

WOOSTER SAUCE

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

Number 69

March 2014

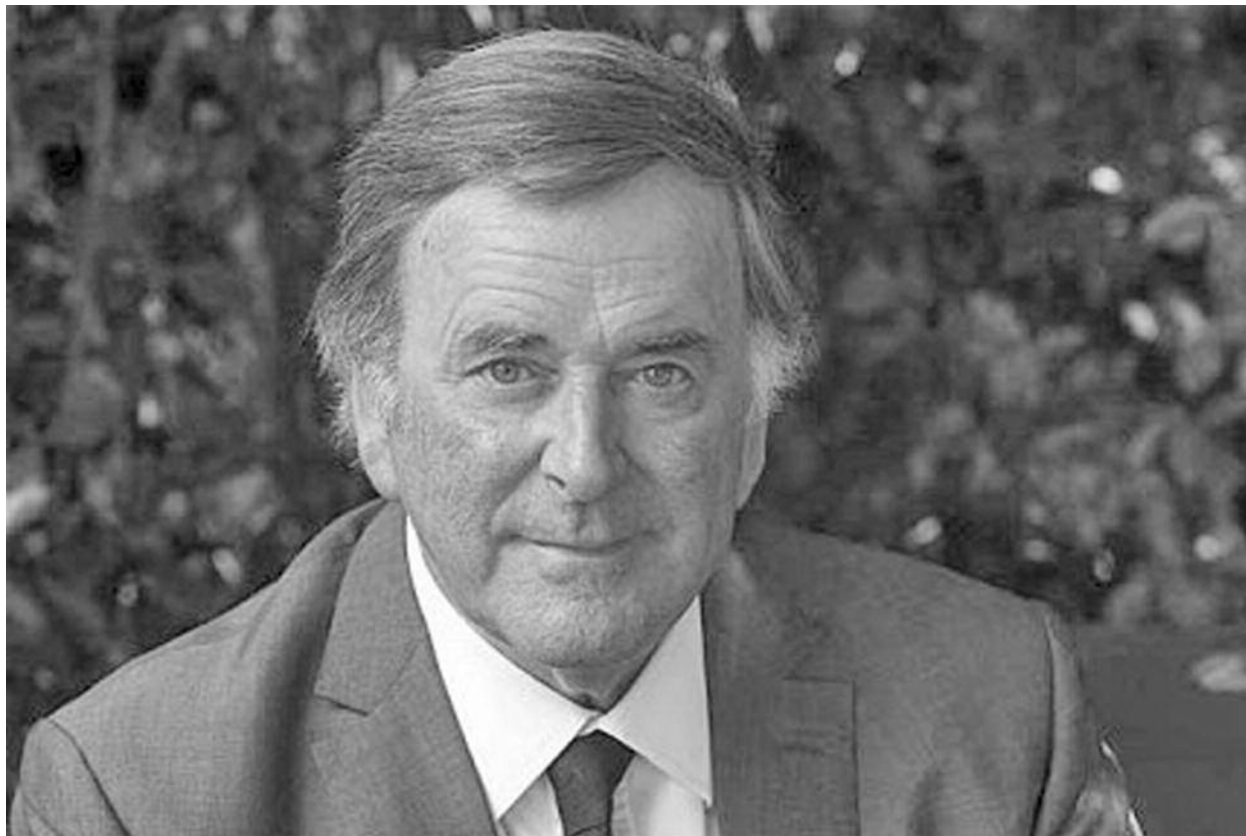
Our New President!

“He never minds how much trouble he takes, if he feels that he’s spreading sweetness and light.”

(Uncle Dynamite, 1948)

We are delighted to announce that Sir Terry Wogan has enthusiastically agreed to become the Society’s President, succeeding the late Richard Briers. Like Richard, Sir Terry is a much-loved British institution, adored and respected by millions for the myriad ways in which he has brought enjoyment and pleasure to

our radios and televisions. Wodehouseans know him as well for his lifelong reverence for the works of You Know Who, making him admirably suited for his new position as the head of our Society. Below is a message from Sir Terry, while on the next page is a profile of our new President. Let’s welcome him with a rousing Pip, Pip!



There is, it is said, in the dusty archives of the British Museum, an early photograph, possibly taken by Cartier-Bresson, of a convivial group raising the cup that cheers in celebration. I can now reveal that the happy crowd number, from left to right, Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh, and myself. And to whom are our glasses raised? Who else but the man we all acknowledged as the greatest writer of English of his age – our beloved Plum, P. G. Wodehouse.

Sir Terry Wogan

Profile of a President

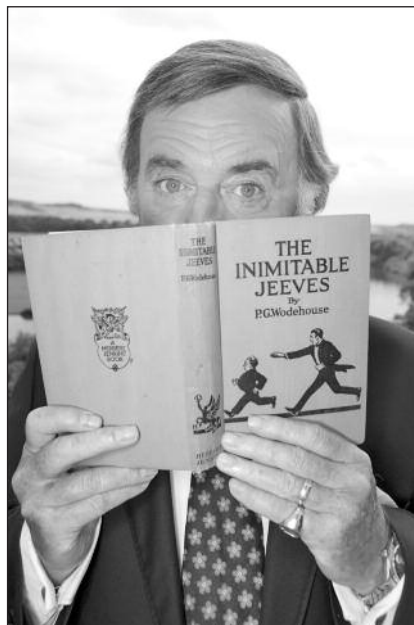
Our new President, Sir Terry Wogan, comes to us with impeccable Wodehousean credentials. With what seems delightful irony, it was an aunt who introduced him to the revered canon, sending him a copy of *The Code of the Woosters* when he was just 12 years old. He has been a devoted reader ever since, and in 2011 he achieved his long-held ambition to film a documentary on Wodehouse; it was broadcast on BBC Two in September that year.

Sir Terry is, of course, known to the wider world as a television presenter and radio broadcaster, beloved for his charming manner, mellifluous voice, and easygoing wit. Born in Limerick, Ireland, in 1938, his early career echoed that of Wodehouse: he worked for the Royal Bank of Ireland for a short time before moving on to radio broadcasting. He conducted interviews and presented programmes for Raidió Teilifís Éireann before moving to the BBC in 1966. Six years later he took over hosting the breakfast show on Radio 2, which he did until December 1984, when he turned towards television presenting. This included chat shows, game shows, and a long-running stint as commentator for the Eurovision Song Contest.

In January 1993 Sir Terry returned to Radio 2 with a new breakfast show entitled *Wake Up To Wogan*, which became popular with young and old alike; at its peak it attracted 8 million listeners. Though he left the show at the end of 2009, he has continued to be busy with radio, television, and charity work (especially Children in Need). He has



Sir Terry with Society Chairman Hilary Bruce at the Society's formal dinner, Gray's Inn, October 25, 2012. (Photo by Ginni Beard)



(Photo by Brian J. Ritchie, courtesy of Hotsauce TV)

also written books, innumerable articles on a variety of subjects, and a long-running column for the *Telegraph*. When Radio 2 turned 40, he was named as the station's Ultimate Icon. He was appointed OBE in 1997 and KBE in 2005.

Thanks to Sir Terry's popularity throughout the U.K., his BBC documentary *Wogan on Wodehouse* helped to introduce many new readers to the joys of reading our favourite author, while also offering a fascinating overview of PGW's life and work. He interviewed numerous well-known Wodehouse fans and experts for the programme. For many Society members, a favourite moment occurred when he spoke to Richard Briers, who read an extract from 'Jeeves Exerts the Old Cerebellum'.

Sir Terry became a Patron of the Society in 2012 and attended the formal dinner at Gray's Inn that same year. In January this year, he accepted Chairman Hilary Bruce's invitation to succeed Richard as the Society's President. Referring to Richard's work in BBC Radio's series of Jeeves and Wooster plays in the 1970s, Sir Terry said he was "honoured to be following in the footsteps of the finest portrayer of Bertie Wooster".

All in all, top hole – what?



Richard Briers reads a Wodehouse story to Sir Terry during filming of the 2011 documentary *Wogan on Wodehouse*.

Society News

2014 Cricket

In recent years the Gold Bats have not enjoyed too many outings due to the inclement weather that has plagued the country. Given the winter downpours, it is hard to tell whether we will be any more successful this year – but there is always hope! So we are looking forward to June and the prospect (fingers crossed) of holding our two traditional matches against formidable rivals.

The first, on Friday, June 20, will see the Gold Bats face the Dulwich Dusters at Dulwich College. The start time is 4.30 p.m., and as usual the Society will host the always-fabulous tea. Application forms for tea tickets are enclosed with this issue of *Wooster Sauce* and are required if you plan to attend and wish to dive into the gastronomic goodies that will be on offer.

The second match, just two days later, will be against the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, as usual at the West Wycombe Cricket Club, which is just off the A40 (Oxford Road) in West Wycombe. Play starts at 11.30 a.m. and ends around 6 p.m., with a mid-afternoon break for some picnicking (of the bring-your-own variety). Following the game, many head off to the nearby Swan Inn for drinks and post-play banter. The fun is free, so do join us!

Passing the Bat

The Society has been very fortunate to have had Bob Miller leading our cricket team, the Gold Bats, since they first played against the Dulwich Dusters in 1998. Bob organised and captained matches in the years to follow, and also enlisted Gold Bats players to participate in other games, including a now-annual charity event at Audley End House. So there was dismay when Bob announced a few months ago that he was stepping down as captain. It seems very hard to imagine our team without him at the helm, but all Society members have reason to be grateful to Bob for his many years of leadership.

Happily, the bat has passed to Mark Wilcox, a Society member with special connections to Wodehouse and to Dulwich. His grandfather, T. R. Wilcox, had been a housemaster at Dulwich in the 1890s, and in 1904 he founded the Alleyn Court School (so named for obvious reasons and still owned by the Wilcox family). Mark's father, D. R. Wilcox, was a cricketer who captained for Dulwich College in the late 1920s, and was captain of Essex until 1939. Wodehouse followed his career closely, and Mark (who has four children himself) is the proud owner of letters from PGW to his father recommending Alleyn Court. He also has a telegram (dated 7 July 1931) from PGW, then in California, to D. R. Wilcox at Lord's, saying: "Delighted to hear you got your Blue please cable your score." Mark adds: "Although Dad was a few years younger than PGW, they were good friends. I have the invitation sent to PGW to my parents' wedding, which was apparently left on the church pew. Also signed first editions and letters from him."

With credentials like these, how can we go wrong? Welcome, Mark!

July Meeting

As our copy deadline loomed, our entertainments impresario came over all tight-lipped and coy about his plans for the July meeting. When challenged that he clearly hadn't got anything prepared, he offered the following reassurance: "Please inform your many anxious readers that there is not a jot or tittle of truth in the scurrilous accusation that I am resting on my laurels. On the contrary, July promises to be a spectacle such as has not been witnessed in many a moon." Enigmatic and short on detail, to be sure – perhaps even a touch Ukridgesque – but we remain confident that rabbits will be extracted from toppers, and that full details will be forthcoming in the next *Wooster Sauce*.

Of Cats, Spats, and Syllabi

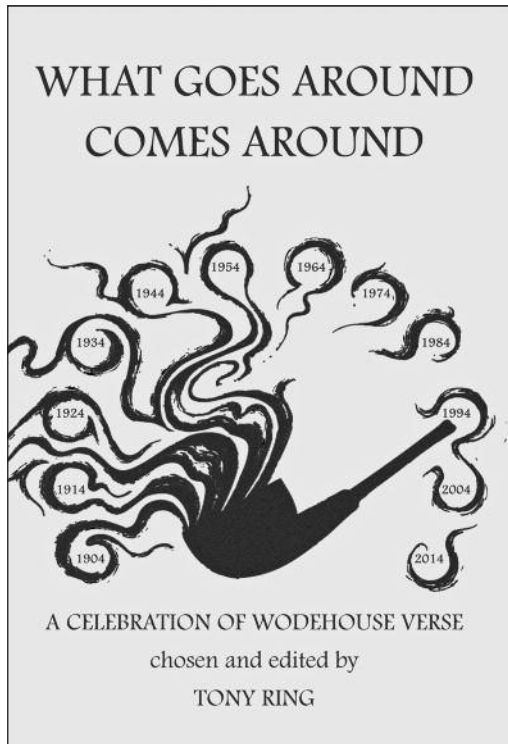
Several months ago, Society Patron actress LUCY STREGAR noticed that LAMDA (the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) includes a Wodehouse passage in its examination syllabus, a concept which is to be heartily welcomed. It is for the Grade 6 (Bronze Medal) level, in relation to the examination on 'Interpretation and Technique'. The learner has to speak from memory one verse selection (out of eight) or one prose selection (also out of eight), and then, if selecting a prose passage, has to answer questions on (a) the key themes in the book from which the selection has been taken; and (b) breathing, voice, and basic speech production, resonance, and projection.

Lucy pointed out that its inclusion in the syllabus will have given students all over the country – and all over the world – the opportunity to be taught and

perform the extract. She added that the LAMDA syllabus is changed every four years, and this one then had another year to run.

The Wodehouse passage in the syllabus is part of the story 'Goodbye to All Cats', from *Young Men in Spats*. Those of us who heard the late Jonathan Cecil's rendering of this story will appreciate how much fun a student could have in rehearsing it.

But it is difficult to see what questions an examiner could ask about the 'key themes in the book', which consists of 11 short stories, including four about Freddie Widgeon, three about Mr Mulliner's extended family, three about assorted Drones, and possibly Wodehouse's greatest-ever short story, 'Uncle Fred Flits By'. We would love to see the examiner's notes and marking schedule for that exercise!



Exciting News of Two

What Goes Around Comes Around - A Celebration of Wodehouse Verse

In the December issue of *Wooster Sauce*, information was provided on how members could acquire a copy of *What Goes Around Comes Around - A Celebration of Wodehouse Verse*, scheduled for publication in March 2014. Happily, the book will be available by the time this issue of *Wooster Sauce* reaches members. If you have not placed an order and would like to, please do so in accordance with the arrangements below.

The cost of the book is £12 plus postage (£3 in the UK, £5 to Europe, and £8 further afield). Postal charges from the UK from April 1, 2014, have not yet been announced. Even if they are significant (especially relevant overseas), these prices will be honoured at least until 30 June. The book is being distributed privately by Harebrain Publishing and will not be available through Amazon or any similar distributor.

The 100 Wodehouse verses in the book have been selected by Tony as a fair representation of the breadth of subject matter about which PGW 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. The cover was designed by Nancy Bixby, and *Times* diarist and Society member Patrick Kidd has written a foreword.

A review by a discerning member will appear in *Wooster Sauce* in June, and there will be a review on the website in due course.

Last Chance to Come to an Evening of Wodehouse Verse!

By the time you read this, the choice of seats still available for *P G Wodehouse – Poetry and Songs*, the event which the Society is presenting in conjunction with the poetry outreach charity Poet in the City (see www.poetinthecity.co.uk), is likely to be diminishing daily! At the date of writing (February 21), 190 out of the 320 seats in the stalls have been snapped up.

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. If all goes well, we will have two well-known and popular actors on hand to read the verses, though this had not been confirmed at the time of going to press. In addition, Hal Cazalet, our patron Lucy Tregear, and a special guest will sing five of the lyrics which Wodehouse wrote during his musical comedy career of the 1910s and 1920s. All the verses

and songs will be placed in context by short introductions by Simon Brett, Sophie Ratcliffe, and Tony Ring.

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

New Wodehouse Books

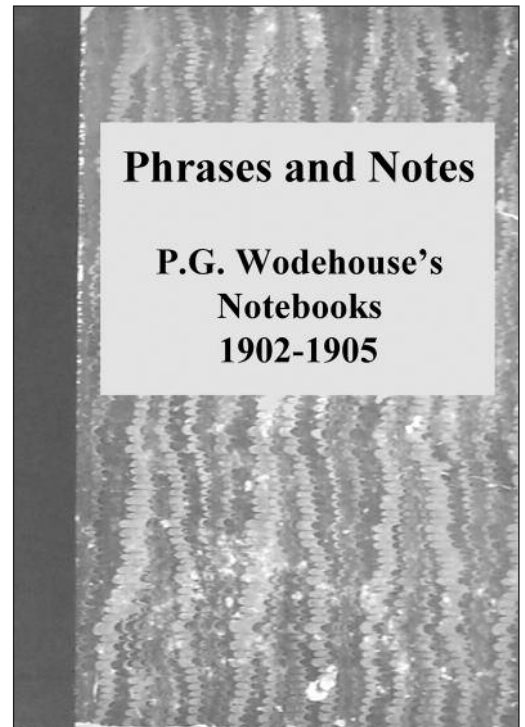
Phrases & Notes:

P.G. Wodehouse's Notebooks, 1902–1905

In the early 1900s, when Wodehouse was trying to make money after leaving the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, he scribbled random thoughts and ideas in commonplace books. These were essentially scrapbooks used for personal diaries, poetry, recipes, or whatever caught the writer's imagination. In his notebooks, Wodehouse jotted down overheard snatches of conversations, funny remarks, anecdotes from bus drivers and policemen, the artless prattle of the young Bowes-Lyons girls – anything that might come in useful. His notes offer rare insight into a great writer during the earliest years of his career.

It is unknown how many notebooks Wodehouse may have used in total, but there are three still in existence in the Cazalet family archive, covering the years 1902–05. Why did they stop then? Perhaps because he had developed an assured market: by late 1905 his stories were appearing in both *The Strand* in London and *Pearson's Magazine* in New York.

With the kind permission of the Wodehouse Estate, Norman Murphy has transcribed and annotated Wodehouse's *Phrases and Notes*, in addition to providing ten explanatory appendixes. The first two notebooks contain an assortment of notes covering a wide range of thoughts and ideas, while the third comprises outline plots of stories and plays, some of which will be immediately recognized by Wodehouseans. They have been published by Popgood & Groolley in one volume.



Cosy Moments

Her Ladyship's Guide to the Queen's English, by **Caroline Taggart (2010)** (from Beth Carroll)

From page 10: "U people were expensively educated, however unintelligent they may have been (even the notoriously dim Bertie Wooster had been to Eton and Oxford), and they had a 'polish' which they felt the non-U lacked."

The Authors XI: A Season of English Cricket from Hackney to Hambledon, by **the Authors Cricket Club (2013)** (from Terry Taylor)

In this book, the introduction, written by Charlie Campbell, begins: "On 29th June 1905, P G Wodehouse and Arthur Conan Doyle opened the batting for the original Authors side. They made an unlikely pair striding out on to the green sward of Lord's." Campbell notes that Wodehouse was at the start of his literary career, having just left the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, whereas Conan Doyle was at the peak of his fame.

(Terry adds: "Wodehouse had had two indifferent seasons playing for Dulwich, whereas Conan Doyle was a formidable all-rounder who had played for the MCC and once had WG Grace caught at the wicket off a long hop.")

Churchill's Wizards: The British Genius for Deception, 1914–1945, by **Nicholas Rankin (2009)**

(from Barry Chapman)

Rankin describes Lieutenant Colonel [later Brigadier] Dudley Clark, RA, as the '*eminence grise* of WW2 strategic deception', and goes on to say:

He liked to appear in rooms, or disappear from them, silently, and his pale oval face, with quick glances from under drooping eyelids, gave him the disquieting look of a sardonic butler. 'Sphinx-like' was how someone described the ivory mask quality of a man who became, in the words of his biographer David Mure, 'the compleat Military Jeeves', solving his master's problems.



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Mark Masoliver

Having recently joined The P G Wodehouse Society, I very much enjoyed my first *Wooster Sauce* – in particular, your article on Paul Cox [December 2013, pg 21]. This was primarily due to my love of all things Wooster, but also as I collect Folio Society books. I have most of the Folio Wooster series and have enjoyed the Cox illustrations. Jeeves certainly is portrayed as I see him in my mind.

Your article certainly set my mouth watering and my wallet was hunted down. I purchased this illustration [right], which now looks down on me from my sitting room wall.

From Graeme Davidson

In your article on Paul Cox, you mention that Paul illustrated 16 Wodehouses for the Folio Society. However, the actual tally is 22: three Jeeves and Wooster books in 2010; six Blandings books in 2004; five Jeeves and Wooster books in 2000; six Jeeves and Wooster books in 1996; *Leave It to Psmith* in 1989; and an anthology, *The Plums of P. G. Wodehouse*, in 1997.

Editor's note. Graeme has kindly provided a list of all the Folio Society Wodehouse books.

From Dr Dilip Joshi

In cricket-crazy nation India, the game is a religion and Sachin Tendulkar, justifiably so, is its presiding deity, a God. Sachin retired from cricket on 16 November 2013 after a glorious 24-year innings. His one brother, in a TV interview, quoted Wodehouse to convey his and his family's sentiment on retirement. The Master's oft-quoted reaction on his daughter Leonora's death was "I thought that she was immortal". Sachin's brother said that, just like Wodehouse, they thought Sachin would never retire – a very apt thought as the Master was a big cricket fan.

From Christopher Bellew

I recently became aware of the work of the theatrical architect Frank Matcham. He designed more than 150 theatres and music halls, including the London Coliseum, the London Palladium and the New Middlesex Theatre of Varieties (1911). This last was renamed the Winter Garden Theatre in 1919, and a number of shows with lyrics by P G Wodehouse were staged here, including *Kissing Time* and *The Cabaret Girl*. I don't think it is

fanciful to think that Sir Geoffrey Parsloe-Parsloe's seat Matchingam Hall, and Sir Mortimer Prenderby's Oxfordshire residence, Matcham Scratchings, are tributes to this remarkable architect. (Matcham Scratchings was, of course, the setting for the Freddie Widgeon story 'Goodbye to All Cats'. The Winter Garden Theatre was rebuilt and renamed as the New London Theatre in 1973. Spookily, the musical *Cats* ran there for 21 years.)

From Laurence Ogram

I am constantly surprised at all the places that P. G. Wodehouse pops up quite unexpectedly. On Christmas Day I watched a documentary about the ghost-story writer M. R. James. In the mid-1930s, when he was dying from cancer, he was visited by the son of one of his close friends, who found James in bed wearing a dressing gown under the bedclothes "rather like a tramp". He was also frequently sipping a cup of tea, which he constantly spilled on himself. Among his favourite authors at this time were Dickens and, you've guessed it, P. G.

Wodehouse. Apparently James loved the moment when Bertie Wooster, who had been in some scrape or other, appeared like a tramp and approached some respectable person who said, "Sad piece of human wreckage though you look, you speak like an educated man." James considered himself to be in exactly the same condition at that time!

I later looked up the quote on Google and discovered that the words were actually spoken to Lord Belper in *A Damsel in Distress* (chapter 15), not to Bertie Wooster. So even a well-educated Cambridge man like M. R. James can be mistaken when attributing the quote to Bertie Wooster!

From Peter Thompson

As a senior partner in Fairway, Bunker and Green, solicitors, who were consulted by the Reverend Aubrey Upjohn on the libellous article in the *Thursday Review* concerning our client's excellent tome on the preparatory school system in Britain, I write to point out that repetition of the libel in the latest edition of *By The Way* is also actionable.

I would also point out that, while in no mitigation of Miss Roberta Wickham's appalling addendum, it is not the only libel in the article, and that she should not have been allowed to shoulder the sole responsibility. An earlier paragraph in the shameful piece reads: "It is a matter of indifference to Upjohn whether pupils leave their preparatory school institutions with anything in their head more intellectually stimulating than strings of rote-learned Latin Conjugations and Times Tables." This



The Paul Cox illustration now hanging on Mark Masoliver's wall.

scurrilous sentence alone would have qualified as libel, clearly intended to denigrate the good name and reputation of Mr Upjohn in the eyes of the man on the Clapham Omnibus (Greer LJ, in *Hall v. Brooklands Auto-Racing Club* 1933).

You are herewith advised that this letter should be regarded as a timely warning to all Mr Upjohn's former pupils, including a certain B. W. Wooster, that you print such observations at your and their peril.

.....
An engineer, roused, is a terrible thing!

By Jove, a veritable hornets' nest seems to have been stirred up by my allegation that the nature and disposition of engineers means that they don't like Wodehouse! [See *Wooster Sauce*, December 2013, pgs 6–7.] However, I must say, Gerard Palmer, that I nodded approvingly when reading your response, which was in quite the proper vein even though it advocated a certain amount of grievous bodily harm to my person. You struck exactly the right tone and obviously took the article in the manner in which it was intended. Although I appreciate that you are now in a position to soak me for considerable damages, I wonder if, as you seem to be a fairly decent sort of fellow, you would show some clemency and perhaps settle out of court.

Moreover, when Alan, the son of the engineer who started all this furore, cast a brooding eye over the article, he promptly tore off his whiskers and revealed that he too is an engineer! He informed me tersely that he had read several of the works of Wodehouse, that his upper lip had occasionally twitched, and that on one occasion he came within a touch of laughing heartily. In the face of this overwhelming evidence, therefore, the least I can do is offer a grovelling apology to the susurrations of engineers, some male, some female, to whom I've caused offence.

To Alexander Dainty, however, I'll merely say that you took it too seriously! The article was aimed at being in the Wodehouse spirit, namely light-hearted and amusing, and not a solemn assertion of facts. I urge you to take a fresh look at PGW's stories in this light and you may see what I mean!

– Iain Anderson

Introduced to the child in the nursing-home, [Bingo] recoiled with a startled 'Oi!' and as the days went by the feeling that he had run up against something red-hot in no way diminished. The only thing that prevented a father's love from faltering was the fact that there was in his possession a photograph of himself at the same early age in which he, too, looked like a homicidal fried egg.

(From 'Sonny Boy', 1938)

A Letter from the Past

Dear Mr Kendall,

Thank you so much for the Golf story you sent me. It was very funny, and I hope I shall be able to work it up into a short story. I saw your Brother about a year ago, but haven't seen him since. He seemed to be looking just the same as ever. How funny that you have read the 'Golficide'. I thought that I was the only person alive who had read it. I didn't write it, but I came across it years ago when I was living in New York, and one or two of my golf stories have a touch of The Golficide in them.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

P. G. Wodehouse

In November 2011, Edward Kendall sent the above letter, dating from 1927, to the *Wooster Sauce* Editor. Edward included the information that it had been written to his great-grand uncle, also named Edward Kendall, whose brother, Frederick Kendall, had worked at HSBC with Wodehouse and holds the distinction of having introduced Wodehouse to Herbert Westbrook in 1902. The current Edward Kendall wrote:

Frederick Kendall brought Wodehouse down to the Kendalls' house at 1, The Paragon, Blackheath when they were both working at HSBC, and Frederick's sister Mary (died 1902) commented on the fact that Wodehouse had two whiskies and soda at dinner. Frederick also regularly dined at Wodehouse's home and supplied Wodehouse with the story on which he built up his reputation, about Phyllis and the dormouse that proved to be dead.

In subsequent correspondence with the Editor, Edward sent some excerpts from his family's 'Round Robin' correspondence now in the keeping of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro. Here is an extract from a letter written by Frederick to Edward, dated 8 February 1927:

I had a very jolly lunch with Wodehouse who, to my amusement, produced Bob Westbrook; you may remember I brought them together some 25 years ago. Wodehouse is a nice chap and doesn't seem to have altered much, except that he is bald. I told him that you were going to send him an idea for a golf story. . . . Wodehouse defined my resemblance to Gerald du Maurier as owing to the fact that we both have the same 'sinister' look, and I can see what he means. He has bought a house, 17 Norfolk St, Park Lane, W.1, which he has settled on his adopted daughter, he having married a widow. . . .

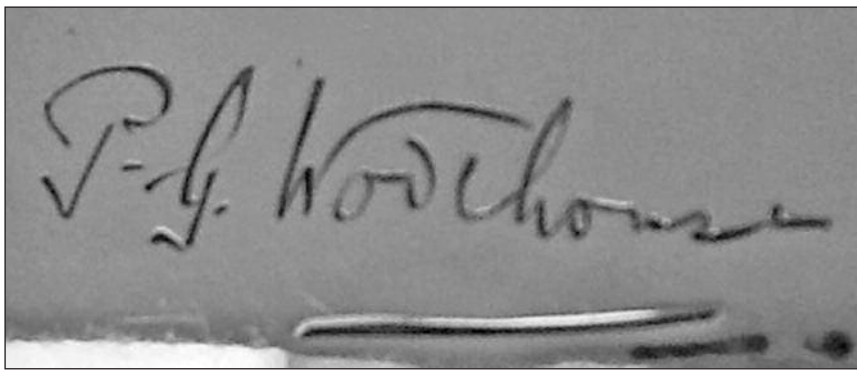
The golf story Edward Kendall sent prompted the reply from Wodehouse shown above. 'Golficide' refers to *Golficide and Other Tales of the Fair Green* by Van Tassel Sutphen (1898), a book of short stories that mixes love and golf (sound familiar?). As for 'Phyllis and the dormouse', well, this remains a mystery to Wodehousean scholars everywhere.

Our thanks to Edward Kendall for sharing this slice of family history with *Wooster Sauce* – and also apologies for taking so long to print this story. His family's 'Round Robin' correspondence is available as an e-book; see <http://bit.ly/1jZBeZx>.

A Mystery Quickly Solved

by Peter Martin

Last year my friend Digby Mackworth served me a drink from a small silver salver intriguingly engraved with a number of facsimile signatures. Digby told me that it had been presented to a Lieutenant Geoffrey Mackworth RN, Digby's grandfather, on the occasion of his marriage in April 1910 by fellow Nore torpedo boat flotilla captains. Digby pointed out that among the signatures was one of a 'P.G. Wodehouse' (below) that seemed to us both to be very similar, at first glance, to the PGW signatures so often seen on books and other materials.



Digby had noted the similarity to the facsimile of PGW's signature in the Google entry (see end of article) but was unsure if it was the signature of 'our' PGW, or of another PGW, or a spoof. Digby and I, who make no claims to being in any sense Wodehousian scholars, decided to try and determine if the signature was of 'our' PGW or another – however remote a possibility that then seemed to us both. Neither of us had heard of any other PGW save 'our' PGW.

Since I knew that PGW had once been intended for the Royal Navy and had attended a pre-Dartmouth prep school at Malvern House, it crossed my mind that maybe PGW and Mackworth had been friends early on and that 'our' PGW had been asked to come to the farewell dinner. Finding no evidence from our own researches, principally in Robert McCrum's *Wodehouse: A Life*, in Sophie Ratcliffe's *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*, and on Google, we acted on Edward Cazalet's recommendation to consult Norman Murphy, who very quickly

provided a convincing solution to our little mystery after confirming his original ideas with further and more detailed research.

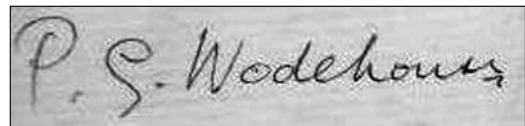
By flogging through hundreds of names in *Burke's Peerage*, Norman determined that Philip George Wodehouse – born in 1883, died in 1973 – was our man. Philip George was the son of the Reverend Philip John Wodehouse, one of PGW's 15 uncles. We know that PGW knew this uncle and stayed with him at his rectory, Bracken House, in Bratton Fleming, Devonshire.

It turned out that Philip George Wodehouse

was a naval officer of the same vintage as Geoffrey Mackworth, who himself commanded a torpedo boat in the Nore Flotilla at the same time as Mackworth. His sister was Helen Marion Wodehouse, an academic who eventually became Mistress of Girton College, Cambridge; this redoubtable woman was almost certainly the model for a number of intellectual, not to say bluestocking,

Wodehouse women such as Florence Beezley, Honoria Glossop, Florence Craye, and Heloise Pringle, all of whom went up to Girton (fictionally).

So what became of Philip George Wodehouse RN? Commissioned Lieutenant RN in 1906, he was promoted to Commander in 1918 and awarded a DSO. He retired as a Captain in 1929 and was recalled to service in WW2 in command of an anti-aircraft ship HMS Tynwald in 1942. More than this we do not know.



'Our' PGW's signature

Editor's note. Norman has always leaned towards the idea that Philip George Wodehouse may have been the 'source' of Lieut. Tom Chase in Love Among the Chickens. He is one of only two naval officers of Wodehouse's acquaintance that Norman can trace.

His moustache was long and blond and bushy, and it shot heavenwards into two glorious needle-point ends, a shining zareba of hair quite beyond the scope of any mere civilian. Non-army men may grow moustaches and wax them and brood over them and be fond and proud of them, but to obtain a waxed moustache in the deepest and holiest sense of the words you have to be a Sergeant-Major.

(From *Money for Nothing*, 1928)

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Martin Breit

Those who have not had their morning tea better sit down before reading on, since I am going to start my confessions with a moderate shock. Well seated? All right, here it is: My first experience with the works of P. G. Wodehouse was not love at first sight! Now you know the sad truth.

I guess I am not the only one who learned from Douglas Adams's *The Salmon of Doubt* that Wodehouse wrote literature worth getting in touch with. That is not so easy here in Germany, but some years ago, in the remote sections of our university's library, I found a small collection of the old Tauchnitz Edition from the 1920s and started to read a story that was, as far as I can recall, 'The Man with Two Left Feet'. It must have been a lack of knowledge of the special vocabulary used by Wodehouse and a portion of laziness to consult a dictionary that made me put away the book after three or four pages and concentrate on a nice little afternoon nap. The book went back to the darker places of the library, and Wodehouse slipped out of my mind.



Some months later I took my semester abroad at the city of Hull in East Yorkshire. Unspoiled by TV, radio, internet, and a properly working heating supply, I realized the need for an improving book and hence gave Plum a second chance. The choice in the university's library was not limited; it must have been *Mulliner Nights* that brought me back to the straight and narrow. I introduced myself to Lord Emsworth, Jeeves, and Soapy Molloy, and in the nearby second-hand bookshop I bought the first two pieces of a collection that now fills about three running metres (including works on Wodehouse, German translations, and two cow creamers) – and it is far from being finished.

Back home and some years later, Wodehouse provided an excellent topic for my Master's thesis. This did not reach the Olympia of academic records, but it was still a good exercise for one of the most exciting tasks in my life. Currently I am writing the first German biography of Wodehouse, and I hope I can do justice to the Master in my attempt to spread knowledge about a man who is rather unknown and underrated in my country.

More Cosy Moments

***Elizabeth the Queen*, by Sally Bedell Smith (2012)**
(from Barry Chapman)

In this biography of Elizabeth II, reference is made to her mother's "particular fondness" for the works of Wodehouse, also noting that she was a great fan of Damon Runyon. Just as the Queen Mother loved to talk in the idiom of Wodehouse's characters, she also would slip into Runyon's vernacular at times: "The way that Dame Pearl gets a ripple on, there was a baby for you – Oh boy."

***Rabbits: The Animal Answer Guide*, by Susan Lumpkins and John Seidensticker (2011)**

(from Janet Nickerson)
Janet purchased this book after a trip to the Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. In a post on PGWnet, she provided the end of chapter 11, 'Rabbits in Stories and Literature':

Brilliant humorist P.G. Wodehouse in his 1909 story, *The Swoop, or How Clarence Saved England*, memorably wrote of the heroic Clarence, "He could do everything that a Boy Scout must learn to do. . . . He could imitate the cry of a turnip in order to deceive rabbits."

***Cables from Kabul*, by Sherard Cowper-Coles (2012)**
(from Christopher Bellew)

The author describes William (Bill) Wood, a former US Ambassador to Afghanistan, this way:

Behind a larger-than-life exterior, firing off one-liners and enjoying the occasional cigarette and Scotch on the rocks, lay a man of culture and discrimination, whose real loves were history and English literature, especially P. G. Wodehouse.

***A History of England in 100 Places*, by John Julius Norwich (2011)** (from Christopher Bellew)

Norwich's number 71 is the two-mile-long Box Tunnel in Wiltshire – the longest railway tunnel in the world at the time it was built. Norwich writes:

There is a story that Brunel designed the tunnel so that on his birthday, 9 April, the rising sun is visible from this portal down the length of the tunnel; but no one seems quite sure whether this is true, and would-be photographers are discouraged from confirming it for fear, as P. G. Wodehouse might have said, of receiving the 6.54 in the small of the back.

Where Is King's Deverill?

by Paul Mayhook

Deverill Hall, King's Deverill, Hampshire (the setting of *The Mating Season*), is the home of Esmond Haddock JP and his five aunts (the Misses Charlotte, Emmeline, Harriet and Myrtle Deverill and Dame Daphne Winkworth). The question of its location was considered by J. H. C. Morris (in chapter 10 of *Thank You, Wodehouse*), who identified King's Deverill with Meonstoke in the Meon valley, south of Alton. As Meonstoke never had a railway station (although one was planned), I assume that Morris meant West Meon (which did have one); however, I do not agree that either place is correct.

As Norman Murphy has pointed out in *A Wodehouse Handbook*, the domestic arrangements at Deverill Hall mirrored those at Cheney Court, near Box, Wiltshire, where Wodehouse would spend the summer holidays when at Dulwich. The 'Deverill' part of the name comes from the five villages of Brixton Deverill, Monkton Deverill, Kingston Deverill, Longbridge Deverill, and Hill Deverill, south of Warminster on the western edge of Salisbury Plain. I suggest that the 'King's' part of the name comes from one of two villages near Winchester: Kings Worthy (two miles northeast) or King's Somborne (six miles west). King's Deverill could well be another village in the same area, which would place it between Andover, Winchester and Salisbury.

In *The Mating Season* there are two principal clues (and one red herring) regarding the location of King's Deverill:

1. When Gertrude Winkworth announces her engagement to Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright, Dame Daphne "let out a yell you could have heard at Basingstoke". Basingstoke is about 20 miles from King's Deverill as the crow flies.
2. Esmond Haddock intends to ride with Gertrude to "a place where there are cliffs and things" and a Lovers' Leap. The Lovers' Leap is 15 miles from King's Deverill.
3. In order to retrieve Gussie's letter to Madeline Bassett, Bertie travels from King's Deverill to Wimbledon by the milk train at 0254. He returns to King's Deverill by train. To get from Wimbledon to King's Deverill, "you change twice before you get to Basingstoke and then change again and take the branch line. And once you're on the branch line it's quicker to walk".

The location of the Lovers' Leap is a puzzle. It must be at most 35 miles (or 40 at a pinch) from Basingstoke, which means that, if it were on the sea,

it would need to be on the eastern side of the Solent. There are cliffs on the eastern side of the Solent which run from Warsash at the mouth of the River Hamble through Lee on the Solent to Browndown. If the Lovers' Leap were somewhere on those cliffs, King's Deverill would need to be in the Meon Valley (near West Meon). This does not accord with my thoughts (above) on where King's Deverill is likely to be, and, as I will show, also conflicts with the evidence of Bertie's railway journeys. I would suggest that the Lovers' Leap should be ignored.

In reconstructing Bertie's railway journeys, I have used *Bradshaw's Railway Guide* for July 1938. This is not precisely contemporary with the book (which was written in France in 1947), but it is the nearest railway guide that I have.

The nearest train to the 0254 from King's Deverill in July 1938 was a train (originating in Weymouth) which ran via Southampton, Eastleigh, Winchester, and Basingstoke (0218), arriving at Waterloo 0355. There were no other up trains on any of the lines in that part of Hampshire. As Bertie did not become aware until after midnight that Gussie had written to Madeline, the 0254 was probably invented by Wodehouse as a device to get Bertie to Wimbledon in time to intercept the letter (an early morning train the next day would have been too late).

Turning to the return journey, Bertie would have changed at Surbiton and Woking to get to Basingstoke. How did Bertie get from Basingstoke to King's Deverill?

We can safely say that he did not take the GWR line to Reading (15½ miles away) as that would place King's Deverill in Berkshire, not in Hampshire. King's Deverill would also be on the GWR, so Bertie would have had to have gone via Paddington and Waterloo to get to Wimbledon, and presumably would have returned the same way.

According to Morris, Bertie took the branch line from Basingstoke to Alton (12 miles away by road); from Alton, trains ran down the Meon valley to West Meon, ending up at Fareham. As the Basingstoke-Alton line was a light railway, the trains were limited to a top speed of 25 mph. As a consequence, the journey from Basingstoke to Alton took 45 minutes – quicker than walking pace, but it may well have seemed slower. However, passenger services on the Basingstoke-Alton line ceased in 1932, so Bertie could not have taken that route.

As the only other lines out of Basingstoke were the main lines to Southampton and to Salisbury and Exeter, we must conclude that Bertie must have changed after Basingstoke before arriving at King's Deverill.

If we look at the Southampton line, Bertie could have changed at Winchester and then taken a train in the direction of Alton. However, the stations on the line to Alton are not far enough from Basingstoke; Winchester is only 18½ miles by railway and 16 miles from Basingstoke as the crow flies, and the stations between there and Alton would be closer. Similarly, stations on the lines out of Eastleigh (25¾ miles by railway) towards Romsey and towards Fareham are too far away. We must therefore assume that Bertie took the Salisbury line out of Basingstoke and changed at Andover Junction.

Two lines left the Salisbury line at Andover Junction (18 miles from Basingstoke): the GWR line to Cheltenham (via Swindon Town and Cirencester), and the SR line to Romsey. Possible candidates for King's Deverill are Weyhill and Ludgershall on the GWR line and Clatford, Fullerton, and Stockbridge on the SR line.

Now, when Gussie steals Corky Pirbright's dog from the police station, we are informed that it is to be taken to friends of hers "who live about 20 miles away along the London road, well out of [PC] Dobbs's sphere of influence".

Stockbridge is nine miles northwest of Winchester and 22 miles from Basingstoke as the crow flies. It lies at the junction of the A30 (the main road between London and Exeter), the B3049 (Stockbridge-Winchester), and the A3057 (Andover-Southampton). Twenty miles from Stockbridge on the A30 bring you to a few miles short of Basingstoke; however, I think it unlikely that a county-wide search would have been set in motion just to recapture a dog that had formerly been in police custody.

Using July 1938 timings, Bertie's journey from Wimbledon to King's Deverill (Stockbridge) would have been as follows:

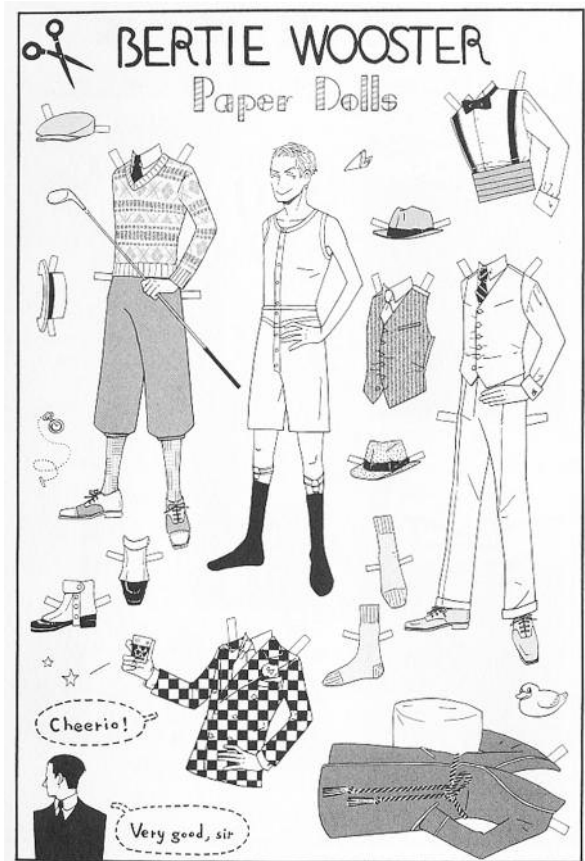
- Dep Wimbledon 0853 (destination Hampton Court), arr Surbiton 0905
- Dep Surbiton 0913 (destination Guildford), arr Woking 0938
- Dep Woking 1006 (destination Bournemouth Central), arr Basingstoke 1037
- Dep Basingstoke 1045 (destination Salisbury), arr Andover Junction 1120
- Dep Andover Junction 1127 (destination Eastleigh), arr Stockbridge 1146.

My conclusion, therefore, is that Stockbridge is the location of King's Deverill.

Sources

- P. G. Wodehouse, *The Mating Season* (Penguin 1957, reprinted 1982)
- J. H. C. Morris, *Thank You Wodehouse* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1981)
- N. T. P. Murphy, *A Wodehouse Handbook* (Popgood & Groolley 2006)
- Bradshaw's Railway Guide*, July 1938 (reprinted David & Charles 1969)
- Wikipedia – articles 'Basingstoke and Alton Light Railway' and 'Meon Valley Railway'.

Spiffing Wodehousean Paper Dolls!



In the latest issue of the Japanese manga *Please Jeeves*, we were delighted to see this page, with an additional outfit for Bertie as below. The artist, Bun Katsuta, continues to do a superb job in depicting the Bertie and Jeeves stories in her manga – and, as can be seen above and below, she gets the details right!

(Images © Bun Katsuta/Hakusensha)



Very Good, Faulks

by Patrick Kidd

This review first appeared in The Times on November 2, 2013. Thanks to Patrick and The Times for permission to reprint it in Wooster Sauce.

Let's cut to the quick. As Bertie Wooster would say, quoting Macbeth as best he could, "If 'twere done when 'tis done then 'twere well to look dashed lively about it." Is Sebastian Faulks's attempt to slip into the brogues of P. G. Wodehouse up to snuff?

For there is no doubt that Wodehouseans have been waiting nervously for this book since it was announced that Jeeves and Wooster were to have their first official outing since *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* was published in October 1974, four months before the author's death.

It seems that everyone is ripping off an old master these days. James Bond keeps being given to new hands (Faulks among them), Jane Austen's novels are being reworked by Joanna Trollope and Val McDermid, and even Asterix has reappeared without the input of a Goscinny or a Uderzo.

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, 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.

The plot is familiar. Take a stately home, a few young couples who fall in and out of love, an aristocrat on his uppers, and some elderly grumps who disapprove of Bertram. Throw in some scrapes, misunderstandings, and a code of honour and then get Jeeves to sort it all out by the end.

This begins with a twist, though, since Bertie is the valet and Jeeves the aristo. In order to infiltrate Melbury Hall and set his pal's love life back on an even keel, Wooster has got his manservant to pretend to be Lord Etringham, while heading off himself for the servants' quarters. While there, he discovers a recent flame, newly engaged to someone else, is a guest. Georgiana Meadows, whose laugh "is the sound of a frisky brook going over the strings of a

well-tuned harp", is that rare beast, a woman of whom Jeeves approves, especially once she starts to quote Tolstoy.

The adventure has some good set-pieces — a cricket match, a concert party, night-time adventures involving Bertie on the rooftops wrapped in a sheet — and an ending that will put a smile on your face for the rest of the day. But what about the Wodehousean virtuosity of language? How does Faulks fare in the similes department? Not too

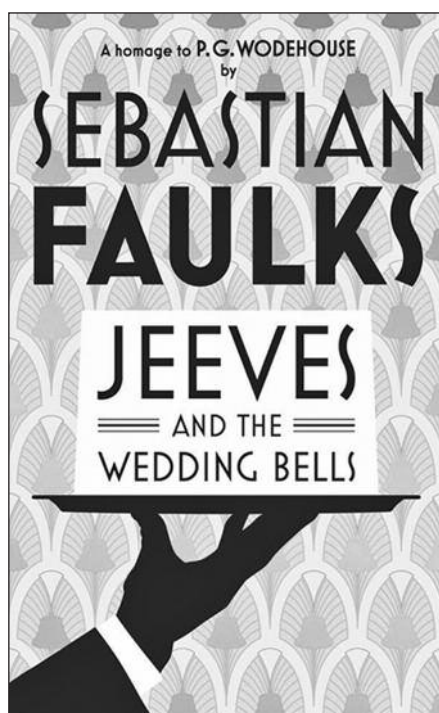
shabbily. Country yokels are described "as though they might be related to one another in ways frowned on by the Old Testament"; Bertie's heart "beats the sort of rhythm you hear in the Congo before the missionary gets lobbed into the bouillon"; and a tense atmosphere is described to be "as welcoming as Goneril and Regan on being told that old Pop Lear had booked in for a month with full retinue". It works for me.

There are, too, some superb examples of Jeeves's superior vocabulary — "accipitrine" and "anfractuosity" are lobbed into conversation within a page of each other — and some delightful Woosterisms. "We leave at dawn," he declares. "Or ten-ish anyway."

A few small quibbles. While Faulks has set this in 1926 and inserted topical references — the General Strike, Bill Tilden playing at Wimbledon — a couple do not ring true. Would Bertie really contrast his cricketing skills with Ranjitsinhji, whose final Test match had been 24 years earlier? And while the comparison of the monumental butler Bicknell to the sculptures on Mount Rushmore is apposite — "No one would have dared to call him corpulent but it would have been unwise to attempt a circumnavigation without leaving a forwarding address" — work did not finish on the first one until 1934.

Still, Faulks need not have worried. He played this testing course in level par, and even if some are not quite grunted by it, they will be a long way from being disgruntled.

Jeeves and the Wedding Bells, by Sebastian Faulks, is published by Hutchinson; list price £16.99, e-book £9.98. It is available at all major retailers and online, with many price bargains to be found. ISBN 978-0-091-95404-8 (272 pages).



Jeeves and the Wedding Bells

Comments from Our Members

From Robert A. Watson

I thoroughly enjoyed the book, but I did think that Bertie was a little too clever, a little too knowing. And I believe that it was a mistake to set the novel in a particular year, in this case 1926, something Wodehouse never did. After all, Bertie was still trying to avoid a matrimonial entanglement at the time of ‘Ban the Bomb’ protests!

From Mark Taylor

Just read *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells*. Made me laugh but not quite Wodehouse. For one thing, the ending didn't gel. The same went for C. Northcote Parkinson's *Jeeves* in 1978 – him as a pub landlord with Bertie as a middle-aged peer married to Bobbie Wickham.

Page 7: I don't recall Corky Pirbright as one of Bertie's fiancées – and surely Bobbie Wickham was about the best-looking girl he ever fell for?

Page 27: Another mistake – setting the story at an exact time. Wodehouse's world should be timeless, the world that might have existed if not for that disastrous mistake in 1914.

Page 139: Good idea making Reginald and Percy Jeeves related.

From Peter Thompson

On a scale of *Blandings* on television being at the lowest end and *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense* being the highest, this book by Sebastian Faulks as a homage to P. G. Wodehouse falls in between, although slightly higher than halfway. At times you feel you are walking through treacle in deep-sea divers' boots compared with Wodehouse, where to mix metaphors you are invariably in soufflé country.

I listened to *How Right You Are, Jeeves* on audiobook, read by Jonathan Cecil, on a car journey at about the same time, and you can see/hear the difference immediately where every word in the Wodehouse version matters, carries the story forward, is either amusing or a quote from some literature lost to Bertie and me for the most part, but adding to the whole dish (still in soufflé metaphor), whereas in the Faulks book I found it a drag at times and persuaded myself to carry on, ultimately glad

that I did so as it picks up towards the end. But that has never been a Wodehouse problem for me.

So an 'A minus' for Mr Faulks. I was listening on the radio to an interview with a writer who regularly writes with characters whose authors are no longer with us, and he had just done another Holmes novel. When asked whether there were any authors he would not dare to try, he immediately said Wodehouse on the basis that it was impossible. He was then informed that somebody (Faulks) had, and was surprised that anyone had dared. He was, of course, correct.

From Paul Hughes

Excellent, thoroughly enjoyed it. Heretical thoughts surfaced, but I managed to suppress them. Surely Jeeves would have laid off the bet, if that's the right term. Georgiana, being widely read, had obviously come across the observation by a writer that “Chumps always make the best husbands”.

From Murray Hedgcock

I got lost in the complexities of Faulks's plot, the characters were muddled to my tired brain, and odd minor irritants surfaced, i.e. page 205 – the No. 27 does *not* go via Richmond (or was this a hint that the future Mrs Wooster took her own idiosyncratic path rather than the route approved by London Transport?). And page 231 struck a definitely jarring note with Bertie's musing about “how many sons of Melbury-cum-Kingston had died at Sevastapol”. There should be no death in Wodehouse; it is the everlasting Garden of Eden, before the Fall, as we have been told.

So, in the finish, with excitement accelerating as the prospect grew of true romance for Bertie, despite his inability to understand what was happening, and to realise that if he did not make a move, then by golly, she would, I award *J and the WB* perhaps a B minus.

Perfect News

In the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, we reported that *Perfect Nonsense*, the hit play based on *The Code of the Woosters*, was scheduled to run at the Duke of York's Theatre until March 8, 2014. The good news is that the production has been such a success that it has now been extended to September 20. Stephen Mangan and Matthew Macfadyen will continue in the roles of Bertie Wooster and Jeeves, respectively, until April 5, whereupon their roles will be taken over by Robert Webb and Mark Heap, starting on April 7; Mark Hadfield will stay on as Seppings. When it has finished at the Duke of York, the show will go on a UK tour, starting at once with a two-week run at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford. Catch it when and where you can!

Bertie Wooster's Spats

by Kate Macdonald

This is an abridged version of a chapter that Kate, a lecturer at the University of Ghent, wrote in 2011 for an as-yet-unpublished book of essays, P. G. Wodehouse and the Middlebrow, edited by Ann Rea.

One of Bertie Wooster's remarks puzzled me a lot as a child: "It would have taken a man of stronger fibre than I am to resist the pair of Old Etonian spats which had smiled up at me from inside the window."¹ I simply had no idea what spats were.

Bertie's garments are literary archaeology, since they were placed in the stories for a reason. Bertie goes to the Park in his green Homburg hat, yellow shoes, and a whangee cane, possibly to dance pastoral dances but certainly to display himself as a dashing and exuberant young man about town.² He has some standards about what can and cannot be worn, as we see from his appalled reaction to the "crimson satin tie decorated with horseshoes" worn by a besotted Bingo Little,³ but his own dress sense is alarmingly erratic.

Bertie is a secure member of his social group, whereas Jeeves's position, on the periphery of that group as Mr Wooster's valet, is insecure. Bertie's errors in sock and shirt choice are more important to Jeeves's sense of status than to Bertie's sense of what is right and wrong. He has no real fear of being ejected from the group to which he belongs by birth, schooling, and other social networks, whereas Jeeves's security of tenure relies on his association with Bertie and his maintenance of the traditional codes. At Jeeves's club, where he mingles with other gentlemen's gentlemen, a well-dressed master maintains the status of his man. Bertie reflects on what might happen to Jeeves at his club if Bertie failed him: "I hated to think of a squad of butlers forming a hollow square while the Committee snipped his buttons off."⁴

"A mere shade in the colour of your spats sets up a subtle social standard."⁵ Wodehouse himself hated wearing spats, describing having to wear them with morning dress at Ascot as "absolute torture."⁶ Spats are short, foldable gaiters of cloth that were worn to protect the shoe from mud and rain. In the 1920s *Punch* wondered whether spats were originally worn to protect the trouser leg from shoe-blackening, but concluded that their principal uses were to disguise an ugly or worn-out sock, or to prevent the back of the turned-down trouser leg from catching in the shoe.⁷ Bertie's Old Etonian spats offended Jeeves so much that he burned them before Bertie had actually given him permission.⁸ In the context of Jeeves's normal deference in other stories of the period (1923), this was taking an unusual liberty and indicates the power of clothes to cause trouble.

In most of the Bertie Wooster stories of the 1920s, clothing is the currency of power. Bertie's submission to Jeeves over purple socks and other ill-advised purchases is a form of reward for the valet. Routinely, Bertie acquires a particular item of menswear as a bid for freedom or autonomy, or as an indication of what he thinks is his superior taste, or to uphold his status as the employer in their relationship, but Jeeves's tastes and desires always triumph. Bertie admits he is wrong because he needs Jeeves's help, and this becomes more important than the clothing fad of the moment, which is thus resolutely sacrificed. This inverted power relationship between master and man makes Jeeves the master because he wields power over Bertie's clothes; this is an inherently comic situation.

Bertie is a knowledgeable buffoon with frequent lapses in taste, displaying a confident rashness in his clandestine purchases that indicate a long history of failing to adhere to the conservative norm. As we see above with the incident of Bingo Little's crimson satin tie, Bertie can be very conservative indeed about others' poor taste in clothes. He also does not show signs of *déclassé* behaviour in any other aspect of his character. His impulse buys and rebellious purchases are aberrations in an otherwise conservative way of life. In a world where insiders dress badly, but with charm, and where outsiders can have perfect dress sense but be appalling blights, Wodehouse conveys an assurance of security within the group that transcends the ideal of conservative good taste. Security in social groupings was becoming important during and after the First World War, when social barriers were becoming more permeable. Those on the fringes of different social strata felt the need for extra vigilance in policing these leaking boundaries. Jeeves's vigilance was for his own profession, in which he would be redundant if gentlemen were not held to the right standards.

Wodehouse first published his comic fiction in 1902, but until the appearance of Bertie Wooster and Jeeves, men's clothes were not particularly prominent in his stories. Very occasionally Psmith noted clothes that he approved of, but his remarks were not developed. Reggie Pepper got into calamities much as Bertie did, but clothes were not his interest. Bertie and Jeeves first appeared together in the American *Saturday Evening Post*, in 'Extricating Young Gussie' (1915) and in 'Leave It to Jeeves' (1916). In the first paragraph of 'Leave It to Jeeves', clothes are clearly important:

I remember meeting Monty Byng in Bond Street one morning, looking the last word in a grey check suit, and I felt I should never be

happy till I had one like it. I dug the address of the tailors out of him, and had them working on the thing inside the hour.

"Jeeves," I said that evening. "I'm getting a check suit like that one of Mr Byng's."

"Injudicious, sir," he said firmly. "It will not become you."

"What absolute rot! It's the soundest thing I've struck for years."

"Unsuitable for you, sir."

Well, the long and the short of it was that the confounded thing came home, and I put it on, and when I caught sight of myself in the glass I nearly swooned. Jeeves was perfectly right. I looked a cross between a music-hall comedian and a cheap bookie.

This very early manifestation of Bertie's impetuosity and Jeeves's superior taste sets the pattern of their relationship as dresser and dressee for the remaining Wooster stories, all the way to the 1970s. The trope that Wodehouse used repeatedly in the Jeeves stories (and it is significant that we know them collectively by the valet's name, not that of the master) is that Bertie wants to wear something that Jeeves will not approve of. The ensuing power struggle provides the humour, rather than the awfulness of the clothes. Jeeves's opinions on Bertie's clothes, and Bertie's eventual agreement with them, are based on how ridiculous Bertie will look. The point at issue is not that the clothes are wrong for the occasion, or that they are wrong for the group (Monty Byng could wear that suit): the clothes are wrong for Bertie. He risks looking ridiculous, but he will not risk looking like a bounder, an interloper or a social climber. He is still Mr Wooster, and his social status will be undiminished even if he merely looks a fool.

At the beginning of 'Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest' (1916), Bertie has had a triumph over the 'Country Gentleman' hat, as opposed to Jeeves's choice of the 'Longacre'. It is a classic Bertiean moment of hubris, signalling that a sartorial comeuppance is on its way as the climax of the story. But when it was rewritten for the 1925 collection *Carry On, Jeeves*, clothing power struggles between Bertie and Jeeves were reduced in prominence. The Reggie Pepper stories published alongside the early Jeeves and Wooster stories don't consider clothes in any way,⁹ and by the mid-1920s Bertie and his world were now written in parallel with Ukridge, Blandings, Mr Mulliner, and golf.

Bertie developed an increasing maturity of outlook that led, by the mid-1930s, to fewer bad taste decisions in clothes and a (slightly) greater sense of responsibility and worldly wisdom. Wodehouse used clothes to criticise contemporary fascist politics. "Roderick Spode is the founder and head of the Saviours of Britain, a fascist organisation better known as the Black Shorts."¹⁰ This satire can be linked to other literary jokes about Fascism, for example Nancy Mitford's suppressed first novel *Wigs on the Green* (1935),¹¹ also playing with clothes. Spode's views are shown to be as ridiculous as his

black shorts uniform. His political power is rapidly undermined when Jeeves discovers his secret.

"Mr Spode designs ladies' underclothing, sir."

[. . .]

"Good lord, Jeeves! No wonder he didn't want a thing like that to come out."¹²

This secret reduces Spode the fascist leader to a figure of ridicule, because, for Bertie and other decent coves, ladies' underwear is the most ignoble form of clothing a man could be associated with. Now someone else is being ridiculed for their clothes, showing that for Wodehouse menswear remains crucial as a marker of character and of position. Wodehouse had merely moved Bertie from goal to attack position.

Notes

- 1 'The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace' (1922).
- 2 'Jeeves Exerts the Old Cerebellum' (1921).
- 3 *Ibid.* The tie is not a garment that a gentleman should wear (with horseshoes on, it breaks fashion rules), and it also makes Bingo ostentatious by its lurid colour and fabric (it breaks fashion rules). The fact that it was given by a waitress to a gentleman who not only accepted it but wore it is not so much an offence against the rules of cross-class encounters as a comment on the depths of Bingo's besottedness, which makes him abandon accepted parameters of taste.
- 4 *The Code of the Woosters* (1938). Bertie is referring to Kipling's poem 'Danny Deever', in which a man found guilty of murdering a fellow soldier is formally stripped of his rank and of his regimental identity, and then hanged in the presence of all his comrades. The poem was highly popular in the late Victorian period, and is a fine recitative piece, possibly learned by Wodehouse at school. It is also highly dramatic, which may explain why Bertie uses it rather inappropriately in this context. Jeeves will not be killed, but he will certainly lose status if Bertie lets him down.
- 5 Laura Ugolini, 'Clothes and the Modern Man in 1930s Oxford', *Fashion Theory*, 4:4 (2000), 427–446, 431.
- 6 Robert McCrum, *Wodehouse: A Life*, (Viking 2004), 165.
- 7 *Punch*, 'About white spats', quoted in Colin McDowell (ed.), *The Pimlico Companion to Fashion* (London: Pimlico, 1998), 24–25.
- 8 'The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace' (1922).
- 9 These 'control' Reggie Pepper stories were 'Absent Treatment', 'Helping Freddie', 'Rallying Round Old George', and 'Doing Clarence a Bit of Good'. Reggie's character is much like Bertie's, but he has more common sense and almost no interest in clothes.
- 10 *The Code of the Woosters* (1938).
- 11 This was withdrawn shortly after publication after pressure from Nancy's older sister Diana, soon to be married to Sir Oswald Mosley, leader of the British Union of Fascists. It has recently been reissued.

Plum's Prose as Part of the British War Effort

by Susan Walker

A aficionado of P G Wodehouse's work knows that he was released by the Nazis from internment in Tost, Upper Silesia, on June 21, 1941; that he was 59 years old at the time (being just under four months short of the usual release date of 60); and that his basically innocuous broadcasts from Germany, which he later so deeply regretted, were made between June 26 and July 2, 1941.

What is not well known, certainly not until October 2012 by this PGW aficionado, is that Plum's name and a quotation from his work were used in one of Britain's most successful wartime propaganda films: *Pimpernel Smith*, starring and directed by Leslie Howard. Intriguingly, the film was released on July 26, 1941 – 24 days after PGW's last broadcast from Berlin.

As older members would know, Leslie Howard starred in many films, including *Pygmalion* (1938), in which he played Professor Henry Higgins; he shot to universal fame as Ashley Wilkes in *Gone with the Wind* (1939). At the outbreak of World War II, he became active in anti-Nazi propaganda and was reputedly involved with British Intelligence, which may have led to his death. On June 1, 1943, the civilian aircraft in which he was a passenger was shot down by the Luftwaffe over the Bay of Biscay. Conspiracy theories still abound, chief of which is that Howard and his travelling companion, Alfred Chenhalls (the star's accountant), were thought by German Intelligence to be Churchill's bodyguard, Detective Inspector Walter Thompson, and the prime minister. Thompson was tall and slim (as was Howard), whereas Chenhalls was fairly short and stocky (as was Churchill). Another theory is that Joseph Goebbels was determined to wreak revenge on Howard for having ridiculed him. To add fuel to the fire, Howard's antecedents were Jewish. It is worth noting here that the *British Film Yearbook* for 1945 described Howard's work as "one of the most valuable facets of British propaganda".

So how did I, aged three at the time of *Pimpernel Smith's* release in July 1941, come to realize that the film included PGW as part of the British propaganda war effort? In a boringly mundane way, I'm afraid. On October 30, 2012, I wasn't very well and decided to spend the day lolling about on the sofa. I recorded

the film (broadcast at 11 a.m. on Film 4) and, during the afternoon, settled down to watch it. It is thanks to that recording that I am able to quote from it verbatim.

The film, which opens in the spring of 1939, follows the exploits of Professor Horatio Smith (Leslie Howard), a Cambridge academic who rescues fellow scientists and their families trapped in Nazi Germany. His chief adversary is General von Graum, played more or less as a comic character by Francis L. Sullivan, a somewhat obese actor who resembled Hermann Goering. About 25 minutes into the film, von Graum says: "I'm told the English have a secret weapon: their sense of humour." He then proceeds to read extracts from P. G. Wodehouse, *Punch* magazine, Edward Lear, and Lewis Carroll. He is bewildered that anyone could find them funny.

The Wodehouse extract is: "The man with a beard sighed. Down in the forest something stirred." [Editor's note. The second sentence is probably from 'The Clicking of Cuthbert', but the first sentence does not precede it in that story.]

Towards the end of the film, von Graum declares: "We shall invade Poland tomorrow." By today's criteria, the story is clumsy. It opens with mice (or hamsters), clearly the victims of experiments. What would today's animal rights activists have to say about that? Professor Smith is an unashamed misogynist and elitist,

though there is some understated love interest, with our hero tacitly succumbing to the charms of a somewhat fierce Ludmilla Koslowski (played by Mary Morris), daughter of one of the rescued scientists.

As I noted above, the film was released just 24 days after Plum's last broadcast from Berlin. Clearly it did not take long to make because most of the shots are studio-bound. (There are no expensive and lengthy outside scenes, such as in Olivier's famous 1944 propaganda epic, *Henry V.*) With that in mind, it is fair to assume that from inception to the last reel in the can, the work was covered in a matter of weeks – probably during Plum's last weeks of internment. Presumably, therefore, *Pimpernel Smith*, uncut, hit the screens of Great Britain before the full fury of the British press was turned upon P. G. Wodehouse.



Revisiting the Land Where the Good Songs Go

by Amy Plofker, with M.E. Rich



On January 15, 2014, advanced music students at Juilliard took part in the New York Festival of Song's 'Emerging Artists' series, in a programme entitled 'The Land Where the Good Songs Go!'. That's right – it was a reprise of the wonderful 2001 concerts of PGW music by Hal Cazalet, Sylvia McNair, and Steven Blier.

The program is a treasure in itself, with learned background notes from Mr. Blier as well as perspectives from the student performers. The instrumentalists (Blier on piano, Greg Utzig on banjo, mandolin, ukulele, and guitar) were flawless throughout. The seven singers (and dancers) who entertained us on January 15 were excellent, performing the Wodehouse & Kern songs (musically difficult, I'm told) with confidence and aplomb. However, their performances did vary as to how fully they seemed to get into the role they were singing. Tenor James Knight was the standout in this respect, likely aided by experience in musical theatre and an extremely expressive face perfectly suited for comedy.

The first half of the concert, to my delight, held up fairly well against my memories of the 2001 concert in Washington, D.C. 'Sir Galahad', 'Tell Me All Your Troubles Cutie', and 'You Never Knew About Me' were enchanting duos or trios that hardly seemed almost a hundred years old. 'Siren's Song' and 'Go, Little Boat' unwaveringly held my attention to the single performer on the stage. 'Rolled Into One', while technically a solo, was enhanced by nonstop horseplay between the soprano and her male swains. 'We're Crooks' seemed least of all touched by the ravages of time, with its snipes about hardened felons who would scorn to adorn the legal profession, Congress, or Wall Street "for we've got some self-respect".

The second half of the show suffered from excessive staging: the multi-performer 'business', while excellently danced or acted, distracted us from the songs themselves. 'Napoleon' had a novel-length plot going on in the background. 'Non-Stop Dancing' somehow included the performers rolling across the stage on top of each other. While great fun to watch, the vibrations coming off the stage in 'Shimmy With Me' and 'Cleopatterer' could have shook the theatre. In the second half, I wobbled between enjoying the singers breaking loose and having a ball, and wishing they would get back their professional mien from earlier. But petty quibbles aside, it was a gorgeous performance and a great evening.

Mastermind Quiz 10: Animals in Wodehouse

1. What are the names of Empress of Blandings's rivals – owned and fattened up by Sir Gregory Parsloe?
2. Sir Roderick and Lady Glossop have an aversion to cats. In 'Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch', how many cats have been secreted in Bertie Wooster's bedroom?
3. In 'Ukridge's Dog College', what does Ukridge intend to train his aunt's six Pekingese dogs to do?
4. In 'Uncle Fred Flits By', Pongo Twistleton is introduced by Uncle Fred to Mrs Connie Parker and her daughter Julia as what?
5. Which of Bertie Wooster's friends is a celebrated newt fancier?
6. In 'Something Squishy', what was the something squishy?
7. In 'The Story of Webster' what kind of animal was Webster?
8. Who owns Bartholomew, the dog that has Jeeves and Bertie climbing onto bedroom furniture in *The Code of the Woosters*?
9. In 'The Go-getter', Freddie Threepwood, second son of Lord Emsworth, attempts to sell which canine-related product to his Aunt Georgiana?
10. Simla and Potato Chip are rival horses in which Jeeves and Wooster novel?

(Answers on page 21)

The Real Jeeves in Stratford

Just as this issue was going to press, we received word that Brian Halford, author of *The Real Jeeves*, will be speaking at the Stratford-upon-Avon Literary Festival. As alert *Wooster Sauce* readers know, *The Real Jeeves* (reviewed by Murray Hedgcock in our December issue) is about Percy Jeeves, the Warwickshire cricketer whose name was appropriated by PGW for a series of books with which we are all familiar. It was published last year during the centenary of the time Wodehouse saw Jeeves play at the Cheltenham Cricket Festival.

The Stratford-upon-Avon Literary takes place April 26–May 4, and Mr Halford's talk will be on Friday, May 2, 6.00 p.m. at the Bear Pit Theatre. He will be sharing the podium with Jim Troughton, the current Warwickshire cricket captain.

The Word Around the Clubs

Johnson as Jeeves

The Times of November 15, 2013, carried an article by Ben Macintyre entitled ‘Boris Is Only Playing at Being Bertie Wooster’; the subtitle was ‘Forget the bumbling persona, Jeeves is the Wodehouse character the London Mayor really resembles’.



Macintyre once spent a day observing Boris on the campaign trail and “I found myself trapped inside a P G Wodehouse novel”. He reported that the day consisted of “one Wodehousean moment after another, farcical but controlled, as I trailed after a politician at once self-mocking and entirely self-aware, hilarious, highly effective and irreducibly English”. He then noted that while Johnson’s stock continues to soar, Wodehouse is undergoing another huge revival.

Macintyre believes there is a link between the two, thanks to their imperishable British optimism. Every problem in the Wodehouse-Johnson world can be defused by irony and humour. He concluded his article by suggesting that the Code of the Johnsons is for Boris to play the part of Wooster while actually performing the role of Jeeves.

(Thanks to CHRISTOPHER BELLEW, LEILA DEAKIN, and MURRAY HEDGCOCK, who all sent in this item.)

Relief for Major Plank – and Others

The headline was blunt:

No place for bonny babies at the PC Carnival

The *Daily Telegraph* of July 11, 2014, recorded:

The organisers of Devizes carnival in Wiltshire has scrapped its traditional bonny baby contest, because members feel it unfair to judge children on their looks. They said the baby and toddler pageant was “no longer an appropriate item” to include in a contemporary carnival programme. Dave Buxton, artistic director of Devizes Outdoor Celebratory Arts, said members were unanimously against the contest.

“Devizes is a modern carnival. . . . Do you really think it is a good idea to judge babies and decide which ones are the best?”

A leader was saddened by the decision.

“The thing is not, after all, an ugly baby contest. . . . As former babies ourselves, we can only applaud recognition of the virtues of babyhood.”

No comment was available from bonny baby experts Major Brabazon-Plank, Bingo Little, Freddy Widgeon, Bill Oakshott, or H.C. Purkiss.

(Thanks to MURRAY HEDGCOCK for this item.)

Where the Garden Flows

The flooding the country has experienced this winter is no laughing matter – and yet, as always, there are Wodehouse quotes appropriate to the occasion that can’t help but bring a smile to the lips. In the *Times Diary* for February 11, Patrick Kidd had this to say:

As footage from Berkshire leads to jokes that it was the Battle of Trafalgar, not Waterloo, that was won on the playing fields of Eton, a quote from Wodehouse springs to mind. In *Ring for Jeeves*, the Earl of Rowcester is desperate to sell his mansion but keeps being stymied by his brother-in-law, who helpfully likes to tell would-be buyers that “in summer the river is at the bottom of the garden, whereas in winter the garden is at the bottom of the river”.

When the Legend Becomes Fact . . .

On December 27 the *Gloucestershire Echo* carried an article by Aled Thomas, who had followed up the claim Wodehouse once made that he threw stamped letters out of a fourth-floor window to save him trudging downstairs when he wanted to post a letter. Thomas left 18 letters at various points in Cheltenham and found that 15 were delivered to the correct address.

The Times and the *Daily Telegraph* both picked up this story on December 28, and on January 8 Harry Mount reported in the *Daily Mail* how he had fared when broadening the field, leaving 20 stamped letters addressed to himself across the country. By now, however, the underlying story, which was apocryphal in any event, had become increasingly exaggerated (giving Wodehouse full credit for the idea when it was actually his friend Fred Thompson who had done it). That did not stop two further West Country journals from carrying out their own experiments – as reported in the *Bristol Post* (January 9) and the *Taunton County Gazette* (January 18). Late in January the *Plymouth Herald* also joined in the act, dispersing 20 letters, of which only seven made it back to the newspaper’s headquarters.

To read Harry Mount’s article, see <http://dailym.ai/1gfm8x8>.



Harry Mount posts a letter, PGW-style

Update from Everyman

For those who are collecting the Everyman Wodehouse series, the word on the street is that the next two titles to be published are *Tales of Wrykyn* (March 28) and *Performing Flea* (March 31). No word yet on other titles to be published in 2014.

The Great Blandings Debate

Early in September 2013, a Q&A section in the *Daily Mail* printed a reader's question asking whether Wodehouse had modelled Blandings Castle on a particular stately home. The answer, provided by another reader, gave a detailed history of the search for Blandings, including, of course, Norman Murphy's finding that the grounds of Blandings were based on Weston Park in Shropshire, while the house itself was based on Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire. The article concluded:



*Apley Hall in Shropshire –
This is NOT Blandings!*

In 2003 this claim was refuted by two researchers from UCL, Drs Ian Greatbatch and Daryl Lloyd. They claimed Murphy had ignored key clues such as the fact that the River Severn ran through or close to the grounds, that there was a boating lake, the driveway was three-quarters of a mile long, and it was possible to see the highest point in Shropshire, the Wrekin, from the grounds. Placing these clues into a computer mapping system used to site Tesco stores, they came up with a single site: Apley Hall, between Bridgnorth and Shifnal in Shropshire.

Upon hearing of this, Norman shook his head and muttered, "Oh dear oh dear oh dear" – then issued a rebuttal:

I don't mind the initial error that the two geographers made – especially when they admitted they had never actually visited the place. But this is the Charge of the Light Brigade error all over again. Looking at a map, they produced one answer, but whoever wrote this newspaper thing got it even wronger.

As I learned as a young subaltern in the

Army: time spent in reconnaissance is never wasted. You MUST walk the ground yourself. I 'walked' Apley Hall for about an hour and I was allowed inside as well (it was a school then). You cannot see the Severn from Apley Hall; it is too close – about 50 yards from the house at the bottom of a sheer cliff.

The drive is indeed three quarters of a mile, but so is the approach drive of just about every Blandings candidate in that part of Shropshire, including Weston Park.

Also, there is *no* boating lake at Apley, and while the Wrekin is clear on the horizon from Weston Park, the well-established woodland around Apley Hall means you cannot see it from there.

I should point out also that there is no Blandings Parva bordering Apley, unlike Weston under Lizard, which backs directly onto the Weston Park kitchen garden; and you cannot, like Lord Emsworth, be awakened by a motorcycle on the Shrewsbury road (the A5) because it is ten miles or so from Apley – but it separates Weston Park from Weston under Lizard.

I won't go on because it would be embarrassing. And I wouldn't have done so since, from memory, neither Ian or Daryl claimed there was a boating lake. It was the newspaper correspondent who made that error.

It should also be pointed out Ian and Daryl are terrific chaps who had never once refuted Norman's conclusions in their study. Rather, they conducted their own project independently using computer models and later admitted there were flaws in the process since they had never visited Apley themselves.

And so the controversy continues – you may draw your own conclusion!

Every Cloud . . .

New Year 2014 opened with drenching rain and gales, not least for the Mayor's Parade in London. Dark clouds loomed over Piccadilly as marching bands from as far away as the States put on a brave face as Britain's winter did its worse. Seeking shelter from the stormy blast, we fetched up at the friendly Clarence pub in a side street, just yards from the Ritz Hotel. Tucking in to tasty pub grub and getting outside a pint of



Guinness my eye alighted on a framed picture of none other than Pelham Grenville Wodehouse. The accompanying text explained that the pub was situated in Dover Street, the location of the fictional Drones Club of Plum fame. What more can you want on a miserable London day – good food, excellent beer, a cheerful welcome and a literary association with our favourite author?

– Roger Bowen

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

The Man with Two Left Feet

The *Man with Two Left Feet* is in many ways an unremarkable Wodehouse book, containing as it does 13 miscellaneous short stories written by Wodehouse before he really got into his stride as a humorous author. However, there are two significant points of interest about it: it contains the first appearance in book form of Bertie and Jeeves (and Aunt Agatha), and it is a remarkably scarce title in first edition format.

It is, at least in my opinion, one of the five scarcest Wodehouse titles in UK first edition format, along with *Love Among the Chickens*, *Not George Washington*, *The Globe By The Way Book*, and *Uneasy Money*. I know of one eminent Wodehouse collector whose collection of first editions was only finally completed by his acquisition of *The Man with Two Left Feet*.

The book was first published in the UK on 8 March 1917 by Methuen. The first edition is succinctly described by *McIlvaine* (A21a): “light red cloth, black lettering”. In fact, the title and the author’s name appear on both the front boards and the spine, and the publisher’s name appears on the spine, with all lettering being in capitals. According to the publisher’s own records, the print run was 1,500, but only 1,405 of the 1,500 copies were bound in the light red cloth described by *McIlvaine* and sold at bookshops; of these 1,405, 125 were bound in Colonial cloth and 125 were bound in Colonial wraps. The remaining 95 copies were then issued by the publisher in variant bindings (some in brown cloth, some in blue cloth; both with plain front boards, but with gilt lettering on the spine giving the title and author’s name in capitals) and sold to book clubs and lending libraries.

The small print run and the wartime economy standards have no doubt combined to mean that not many copies have survived. The 250 Colonial copies of the title are so scarce as to be unknown: in John Loder’s bibliography *P.G. Wodehouse’s Colonial Editions* (2005) it is the only one of the Methuen

Colonial editions “so far not seen by us” (p14). And I have only been able to trace four copies of the UK first edition appearing at auction in the last 20 years:

a copy in the blue library cloth was sold in the Henry Blofeld collection at Christie’s in January 1994; and copies in the standard light red binding described in *McIlvaine* were sold in the James Heineman collection at Sotheby’s in June 1998, in the Michael Carter collection at Christie’s in February 2000 (although this was possibly the copy from the Heineman collection), and in the Nigel Williams collection at Bloomsbury in April 2011. There will, of course, have been “off-market” transactions, where copies were sold privately by one collector to another, or via a dealer without them being advertised for general sale, but it is still undeniably a very scarce title.

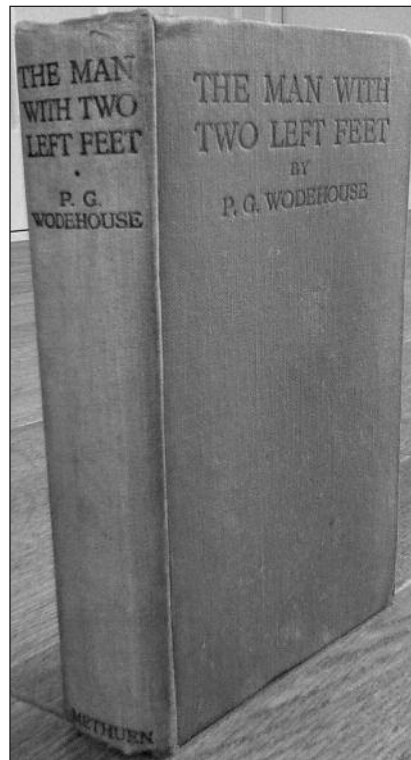
What makes it even more frustrating for a collector is that, unlike most other Wodehouse titles, the second edition was issued in a new format, different to the first edition. So whereas collectors unable to locate a first edition of, say, *Love Among the Chickens*, *Not George*

Washington, *Mike*, *Something Fresh*, or *Uneasy Money* can sometimes console themselves by acquiring a second edition in the same format as the first

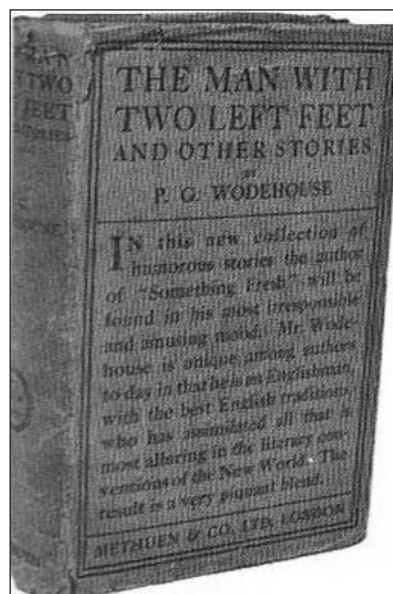
(although in many cases the second editions are also scarce and correspondingly expensive), such a Plan B is not possible with *The Man with Two Left Feet*, nor, frustratingly, with *The Pothunters*, *The Globe By The Way Book*, or *The Swoop* (there were, of course, no second editions of the latter two titles, although facsimile editions were published by Heineman in 1985 and 1993, respectively).

If the first edition of *The Man with Two Left Feet* is very scarce, the accompanying dustwrapper is, unsurprisingly, even scarcer. Fortunately, a colour photograph of it appears

in Plate 3 in *McIlvaine*, which is the closest most collectors are ever likely to come to it!



First edition in standard red cloth



Dustwrapper for first edition

Maud Allan – an Unlikely Wodehouse Heroine

by Tony Ring

In the March 2002 *Wooster Sauce*, the verse featured in Poet's Corner was a 1908 offering entitled 'Maud', concerning the refusal of Manchester City Council to permit Maud Allan to perform her by-then-notorious dance *The Vision of Salome*. Allan was once the most famous dancer in London, and two recent publications have brought her extraordinary life back into focus.

Born in Toronto in 1873, Maud Allan was raised in San Francisco and was studying piano in Germany when her brother was hanged for the murder of two young women. She immediately abandoned the instrument to take up a completely different form of artistic impression – a very personal style of movement and dance – and after apprentice years on the continent, she became a sensation with her *Vision of Salome* in 1906.



Rumour had it that she had performed the dance naked before England's King Edward VII at a private audience at Marienbad, following which she started an affair with him.

In 1908 Allan brought the dance to the Palace Theatre in London, where she reputedly earned £250 per week, and although she was at least partially clothed during the performances, there seem to have been occasions when she perhaps showed more than the management expected. This led to the decision by the puritan Manchester council and Wodehouse's poem. Further rumours abounded to the effect that she was having a lesbian affair with Margot Asquith, one American reporter even claiming she was involved in a ménage à trois with Margot and her Prime Minister husband.

But the real scandal in Allan's life was not to raise its head for another ten years. In 1918, to obtain publicity for his new journal, an MP, Noel Pemberton Billing ('PB'), described her as a lesbian whose dance studies in Berlin had made her part of a widespread German spy circle operating at a high level in the UK. PB had hit on the idea of creating a libel suit which would catch the public imagination. The tense political situation in the last months of the war meant that Lloyd George wanted the case to have minimal publicity and short duration, so it seems a raft of unreliable witnesses were called to give damning evidence against Allan, and the trial became a travesty of justice. The *Times* declared that every well-proved canon of British fair play was frankly disregarded.

Maud Allan became the victim, losing the case and the remaining vestiges of her career. And she couldn't blame Manchester for that.

Poet's Corner

His Pet Subject

Oh, I'm not what you'd call a ripe scholar,
At Latin, I own, I don't shine,
While Greek merely rouses my choler,
It's not my particular line;

I can't understand mathematics,
Their beauty I quite fail to see,
Whether simple addition or statics;
But I fancy I'll get my degree.

I quaff the convivial pewter,
Play cricket, and go to the boats.
When I go – once a term – to my tutor,
I seldom, if ever, take notes.

Then, of course, there is Bridge after dinner –
We play from eight thirty till three
(I'm a very occasional winner);
But I fancy I'll get my degree.

My tailor is pressing for payment –
I tear up his bills with a sigh –
And meanwhile, in beautiful raiment,
I stroll in the Broad and the High.

In that line, I don't mind confessing,
There has never been much wrong with me.
If a fellow can do it by dreaming,
I fancy I'll get my degree.

For, if I'm but garbed as is proper,
If I don't wear a 'bowler' with tails,
If my notion of sporting a 'topper'
With praise the examiner hails,

If there's nothing much wrong with my trousers,
If my waistcoat is all it should be,
I shall not stand a chance of a plough, sirs.
Yes, I fancy I'll get my degree.

From the *Daily Chronicle*, March 23, 1903
(Following a report from Tailor and Cutter suggesting a sartorial professor be appointed at Oxford, and correct dressing be taught as a regular subject.)

Answers to Mastermind Quiz

(Page 17)

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Pride of Matchingham | 5. Gussie Fink-Nottle |
| Queen of Matchingham | 6. A snake |
| 2. 23 | 7. A cat |
| 3. Become performers in
the musical hall | 8. Stiffy Byng |
| 4. A deaf parrot-clipper | 9. Donaldson's Dog Joy |
| | 10. <i>Aunts Aren't Gentlemen</i> |

Recent Press Comment

Los Angeles Times, November 6

Michael Hiltzik's article celebrating the 110th birthday of George Orwell included the essay *In Defence of P G Wodehouse* in his choice of Orwell's five greatest essays.

Daily Telegraph, November 7 (from Carolyn De La Plain)

An article previewing the centenary of the crossword included in its short list of known addicts the Queen, Indira Gandhi, and P. G. Wodehouse.

The Times, November 7

The 'Diary' commented that, due to a white-tie banquet for the visiting president of South Korea, there had been a demand at hire shops, "with guests wanting the full soup and fish, as Bertie Wooster calls it, at £200 a pop".

Times Literary Supplement, November 8

(from Barry Chapman)

In a letter to the Editor regarding article entitled 'Who pays the piper calls the tune', the writer noted: "P. G. Wodehouse's Earl of Emsworth is sometimes ready, however grudgingly, to bow to his gardener's expertise in flowers, and I imagine some pipers may have given their lairds a hard time."

Daily Telegraph, November 9

(from Carolyn De La Plain)

A General Knowledge crossword clue asked for the surname of the actress playing Lady Constance in the TV *Blandings* (8).

Daily Telegraph, November 16

(from Carolyn De La Plain and Susan Walker)

Another General Knowledge crossword clue required the first name of a character in the early Wodehouse school stories, with the surname Jackson (4).

Daily Telegraph, November 17 (from Alan Hall)

In a book review, Charles Moore discussed transferred epithets, noting that "only PG Wodehouse could have taken the epithet 'astonished' and transferred it to the word 'toast'."

The Times, November 25 (from Leila Deakin)

Clue number 16 Down in the 'MindGames' crossword was: "Expression associated with Bertie Wooster (4, 2)". (Answer: "What ho")

The Guardian SpinBlog, November 26

(from Robert Bruce)

The blogger noted that just four days after Sachin Tendulkar finished his final Test, a 14-year-old batsman born in Mumbai, Prithvi Shaw, had broken the record for the largest-ever score in the Harris Shield, the same school competition in which Tendulkar had shared a 664-run stand with Vinod Kamble. The innings left many feeling a little like Keats did when he first read Chapman's *Homer*, "like some watcher of the skies / When a new planet swims into his ken", or, indeed, as P G Wodehouse put it, "the fellow who on looking at something felt like somebody looking at something".

The Week, November 29

(from Sharon Mitchell and Alexander Dainty)

Reprinted a quote from Wodehouse that had originally appeared in the *Boston Globe*: "The less you want a fellow, the more punctual he's bound to be."

The Spectator, November 30 (from Leila Deakin)

In a review by Christopher Howse of *The Elements of Eloquence* by Mark Forsyth (ISBN: 9781848316218), the following sentence is quoted as containing three rhetorical figures of speech – a transferred epithet ('meditative foot'), synecdoche ('Pale Hands'), and, taken as a whole, an example of litotes:

As I sat in the bathtub, soaping a meditative foot and singing, if I remember correctly, *Pale Hands I Loved Beside the Shalimar*, it would be deceiving my public to say that I was feeling booms-a-daisy.

The Times, December 7

(from Leila Deakin)

A leader entitled 'Plum Property' noted that Wodehouse's Remsenburg, New York, property had been put on the market for £2.8 million and commented on how Wodehouse was "an American writer too, owing much of his brilliance to immersion in that culture. . . . Wodehouse was a good egg – and also a great American."

The Guardian, December 8

Printed an article by Society treasurer Jeremy Neville regarding *Perfect Nonsense*. Jeremy concluded: "There is something about Wodehouse that makes you suspend your disbelief and just revel in the happy world he creates."

The Guardian, December 9 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Noted that David March, the newspaper's style guide editor, had explained how the paper refers to peers.

The policy for several years has been that when referring to peers, we call them simply Lord Emsworth, say, at first mention, and thereafter simply Emsworth.

Radio 4 – That Mitchell and Webb Sound, December 10

In episode 3 of series 5, there was a three-minute sketch about the nature of a PA to Bertie Wooster in the Facebook Generation.

The Guardian Blog, December 13

Opened a lengthy discussion about the ongoing popularity of Wodehouse's books with the following paragraph:

Few writers evoke the notion of 'comfort' like P G Wodehouse. Whether the lost upper-class Edwardian world of Bertie Wooster and the Drones Club, or the pastoral haven of Blandings Castle, his work conjures a timeless myth of quintessential Englishness. The last 12 months have seen him flourishing in the popular imagination to an extent perhaps unmatched since the height of his success in the 1930s. There's been the BBC adaption of *Blandings*, the BBC4 biopic *Wodehouse in Exile*, Sebastian Faulks's *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells*, and the West End adaptation of the 1938 novel *The*

All Those Reviews

Many thanks to all members who sent in more press reviews or related articles concerning *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells* and *Perfect Nonsense*. There were so many that they would have swamped this column, thus they are not included here. However, see the Society's website for a compilation of reviews.

Code of the Woosters. All of which have introduced him to a new generation of readers, as well as reminding the rest of us why re-reading him is such a delight.

The Guardian, December 21 (from Terry Taylor)

A review of a new book on Eric Ravilious revealed the artist and designer's favourite author was P. G. Wodehouse.

The Mail on Sunday, December 22

(from Christopher Bellew)

In a review of *Two Girls, One on Each Knee: The Puzzling, Playful World of the Crossword* by Alan Connor, Craig Brown noted that his own incompetence at crosswords found him in good company: "In the P G Wodehouse novel 'Hot Water', Mervyn Mullinger [sic] is baffled by the name for a large Australian bird beginning with E and ending with U, so he decides to 'place the matter in the hands of the editor of the Encyclopaedia Britannica'." (Note: The story is actually 'The Knightly Quest of Mervyn'.)

Daily Telegraph, December 27

Harry Wallop reviewed the book *Still Thoroughly Disgusted After All These Years* by Nigel Cawthorne. It concerned the letters written over the years to the *Tunbridge Wells Advertiser*, and Cawthorne comments that the letter writers were – and still are – terribly polite. "It is the world of P. G. Wodehouse and Agatha Christie."

Financial Times, December 27 (from Christopher Bellew)

A letter to the Editor accused two previous letters of being "a little ungenerous. As Bertie Wooster observes: 'I could see that, if not actually disgruntled, he was far from being grunted.' If it is good enough for PG Wodehouse, it is good enough for me."

Radio 4 - PM, January 2, 2014

In a discussion on the decline of reading, which had been stimulated by an article by Ruth Rendell, it was agreed that what constitutes 'classics' would include Wodehouse.

The Times, January 3

Patrick Kidd noted in his 'Diary' column that Stephen Mangan had tweeted a photo of the 'House Full' sign for *Perfect Nonsense* outside the Duke of York's Theatre with a comment 'Bloody Bulgarians, coming over here enjoying our culture', reflecting the change to the immigration laws on January 1. (Note: there are well over 20 translations of Wodehouse books in Bulgarian.)

New York Times Book Review, January 3

(from Lynn Vesley-Gross)

Donna Tartt explained her selection for her favourite book of 2013 like this:

I adored *P G Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*, edited by Sophie Ratcliffe. I've always loved Wodehouse, and these letters, while informal and often hastily written, throw off sparks of his *sui generis* brilliance at almost every line, while at the same time providing a rare glimpse of the gentle, self-deprecating soul behind the books. One of my favorite letter collections in years.

Sunday Telegraph, January 4

Alan Titchmarsh closed an article on the glorious history of the cocktail with Wodehouse's recollection that Galahad Threepwood had discovered that the prime secret of eternal youth was to keep the decanter circulating and never to go to bed before three in the morning.

Daily Telegraph, January 5

Olivia Williams wrote about a return visit to Harrogate – "to shoot a creepy film set in a big draughty house". She recalled that her last visit there was in 1993 to play Madeline Bassett [sic] in Wodehouse's *Summer Lightning*, adding: "I shall take my shiny new Christmas edition of the book to warm me up between the scenes of shivering terror and suspense." (Er – she probably means Sue Brown.)

Vulture.com (website), January 6

Jody Rosen, a blog writer in the USA, where series of both *Downton Abbey* and *Blandings* are available, discusses the decision making behind the format of the two shows, and concludes that *Downton* takes itself too seriously, while *Blandings* follows the Wodehouse approach of regarding the work as musical comedy without the music. (See <http://vult.re/1bVqXs9>)

Daily Telegraph, January 15 (from James Wood)

In a column about how crosswords and other puzzles contribute to longer, healthier lives, Harry de Quetteville included a quote from *Summer Moonshine* (where Sir Buckstone Abbott incorrectly but confidently solves a crossword clue) that appears in the book *Two Girls, One on Each Knee*, by Alan Connor. De Quetteville concluded: "It is just conceivable that Wodehouse's oeuvre is the only thing that has brought more contentment to more people than crosswords. But even the Master cannot claim to bring health as well as happiness."

The Metro, January 16

Susan Hill, author, named *The Mating Season* alongside *Bleak House* and *The Authorised Version of the Bible* as one of her three top reads.

The Lady, January 24

(from Caroline Franklyn and June Arnold)

Number 24 in the journal's series of 'Great Literary Ladies' features Aunt Agatha, "the formidable relative in the Jeeves and Wooster series". After describing Aunt Agatha's impact on Bertie's life, Louise Trask concluded that she "is the catalyst for Wooster's mischievous adventures, a force of nature and an unforgettable character in her own right". (Where's Aunt Dahlia?)

Daily Telegraph, January 28

In an interview about his life of travel, Henry Blofeld reported that he still always takes Wodehouse paperbacks with him when he goes away.

Daily Express, February 1

In an article on the return of *Blandings* for its second series on BBC2, star Jennifer Saunders commented that "you can't beat P.G. Wodehouse. His turn of phrase is immaculate, his handling of farce is superb and the little worlds he creates are so entire and perfect."

The Independent, February 12 (from Mike Swaddling)

Eleanor Doughty complained about the dearth of Wodehouse books on library shelves and noted that any reforms seeking to broaden and balance young people's education should include comedy by such masters as Waugh, Wilde, and Wodehouse:

If English literature is under academic scrutiny . . . then where's the Wodehouse? Where is the commander of the extended simile, the ludicrous metaphor that timelessly produces a snort of laughter? Where is Jeeves, heartily putting down his master, and why isn't he in my library?

Future Events for Your Diary

Perfect Nonsense at the Duke of York's Theatre

The hit play based on *The Code of the Woosters* will continue into September – hurrah! See page 13.

April 14, 2014 Poet in the City Readings

A special treat for Wodehouse poetry lovers is in store with this evening of Wodehouse verse. See page 4 for details on how to get tickets.

May 2, 2014 Brian Halford at Stratford-upon-Avon

Author Brian Halford will talk about his book, *The Real Jeeves*, at the Stratford-upon-Avon Literary Festival. For more information, see page 17.

June 20, 2013 Gold Bats vs. the Dulwich Dusters

Our annual match against the Dulwich masters will start at 4 p.m., with a break for the always lauded tea. See more on page 3.

June 22, 2013 Gold Bats vs. Sherlock Holmes Society

Unless the rain gods once again spoil the fun, we will be convening at the West Wycombe cricket club in the morning and starting play at 11.30.

July 15, 2014 Summer Meeting at The George

The entertainment is not yet settled for this meeting, but it will be by the time the next issue of *Wooster Sauce* is published. As always, we kick off at The George, 213 Strand, London, from 6 p.m.

August 10, 2014 Richard Burnip's 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.

October 16, 2014 Dinner at Gray's Inn

Our biennial dinner has a special treat in store in order to honour a certain key date in PGW's life. Full details will be published in the June issue, which will include application forms.

October 26 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Richard will again lead a Wodehouse-themed walk for London Walks. See August 10, above, for all details.

November 18, 2014 Autumn Meeting at The George

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

There was a tender expression on his handsome face as he made his way up the stairs. What a pleasure it was, he was feeling, to be able to scatter sweetness and light. Especially in London in the springtime, when, as has been pointed out, he was always at his best.

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

CONTENTS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Our New President! | 11 Spiffing Wodehousean Paper Dolls! |
| 2 Profile of a President | 12 Very Good, Faulks (review) |
| 3 Society News | 13 <i>Jeeves and the Wedding Bells</i> : Members' Comments |
| 3 Of Cats, Spats, and Syllabi | 13 Perfect News |
| 4 Exciting News of Two New Wodehouse Books | 14 Bertie Wooster's Spats |
| - <i>What Goes Around Comes Around</i> | 16 Plum's Prose as Part of the British War Effort |
| - <i>P. G. Wodehouse's Phrases and Notes</i> | 17 Revisiting the Land Where the Good Songs Go |
| 4 Last Chance to Come to an Evening of Wodehouse Verse! | 17 Mastermind Quiz 10: Animals in Wodehouse |
| 5 Cosy Moments | 17 The Real Jeeves in Stratford |
| 6 Letters to the Editor | 18 The Word Around the Clubs |
| 7 A Letter from the Past | 19 The Great Blandings Debate |
| 8 A Mystery Quickly Solved | 19 Every Cloud . . . |
| 9 My First Wodehouse Experience | 20 Bibliographic Corner: <i>The Man with Two Left Feet</i> |
| 9 More Cosy Moments | 21 Maud Allan – an Unlikely Wodehouse Heroine |
| 10 Where is King's Deverill? | 21 Poet's Corner: <i>His Pet Subject</i> |
| | 22 Recent Press Comment |