wodehouse's best book, and I could hardly wait to see how it all turned out in the end. It is not Wodehouse, but it is very near it. Bertie and Jeeves behave as they ought to and, far more difficult, they speak exactly as they ought to speak. Sebastian Faulks is to be congratulated.

– Norman Murphy



Sebastian Faulks at the book's launch party on November 4.

What Some Critics Had to Say

(Note: Patrick Kidd's review will be printed in full in the March issue, along with extracts from other reviews.)

For me, Faulks captures perfectly both the tone and the spirit of Wodehouse's originals. What's more, he does so in a manner that, in rekindling happy memories of those books, reinvigorates one's retrospective enjoyment of the originals.

– Matthew Dennison, *The Spectator*, November 2

But to write a new entry in the Jeeves canon, the very nerve of it. What Wooster sauce! It is something Faulks is clearly nervous about. In an author's note,

It was the sheer volume of the butler that was overwhelming. If one of the heads on Mount Rushmore had taken first a body then a breathing form, it could have picked up a hint or two from this Bicknell. Monumental was the word that came to mind. No one could have wished – or dared – to call him corpulent: there was no suggestion of spare flesh beneath that mighty waistcoat; but it would have been unwise to attempt a circumnavigation without leaving some sort of forwarding address or *poste restante*.

(*Jeeves and the Wedding Bells*, chapter 4)

he is at pains to say that this is “a tribute and a thank you” to Wodehouse, exhorting his readers to check out the originals. He need not have worried. Despite an occasional wander into “Wodehouse by the numbers” — I opened a random page and immediately saw a “spiffing” — Faulks has done a fine job that is

faithful to the spirit of the originals while offering a few novelties.

– Patrick Kidd, *The Times*, November 2

[T]he best comic turn comes from the novel's own double texture. Faulks, like Bertie, is involved in his own complicated act of dressing up – the literary equivalent of squeezing himself into someone else's trousers. Throughout the book we get a sense of what Faulks hears in Wodehouse's style. . . . Loopy backstories abound, epithets are transferred, and comparisons stretched. Even the pace pays tribute to Wodehouse's impeccable timing.

– Sophie Ratcliffe, *The Guardian*, November 6

Perfect Nonsense

The play enjoyed a near-perfect reception

Perfect Nonsense – written by Robert and David Goodale and directed by Sean Foley – had trial runs at the Theatre Royal Brighton and at the Richmond Theatre before settling down at the Duke of York’s Theatre in London (where it will run until March 8). Members who saw the show prior to its official opening (when it was still being developed and fine-tuned) wrote in with enthusiastic comments. (See also the review on page 18.)



executed serendipity, speed of transformation, and joy and elation at the continuous triumphs, rolls inexorably, minute by minute through the evening. Exhausting for the cast, sheer exuberance for the audience.

* – Including the dog Bartholomew.

.....

Christine Hewitt reported after seeing the show in Brighton: The audience laughed and clapped throughout at various lines or funny little tricks with the scenery. Overheard during the interval: “The thing about the humour here is that it is understated”; and: “That was brilliant. I will get my Wodehouse books out and read them again.” There were a few small tweaks that I would make here and there, but it really is an excellent entertainment.

John Perry saw the Richmond production: Total knock-out! Absolute scream from first to last. Rolling in the aisles etc. 5* cast, 5* script, 5* performances, 5* stage-work, 5* scenery effects. Stupendous evening. Should run & run. Was told the run was a sell-out, so if you’ve no ticket yet, beg, borrow or steal one. Today Richmond, tomorrow the world?

Robert Bruce saw the London production shortly after it opened for previews: One of the joys of the London theatre in recent years has been terrific ensemble playing – a great team of actors demonstrating the ease of working with each other and building layers of funny business and joyful stuff into the performance. *Perfect Nonsense* turns this on its head. It has only three people in the cast, yet steadily transforms this, through the course of the play, into a cast of thousands.* The resulting ingenuity, sharply-

Previews at the Duke of York’s Theatre began on October 30 and continued until Press Night on November 12. While there were a few critics who found it a bit over the top (Dominic Maxwell of *The Times* felt that “Wodehouse’s wit was crowded out by some of the slapstick stagecraft”), the majority found much to applaud in the production. Following are a few extracts; there will be more in the March issue.

.....

With his glassy grin and an astonishing laugh that puts one in mind of both a braying donkey and a door creaking open on rusty hinges, Stephen Mangan proves the perfect Wooster, achieving exactly the right mixture of bonhomie, idiocy and panic. A particularly delightful scene finds him playing with a rubber duck in a foaming bathtub, lost in a little world of pure happiness. . . . I suspect that Wodehouse himself would have loved this production, and there is no doubt that it captures the dotty, sunlit innocence of his work with panache.

Charles Spencer, *The Daily Telegraph*, November 13

What makes the show better than many Wodehouse adaptations is that much of the author’s original words are used. Some particularly glum fate is compared to ‘something that might have occurred to Ibsen in one of his less frivolous moments’. Bertie, on receiving some bad news, said it hit him like ‘one who has been picking daisies by the railway line and catches the 4.15 in the small of the back’. . . . Wodehouse is notoriously difficult to dramatise but the Goodale brothers have cracked it. *Perfect Nonsense* shimmers with just the right dose of silliness and self-mockery to suit it to the modern West End.

Quentin Letts, *The Daily Mail*, November 13

Macfadyen and Hadfield turn in tours de force of inspired silliness and versatility. And I don’t see how Mangan, with his honking toff’s laugh and his lovely aura of benign dimness and noblesse oblige, could be bettered as Bertie. By and large, top-hole.

Paul Taylor, *The Independent*, November 13



Society News

Our Next Meeting

Stop Press! Entertainments Impresario Paul Kent has been swamped by at least two requests for another Wodehouse Quiz. As ever, eager to oblige, he has duly scheduled the fiendish brain-scrambler for our February meeting. All welcome, no special skills required—just a knowledge of all things Wodehousean, and a predilection for good, wholesome fun. See you at The George on February 18!

Join Our Team! Membership Manager Needed

Are you comfortable operating a database? If you are, and you can spare a bit of time to help run your society, then we'd love to hear from you.

Having steered us safely through the last couple of years, our Membership Manager, David Lindsay, is standing down, and we need a successor to take over from him early in 2014.

Our database runs on Access and contains the membership records of our 1,000-plus members. It is used to ensure members are reminded to pay their subs, and to produce mailing labels for *Wooster Sauce*, four times a year. The work is timetabled, fairly predictable, and involves:

- liaising, usually by email, with our membership secretary, treasurer, editor, chairman and members to keep the database up to date.
- producing mailing labels, usually customised

No Nonsense

In the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, we mentioned the possibility of a special night of *Perfect Nonsense* for Society members, including reduced ticket prices and a possible Q&A session with cast members. Unfortunately, we failed to work out the details for this event, so those who had expressed interest in it have been informed they are on their own. We apologise to members for being unable to organise this.

to identify groups of members for reminders and so forth.

- receiving and paying in cheques, etc., from renewing members and updating their records.
- checking and identifying standing order payments.

Sounds awful, doesn't it? Especially since it is a very important job, on which the health of the Society depends! But for someone who knows what he or she is doing, it's not actually too bad, and there is only one quite busy period, in May/June every year at renewal time.

Of course, expenses are paid, but the applicant will need a computer with Access to run the database. Liaison is usually done by email and post, so location is not crucial. Interested? Of course you are. Drop an email to chairman@pgwodehousesociety.org.uk to discuss it further.

What Goes Around Comes Around

A new book of Wodehouse verse

In the September issue of *Wooster Sauce*, we reported that a new book of Wodehouse's verse was in preparation and would be published in the New Year. Arrangements for the publication of the collection, entitled *What Goes Around Comes Around – A Celebration of Wodehouse Verse*, have now been completed, and it will become available in March 2014 at a price of £12 plus postage (£3 in the UK, £5 to Europe, £8 further afield). It is being published privately by Harebrain Publishing and will not be available through Amazon or any similar distributor.

The book's 100 Wodehouse verses have been selected by Tony Ring as a fair representation of the breadth of subject matter about which he wrote – including sport, entertainment, politics, crime, food, and romance. By far the majority date back over a century, and very few are to be found in general anthologies. A few verses of later origin have been included to ensure that this work is fully

representative. Tony and Eric Midwinter have provided appropriate contextual notes where these might assist the reader in understanding the context in which the verse was written. *Times* diarist and Society member Patrick Kidd has written a foreword.

What's in an AGM?

On Tuesday, October 29, the Society held its Annual General Meeting at The George, 213 Strand – not, perhaps an event on a par with the Lord Mayor's Show, but we do our best. Outside observers have noted with some surprise that our AGMs are well attended, but we do have two advantages: members know that we try and make the AGM as short as possible, consonant with legal requirements, and there is always a good speaker to amuse us afterwards.

As ever, Hilary Bruce was fully conscious of her responsibilities and conducted the meeting with laudable dispatch. She began by displaying the Society's new regalia which had been presented to her at The Wodehouse Society convention in Chicago (see picture, right, and report on page 10). She informed us that the Society was in good shape, with which we agreed, though the change of subscription charge had meant an undue load on the Committee and, in particular, the Treasurer, in chasing up those who had been reluctant to take action in this matter.

We have 1,072 members, 125 of whom had joined in the last year. Of these, 75 % are UK residents, 10 % are American, and the others are spread around the world.

Hilary went on to thank all those who had helped to make the Society such a success. After a unanimous vote that Committee members remain members of the Committee, and the meeting came to a successful conclusion at the 16-minute mark.

As a reward for our AGM attendance, the next event was an address by Murray Hedgcock entitled 'What's in a Wodehouse Name?', based on his talk at Cheltenham earlier this year to celebrate the centenary of Wodehouse's watching Percy Jeeves playing for Warwickshire against Gloucestershire.

It was Murray at his best. Apart from an unnecessary reminder, from his audience's point of view, of the 1920–21 Test series (Australia five, England nil), he delighted us with his musings on other cricketers whose names Wodehouse might have used. It could have been the Australian bowler Hugh Trumble ("my man Trumble") or fellow Warwickshire colleagues of Jeeves – Langley, Hands, Santall, or Quaife ("my man Quaife").

Murray told us how the immortal Neville Cardus, who transformed cricket writing into an art form, had recognised the importance of names in cricket and had never forgotten his horror when, in 1903, Lancashire were thwarted by two Worcestershire players in a partnership of 167 runs. (They were H. K. Foster, one of the famous Foster brothers on whom Wodehouse based Mike

Jackson and his brothers, and George Warrington Gaukrodger who scored 91. –NM) Cardus reckoned it was an impossible name for a cricketer, and maybe he was right. Certainly it is difficult to imagine "my man Gaukrodger".

Then Murray returned to our hero, Percy Jeeves. He gave us a brief outline of his career and his short time with Yorkshire, then recommended Brian Halford's book *The Real Jeeves* (see Murray's review on page 16) and pointed out that Jeeves's birthplace is still in doubt. He told us of Jeeves's death in the First World War and how, at Cheltenham, he had informed his audience that we Wodehouseans say "Jeeves", not "Cheese", when we are being photographed. Not a bad way of keeping a name alive, Murray suggested, and we all agreed enthusiastically.

An excellent AGM and an excellent talk afterwards. If only AGMs everywhere could be like this!

– Norman Murphy



The Chairman's new regalia was presented to Hilary Bruce by Ken Clevenger in Chicago in October.



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Andrew Pinkett

I recently joined the Society, and in the June 2013 *Wooster Sauce* I noticed a reference to a long article by Thomas Behr about reading Wodehouse. [See the June issue's Press Comment, April 9 entry.] This sounded like the sort of erudite piece a newcomer should read to exercise the brain cells, so I took a look.

Behr soon got down to discussing Aristotles' *Nicomachean Ethics*. Now, I am sure most members of the Society have read this tome – it's probably required bedside reading for the Committee – but I must confess it has long remained low on my list of books I ought to read. I find that whenever it gets to the top of the list, some other vital task like ironing the shirts or feeding the cat intervenes to thwart me.

Anyway, the gist of Behr's article is that it's not enough to read anything just for recreation and amusement. This was rather troubling, but I need not have worried. By the end, Behr had concluded that reading Wodehouse is good for the soul. What a relief. But no doubt you all knew that already.

From Martin Scourfield

Your article about Percy Jeeves, the cricketer, [*Wooster Sauce*, September 2013] stirred a trivial memory. I'm not certain of the date; it may have been the early 60s. At that time, Oxford and Cambridge students went on an exploration of the Amazon. A series of films was shown on BBC television about the expedition. The man who filmed the students in Brazil was called Stanley Jeeves. I have no further information, only this memory.

The Editor replies: Mr Scourfield may be excused for a slightly faulty memory after more than 50 years. A quick search of the internet reveals that Stanley Jeeves led an exploration of a cave in British Guiana (now Guyana). The film was broadcast on the American documentary series Expedition! (which had included an episode on the Amazon trip) sometime in early 1962. Jeeves subsequently wrote a book about the exploration, *Journey to the Lost World*, published in 1965. If any reader knows anything else about this Jeeves, do enlighten us.

From Edmond Wodehouse

I wonder whether Mike Swaddling ('Armines, Armines Everywhere', *Wooster Sauce*, September 2013) and his fraternal relation haven't performed the journalistic equivalent of tripping over the cat or perhaps stepping on a golf ball or perchance volplaning down the stairs to crash into an occasional table covered with china and framed photographs!

The reason for my rumination is simple. I am the son of the newly named 'Andover Armine' – a moniker which would, I am sure, cause the celestial choir to sing very flat for a while – and feel duty-bound to correct a few woeful inaccuracies which might appear minor to most but loom large for me.

Firstly, he was not John Armine, but Armine John. Secondly, he had been a Major. Thirdly and most surprising he did not have four children but three! At least that's what my mother Louise has confirmed and being a dutiful son I am minded to believe her. So come on, Mike, get it right, please!

On a lighter note, the pronunciation of Armine was a constant source of amusement for my father. He was either Armine as in fine line or Armine as in mean and green; occasionally Armand; once or twice Almond and more often than not a mere mumble resembling none of the above!

At least my son and I have escaped such mirth for Armine is only our middle name!

Norman Murphy replies: Mike Swaddling is innocent, and I take full responsibility. When Mike asked me to trace Armine John Wodehouse, I turned to my well-worn photocopy of Burke's Peerage (1971 ed.). My error was to misread the minute 2-point font, which lists Edmond and sister Rosemary, and to give them two more siblings. But that edition states clearly that Armine John was a captain in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. My faith in Burke's is now sadly shaken.

The Great Engineers Controversy

Iain Anderson's article in the September issue of *Wooster Sauce* ('Why Engineers Don't Like Wodehouse') incited a storm of protest – well, from two readers, anyway. Following are edited versions of their letters. Iain, it's your turn!

From Gerard Palmer

I was feeling a little low-spirited – probably owing to the onset of autumn and my 80th birthday looming on the horizon – when the postman delivered my copy of *Wooster Sauce*. Just the thing to buck me up, I thought, it's always full of good stuff. And, sure enough, there were reports of cricket matches and sundry get-togethers, all very jolly.

But then I came to page 9 and saw the headline 'Why Engineers Don't Like Wodehouse' by some rotter of the name of Anderson. I could scarce credit what my eyes were seeing – the brain reeled.

"Who is this fiend in human form?" I thought. "Is he unaware that there are many species of engineers at large grouped, according to their

particular bent, in some 36 institutions?" I confidently expect this fine body of men and even finer body of women to arise and smite the blighter.

He should also have a care to remember the law of libel. I should have to consult Jeeves, but I am fairly sure an action would lie.

I am an engineer and have enjoyed the Master's works since the age of 16, when I used to read them on the train to Charing Cross and received many a dirty look from fellow commuters for laughing out loud when they were intent on their crossword puzzles. I think an apology is called for and await the next edition with keen interest.

From Alexander Dainty

On reading the latest *Wooster Sauce*, I took exception to Iain Anderson's 'Why Engineers Don't Like Wodehouse'.

It was through my father that I developed a tremendous affection for P. G. Wodehouse, and he was a brilliant engineer involved in the construction of hyperbolic parabolic roofs for such places as the

Plymouth Pannier Market. He also helped in the design of wind tunnels for testing aircraft and advised on the construction of the Ocean Terminal at Southampton.

Despite his work and hobbies, he managed to read Wodehouse avidly, and we shared this interest for many years.

I have often wondered if his liking for Wodehouse may have developed from a similar childhood. Born of English parents in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), he spent his early life travelling from Ceylon to England, then moved with his mother and brother to England, where he was educated at Leys School, Cambridge. In the late 1920s, he went to Cambridge to study engineering. He had a slightly Wodehousean experience, playing in a University dance band in the evening and living in lodgings instead of in hall at Jesus College. He also drove a 1927 Austin Seven, which was very much against the University regulations when one was not allowed to have a car within a five-mile radius of Cambridge.

The Newbury Show Sparkles Once More

by Tony Ring

I only rarely, I suppose, take up a pencil to compose – I hope it won't seem rude or terse – a *Wooster Sauce* report in verse. But Summer gave a last hurrah and called for Berkshires near and far to hurry to the Newbury Show. (Newbury is in Berks, you know.)

At half past nine, Sunday a.m., fourteen were there – I counted them. Phil Fowlie found his notes to read "Berkshires now. The 'Best of Breed'". Round and round the ring they walked; handlers nervous – being baulked by champions from the national shows. First one speeds up – then it slows.

It's really an impressive sight to see the black pigs, tinged with white in all the vital places that Ron Fieldhouse, judge, was peering at. It took a while for him to choose the first dozen which had to



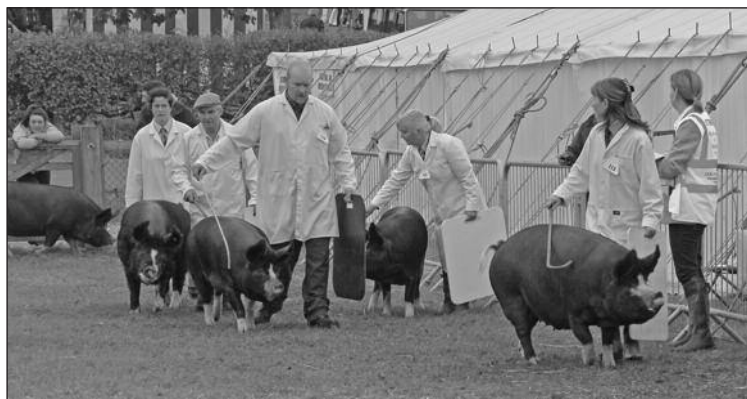
Photos by Tony Ring

lose. "Truly well turned-out," he said. "Clearly every one well-bred." At last Ron named the winner – he announced the Berkshire Champ to be a visitor from Dartmouth, Devon; by name Kilcot Mermaid 7. Another Kilcot – Royal Lustre – came in second in the muster. 'Reserve Champion' is how she will spend Winter 2-0-1-3.

Hilary Bruce cut quite a dash handing out rosette and sash both bearing our own Soc's name – as Sponsors – our minutes of fame. Sue Fildes – the winning owner – then took Mermaid back into her pen. She went to get her mind in gear and plot how she can win next year!

And so to pigs we said goodbye. "Back the Berkshire" 's still the cry. Off we went to cows and horses; another favourite, of course, is the llama and alpaca stand – obedience taught by word and hand. Not to forget the goats and sheep and poultry, though some may seem to sleep.

So make a note that next year's fun may well be on Sept twenty-one. In short – give Newbury your favour. It really is a show to savour.



Jeeves, the Model of Servant Leadership

by Tom Smith

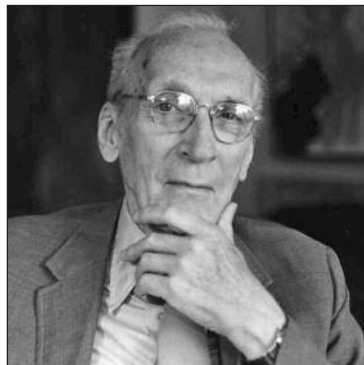
Editor's note. This is a précis of the talk that Tom delivered at The Wodehouse Society's convention in Dearborn, Michigan, in October 2011. To read the full version of his paper, see Plum Lines, Spring 2012, p. 18.

Servant leadership is, according to Robert Greenleaf, the creator of Servant Leadership, the desire to be of service to others through leadership. One problem I have with this philosophy is that although many have written on the subject, it is difficult to define Servant Leadership. Greenleaf's 'One Best Test' of Servant Leadership is:

Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?

(*Servant Leadership*, Paulist Press, 2002)

Robert Greenleaf graduated from a small Midwestern college around 1920 and joined AT&T, where he was a senior manager in training and education. Upon retiring, he became a management consultant and expert on management in large organizations. He also wrote prolifically. In the 1960s, he was doing consulting work for a university. In order to understand the students he was working with, he decided to read what they were reading. Since the German author Herman Hesse seemed popular, he read a copy of Hesse's *The Journey to the East*. Out of the experience came Servant Leadership. In Greenleaf's words:



Robert Greenleaf, creator of the philosophy of Servant Leadership

In this story we see a band of men on a mythical journey, probably also Hesse's own journey. The central figure of the story is Leo, who accompanies the party as the *servant* who does their menial chores, but who also sustains them with his spirit and song.

* * * * *

He is a person of extraordinary presence. All goes well until Leo disappears. Then the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without the servant Leo. The narrator, one of the party, after some years of wandering, finds Leo and is taken into the Order that sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo, whom he had known first as *servant*, was in fact the

titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit, a great and noble leader.

Greenleaf was inspired. To him the story of Leo "clearly says that *the great leader is seen as servant first* and that simple fact is the key to his greatness". Wodehouseans may already see where I am heading.

The problem I had with Hesse's Leo is Greenleaf's own best test. The narrator in Hesse's story does not become wiser. He merely realizes that Leo was running things and that he, the narrator, was merely going along for the ride. So I would like to offer a better exemplar of Servant Leadership: Jeeves.

It is important to point out that the idea of Servant as Leader did not originate with Greenleaf, Hesse, or Wodehouse. In *Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes*, Kristin Thompson points out that characters like Jeeves are part of a long "literary tradition of clever servants, stretching back to the plays of Aristophanes and Plautus and extending through such figures as Sancho Panza and Sam Weller". Literature abounds with masters who would be lost without their servants. There is Blackadder, the smart, cunning valet to the dim Prince Regent. More recently, we have Betty Suarez of the TV show *Ugly Betty*, who, as assistant to the magazine editor, takes care of all of his needs and teaches him how to treat others with respect.

So, all goes well for Bertie until Jeeves is not available. Then he and his friends, who also rely on Jeeves, fall apart. The Bertie and Jeeves stories revolve around two basic formulas: either Bertie or his friends are in trouble and turn to Jeeves for advice, or Bertie's attempts to solve his friends' problems gets his friends stuck even deeper so they have to turn to Jeeves.

It becomes clear in the first Jeeves story ('Jeeves Takes Charge') that Jeeves runs the show, and Bertie knows it. He says, "I gave up trying to run my own affairs within a week of his coming to me." Bertie's friends also learn to rely on Jeeves. In 'The Artistic Career of Corky', Bertie says:

I felt like the proprietor of a performing dog on the vaudeville stage when the tyke has pulled off his trick without a hitch. I had betted on Jeeves all along, and I had known he wouldn't let me down. It beats me sometimes why a man with his genius is satisfied to hang around pressing my clothes and what not. If I had half Jeeves's brain I

should have a stab at being Prime Minister or something.

Unlike the people Leo serves, the people Jeeves serves are aware of what he does for them. This is the first step in Bertie's attainment of wisdom. But eventually Bertie begins to resent Jeeves's skills and attempts to show Jeeves that he, Bertie, can also solve problems. Of course, this always means Jeeves has to intervene.

Eventually, Bertie becomes resigned to his relationship with Jeeves. He becomes wiser about his own abilities and is even inspired to serve others by providing his friends with Jeeves's advice. I believe that his self-knowledge does represent growth. And if that isn't sufficient, in *The Return of Jeeves* we

learn that Bertie is at a school where gentlemen learn to take care of themselves. This is growth and understanding far exceeding that of Leo's masters.

So, for me, Jeeves is a much better example of Servant Leadership than Hesse's Leo. One wonders what would have become of Greenleaf's notion of Servant Leadership had he picked up a copy of *Carry On, Jeeves* instead of Hesse's *Journey to the East*. I suspect Greenleaf's writing would have benefited and perhaps had some necessary humour injected into it. But Greenleaf's best test can still stand, and with the inimitable Jeeves as exemplar, we should all strive to be



Tom Smith

Servant Leaders.

Another Milestone for Everyman

by Tony Ring

When Everyman's Library started their ambitious project in 2000 to publish a uniform collectors' edition of Wodehouse's writings, they were greeted with appreciation of their goal and best wishes for a successful outcome. Since then, the quality of the series has maintained superb production standards, and any collector would be delighted to show off shelves covered in the books. Each one has a cover with artwork by the same artist – the distinctive hand of Andrzej Klimowski. He is also to be congratulated on his perseverance and thanked for his commitment to the Wodehouse cause over such a long period.

The two titles published in Autumn 2013 have not only enabled the edition to reach a milestone of 90 books in the series, but have broken new ground. Many readers might have thought that 'new ground' would be impossible within the spirit and intention of the Everyman series, but the publisher's broad and flexible Ukridgean outlook has permitted these two titles to be published:

The Swoop and *The Military Invasion of America* (ISBN 978-1-84159-190-2). *The Swoop* is a 1909 title which has rarely been republished, although the Society did serialise it in *By The Way* a few years ago. This edition reprints the 33 drawings by C. Harrison that accompanied the original text. *The Military Invasion of America* was a short adaptation of the same idea, with the site of the action transported to America, which was published

in the American monthly magazine *Vanity Fair* in July and August 1915. As far as I am aware, this version has never previously been republished anywhere, so congratulations, Everyman!

The Kid Brady Stories and *The Man of Means* (ISBN 978-1-84159-189-6) are collected together in a book for the first time. The Kid Brady stories were written for an American magazine between 1905 and 1907, and the leading character featured strongly in the later novel *Psmith Journalist*. The Society has also made these stories available to our members in individual publications, and once again this is their first appearance in an official book publication. *The Man of Means* stories were written by Wodehouse and his friend Charles Bovill in 1914 and appeared in monthly magazines on both sides of the Atlantic – *Strand* in the UK and *Pictorial Review* in the United States. They were collected into a book with a limited print run by Porpoise Books in 1991.

We await with considerable interest the disclosure of any future plans which Everyman may have for further titles. For more information about the Everyman series, visit their website at www.everymanslibrary.co.uk/wodehouse.aspx.

To see the covers of these two new titles and learn more about them, see Nick Townend's article on page 20.

Dark hair fell in a sweep over his forehead. He looked like a man who would write *vers libre*, as indeed he did.

(From *The Girl on the Boat*, 1922)

The Empress Strikes Back

A Report of the American Convention, October 18–20

The Wodehouse Society can always guarantee a corking good time at its biennial conventions, and this year was no exception. The bash put on by the Chicago Accident Syndicate, our convention hosts, was positively oojah-cum-spiff. What better place for Wodehouseans to gather, after all, than in a very posh club containing a bar that served the biggest and best gin and tonics we had consumed in years? And the food at our venue, the Union League Club of Chicago, wasn't bad either.

The primary action took place in the club's Crystal Room, where an entire back wall was lined with tables covered stem to stern with goodies of all descriptions. These were the wares for the rummage sale, raffle, and auction; the stall of remarkably cheap Wodehouse books sold out very quickly.

The faithful began arriving on Thursday the 17th, and on Friday groups formed for tours of the Club's artwork and of Chicago's architectural gems. Since the city burned down in 1871, some of us were a bit cynical about the gems bit, but we came back admitting that there might be more to skyscrapers than we had thought.

The joint was really jumping by the time of Friday evening's official reception and buffet. That ended on a high note as members of Chicago's City Lit Theater Company treated us to two staged readings, both of them short stories from *The Man Upstairs*: 'The Man Upstairs' and 'Ahead of Schedule'. These are less-known, early Wodehouse stories, but the City Lit folks proved brilliantly just how delightful they are.

Saturday is the big day in a TWS convention. The daylight hours are spent enjoying Riveting Talks, while the evening features fantastic food, delicious drinks, magnificent music, inspiring impersonations, and rambunctious revelry. Who could ask for anything more?

This year's talks were especially riveting. Chris Dueker kicked off with 'Of Mumps and Men', from which we learned everything we had ever wanted to know about mumps but were afraid to ask. In a very humorous talk, Chris dispelled any notion that Wodehouse had had mumps twice – very unlikely – and that it would have affected his libido, as some biographers have claimed.

Our second speaker was Dan Garrison, author of *Who's Who in Wodehouse*. Dan examined 'Romantic Plots in Wodehouse: The Greek Comedy Formula', which showed the parallels between many of Wodehouse's stories and key plot devices of Greek comedy, in particular what was known as 'new comedy'. This may seem a misnomer since it began about 320 B.C., but that is when Menander and the rest of the boys stopped writing about gods and goddesses and started satirizing contemporary life in Athens. Dan convincingly demonstrated that PGW was using 'new comedy' to the end of his life..

Then it was Tony Ring's turn; he spoke on 'The Frustrations of a Proven Successful Playwright', which focused on Wodehouse's straight theatre work, with emphasis on his collaborations as well as his translations or adaptations of others' plays. Of special interest in this department was *Keep Your Head*, a rather unusual piece with a plot centered on head-hunting, of all things!

Tony was followed by Peter Nieuwenhuizen, a Dutch member who discussed 'A Tale of Two Knights: Sidney and Wodehouse'. The Sidney in question was Sir Philip Sidney, the 16th-century English poet and soldier who died at the battle of Zutphen in the Netherlands. He is famous for the line "Thy necessity is greater than mine," spoken as he gave up a drink of water to another wounded soldier while he himself was dying. Peter reminded us how Wodehouse used this line in many forms (correctly and mangled) more than 20 times in his stories.

The morning session concluded with Nina Botting Herbst, a Brit now living in the Chicago area, who holds the distinction of playing Bobbie Wickham in the first season of *Jeeves and Wooster*. Nina had everybody laughing with her memories of working with Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie.

The afternoon session commenced with the Dreaded Business Meeting, conducted by TWS president Ken Clevenger. Ken reported that the society's



Members of Chicago's City Lit Theater Company performed two Wodehouse stories to great applause.



British ex-pat Nina Botting Herbst was one of eight enjoyable speakers.

membership is healthy, and treasurer Kris Fowler confirmed that TWS is solvent. We learned the happy news that TWS now has a new website, and if you'd like to see it, go to www.wodehouse.org. Then Susan Collicott and Tom Smith came to the podium to announce the location of the 2015 convention: Seattle, Washington. (The dates will be October 30–November 1, so do mark it in your calendar.)

In keeping with TWS tradition, Ken stepped down as president, and Karen Shotting was unanimously elected to take his place. The new vice president is Bob Rains, Kris Fowler continues as treasurer, and Ian Michaud will labour on as the society's membership secretary.

The business done, it was time for a little entertainment, and this was provided by a cast of thousands – or so it seemed; it was really just 12 people – who did a staged reading of 'The Riddle of the Starving Swine'. This original sketch by Gayle Lange Puhl, a Sherlockian as well as a Wodehousean, had Sherlock Holmes investigating the mystery of the Empress of Blandings's loss of appetite. Although clearly pilfered from 'Pig-hoo-o-o-ey!', it was a wonderful pastiche, made all the more enjoyable by the handheld puppets used to enact the story.

The antepenultimate speaker was Michael Pointon, who shared stories of the day in 1988 when the blue plaque marking PGW's London residence at 17 Dunraven Street (formerly Norfolk Street) was unveiled by the Queen Mother. Michael was instrumental in getting the plaque installed on the house and therefore had a unique perspective on the day's events.

Norman Murphy – our fourth and final British speaker of the day – then told us about 'Wodehouse and the Girl Friends'. These friends encompassed children such as the Bowes-Lyon girls (the Queen Mother's cousins, to whom *The Pothunters* was dedicated), his cousins the Deane sisters, women with whom he enjoyed platonic friendships, and those for whom he entertained feelings deeper and warmer than those of ordinary friendship. Norman ended by revealing for the first time in public the facts behind the shocking story that PGW had had an affair – and Ethel had found out about it.

Finally, Ian Michaud provided an overview of the PGW Globe Reclamation Project, which is bringing together Wodehouse scholars from around the world.

More about this project can be read in the September 2013 issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

With that, the talks were over and it was time for the evening reception and banquet. It is traditional but not mandatory to come in costume, and many preferred to simply dress up for the occasion. But as usual we were awed by the wonderful variety and originality of those who had come in costume, whether as a Wodehouse character or a book title (not easy to

do), or in period dress. After the delicious meal had been consumed and toasts had been drunk, awards

for the best costumes were presented. Other prizes were distributed, raffle winners were announced, and UK Society Chairman Hilary Bruce was presented with a gift from the American Society (see photo, page 5). Later in the evening, the magnificent Maria Jette performed some Wodehouse songs for us. (Maria has already released one CD of

PGW songs; another one is in the works.) The evening ended on a very jazzy note, with Michael Pointon and Katherine Lewis providing the dance music.

On Sunday morning, during the traditional farewell brunch, we enjoyed several readings – first a selection from 'The Clicking of Cuthbert' read by Tad Boehmer and Masha Lebedeva (the latter enacting Vladimir Brusiloff in full beard); then various favourite selections chosen and read by Nina Botting Herbst and Michael Pointon. After this splendid finish, it was time for the tearful goodbyes as we took our leave of Chicago and each other with promises to meet again in Seattle in 2015.

Every TWS convention has its own special 'feel'. This one will probably be best remembered for its milieu, the superb gin & tonics, and the very high standard of talks. Thus sayeth your Editor.



Outgoing president Ken Clevenger presented Karen Shotting with the presidential regalia.



Maria Jette wowed the crowd.



Two Cleopatterers who won costume awards included UK Society membership secretary Christine Hewitt (right).

The Real-Life Archibald Mulliner

by Harshawardhan Nimkhedkar

I have been reading the scholarly works of Wodehousian experts for years and have felt there is almost no aspect they have not explored. And yet, sometimes something new comes to light. When I stumbled upon this discovery in 2011, I wrote to both Norman Murphy and Tony Ring for their opinion. They both were kind enough to reply encouragingly. And so, here it is for what it is worth.

You see, I think I have found out who PGW may have had in mind when he limned the character of Archibald Mulliner. Archibald, Aurelia Cammarleigh's lodestar in 'The Reverent Wooing of Archibald', was a typical Drone in spats. Yet Aurelia loved him, overlooking his legendary brainlessness. Why? Because Archibald was an inimitable hen imitator! His enactment of a hen laying an egg was so convincing, so realistic, that it was out of this world.

Archibald's imitation of a hen laying an egg was conceived on broad and sympathetic lines. Less violent than Salvini's *Othello*, it had in it something of the poignant wistfulness of Mrs Siddons in the sleep-walking scene of *Macbeth*. The rendition started quietly, almost inaudibly, with a sort of soft, liquid crooning – the joyful yet half-incredulous murmur of a mother who can scarcely believe as yet that her union has really been blessed, and that it is indeed she who is responsible for that oval mixture of chalk and albumen which she sees lying beside her in the straw.

Then, gradually, conviction comes.

"It looks like an egg," one seems to hear her say. "It feels like an egg. It's shaped like an egg. Damme, it *is* an egg!"

And at that, all doubting resolved, the crooning changes; takes on a firmer note; soars into the upper register; and finally swells into a maternal pæan of joy – a "Charawk-chawk-chawk-chawk" of such a calibre that few had ever been able to listen to it dry-eyed. Following which, it was Archibald's custom to run round the room, flapping the sides of his coat, and then, leaping onto a sofa or some convenient chair, to stand there with his arms at right angles, crowing himself purple in the face.

It so happened that in July 2011, while trawling through the depths of the internet for some matters related to the history of the British Raj, I chanced upon the e-Bay listing of an old (1913) book, *F. Armine Wodehouse – A Short Memoir with Some Sketches And Verses*. It was a posthumous collection of essays and poems by F. Armine, written while he was stationed in Agra, India, before his early death.

The name Wodehouse always acts on me like catnip on a cat, so I stopped and sniffed. I knew all about Ernest Armine and Sir Philip, the two celebrated Wodehouses with connections to India – but this name was new. Any relation to our hero? And what was he doing in India?



Frederick Armine
Wodehouse
(1884-1912)

Fortunately, the eBay seller had quoted extensively from the book with photographs – and the text revealed that this Wodehouse was a famous bird imitator!

Aha! Now, what do we have here? I said to my immortal soul. Was this the man who gave P. G. Wodehouse the idea for Archibald Mulliner?

The more I mused, the more convinced I became. Unable to keep my thoughts to myself, I shared this idea with my 'Blandings' Yahoo group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/blandings>) and also wrote to both Norman Murphy and Tony Ring, seeking their views. I am very glad to say they both supported my theory. In my announcement, I quoted an extract from the book:

In one of his reports he is warned against "making strange animal noises in the corridors," and this mimicry of animals went with him through life, as most of his intimate friends will recall his silent delight when the sofa and even the piano had to be moved to look for that cat whose faint mew was heard, so life-like that no one suspected the real author of its cries. His sister records that even in India this "parlour trick" enlivened many a dinner party or flagging entertainment!

The "he" above refers to F(rederick) Armine Wodehouse, a cousin and near contemporary of P. G. Wodehouse. The son of the Reverend Frederick Armine Wodehouse and Alice Elizabeth Juliana Powys, he was born on 23 June 1884 and later became Professor of History at Agra College, India, where he died from enteric fever on 21 September 1912, aged just 28. After reading about this chap, I became convinced that when our PGW first thought of Archibald Mulliner in 1928, he had had this long-lost cousin in his mind.

In fact, an even earlier allusion by PGW to this cousin would be dated 1915 – 13 years before Archie Mulliner's chicken-imitating debut and only three years after the death of Plum's cat-imitating cousin, when Wodehouse had Ashe Marson imitating a cat-fight to get Joan Valentine out of a tight spot in *Something Fresh* (aka *Something New*).

When I sent my findings to Norman and Tony in July 2011, Tony replied:

Thank you for pointing out this item on eBay, and for summarising the arguments that it points to him as the model for Archibald Mulliner. I wonder if there is any evidence anywhere that PGW had met him – he went to Cheltenham College according to the extracts, so it is quite likely. Norman may have a better idea. Wodehouse tended to make notes of little pointers like this, which he kept in notebooks and referred to from time to time when working on his novels and stories. It would be expecting too much to find a specific reference to this subject, I think.

And Norman had definite thoughts to share:

I am sure you are right. I suppose lots of boys learned how to imitate animal noises – see also Ashe Marson who enlivens dinner in the Steward's Room at Blandings by doing an imitation of a cat fight – but a party trick like this would certainly be known and remembered by the family.

However, it is unlikely that PG and his cousin ever met, although they certainly knew of each other. Frederick was the second of three sons and the third brother, Norman Atherton, went into the Navy and captained England's Rugby team six times before the First World War. PG was very proud of this but said he had never met his cousin; which implies that he had never met Frederick either. (I have not found any reference to his ever having visited Gotham in Derbyshire or even mentioning it.) But we do know that PG did know Frederick's father, the Rev. F Wodehouse (PG's own 'Uncle Fred'). He was one of PG's four clergyman uncles and the Miss Powys he married happened to be a very close friend of the Countess of Bradford of Weston Park, Shropshire (the source for the Blandings estate).

I found her name in the Weston Park Visitors' Book frequently and, after her marriage, she brought her husband to stay at Weston Park as well. Further, in his Notes and Phrases notebooks, PG notes that Uncle Fred came to Oxford to consult with PG's brother Armine as to which college Uncle Fred's eldest son Arthur should go to. And when we remember that both Armine and his cousin Frederick then went out to teach at universities in India, not too distant from each other, then I think we have a sufficient connection. One day, I must sit down and count how many Wodehouses served in India; Frederick's brother was there as well in the Indian Army. Congratulations on having found it.

Now I am making this discovery public (after much nagging from the *Wooster Sauce* editor). The next time you read PGW's description of Archibald's imitation of a hen laying an egg, remember Frederick Armine Wodehouse and drink a glass in his honour. Don't forget to say a loud 'Charawk' at the same time!

Mastermind Quiz 9: A Wodehouse Christmas

by David Buckle

1. In which short story does Bertie Wooster puncture Sir Roderick Glossop's hot water bottle in the small house of Christmas morning, having mistaken him for Tuppy Glossop?
2. Whom does Bertie describe as "jovial and bonhomous as a dame in a Christmas pantomime" in *Much Obligated Jeeves*?
3. Not being full of the festive spirit, what charitable act does Bertie refuse to do for Aunt Dahlia?
4. 'Another Christmas Carol' is narrated by which Wodehouse character?
5. Writing in the American magazine *Vanity Fair* in December 1915, P G Wodehouse gave advice to a Christmas Shopper. What pen name did he use?
6. In which story in *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets* does the narrator state: "Too often, when you introduce a ringer into a gaggle of Pekes, there ensues a scrap like New Year's Eve in Madrid"?
7. "And then, one morning, like a voice from another world, had come the news that the White Sox and the Giants were to give an exhibition in London at the Chelsea Football Ground. He had counted the days like a child before Christmas." These lines comes from which story in *The Man with Two Left Feet*?
8. "The days are growing short and cold, / Approaches Autumn, ay and chill Yule" are the first two lines of which Wodehouse poem?
9. "Jeeves was in the sitting-room messing about with holly, for we would soon be having Christmas at our throats and he is always a stickler for doing the right thing," mused Bertie Wooster in which short story?
10. In 'Jeeves and the Yule-tide Spirit', why does Bertie cancel a trip to Monte Carlo?

(Answers on page 21)

It was as he was passing the Houses of Parliament that the realisation came to him that the strange bubbly sensation that seemed to start from just above the lower left side-pocket of his waistcoat was not, as he had at first supposed, dyspepsia, but love.

(From 'The Romance of a Bulb-Squeezer', 1927)

Gladys and Ern: The Further Adventures

by Bob Rains and Andrea Jacobsen

This was written for the Society's Weekend with Wodehouse in Norfolk last year. Four participants were challenged to describe their favourite child character(s) in the PGW canon. Bob and Andrea were the clear-cut winners.

We have encountered the siblings Gladys and Ern only once, in the immortal 'Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend', which Rudyard Kipling famously described as one of the most perfect short stories he had ever read. That font of all information, Wikipedia, reports that 'Lord E and the G F' first appeared in 1926 in the U.S. in *Liberty* magazine and in England in *Strand*. It was, of course, later collected in *Blandings Castle*, aka *Blandings Castle and Elsewhere* (1935).

It's actually something of an exaggeration to say that we encounter Ern in the story as he has no speaking role, and his most important action, for which he is due eternal glory – biting Lady Constance on the leg – occurs offstage.

Gladys is another matter altogether. She has a lot to say, and she says it brilliantly. Her thoughts, straight from the heart, are punctuated with "Yes, sir. Thank you, sir," even when the thanks are due her, as when she saves Lord E's own leg from an aroused canine. Explaining why she thought it was okay to take food for the banished Ern, she famously explains, "Thank you, sir. I thought if I didn't 'ave none, then it would be all right Ern 'aving what I would 'ave 'ad if I 'ad 'ave 'ad."

Gladys is not just uniquely eloquent, she is also a girl of action. In this one story she manages to pick flowers from the gardens of Blandings Castle, cop McAllister on the shin with a stone, calm the aforementioned wild dog before it can attack Lord E, pinch "two buns, two jem-sengwiches, two apples and a slicer cake", get put in a cattle shed, persuade Lord E that she be allowed to pick more "flarze" for Ern, and, most important of all, win the heart of Lord E and turn him from a mouse into a man capable of staring down McAllister and standing up to the imperious Lady Constance.

So, what can we predict for the future lives of such wonderful children? We know that Wodehouse contemplated a sequel in which Gladys would return to Blandings as a 'tweenie' engaged to a jealous valet or perhaps the local vet, but, sadly, this never came to fruition. (*What Ho!* (2000), p. 132)

We think perhaps that these children of the streets of London, given their propensities . . . well, it would go like this:

One day a nice American lady known as Gumshoe Gertie, aka Sweetie Carlisle, was wandering among the stalls of Covent Garden when

she heard a modern-day Elisa Doolittle cry out, "Getcher flarze here. Flarze for sale cheap." Gertie was touched by what appeared to be a brother-and-sister team working side by side out of a flower cart. She could not help but notice that whenever the flower girl's attentions were focused on a customer and the assembling of a proper bouquet, the young man appeared to be dipping into the customer's purse, no doubt with the best of intentions. (We ought not judge Ern too harshly, as he had developed something of a drinking problem, having been introduced at a tender age to the delights of alcohol with the gift of a bottle of port from Lord Emsworth. But we digress.) Gertie, feeling she could take care of herself, decided to make a purchase. She bought a vase full of what Gladys described as "gladly-old-eyes". She took that vase back to the flat, and, the rest is history.

As later recounted in *Cocktail Time*, Gertie got incensed when she learned that her husband, Gordon Carlisle, known among his associates as Oily, failed to take strong measures when a mug named Cosmo Wisdom had welshed on a sporting wager.

Gertie said, "I'd have busted him one."

Mr. Carlisle could well believe it. Impulsiveness and a sturdy belief in direct action were the leading features of his mate's interesting character. Some time had passed since the incident occurred and the bump had gone down now, but there remained green in his memory the occasion when a fancied misdemeanour on his part had led Gertie to hit him on the back of the head with a large vase containing gladioli. It had, in his opinion, spoiled the honeymoon.

There is a postscript. After he was sentenced at the Boshier Street Magistrate's Court to 20 days without the option, Ern whiled away his time studying the writings on high finance of a certain Robert Bruce. A mere 20 years later, G&E-Flarze.com, Ltd., had its long-awaited initial public offering and outperformed the Facebook IPO by several hundred million pounds. G&E's sister and brother founders reported that they had used a tiny portion of their profits to purchase a rundown estate called Blandings Castle, which they intended to rehabilitate and turn into a retreat and spa for an obscure group known as The P G Wodehouse Society.



Bob and Andrea in their guises as Oily and Sweetie Carlisle, at The Wodehouse Society convention in October 2013.



Book Now for an Evening of Wodehouse Verse!

In the September edition of *Wooster Sauce*, preliminary notice was given of a forthcoming Society event which is being presented in conjunction with the poetry outreach charity *Poet in the City* (see www.poetinthecity.co.uk). It is to be held at 6.30 for 7 pm on Monday, April 14, 2014, in Hall One, King's Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9AG – close to Kings Cross Station. The event is expected to last about 90 minutes.

This is a unique opportunity to hear readings of a dozen or so Wodehouse verses of a century ago, written mainly in response to published reports of minor incidents from everyday life. We expect that these will be read by established stars from the Arts, whose participation will be confirmed in the New Year on our website (www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk) or through *Poet in the City*. In addition, Hal Cazalet and our patron Lucy Tregear will sing five of the lyrics which Wodehouse wrote during his musical comedy career of the 1910s and 1920s.

As far as we are aware, this is the first time that an evening of Wodehouse verse has ever been offered, and it is another example of the extraordinary breadth of his work. We strongly encourage you to persuade a few friends to join you for an unusual and exuberant evening.

Tickets went on sale during November. If purchased in person or by telephone through the Kings Place Box Office (020 7520 1490), they cost £11.50. However, purchasing online at www.kingsplace.co.uk brings a £2 per ticket discount.

We look forward to seeing many of you and your friends at King's Place for what should be an extraordinary evening.

To learn about a new book of PGW verse, to be published in 2014, turn to page 4.

"I didn't know poets broke people's necks."

"Ricky does. He once took on three simultaneous costermongers in Covent Garden and cleaned them up in five minutes. He had gone there to get inspiration for a pastoral, and they started chi-iking him, and he sailed in and knocked them base over apex into a pile of Brussels sprouts.

"How different from the home life of the late Lord Tennyson."

(From *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, 1939)

Poet's Corner

The Haunted Tram

[A gentleman recently wrote to the *Daily Express* alleging that several times mysterious footsteps have been heard on the top of a South London tram at night, accompanied by the rattle of a conductor's chain and (probably, though he does not say so) a whispered request for fares. And no conductor was visible!]

Ghosts of The Towers, The Grange, The Court,
Ghosts of the Castle Keep,
Ghosts of the finicking, "high life" sort
Are growing a trifle cheap.
But here is a spook of another stamp.
No thin theatrical sham,
But a spectre who fears not dirt nor damp:
He rides on a London tram.

By the curious glance of a mortal eye
He is not seen. He's heard.
His steps go a-creeping, creeping by,
He speaks but a single word.
You may hear his feet: you may hear them plain,
For – it's odd in a ghost – they crunch.
You may hear the whirr of his rattling chain,
And the ting of his ringing punch.

The gathering shadows of night fall fast;
The lamps in the street are lit;
To the roof have the eerie footsteps passed,
Where the outside passengers sit.
To the passengers' side has the spectre paced;
For a moment he halts, they say,
Then a ring from the punch at the unseen waist,
And the footsteps pass away.

That is the tale of the haunted car;
And if on that car you ride
You won't, believe me, have journeyed far
Ere the spectre seeks your side.
Ay, all unseen by your seat he'll stand,
And (unless it's a wig) your hair,
Will rise at the touch of his icy hand,
And the sound of his whispered "Fare!"

At the end of the trip, when you're getting down
(And you'll probable simply fly!)
Just give the conductor half-a-crown,
Ask who is the ghost and why.
And the man will explain with baited breath
(And point you a moral) thus:
"E's a pore young bloke wot was crushed to death
By people as fought
As they didn't ought
For seats on a crowded bus."

First published in *Punch*, July 17, 1903

The Life and Death of the Real Jeeves

as considered by Murray Hedgcock

The June issue of *Wooster Sauce* tells the story of Percy Jeeves, the Yorkshire-born cricketer who made an impression on PGW when playing for Warwickshire at Cheltenham in 1913. But it has been only in the Wodehouse oeuvre that the name, transferred to a marvellous literary character, has been properly recognised. So we are indebted to Brian Halford for his life of Percy Jeeves, entitled *The Real Jeeves*.

Percy Jeeves, born March 5, 1888, made his name playing for Goole in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Spotted in 1910 by the secretary of the county club, R. W. Ryder, Jeeves was recruited by Warwickshire, making his first-class debut at Edgbaston against the Australians on May 29, 1912. From a modest beginning with innings of one and 12, and a bowling analysis of two wickets for 35 runs, Jeeves steadily improved until his selection for the Players v. Gentlemen in 1914. He had match figures of five wickets for 68 runs and earned the approval of the old England captain Plum Warner, captaining the amateurs. Jeeves, said Warner, would be an England bowler in the near future.

But life had different plans for the young Yorkshireman.

The obituary sections of *Wisden* from 1915 to 1920 are a touching reminder of the price paid by cricketers, page upon page recording the young men who died for their country. There is, perhaps understandably, an emphasis on officers – products of the public schools who found themselves in action within months of wearing their First XI colours. But alongside these were thousands of working-class recruits like Percy Jeeves who joined up within weeks of the outbreak of the war.

A chapter heading in *The Real Jeeves* sums up what awaited Jeeves and his fellows in the 15th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment when they arrived at Boulogne on November 22, 1915, heading to camp:

Vile introduction to France. Waist-deep thick liquid mud.

The privations, uncertainties, and fears of Army

Jeeves had won the match for his team with figures of 15-3-44-4, so led the Players back into the pavilion. The Warwickshire player was first up the pavilion steps, before Hobbs, Woolley, Gunn, Hitch - great players following in his wake.

"There was no player on either side who created a more profound impression than Jeeves," commented the *Post*. It was no cheap parochial praise. Jeeves had announced himself as one of the very best.

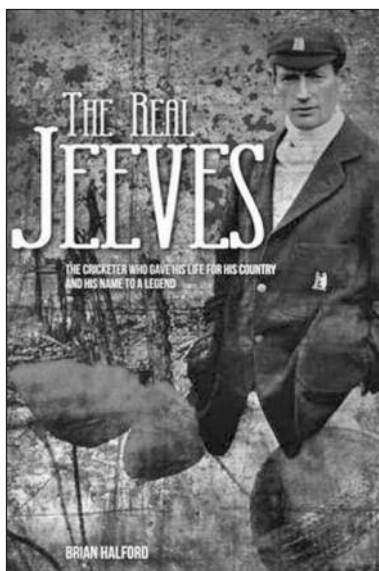
(From *The Real Jeeves*, chap. 26, concerning the Players v. Gentlemen match of July 1914)

life in the trenches are graphically recorded, leading to the night of July 21, 1916, when the 14th Warwickshire and 1st West Kents went over the top in the terrible Battle of the Somme. Most managed only a few paces before they fell.

With their star-shells lighting up the valley, the Germans had a perfect view of the enemy, lumbering their way towards them. . . . They blundered into a storm of shrapnel, with barely a chance of firing a shot in reply.

The action was tantamount to murder, not by the German machine-gunners carrying out a legitimate defensive act of war, but by the British officers on their own courageous infantry.

As line after line of men were cut down, only a few minutes elapsed before two companies of the 15th Warwickshire was ordered to support the attack. C Company, including Percy Jeeves, was one of those chosen.



Next morning, the 15th Warwickshire reported one officer and 13 Other Ranks killed, five officers and 90 Other Ranks wounded, and one officer and 31 Other Ranks missing. "One of the latter was Private 611 Percy Jeeves. He is still missing."

Today Percy Jeeves is one of more than 72,000 names on the Thiepval Monument, a memorial to men with no known grave, set on the site of the Somme battlefield. "Carved there, at Pier and Face 9A 9B and 10B, is Jeeves's name, in perpetuity, just a few miles from where his body is lost forever."

'Our' Jeeves, we know, dabbled in the War to an extent. The real Jeeves – and we must concede Percy Jeeves that title - did more than dabble. He volunteered, he trained, he served – and in the finish, he gave his life.

Percy Jeeves might well have represented his country at cricket, but it was not to be. Brian Halford has done a service beyond telling us of a cricketer whose promise was never to be fulfilled. He has reminded us that often, beyond the fun of Wodehouse and the rewards of the Summer Game, lies the harsh reality of a cruel world.

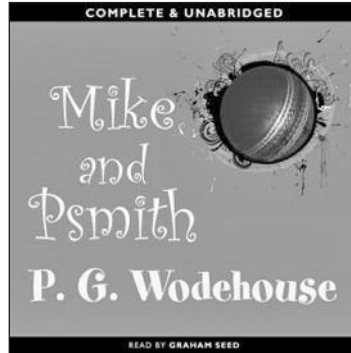
The Real Jeeves, by Brian Halford, is published by Pitch Publishing at £16.99.

Two Recent Unabridged Audio Recordings

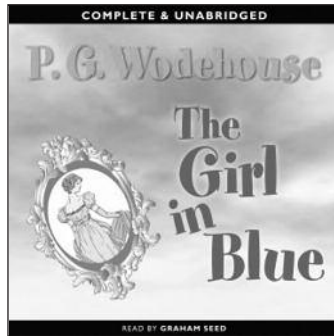
Reviewed by Tony Ring

Wodehouse has been well served by the readers of both abridged and unabridged audiobooks for almost 25 years. Chivers Audio first produced a Jonathan Cecil recording in 1989, and until his recent death he had recorded almost 40 titles for the company through its various evolutions (Chivers, BBC Audio and AudioGo are successive names for the same company). He set a challenging standard for those following. Simultaneously, Martin Jarvis was recording a total of almost 20 abridged books for CSA Telltapes (now Canongate).

Keen to continue recording unabridged Wodehouse titles, AudioGo selected Graham Seed to read two very different books, *The Girl in Blue* and *Mike and Psmith*. *The Girl in Blue*, a 1970 book, has none of Wodehouse's best-known characters, but it does have Americans of both sexes alongside the British characters. Graham has a good narrative voice and has produced a recording which is very pleasant to listen to, but it is fair to say that the ear did not always distinguish the speakers easily during prolonged dialogue sequences. His most successful accent was that of Chipperfield, the brokers' man acting as butler to Crispin Scrope; in my view his least successful was the American lady Barney Clayborne.



He had an even more difficult job in reading *Mike and Psmith*, the second half of the 1909 school story *Mike*, which was published separately under different titles in 1935 and 1953, which had a cast including numerous adolescent schoolboys. Graham's speaking voice comes across as very much in the mid-range, and he is naturally quite softly-spoken, ideal for the basic speaking voice of such characters. His clarity is exemplary, so, as with *The Girl in Blue*, it is the difficulty of distinguishing between similar characters in dialogue which is the only criticism. Even his angry, grumpy Mr Downing didn't generate a feeling of terror in the listener as it was reported as having caused in the boys. I wonder to what extent this reaction reflects the way we have been spoiled by the long familiarity with Jonathan Cecil's recordings.



There are still many Wodehouse books which have not yet been recorded in unabridged audio format, and it is to be hoped that the company will continue to use professional readers such as Graham Seed to fill in the gaps.

Since this article was written, Audiogo has suddenly ceased business and gone into administration. No details are yet available about the fate of existing stock or rights to publish the recordings in future.

Little Nuggets

'The World's Finest Pork'

SHARON MITCHELL sent an advertisement from a U.S. magazine extolling the virtues of Berkshire Pork: "The Berkshire breed of pork has been perfected over a nearly 300-year period to retain its superior taste, texture and marbling. Often known as Kurobuta, this particular pork is celebrated in Japan for its tenderness and juiciness." (Note. When Crown Prince Hirohito visited England in 1921, he so enjoyed the Berkshire bacon at Buckingham Palace that he insisted on it for breakfast to the end of his life.) The ad included a recipe for Berkshire chops.

A Bad Connection

Contestants on the BBC Four quiz programme *Only Connect* have to spot the connections between groups of four items out of a 'wall' of 16. During the final on August 5, MARTIN STRATFORD tells us, one of the groups on the wall consisted of 'Wellbeloved, Beach, Voules, and Twemlow'. Martin writes: "Despite my

shouting at the screen, the contestants (the team who went on to become series champions) failed to spot the Blandings connection."

Wodehouse and Jazz

ALAN WOOD came across an unexpected Wodehouse reference in jazz musician Dave Frishberg's online memoirs (<http://bit.ly/16NoMqX>). In discussing the great Gene Krupa and the Austin High School gang (which gave birth to the 'Chicago' style of jazz), Frishberg writes:

Once in the car he [Krupa] reminisced about the Austin High School group in Chicago and their assortment of Bohemian friends, characters we would call "beatniks" in later years. There were avid readers among them, and the English humorists were favored. Gene remembered Bud Freeman, Bix Beiderbecke, Dave Tough and others quoting dialog from P.G. Wodehouse. Gene said his own favorite was *Three Men In a Boat* by Jerome K. Jerome. He said Bix could quote long passages from that book.

Perfect Nonsense: A Review

by Peter Thompson

On 14 October, I attended Richmond Theatre to see a performance of *Perfect Nonsense*. Based on *The Code of the Woosters*, this was written by brothers Robert and David Goodale. And a splendid job they have done.

It opens with the spartan set of a chair and Bertie Wooster, and like the rest of the audience, I suspect, I wondered how the play would deal with the story, bearing in mind there are but three persons in the cast: Matthew Macfadyen as Jeeves, Stephen Mangan as Bertie, and Mark Hadfield as Seppings, butler to Aunt Dahlia. But the Goodales – obviously men who, like Oofy Prosser, would walk ten miles in tight shoes to pick up sixpence and do not like to waste wages on a large cast when three very talented men can do the job of a dozen – allow Jeeves and Seppings to act out the parts of all the others with hilarious consequences and no loss of Wodehouse quality. You will probably never see a better Gussie Fink-Nottle, nor indeed a better Aunt Dahlia. You will certainly never see a similar Roderick Spode, of that you have my personal guarantee, and there is a danger that he may steal the evening.

The play appeals not only to Wodehouse lovers by ensuring that all the best lines are there along with the complex plot, but also to the other members of the audience (otherwise known as Those Who Live on the Dark Side) who just want a farce which is clever and performed brilliantly. The actors, I trust, have booked themselves into a rest home after the run concludes as they will undoubtedly be totally exhausted. It is fast and furious from beginning to end. But thanks to clever production ideas, excellent directing and clever acting, they make the evening one to remember. Those who will have you believe that an actor's life is an easy one should be booked in to perform this brilliant piece. That, as they used to say, would "larn 'em".

A bonus for Society members is that in the programme notes, there is a familiar name telling us about 'Jeeves and the West End Stage' – namely, Tony Ring. As ever well researched, beautifully written, interesting, and informative. Thank you, Tony.

A note of caution: This works on stage, but beware if they ever put it on television, DVD, or film. It works because it is *on stage and live*.

Wodehouse at the Cheltenham Literature Festival

Wodehouse's work was featured in two separate events on the second day of Cheltenham's Literature Festival in October, and large audiences were present for each.

In the first, Hugo Rifkind hosted a discussion of his work, involving Sir Terry Wogan, Hal Cazalet, and Sebastian Faulks; the latter was fresh from an extraordinarily interesting discussion with James Naughtie on aspects of his book *Birdsong*. Hal and Lara Cazalet sang two PGW songs (respectively, *There Isn't One Girl in the World for Me* and *Bill*), accompanied by Cat Beveridge, to open proceedings, after which the discussion between the participants and the audience was accompanied by two superbly read extracts from the

works. Hal read Sebastian Faulks's favourite passage from English literature (Bertie as Gussie joining with Esmond Haddock in a rendition of *A-Hunting We Will Go*) from *The Mating Season*, and Sir Terry followed up with the scene of Gussie Fink-Nottle presenting the prizes from *Right Ho, Jeeves*. Both were enthusiastically received by the almost capacity audience of more than 1,300.

Later in the day, Martin Jarvis made a live recording of 'Jeeves and the Song of Songs' and 'Jeeves Takes Charge' in front of an audience of 700 in the Sky Arts Theatre, which is a large tent. This was another enjoyable event but, unfortunately, significant and unexpected extraneous noise from generators and other sources may make it impractical to broadcast the recordings.

Jonathan Coe on Wodehouse

The *Guardian* of September 7 featured a long and thoughtful article by Jonathan Coe on 'What's So Funny About Comic Novels?' (see <http://bit.ly/13rDLpi>). In this piece, Coe seeks to establish principles on the subject, saying that it is an area in which British writers are supposed to excel. Having offered a number of suggestions, he concludes:

All of this leads us inevitably to P G Wodehouse, the elephant in my comic room, about whom I've been silent for far too long. We must admit that there is not a grain of satire or moral seriousness in his novels. . . . While it should have been obvious to me that these very qualities are the key to his greatness, for a long time they made me feel stupidly snobbish about Wodehouse and reluctant even to read him. Some years ago I was lucky enough to be awarded a prize in his name, and with it came a complete set of the Everyman edition of his works. It was only then that I realised the pure, unpolluted humour of which he was possessed was the greatest possible gift he could have offered to the world: the same thing, I suppose, that Italo Calvino had in mind when he extolled the virtues of 'thoughtful lightness' or 'comedy that has lost its bodily weight'. More and more I feel that, just as all art aspires to this condition of music, all humour should really aspire to the condition of Wodehouse.

Identity Crisis

by Roger Bowen

I've often thought of you as a Wodehouse character," opined a friend who saw me convulsed in laughter by *Right Ho, Jeeves*. When questioned about exactly which of Plum's creations I resembled, my chum seemed uncertain. This threw me into a frenzy of self-examination, and self-doubt, calling into question my whole self-image. Did my friend mean that I brought to mind:

Bertie? Yes, I'm certainly on the vague side, people say well-meaning and good-natured, but just short of needing a keeper like Jeeves to organise my life.

Lord Emsworth? I'm not that vague.

Gally Threepwood? Not enough of a 'past'.

Jeeves? Well, I eat plenty of fish, but not necessarily with the same mental stimulation.

Spode? I hardly see myself as an embryo Mussolini.

Gussie Fink- Nottle? No, not sufficiently newt-orientated.

And these are just the male characters. If I remind people of the females, it just does not bear thinking about. With Madeline Bassett, no balanced person could share her views on rabbits, elves, and stars. Constance and Agatha are too bossy and overbearing, but Dahlia's a good egg.

Never mind, one could easily be compared to characters from the works of other writers. Wodehouse's creations are mostly likeable. How about: "You remind of something out of Edgar Allan Poe or Dostoevsky?" Or: "You are just how I imagined Franz Kafka." Things could be worse.

The Words of Wodehouse

by June Arnold

Solve the clues in the top grid, then transfer the letters from there to the bottom grid, which will give you a description of a Wodehouse character; reading down Column A in the top grid will reveal the character's name. Answers are on page 21.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1						■										
2								■								
3						■				■						
4												■				
5					■											
6								■								
7						■										

Clues:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 A waitress courted by Jeeves (5) / Macbeth, thane of _____ (6) | 5 _____ Prosser, Drones Club member (4) / Riches (6) / Noise (3) |
| 2 Frisby's solicitor in <i>Big Money</i> (7) / Conflict (3) | 6 Editor of <i>Peaceful Moments</i> in <i>The Prince and Betty</i> (Amer. ed.) (7) / Sweetly sentimental (4) |
| 3 Pay out money (5) / Fish eggs (3) / African desert (6) | 7 Butler in <i>A Damsel in Distress</i> (5) / Goblet (7) |
| 4 Probability (6) / Operatic song (4) / American soldier (2; abbr.) | |

2G	6E	ID		5F	4C	7E		3L		1I	5A	1A	4H	6C				
4A	2J	3B	7I	2C	1E	4F		3H	5C		7G	5K	6B	1G	7A	2E	5O	4M
	6F		4E	7H	5H	1L	7C	5N	2F	7D								
2A	3M	4N	3D	5B	7L	6K	3G	2B	6D		6J	4J	5J	4B			3N	
4I	1B	7K	3A	5G	5M		3C	5D	7B	1C	2K	1K	6G		3P	4D	1J	
4K		2I	3I	5I	7J		2D	6A	6L	3E		3K	6I	1H	3O	7M		

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

Two New Wodehouse First Editions

Regular readers of this column will know that Eileen McIlvaine's *P. G. Wodehouse: A Comprehensive Bibliography and Checklist*, published in 1990, is the standard Wodehouse bibliography. Section A of *McIlvaine* is entitled 'Novels and Semi-Autobiographical Works' and runs from A1a (*The Pothunters*, 1902) to A103a (*The Clicking of Cuthbert*, 1986 (being the short story as a stand-alone US edition, so not really a first edition in the traditional sense)). The *Addendum to McIlvaine*, published by the International Wodehouse Association in 2001, extended this to A111, taking account of titles such as *A Man of Means* (A107), *Plum Stones* (A108), *The Luck Stone* (A109), and *Tales of Wrykyn and Elsewhere* (A110), all of which were published by specialist Wodehouse publishers, either Galahad Books (see *Wooster Sauce*, March 2011, p19) or Porpoise Books (see *Wooster Sauce*, December 2012, p5). Following the publication of the *Addendum*, Galahad Books published one further title, *A Prince for Hire*, in 2003.

Recently, a mainstream UK publisher has issued not one but two new Wodehouse first editions, containing stories never before published in the UK, neither in book form nor in a magazine. By my reckoning, this is the first such issue by a mainstream publisher in the UK in over 35 years, since *Sunset at Blandings* (A100a) in 1977. The publisher is Everyman, and in autumn 2013, as part of its Everyman Wodehouse series, it published *Kid Brady Stories and A Man of Means* and *The Swoop! & The Military Invasion of America*. For our purposes, it is the first half of the first title and the second half of the second title that are most interesting from a bibliographic point of view.

As the copyright page of the Everyman edition states, the Kid Brady stories were first published in *Pearson's Magazine*, New York, from September 1905 to March 1907. This is correct, but it does not provide full details: the seven stories were published in September 1905, November 1905, January 1906, March 1906, May 1906, July 1906, and March 1907 (D48.1-7). Unlike most of Wodehouse's stories from the 1900s, they were not published in a magazine in the UK. And until the Everyman edition, they had

not been published in book format either in the UK or the US; in fact, not even a single one of the stories had ever appeared in book format. Between their original appearance in *Pearson's* and their reappearance in the Everyman edition, their only republication was by The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) in a series of seven separate supplements which were issued annually to members of the Society as they renewed their subscriptions. The first supplement was issued in December 1998 to members of the Society who had renewed their membership for the first time.

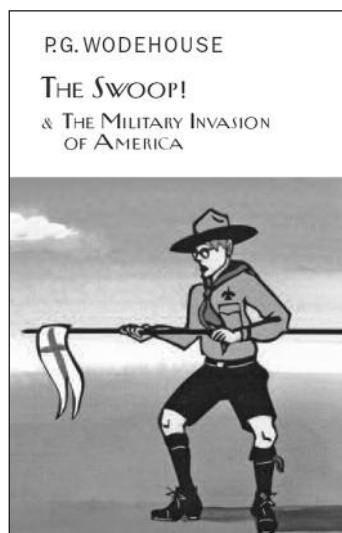
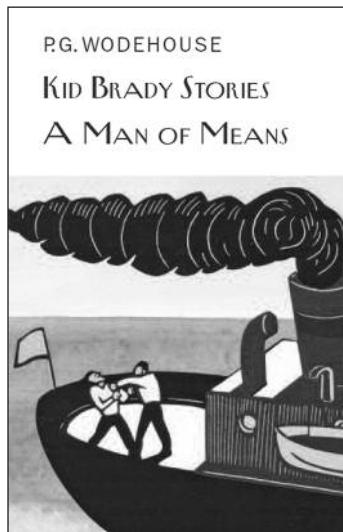
Like the Kid Brady stories, *The Military Invasion of America* has only previously been published in the US in magazine format, being serialised in *Vanity Fair* in July and August 1915 (D67.14-15). It is essentially a re-working of *The Swoop* for an American market, as its subtitle, *A Remarkable Tale of the German-Japanese Invasion in 1916*, indicates. Once again, the hero is the Boy Scout Clarence Chugwater.

The other stories in the Everyman editions have appeared in book format before. The six episodes that make up *A Man of Means* were first

published in *The Strand* magazine in the UK from April to September 1914 (D133.30-35). As mentioned above, they were first published in book form by Porpoise Books (A107) in 1991. *The Swoop* was first published in 1909 (A11a) in paperback; parts of it were serialised in *Story Paper Collectors' Digest* between July and September 1969, and it was republished in a facsimile limited edition of 500 by Heineman in 1993 (see *Wooster Sauce*, December 2011, p24, and March 2012, p20). So the Everyman edition of *A Man of*

Means therefore represents its first book publication by a mainstream publisher, while the Everyman edition of *The Swoop* represents its first hardback publication in the UK.

It is very exciting that the Kid Brady stories and *The Military Invasion of America*, which have been so difficult to obtain, are now widely available to the general public. It does make one wonder what further buried Wodehouse nuggets will be made available by Everyman before the series concludes.



A Wodehouse Illustrator Par Excellence

The Chris Beetles Gallery (located at 8–10 Ryder Street, St James's, London) has long been renowned for its dedication to traditional art, its immense stock of watercolours and illustrations, and its support of innumerable artists and illustrators. Among these is the London-born Paul Cox, a 56-year-old artist and illustrator whose work has been seen in publications from



Simultaneously, a small but noteworthy procession filed out of the house and made its way across the sunbathed lawn to where the big cedar cast a grateful shade.
– *Summer Lightning*, 1929

(Thanks to Chris Beetles Gallery for permission to print this illustration)

the *Daily Telegraph* to *Vanity Fair*. Most notably for Wodehouseans, he illustrated 16 Wodehouse books for the Folio Society (11 from the Jeeves and Wooster series, five from the Blandings series).

Thus, when your Editor received an invitation to attend an exhibition of Mr Cox's work in October, it was the work of an moment to say, "Yes, please!" The exhibition (which has, alas, ended) centred on the artist's views of the world based on his journeys through Britain and Europe, as well as trips made to New York City (his favourite city after London). Almost 250 of Mr Cox's works were on display at the gallery, and they made for fascinating viewing, with vivid, colourful representations of landscapes, cityscapes, buildings, and people. His eye for detail and movement results in a visual feast, and I found myself enraptured by endless number of pictures I was longing to buy.

One entire section of the exhibition (within the Britain area) was devoted to Cox's Wodehouse illustrations. The one that really caught my eye was a small but perfect portrait of Plum himself, working at his typewriter, his pipe emitting smoke that rose into a balloon above his head containing a miniature likeness of Blandings Castle. This was within my price range,

but alas, it had already been bought. Imagine my chagrin – and delight – when I discovered it had been purchased by my good friend Robert Bruce as an anniversary present for his wife, Hilary (yes, our own Chairman – lucky Hilary!).

Another picture I fixated on was the pen-and-ink above, depicting the Beach-led procession of servants taking tea out to the cedar tree. This, too, had been sold already, but given the price tag of £950, I could have done no more than gaze at it longingly.

It was unfortunate that word of this exhibition came too late to include notice of it in the last *Wooster Sauce* – but, oh, what a wonderful experience for yours truly and numerous other Wodehouseans who were able to make it. And there are still plenty of Paul Cox pictures available for sale; see the gallery's website at <http://bit.ly/187H7AD>.

– Elin Murphy

Answers to Mastermind Quiz

(Page 13)

1. 'Jeeves and the Yule-tide Spirit'
2. Aunt Dahlia
3. Dress up as Santa Claus for a Christmas party
4. Mr Mulliner
5. P. Brooke-Haven
6. 'Bingo and the Peke Crisis'
7. 'One Touch of Nature'
8. 'The Cricketer in Winter'
9. 'Jeeves and the Greasy Bird'
10. So he can spend Christmas with Bobbie Wickham and her family.

Answers to

The Words of Wodehouse

(page 19)

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Mabel / Cawdor | 5. Oofy / wealth / din |
| 2. Robbins / war | 6. Renshaw / twee |
| 3. spend / roe / Sahara | 7. Keggs / chalice |
| 4. chance / aria / GI | |

Quote: She was a woman capable of checking a charging rhinoceros with a raised eyebrow and a well bred stare.

Character: Mrs Cork (*The Old Reliable*)

Recent Press Comment

The Pune Mirror, August 8

In 'Are Jeeves and Wooster British?', Eunice de Souza quoted David Gilmour, leader of the band Pink Floyd: "My children sigh when they find me reading P G Wodehouse . . . they realize why I am reading *Right Ho! Jeeves* or *The Code of the Woosters* for the eighth time; they know that for me the Wodehouse world is the best of all anti-depressants."

Washington Post, August 9

(from Janet Nickerson)

A review by Tim Page of Neil Powell's *Benjamin Britten – a Life for Music* criticised the idea that Britten "is sometimes described as the most significant English composer after the death of Henry Purcell in 1695. For me, this is such a staggering overvaluation that it recalls P. G. Wodehouse's line about 'the raised eyebrow and the sharp intake of breath'."

The Times, August 12

In his 'Word Watch' puzzle, Philip Howard asked whether the word 'persp.' meant (a) perspiration, (b) Spanish travel, or (c) a trumpeter's command. His answer – that it was a colloquial abbreviation of 'perspiration' – noted it was found in Wodehouse and quoted from *The Inimitable Jeeves*.

Daily Telegraph, August 15

(from Carolyn De La Plain)

Max Davidson finished an article about why the British on holiday should stick to speaking English by quoting Wodehouse's nifty about Monty Bodkin's hangdog look when about to speak French.

The Week, August 17

(from Ian Alexander-Sinclair and David Lindsay)

Charles Moore chose among his favourite six books *The Apologia Pro Vita Sua* by Cardinal Newman, and commented that "No Englishman ever mastered prose so completely, unless it be P G Wodehouse". [Appropriate if he had done so – remember they were distantly related.]

The Observer Food Monthly, August 18

Robert McCrum wrote an extensive article on the British obsession with pigs and interviewed four owners about their attraction. He referred to the Empress of Blandings as one of the characters created by the "prose poet of the pig", PGW. His subjects included Sue Fildes, breeder of a Berkshire Champion of Champions at the Newbury Show; and Suzi Westron, who spotted a Berkshire sow 10 years ago, started breeding them for food, and now has up to 70 Berkshires at any one time.

The Guardian, August 23 (from Mike Swaddling)

In Philip Hensher's tribute to Elmore Leonard, he wrote: "What makes a novelist last is the music they make – not their social concerns, not the importance of their subjects.

P G Wodehouse has lasted where A J Cronin faded. Silliness, absurdity and the utmost triviality are no barriers . . . if they sing."

The Guardian, August 24 (from Caroline Franklyn)

A letter to the editor took issue with one of Elmore Leonard's rules for successful writing, noting that

Wodehouse often opened a story with comments about the weather: "As a feature of the Blandings Castle stories in particular, it transported the reader immediately from the humdrum woes of everyday life to a place where the sun shone, insects droned and love and laughter ruled."

The Times, August 29

In a review of the production of *Thark* at the Park Theatre, London N4, Libby Purves noted that the 1927 Aldwych farce encompassed "a world of P G Wodehouse archetypes: tweedy squire, gimlet-eyed wife, young twits with assertive girlfriends". Charles Spencer had noted something very similar in the *Telegraph* on August 27, specifying, *inter alia*, dragon aunts and good-hearted shop girls.

The Times, August 30

(from Murray Hedgcock)

Reported that the late Alexander McQueen's house in Dunraven Street was about to go on the market – and that it had previously been owned by Wodehouse (when the street name was Norfolk Street) and a grandson of Queen Victoria.

Bibliophile, September

Chose as their quotation to introduce books for sale in the category 'Erotica' this from *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*: "Love is a delicate plant that needs constant tending and nurturing, and this cannot be done by snorting at the adored object like a gas explosion and calling her friends lice."

Wall Street Journal, September 2

(from Beth Carroll and Caroline Franklyn)

In an article entitled 'Sentences to Make Life Worthwhile', Mike Dirda paid homage to PGW's genius for language, ending: "After all, to open almost any of Wodehouse's books is to open a door into endless summer."

BBC News Magazine (online), September 12

(from Nirav Shah)

An article on butlers in Dubai began: "If P G Wodehouse's unflappable valet Jeeves had been called upon to work in the Arabian peninsula, you can be sure he would have been perfectly at home."

New York Times, September 19 (from Andrew Hall)

Carried an interview with the singer-songwriter Sting, which includes this Q&A:

Jeeves and the Wedding Bells* and *Perfect Nonsense

Since the last issue, there have been dozens of articles referring to the play *Perfect Nonsense* or the book *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells* by Sebastian Faulks – too many for inclusion here (though thanks go to those who sent clippings). A small selection of press quotes and member reactions to the book and the play appear on pages 2 and 3; a fuller overview will appear in the March issue. Meanwhile, we are collating a list of the most significant articles and will post them – with website links where possible – on the Society website (www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk). We apologise to members who do not use the internet, but trust that they will be able to persuade a friend to show them the material if they are interested in following the progress of these exciting projects.

Q: What books might we be surprised to find on your shelves?

A: The complete works of P G Wodehouse, for their innocent escapism.

New York Times, September 20 (from Andrew Hall)

An article on a sale of decorative art at Christie's began: "P.G. Wodehouse, writing in his light-hearted mood, would have enjoyed telling the story of Sir Albert Richardson", the collection's owner, who died in 1964.

Financial Times, September 21

Printed a letter from Society member Christopher Bellew in reply to a column about how books furnish a room: "Sir, Harry Eyres' parents seem not to have anything by P.G. Wodehouse; hardly a well-furnished room."

Financial Times, September 28

(from Christopher Bellew)

Sir David Tang was asked what he listens to while exercising on a gym bike, a process which he does not enjoy. He listens to audiobooks and notes that "good old P G Wodehouse always makes me chuckle and even curl up, which is always welcomed as a camouflaged rest".

The Sunday Times Style Magazine, September 29

The feature 'Dress to Impress' quoted menswear designer Sean Crowley at Ralph Lauren as saying that Hugh Laurie as Bertie Wooster is his style icon.

Intelligent Life Magazine, September/October

In an article noting that "of all the great novelists, [PGW] has the least interest in the real world", writer Ed Cummings identified some of the key clues to appreciating his writing.

Daily Mail, October 3

Ran a feature by John Edwards about the football team St Gallen, in Switzerland, who were due to play Tottenham recently in a European tournament. A footballer from Rochdale named Jack Reynolds retired from playing and took up management of St Gallen in 1912. By the time he retired from football 35 years later, he had had a spell as manager of the German national team cut short by World War I, made Ajax of Holland the pioneers of a new style of football, and shared a cell with Wodehouse in an internment camp!

Metro, October 3 (from Christopher Bellew)

Reported that Boris Johnson had told LBC presenter Nick Ferrari that in 2015, after ceasing to be mayor, "I am going to take up romantic novels under the pseudonym Rosie M. Banks".

The Times, October 5

In the feature '50 books we all secretly love', *The Code of the Woosters* was included in the five representatives of Comedy.

The Sunday Times Culture Section, October 6

Went one better with a splash on '100 Books to Love', and this time *The Code of the Woosters* was included among 15 'Books That Make You Laugh'.

The Times, October 8

In one of the articles previewing the Cheltenham Literary Festival, Alan Johnson, MP and former minister, explained to Philip Collins how he effectively continued his education in the sorting office at Slough Post Office, staffed by Asian men whose Indian education was of little use, but who were reading English classics. They started Johnson on Hardy, extending a course of reading

which had received an impetus when, at the age of 12, he discovered the great literary love of his life – P G Wodehouse.

Birmingham Mail, October 13

Reported that an anonymous man had donated a first edition of the *Jeeves Omnibus* in its original jacket, to a Birmingham charity shop, apparently unaware that it was worth in the region of £1,000.

Los Angeles Times, October 15

Michael Hiltzik began a birthday tribute article by writing: "Some people have left such an enduring mark on civilization that we shouldn't wait for jubilees or other milestones to honor their birthdays. Such is P. G. Wodehouse, that great British master of farce, born 132 years ago today. For me, Wodehouse is the antidote to every ill that can arise in life."

Daily Telegraph, October 16 (from Carolyn De La Plain)

In an article entitled 'For quotes, we're wild about Wilde', Hannah Furness noted that in the latest edition of *The Oxford Book of Humorous Quotations*, Wodehouse could claim a very creditable 42 examples.

India Today, October 18

The project director of the Mars Orbiter Mission at the Indian Space Research Organisation was reported as having three books on the table: two technical tomes on the Mission and Wodehouse's *The Small Bachelor*. "I need P. G. Wodehouse to distress myself. I have had too many sleepless nights ensuring everything goes smoothly with India's mission to Mars," S. Arunan was quoted as saying.

Sydney Morning Herald, October 21

(from Barry Chapman)

Clue number 50 Across in the Omega Crossword was: "P.G. Wodehouse character played by Hugh Laurie, . . . Wooster (6)".

Daily Telegraph, October 28 (from Terry Taylor)

In praising Tim Rice's latest musical, *From Here to Eternity*, Boris Johnson said: "It is a high calling to write the lyrics for musicals. P G Wodehouse – the 20th century's greatest English phrasemaker – spent a huge amount of time and effort trying to do what Tim does. I don't think he succeeded half so well."

Evening Standard, October 29 (from Caroline Franklyn)

Barry Humphries wrote about discovering a Wodehouse novel, "which I began to read and kept on reading. . . . I did not merely enjoy it but I loved it." Having not previously read Wodehouse, he was now resolved "to tackle Wodehouse's vast oeuvre with no hope of ever catching up with Stephen Fry".

Washington Post, November 1

Jonathan Yardley started his very positive review of the two latest Overlook reprints in the USA (*If I Were You* and *The Small Bachelor*) with a eulogy in praise of the whole Everyman/Overlook project, which is nearly reaching its end: "[W]hat especially pleases me is that as the series nears completion, it gives no evidence of scraping the bottom of the barrel, indeed provides proof that Wodehouse's barrel had no bottom."

The Republican (Springfield, Mass.), November 4

(from Alvin Cohen)

Phillip Alder began his bridge column with the Wodehouse quote: "Golf, like measles, should be caught young." (Alder applied this quote to bridge as well.)

Future Events for Your Diary

Perfect Nonsense at the Duke of York's Theatre

The smash hit play based on *The Code of the Woosters* is scheduled to continue its run until March 8, 2014.

December 29, 2013 London Walks Wodehouse Walk

Richard Burnip is leading a Wodehouse-themed walk for London Walks. The usual fee is £9, but Society members get a discounted price of £7. No need to book a place; just be at exit 2 (Park Lane east side) of Marble Arch Underground station at 2.30 p.m., and identify yourself as a Society member.

February 18, 2014 Winter Meeting at The George

Spring will be just around the corner when we gather at The George once again. On this night we will keep cosy with a pub quiz. Bring your pencils and your little grey cells!

April 14, 2014 Poet in the City Readings

A special treat for Wodehouse poetry lovers as the Society teams up with the charity Poet in the City for an evening of Wodehouse verse. See page 15 for details on how to get tickets.

June 2014 Cricket Dates

At the time of going to press, the dates of the Gold Bats matches traditionally held in June – against the Dulwich Dusters and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London – had not yet been settled. This information will be published in the March *Wooster Sauce*; in the meantime, keep an eye on the Society's website, where the dates will be posted as soon as they are known.

July 15, 2014 Summer Meeting at The George

The date is set, but news of the entertainment is yet to come. Whatever happens, it will be fun, so be sure to mark the date on your calendar.

October 16, 2014 Dinner at Gray's Inn

Our biennial dinner has a special treat in store in order to honour a key event in PGW's life. Hold onto the date; further details to come in March, and applications will be sent out with the June issue.

November 18, 2014 Autumn Meeting at The George

No news on the entertainment for this meeting yet, but stay tuned.

Houses – and Dreams – for Sale

In late August, word was received that the house in Dunraven Street (previously Norfolk Street) once owned by the Wodehouses was on the market (see Press Comment). Then, in October, BOB RAINS reported that P.G. and Ethel's home in Remsenburg, New York, was also available. The property includes six bedrooms, five baths, a pool, and 1.5 acres of land; asking price: \$2.8 million (app. £1.8 million). The owner presented information about the sale to The Wodehouse Society (U.S.) as a courtesy before it was put on the market. TWS's pipe dream is use the house, a Mecca for Wodehouseans, as a museum and hostelry for Plum-minded pilgrims. *Wanted*: A Wodehousean with deep pockets!

CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 1 | What a Year! | 14 | Gladys and Ern: The Further Adventures |
| 2 | <i>Jeeves and the Wedding Bells</i> : Some views on the new book | 15 | Book Now for an Evening of Wodehouse Verse! |
| 3 | <i>Perfect Nonsense</i> : A near-perfect reception | 15 | Poet's Corner: <i>The Haunted Tram</i> |
| 4 | Society News | 16 | The Life and Death of the Real Jeeves |
| 4 | <i>What Goes Around Comes Around</i> | 17 | Two Recent Unabridged Audio Recordings |
| 5 | What's in an AGM? | 17 | Little Nuggets |
| 5 | Members Offers: For Sale or For Free | 18 | <i>Perfect Nonsense</i> : A Review |
| 6 | Letters to the Editor | 18 | Wodehouse at the Cheltenham Literature Festival |
| 7 | The Newbury Show Sparkles Once More | 18 | Jonathan Coe on Wodehouse |
| 8 | Jeeves, the Model of Servant Leadership | 19 | Identity Crisis |
| 9 | Another Milestone for Everyman | 19 | The Words of Wodehouse (acrostic) |
| 10 | The Empress Strikes Back | 20 | Bibliographic Corner: Two New Wodehouse First Editions |
| 12 | The Real-Life Archibald Mulliner | 21 | A Wodehouse Illustrator Par Excellence |
| 13 | Mastermind Quiz 9: A Wodehouse Christmas | 22 | Recent Press Comment |