



WOOSTER SAUCE

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

Number 71

September 2014

Wodehouse and the Sailor

by David Gunn

Late in 2013, naval and military publishers Pen & Sword launched my book about an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy who fought the Turks up the River Tigris in 1915 from a Calcutta River Police Launch. He bombarded the enemy with 4.7" guns that had last been used at the Relief of Ladysmith in the Boer War in 1899.

What the attendant publicity to *Sailor in the Desert* did not say was that this seaman was one of the greatest P G Wodehouse fans of all time and had entered into a correspondence with Plum.

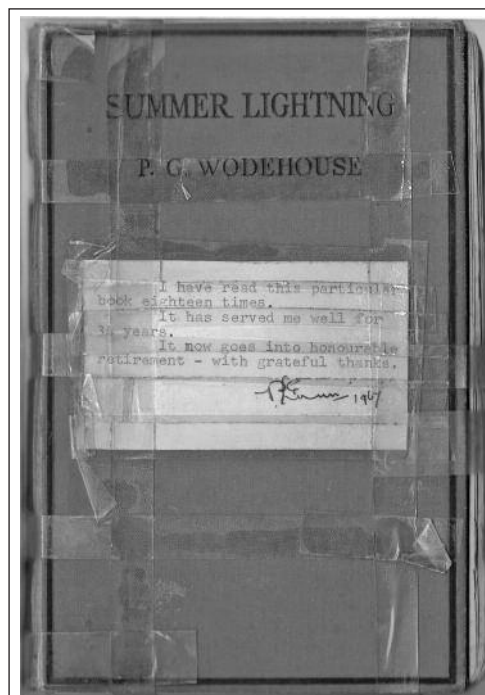
The sailor concerned, Phillip Gunn – my father, born in 1895 – was later commissioned as an officer in the Royal Navy. In the early 1930s he chanced upon *Summer Lightning*, then *Leave It to Psmith*. He was so gripped that, for recreation, he virtually never read anything other than Wodehouse for the rest of his life. In each book was carefully annotated the month and year in which he had read it. *The Code of the Woosters* has 35 dates and *Money for Nothing* 28 between April 1934 and February 1983.

Eventually the books would fall apart from all this attention. At this point Phillip solemnly taped them up (see photograph) and attached an epitaph to their front cover, having obtained a new copy. The ‘retired’ edition would remain on his bookshelf with those in current usage. The inscription on his first copy of *Money for Nothing*, for instance, reads as follows:-

This book has given me so much pleasure in its reading for 34 years (on & off). I cannot destroy a faithful old friend, and therefore I put it into honourable retirement upon buying another of the same title.

P.L. Gunn July 1968

The Second World War descended on the world and, remote from Mr and Mrs PGW, then in Le Touquet, Phillip Gunn – now a Captain, DSM, Royal Navy, having commanded ships between the wars – found himself in charge of the naval forces at Aden.



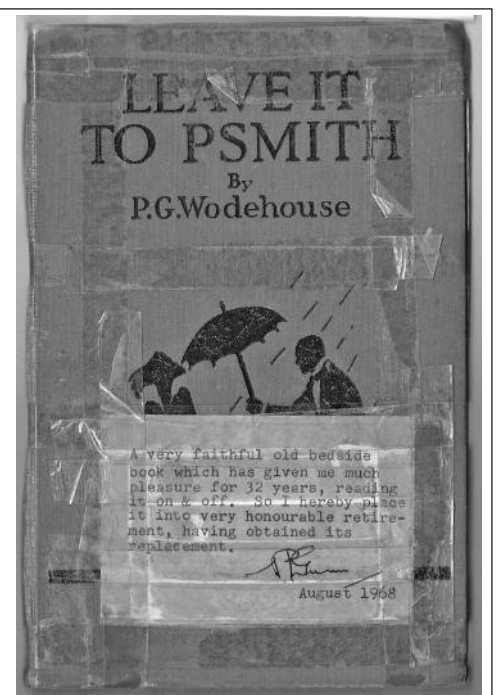
Two of Phillip Gunn's 'retired' books. His inscriptions read as follows:

(Left) I have read this particular book eighteen times. It has served me well for 34 years. It now goes into honourable retirement – with grateful thanks.

P L Gunn 1967

(Right) A very faithful old bedside book which has given me much pleasure for 32 years, reading it on & off. So I hereby place it into very honourable retirement, having obtained its replacement.

P L Gunn
August 1968



Eventually, suffering from exhaustion after building the base up from two people to 400, he came back to Liverpool in a liner. According to the notations in the books, he picked up *Quick Service* (24 readings) from Adams & Co, Booksellers of Durban, when passing through; he also read *Piccadilly Jim* (20) on the voyage back to England.

On retiring from the Navy in 1946, Phillip became a landscape painter. However, Wodehouse being so much 'in his blood', he could not resist the temptation to execute a composite oil painting of Plum's characters in the little Suffolk cottage/studio in which he lived and painted.

On its completion, he wrote to Wodehouse in Remsenburg, New York, and described what he had done. He was delighted to receive a warm and personal reply dated September 26, 1960 (above), saying the author was looking forward to getting photographs of the painting. Plum's reply did not stop at that but also included a description of the devastation he had suffered from the latest hurricane and a feeling of 'slight gloom' because, after 40,000 words of a new Blandings Castle novel, he found he had got the story 'all wrong'.

Phillip sent off a photograph of the P G Wodehouse painting to Plum with some trepidation. Essentially a landscape artist, he realised he had limitations so far as figures were concerned. But the picture (below) speaks for itself. From left to right, there are members of the Drones Club in front of a brown panelled bar wall which merges into the light blue of the Blandings drawing room. At the edges, Utridge creeps in from the left, while Beach, carrying a silver salver, disappears to



Phillip Gunn's painting 'P G Wodehouse Looks In'. Sadly, David Gunn had to sell the painting during hard times, but he hopes to find out what happened to it.

the right. In the left foreground, Jeeves, carrying a case, advises Bertie Wooster on train times by which to escape, while the latter asks for Jeeves's advice, having been castigated by Aunt Agatha and Lady Constance. Between those formidable ladies can be seen the distant head of the Efficient Baxter. Next to Constance, Freddie Threepwood lounges in an armchair reading a whodunnit. Beside him, the Hon. Galahad Threepwood is taking a drink, while Lord Emsworth is springing out of the armchair on the right, losing his spectacles and dropping his copy of *Whiffle on the Pig*.

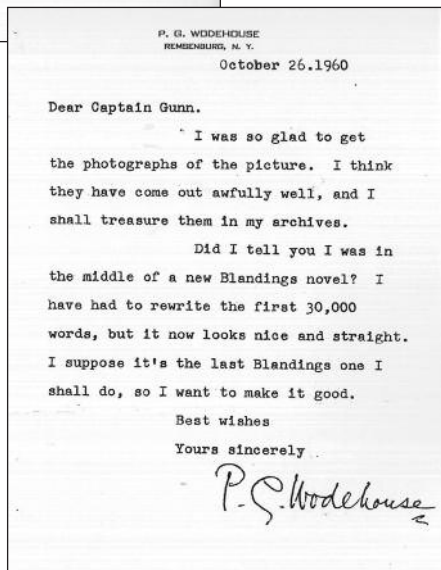
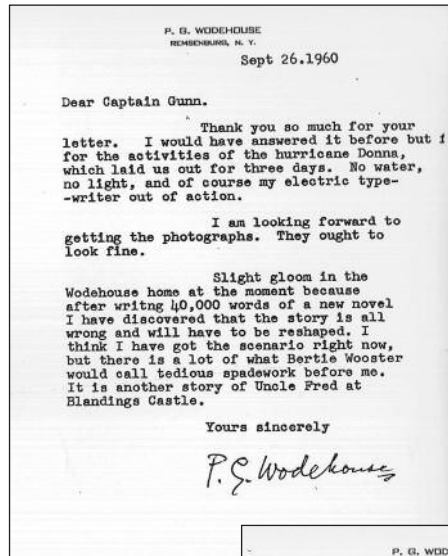
The painting is called *P G Wodehouse Looks In*, the title emerging from the fact that, centrally, the larger-than-life-size head of PGW smiles in at his characters through a window.

Wodehouse wrote to Phillip that he had been delighted to receive photographs of the painting (left). He referred to having had to rewrite the first 30,000 words of his new novel but thought he had got it right now. On checking the dates, the book to which he referred was almost certainly *Service with a Smile*. It is of interest that Phillip,

undoubtedly one of PGW's greatest fans, notes uniquely that on this occasion he found it 'a bit boring', suggesting that he felt Wodehouse had not totally corrected the worries to which he had referred in his first letter. Despite this, there are nine dates noted on which Phillip read it at different times.

When Phillip (shown right) died in February 1983, I found *Very Good, Jeeves* alongside the bed in his cottage. He had read it 17 times.

David Gunn's book about his father – Sailor in the Desert: The Adventures of Phillip Gunn, DSM, RN in the Mesopotamia Campaign, 1915 – was written from memoirs and conversations. It is available in hardback through all major retailers.



Society News

November's Society Meeting: A New Date and New Location

Things were progressing rather nicely with the current *Wooster Sauce* – at the news desk, editor, typewriter, and ribbon were operating in perfect harmony for once – when the collegiate atmosphere was rudely shattered by the unannounced appearance of a reeking messenger.

Ice formed on the Editor's upper slopes. Raising her green eyeshade, she rewarded the intruder with her customary basilisk stare, for she had grown accustomed to such untimely interruptions as she was putting the journal to bed. "Yes?" she ventured wearily.

"Urgent news!" the messenger gasped. "From the Impresario! We're moving!"

The Editor sighed. "Pray explain," she replied, rolling her eyes heavenwards. "I'm all agog."

Although he could detect just the faintest note of sarcasm, the young man persisted.

"Yes. It's our meetings. Apparently, our customary venue, The George, is being converted to a swanky restaurant for lawyers, so after four happy years we're personae non gratae, I'm afraid."

"So your mission is to tell me where the Society's November meeting is to be held?"

"Rem acu tetigisti," came the reply. "It's going to be on Wednesday, November 19 – that's WEDNESDAY, *not*

Tuesday – from 6 pm onwards, upstairs at The Savoy Tup, London WC2 0BA. That's just off the Strand and but a stone's throw from where we used to be. There is the customary excellent ale, wines, champagnes, and soft drinks, all served in a rather more intimate atmosphere than that to which we've hitherto grown accustomed."

"Hmm," replied the Editor. "This is close to being a genuine news item. I'd better recap. The next Society meeting will be held on

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19,
FROM 6 PM AT THE SAVOY TUP,
LONDON WC2 0BA**

... RIGHT?"

"I say," said the messenger, "there's no need to shout. But if you could urge the punters to alter their diaries, and to entice them along with the news that, to leaven the serious business of the AGM, we're having a fascinating talk by member Graeme Davidson about the noble work of Wodehouse illustrators, everything would be oojah-cum-spiff."

"I see. Consider it done," said the Editor. "I might even find room for our first-ever STOP PRESS."

Biennial Dinner, October 16, 2014

Plans are well in hand for the biennial dinner at Gray's Inn on Thursday, October 16. Those members who have applied for and been allocated places should have received a letter of confirmation with details of the evening during the first week of September. This year we have been able to accommodate all those who have applied for places, so if you haven't received your confirmation yet, please contact ---.

Although there are no spare places at the moment, there is no waiting list. Since, every time, a few people inevitably find they have to cancel, any members who would like to come but have not applied may email --- to register interest in case any places become available.

By the same token, it would be much appreciated if members who have places but need to cancel would let Tim know as quickly as possible. Members who cancel before we give final numbers to Gray's Inn at the end of September, or those whose places can be re-allocated to another member, will receive a refund.

Mora Morley-Pegge

Mora Morley-Pegge died on July 29. A long-time proud member of the Society, Mora won the PGW limerick competition at the October 2011 Wodehouse Weekend in Emsworth. Her funeral on August 18 included limericks and a reading from a Blandings Castle story.

Our Final Champion of Champions

For 10 years, as part of our Back the Berkshire campaign, the Society has sponsored the Berkshire Champion of Champions competition at the Royal County of Berkshire Show in Newbury. Now, with deep regret, we announce that this year will be the last time the Society's sash will be draped across the winner's back.

As the Committee was debating renewal of our sponsorship, news came that the competition would be moving to Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, in 2015. The cost and time implications of the move, added to other considerations, persuaded the Committee not to continue sponsorship after 2014. Thus, members are invited to come along to Newbury on September 21 to witness a fine parade of Berkshire champions, one of whom will be the last to be adorned with the Society's sash. The judging usually starts around 9 am, so once it is done you will have the rest of the day to enjoy the show.



Bob Miller

As this issue was being prepared, we learned with great sadness that Bob Miller, a trustee of the Society and our Gold Bats cricket captain for 15 years, died of cancer on August 16; see Patrick Kidd's obituary on page 18. The Society extends its deepest condolences to Bob's family.

A Finely Run Race

"It is hot," said Rutherford.

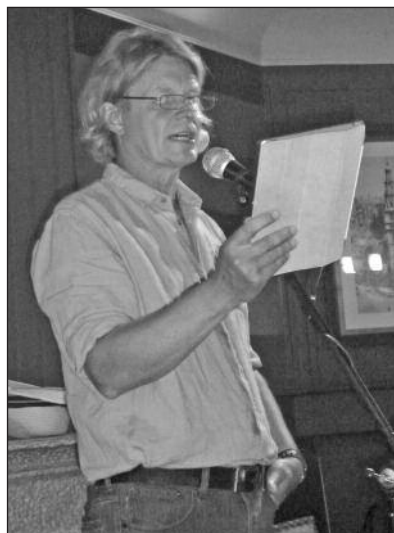
"You've noticed it? Bully for you! Back to the bench for Sherlock Holmes."

(‘In Alcalá’, 1909)

It didn't take Sherlock Holmes to notice that it was dashed hot on July 15, and no doubt that was the reason why the Society's meeting at The George was not as heavily attended as usual. Those who had had the foresight to arrive early quickly claimed the best positions by the open windows through which a whisper of a breeze offered some relief. For everybody else, it was the liquid refreshment that did the trick.

By the time the official proceedings began, we were all sufficiently oiled and ready for the Parish Notices, delivered by our Chairman, Hilary Bruce. She began by introducing two American visitors: Bob Rains, current vice president of The Wodehouse Society (US), and his consort, Andrea Jacobsen. Hilary then informed us this could be our last meeting at The George, for reasons explained in Society News on page 3, where her news about the Society ending its sponsorship of the Berkshire Champion of Champions is also covered. We then learned of a special series of literary benches across London that includes one devoted to Jeeves and Wooster (about which see page 18), and we were reminded of the Society's formal dinner in October. Additionally, we were informed that the Committee is still working on an official Society tie but is temporarily stymied by issues of design and colour. (See page 19 for member Peter Thompson's view about this.)

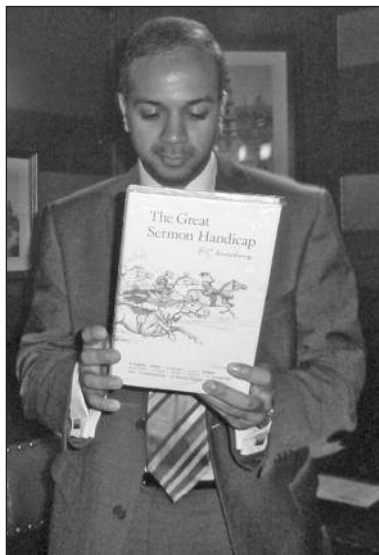
The evening's entertainment was entirely appropriate for a summer gathering of Wodehouseans. Our impresario, Paul Kent, had decided a Great Sermon Handicap was in order – although, lacking the necessary clergy, he had to improvise a bit. Instead of sermons, we had to make bets on how long it would take Paul to read PGW's classic short story. But, lest those with inside knowledge think they could steal a march on their competitors, Paul had outwitted them by abridging the story. With the bettors thus possessing no knowledge of how long or short it would actually be, brows were well furrowed as names and guesses about timing were written down on betting slips. To circumvent any funny business, there were two official, synchronized timers, one monitored by Paul, the other by Hilary.



Our impresario reads

Of course, it was not just the story's abridgement that affected the length of the reading. There were also the dramatic pauses as Paul reached for his glasses or the sudden accelerations during key bits of dialogue. He had disparaged his acting abilities, but Paul is actually a very adept reader, and there were many murmurs of appreciation for his portrayal of the Rev. Francis Heppenstall. There was also a lot of laughter as the familiar but much-loved plot unfolded.

When the story ended, the timers registered 23 minutes, 9.86 seconds. We broke for drinks while Paul sorted through the betting slips, then announced the results. One member, putting great faith in Paul's power to abridge, had optimistically betted on 8 min, 20 sec; another not-so-optimistic member had dolefully predicted 32 min, 20 sec. A wide range of guesses fell between these extremes, but several came very close indeed, including another visiting American, McKettle Dowers (23.47); Patrick Carroll (23.27.03); and Andrea Jacobsen (23.27). But the undisputed winner was Nirav Shah (pictured left), with an astoundingly close prediction of 23 minutes, 5 seconds.



And the prize for Nirav's power of prophesy? No less than Volume V of the six-volume set, published by Jimmy Heineman in 1989, containing translations of 'The Great Sermon Handicap' in 57 languages. This particular volume (with an introduction by Norman Murphy) includes Aramaic, and percipient Plumies will remember that in Wodehouse's story, the Rev. Heppenstall's sermon on Brotherly Love includes a section on the family life of the early Assyrians, themselves Aramaic speakers. No wonder that Paul, in presenting the book to Nirav, expressed a longing that he could have been a contestant himself to have a shot at getting it. Well, Hilary took care of that by producing another copy and bestowing it on our entertainment impresario as thanks for his efforts in putting together such a splendid evening of fun – and creating heaps of brotherly love in the process.

–ELIN WOODGER MURPHY



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Lynne Hartley

I was filled with absolute joy when I read the news about Sir Terry Wogan taking over as our new President after the loss of the wonderful Richard Briers. In fact, it made me sit up in bed with “a nude vicar”, or was it “renewed vigour”? You’d have to check with Sir Terry; his listeners always did get that bit mixed up.

Editor’s note: My apologies to Lynne and to Jo (next letter) for failing to print their letters in the June issue.

From Jo Jacobius

Does the artist Bun Katsuta really ‘get the details right’ as your piece states? (‘Spiffing Wodehousean Paper Dolls’, *Wooster Sauce*, March 2014, p.11) Of course, we really need Jeeves to confirm, and I am no expert in men’s formal attire, but I had always understood that white-tie tail-suits should *never* have cuffed trousers. This is also true of morning suits, if the plot line in the Fred Astaire film *Swing Time* is accurate, where the issue of cuffs or no cuffs is so serious that two weddings are called off. Perhaps *Wooster Sauce* readers who are well-versed in these matters can confirm whether Bertie Wooster’s paper doll outfit really is spiffing or a matter over which a gentleman’s personal gentleman might threaten resignation.

Editor’s note: Norman Murphy confirmed that Jo is quite right: “One does not have turn-ups on the trousers one wears with evening dress (white tie) or dinner jacket. Further, one does not wear them with morning dress (grey/black tail coat) and spongebag (striped) trousers.” This led him to muse on why this is the case, but alas, space does not allow us to print his musings in full.

From Eileen Allen

Reading again ‘Johnson as Jeeves’ (*Wooster Sauce*, March 2014, p.18) and then also re-reading, in the same column, ‘When the Legend Becomes Fact’, I was reminded of a hand-written note sent to me by Stanley Johnson, Boris’s dad. Stanley (who was then an MP) was extremely helpful, with Brian Davies of IFAW, in ending the killing of white-coat seals in Canada, and I had written thanking him. His reply was to thank me for my letter and added, in effect, “watch this space”. The seal hunt was soon to end.

I took this letter to work with me to show a friend, but on the way, horror of horrors, I lost it. How could I have done that?

Imagine my delight when the next day, on my doormat, was Stanley’s note, back again. Some kind person must have picked it up and put it in a letterbox. This shows it actually did happen to me.

From Roy Morgan

In the June *Wooster Sauce* there is an excellent article by Ian Alexander-Sinclair which refers to PGW in Emsworth. I hate to be picky, but as *Wooster Sauce* is recognised as a definitive source, I must point out one error on page 10. Record Road, Emsworth, was not previously named Beach Road, which was already in existence and led from the Main Road by the school to the sea – hence the word ‘Beach’.

From Barry Chapman

On page 23 of *Wooster Sauce* for June 2014, Sir Terry Wogan is quoted as stating that “the subject of money would never have raised its ugly head at the Drones”. That statement is open to dispute. On the face of it, it is untrue; however, using some technicalities, the evidence against it can perhaps be denied. The arguments for and against are as follows:

Over the years many members have asked Oofy Prosser, “the club’s tame millionaire”, for a loan of cash. Often the request was made inside the hallowed halls of the Drones Club itself. The consideration that he always refused to lend them anything whatsoever perhaps cancels out the fact that sometimes money did actually raise “its ugly head” there.

In *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, inside the club itself, interloper ‘Mustard’ Pott runs a book on the Clothes Stakes. This involves betting on what clothing the member locked in the telephone booth (Horace Pendlebury-Davenport) will be found to be wearing when released. But since Mustard Pott is definitely not a member of the Drones, perhaps this doesn’t count, either, as money raising its ugly head.

Thus, Sir Terry may arguably be right after all, though saved by a couple of technicalities!

From Christopher Bellew

The Beetle and Wedge, in *Cocktail Time*, boasts a television set. Is this the first reference to television by the Master? It was published in 1958 when televisions had become more commonplace since the Coronation had been broadcast. (I expect Bertie concealed his within a cocktail cabinet and Jeeves supplemented his income by winning TV quiz shows.)

Correction to a Correction: In the amendments to *Phrases and Notes* on page 17 of the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, Norman Murphy thanked Ananth Kaitharam for finding an early photo of PGW taken by Florence Mason. In fact, it was Harshawardhan Nimkhedkar (known as Bosham to his Wodehousean friends) who discovered the photo, which was subsequently circulated by Ananth. Our thanks to both!

A Cricket Season At Last

After rain stopped play for three successive years, the Gold Bats finally managed to take a few wickets. Herewith are two reports of the season, plus a visiting American's view.

The Charity Match at Audley End

by Patrick Kidd

The eighth annual charity cricket match between the Gold Bats, representing the Society, and a team captained by Society member Patrick Kidd was held at Audley End House in North Essex on June 8. The Gold Bats won for the third year in a row to stretch their overall lead to 5-2, with one draw, but all three results were possible in the closing stages.

Led by Jonathan Fisher in the absence of their much-loved skipper Bob Miller, who was unwell, the Gold Bats generously allowed Kidd's team to bat first after he pleaded for clemency on discovering that one of his key bowlers, a commercial pilot, had been grounded in Paris and would arrive late. "I'd have bowled first anyway," Fisher said.

It was a good decision since the Gold Bats, aided by some fine fielding and excellent wicket keeping, restricted the Kidd XI to 140, with each of the bowlers taking a wicket. Only two of the opposition reached 25 runs, at which by convention in these matches a batsman must retire to give someone else a go, one of whom was Danny Sedano, described as the finest Peruvian batsman to be seen on an Essex wicket since the Lima-born Freddie Brown captained England in the 1950s.

The Gold Bats made a sprightly start to their reply, with two of the top order reaching 25, but wickets started to fall as the match entered its final hour. With two of the Gold Bats in hospital after Jean Paul Halliwell sustained a cut hand, they were down to their last-wicket pair and still needed a handful of runs. Kidd agreed to allow Mark Wheeler, who had been unfortunately run out by an over-athletic batting partner, to have another innings if needed, but Barry Clayden and Martin Southwell saw the Society home for a victory by two wickets.

Barely 30 seconds after the winning run was struck, the heavens opened and a deluge struck the ground, leaving Kidd to curse his luck that the match had not been prolonged for another over. So rainy was it that one of his team wandered out to the middle wearing only a pair of briefs and a smile and clutching a bottle of shampoo so that he could take a shower in the open air.

The day concluded, as usual, with a barbecue at the Queen's Head in Littlebury and a raffle of cricket books, including Brian Halford's *The Real Jeeves*, which raised £450 for the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity.

Our Two Traditional Matches

by Robert Bruce

A good English summer wipes the memory clean of past days of cricket when umbrellas were more important than the skill of landing an off-break on a length. In recent years Wodehousean cricket has been through a bad patch with the weather, and there were worries at the outset of the annual Gold Bats vs the Dulwich Dusters game on Friday, June 20. But, as if raising the curtain on what turned out to be a summer of unbroken sunshine, the clouds lifted and the Gold Bats strode out to bat. Oliver Wise hit a pleasant 28; Graham Stokes, including a very satisfying six through the hands of a leaping long-on, made 29. The final score of 109-8 included a bonus of some 17 wides.

After the traditional sumptuous tea (for which Gold Bats captain Mark Wilcox made a gracious speech of thanks to the ladies of the committee), the Dusters started their innings. And it matched the bucolic school setting that the first wicket to fall went to a lovely tumbling catch close in by the Vice-Dean of Chelmsford Cathedral. Then came two smart catches in the slips, one high above her head, by Georgia Isaac, granddaughter of the veteran umpire and Wodehousean (and the man officiating at the time) Murray Hedgcock. But boundaries flowed, and after 17 overs the Gold Bats' total had been overhauled. The evening light saw a bunch of happy cricketers retire to the Pavilion bar.



The action on the pitch at Dulwich

The following Sunday, June 22, saw the sun beaming down on West Wycombe for the annual match against the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. This was a rare sight, no play having been possible in the last three or four of these fixtures. And the locals were quick to point out that we were lucky, the ground having been under water only a month previously. Instead it was a blissful summer's

day and a very good crowd had gathered.

Someone could develop an award-winning thesis on this but, just as owners come to resemble their dogs, literary cricket teams apparently come to represent their heroes. It is no surprise that the Gold Bats of The P G Wodehouse Society tend toward the adventurous and joyful. Gally Threepwood would be a natural No 3. And equally it is no surprise that the Sherlock Holmes Society incline toward logic and analysis. They bring the same thorough work to bear on the quirks of train timetables from Paddington to Grimpen Mire as they do to the angle of the bat in the forward-defensive stroke.

So it was no surprise that the Gold Bats innings was full of exuberant shots, long pauses while balls were sought amidst the nettles at long-off, and a general exuding of exhilarating derring-do. Oliver Wise, after a thoughtfully compiled 29, even managed to be caught at short extra cover off a wide daisy-cutter, a feat considered quite improbable. The membership secretary's car had to be moved to retrieve the ball after a towering boundary from Julian Hill. And the innings closed at 225.

The Sherlockians progressed to a stately 22 for 1 by tea, advanced to 100 for 4 off 31 overs, and then came the now traditional blocking of captain Peter Horrocks through the last 20 minutes of the game. The last over was entrusted to Georgia Isaac, who had been the subject of a controversial LBW decision earlier in the day, and who triumphed here with figures of five overs, one wicket for six runs. Despite being surrounded by three slips and a gully, the Sherlock Holmes Society were a studied 127 for five at the end.

An American's First Cricket Match in England

by Laura Woodger Loehr

Traveling to London this past June in order to visit with family provided the opportunity to attend my first cricket match—an experience, no doubt, not unlike an Englishman attending his first American football game. There was much anticipatory curiosity. I had had numerous demands by friends on my side of the Atlantic to come back educated as to how a cricket match is played, so I duly took mental notes in order to fulfill those requests. I'm not entirely sure I can describe everything to them, but I did have a very good start, thanks to the tutelage of several Wodehousians. Chief among them was Robert Bruce, to whom I am indebted for an on-field crash course before the start of the match at Dulwich College on June 20. The Gold Bats were brave enough to take on the Dulwich Dusters on the lovely campus of Dulwich College on a beautiful day.



Laura Loehr, right, with her cricket tutor (and Wooster Sauce reporter) Robert Bruce, who sits beside scorer Stephen Fullom.

So now I can determine how the scoring goes, generally speaking, being able to confirm that a particular player had just earned 4 points, not 6, from where the cricket ball landed. I know also that the referees (I could make them out because of the white overcoats and the hats they wore, quite different from the players, even though they're also decked out in white—Robert, Norman Murphy, and Murray Hedgcock put in impressive patience with this refereeing task) have coins in their pockets so as to count the number of pitches in each 'over'.

Twenty overs later, everyone stopped for tea, assiduously organized by Elaine Ring, and it seemed to be much appreciated by the players and the assembled guests. Then on to another 20 overs, ending with an impressive score which declared the Dusters the winners. It all seemed very civilized, and there was much good camaraderie, which I took away as a major aspect of the game.

I must also say, as a Wodehouse admirer, that Norman's tour of the campus and introduction to the Wodehouse Library at Dulwich were added benefits to a very lovely visit at the school where PG spent many happy hours – including while playing cricket.

Note: this report was also published in Plum Lines, Autumn 2014.

Magical Wodehouse Therapy

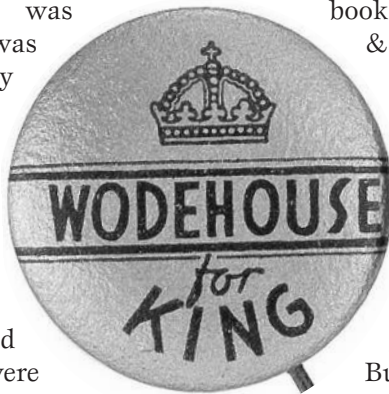
In November 2013 I had a very severe heart attack, which resulted in four bypasses, three weeks in hospital, and four weeks in a rehab facility; then home and more months of rehab. During the month I was at the rehab facility, an old injury in my wife's back flared up and became so painful that she was immobilized. Whenever the therapists left either of us alone, I, in my bed at the rehab, and my wife, at home, listened continuously to audio recordings of PGW novels and stories. This provided the calmness and relaxation we both needed for recuperation, and we still listen each night at bedtime. So now I am happy to say that both of us are still among those present, and endlessly grateful for the magical therapy of the stories and words of P. G. Wodehouse.

– AL COHEN (USA)

Button, Button: A Mystery

Earlier this year, LYNN VESLEY-GROSS sent an image of a button she had received from her husband for Christmas. Understandably, she was curious about what Wodehouse was running for king, and where. The only clue she had to the button's origin was in the tiny printing on the back: 'Bastian Bros. Co. Novelties. Rochester, NY'. Lynn did find a website with a picture of the button, pairing it with another button reading: "I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING"/THE NEW PRIESTLEY NOVEL. A caption above the picture stated that the buttons dated to the 1930s and were rare. But this was all she could learn.

Even the normally unflappable Norman Murphy was a bit flapped. He speculated that the button might have been a souvenir handed out at a book fair



(assuming they had book fairs in the 1930s) and noted that Doubleday Doran published Wodehouse's books from 1928 to 1939, while Little, Brown & Co., Boston, did three or so from 1933 to 1936; however there is nothing to say the button is connected with either of those publishers. It should be noted that Priestley's book *I'll Tell You Everything* was published in the US in 1932. Meanwhile, after his first stint in Hollywood, PGW returned to London in November 1931 and didn't go back to the US until September 1936. But none of this sheds any light on the button's origins.

Should any fish-eating members have other ideas about this button – or, better yet, solid information – write and let us know!

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Phil Haigh

That Sunday in May 1961, the afternoon sunshine moved like a slow-flowing stream across the rooftops of Alder Avenue, lighting up with a heartening glow the council estate walls with their chalk-drawn wickets and goalposts, the broken pavement flags and factory workers tending to their patches of green England. It fell on a small boy of 12 who made his way up the steps to the front door of my humble pile. He knocked tentatively and eventually the door opened.

"Is your Philip coming out to play football Mrs Haigh?"

Mrs Haigh replied with concern in her voice. "Hello, Ian. I don't think so. He's been in his bedroom since he got that book about some toff with a butler."

Upstairs in my bedroom I was just learning how Jeeves had 'Fixed It for Freddie' and was keen to move onto a story about Young Bingo. Thoughts of football had somehow been forgotten. It had all started a couple of months previously . . .

Mr 'Charlie' Parker, the English teacher at East Ward Secondary Modern, Bury, was looking for a secretary to organise a mail-order book club. In return a free book was offered for every 12 ordered.

I was privileged to be asked. After all, as he explained, I was the natural choice. "Haigh, you are the only boy in the school who pronounces his 'aitches' – you can be secretary." As my pocket

money never seemed to extend beyond buying a War Action comic, this seemed a good opportunity to acquire a free book and use my War Action money on sweets. I duly obtained the necessary 12 orders and perused the list to choose my freebie.

One book on that first list caught my eye: *Carry On, Jeeves*. I was already a Carry On fan, so the choice was obvious!

It was with a little disappointment that I received the book a couple of weeks later. It was soon clear that this was not a literary follow-up to the Carry On films and that Jeeves was no Sid James. Nevertheless, that Friday night, I was soon hooked as Jeeves Took Charge. Saturday was spent with the likes of the Unbidden Guest and the Hard-Boiled Egg. On Sunday I moved on to Aunts, Biffy, and Freddie.

Mrs Haigh shouted up the stairs, "Ian wants to know if you're playing football."

I thought about it. Football or Wodehouse? I bounded down the stairs. After all, I was 12, it was the weekend, and football with your mates wasn't to be missed. Wodehouse was left on the floor.

However, the seed had been sown, and 10 years later I picked up *Carry On, Jeeves*. I remembered having started it with enthusiasm but never having finished it. I began to read about Young Bingo. The rest, as they say, is history.



J. B. Priestley on Wodehouse

The following extract is from J. B. Priestley's *English Humour* (Heinemann edition of 1976). Thanks to James Hogg for finding and sending this a few years ago.

I am now about to run into trouble. And there is no help for it: a man must stand by his beliefs. It is ironical too that, after dipping into several Wodehouses this afternoon, I began at the tea hour *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, with its full cast of aristocratic eccentrics and imbeciles, and very, very reluctantly indeed I pulled myself away from it to begin this piece of writing. Yes, we are about to discuss P. G. Wodehouse. *Everyman's Dictionary of Literary Biography*, which I frequently consult, calls Wodehouse 'the greatest humorous novelist' of our time. Now if the *Dictionary* is saying in effect that Wodehouse was a great humorist, then I have no option but to declare it is quite wrong. In my book – this one, in fact – he is not a great humorist at all. He cannot be squeezed into the company of great humorists, alongside Fielding, Sterne, Lamb, Dickens. He is simply not the same *kind of* writer. He has not their irony, their affection, their contact with reality. He does not begin to make us think about life or feel deeply about it. If humour once again is 'thinking in fun while feeling in earnest', he is not a humorist at all, let alone a great one. Compare, for instance, any book by Wodehouse with *The Diary of a Nobody*, and the essential difference should be apparent at once.

This is not an attack on Wodehouse but an attempt, quite sympathetic, to explain him. His huge success has been well deserved. He has probably been the king of our funny men in fiction. Over an astonishingly long period of time he has entertained, 'taken out of themselves', as people like to say, readers of all ages, shapes and sizes. He has made us laugh when often we never feel like laughing. Even when his invention has not been fruitful, when we have met the same sort of characters in the same kind of situations, his narrative, studded with ludicrous metaphors all in good crisp prose, has kept us merrily attentive. But while I have praised him, I have not yet explained him. Risking all on one throw, I will now come to that.

I believe this man, who lived so long, wrote so much, earned several fortunes, was really a schoolboy. He was of course no ordinary schoolboy but a brilliant super-de-luxe schoolboy. This explains what he wrote, how he behaved, why he succeeded. His 'eggs, beans, and crumpets' give us a schoolboy's notion of Edwardian young men-about-town. His sexless young women, running round breaking off their engagements, and his formidable bullying aunts, all belong to a schoolboy's world. So do his eccentric or quite dotty dukes and earls. His behaviour was mostly that of an elderly schoolboy: those letters anxiously inquiring about the School Second Eleven; his helpless dependence on his womenfolk to decide for him where he lived; his idiotic capture by the Nazis in the Second World War; there is no sign of a mature man here. Together with his talent for the absurd, this explains his success. Most of us who enjoy him still have a schoolboy somewhere in us, and to reach that schoolboy (aged about fifteen or sixteen), to let him enjoy himself, is a perfect escape from our adult problems and trials. When Oxford gave him an honorary doctorate, the senior dons there, guffawing and giggling away, had let loose the schoolboys in themselves. Wodehouse did very well as he was, but to become one of our 'great humorists' he would have had to grow up. And after that parting shot, I can happily return to *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*. 'Mustard' Pott is refusing to kidnap that noble animal, the Empress of Blandings:

'Well, between you and me, Lord I', said Claude Pott, discarding loftiness and coming clean, 'there's another reason. I was once bitten by a pig.'

'Not really?'

'Yes, sir. And ever since then I've had a horror of the animals.'

Lord Ickenham hastened to point out that the present was a special case. 'You can't be bitten by the Empress.'

'Oh, no? Who made that rule?'

'She's as gentle as a lamb.'

'I was once bitten by a lamb.'

A Religious Matter

Two auctions on eBay closing on July 19 were volumes in TONY RING's *Millennium Wodehouse Concordance* series. The brief description of one read: 'Used. Religion. First edition. Ring. Wodehouse at Blandings Castle'. If you had followed the link to the detail, in 'Item Specifics' you would have seen the following interesting and unexpected information:

Country or Region of Manufacture: United States

Subject: Religion

Topic: Concordances

Tony writes: "The seller, J. Grant Thiessen, may regard PGW as a God, but need he be so blatant about it? And does he really think Chippenham, Wiltshire, where the book was printed, is in the USA?" The mind boggles!

The Influence of Clare Victor Dwiggins

by Tony Ring

(with help from Neil Midkiff)

When Wodehouse decided to send his charismatic young adult Psmith to America for the adventures which were reported initially in *The Captain* from October 1909 to March 1910, he evidently accompanied him, for the magazine's report of those adventures were based on his hand-written records. Almost immediately, Wodehouse was to be plunged into controversy, though it has taken more than a hundred years, the development of the internet, and the persistent researches of North American Wodehouseans to establish the truth.

When most of us read *Psmith, Journalist* for the first time, we will have smiled at the way in which the mature young title character grabbed the starring role in a far more intense tale of social comment than would be Wodehouse's norm. We will have smiled equally at the impossibly imaginative name which the writer gave to the editor-in-chief of *Cosy Moments*, the New York journal which would never be the same again after he left his post to go, at his doctor's insistence, on a 10-week holiday to recover from overwork. There might be those who wondered at the generosity of this period of absence – about five times the regular vacation allowance for most American office workers even 80 years later – but we are not concerned with that. Our interest is in the name of the editor-in-chief: Mr J Fillken Wilburfloss. Would even America readers accept the possible existence of such a name, we probably asked ourselves.

And we find that the name was not quite Wodehouse's first choice. As will be seen from the first page of the handwritten notes referred to above, he had first written 'Mr J Filliken Wilburfloss', with slight differences in the spelling of each of the two constituent parts. Indeed, halfway through chapter 17 in the *Captain* serialisation, as American researcher Neil Midkiff has pointed out, his surname did revert, just once, from Wilburfloss to Wilburfloss, suggesting that someone in the *Captain* offices had had a 'Homer-nodding' moment. (It is refreshing to note that the editors at A & C Black were sufficiently alert to correct this blemish when the book was published in 1915, even without the assistance of an electronic spell-checker. They may not have performed quite so well with the book's title, however: in the original *Captain* serialisation, and on those handwritten pages of Wodehouse's manuscript where this title – rather than the original choice of *Psmith, U.S.A.* – appears, there is a comma between *Psmith* and *Journalist* which was omitted throughout the first book edition. For consistency in this article, the comma has been included.)

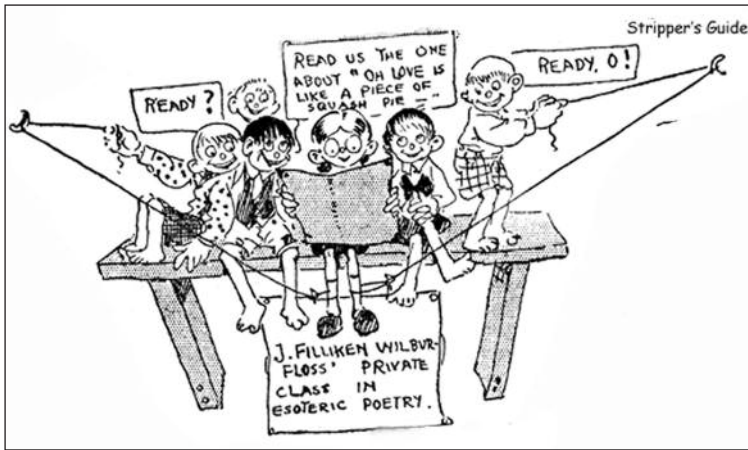
Psmith, U.S.A.
Chapter No. *Cosy Moments*
The man in the street would not have known it, but a great crisis was imminent in New York journalism
Everything seemed much as usual in the city. The car ran blithely on Broadway. Suddenly, shouts "Wuxa-ty!" in the ears of nervous pedestrians with their usual Caruso-like view. Society passed up and down Fifth Avenue in its automobiles, and was there a furrow of anxiety upon Society's bow? None. At a thousand street-corners a thousand policemen preserved their air of massive indifference to the things of this world. Not one of them showed the least sign of perturbation. Nevertheless the crisis was a hand. In J. Filliken Wilburfloss editor-in-chief of 'Cosy Moments', was about to leave his post and start on a 5 or 6 weeks' holiday.

Extract from the first page of the hand-written manuscript for *Psmith, U.S.A.* (eventually re-titled *Psmith, Journalist*), which shows PGW's original use of the name J Filliken Wilburfloss.

Neil decided to pursue his investigations further, to try to work out why Plum would have made this change in the spelling of a minor character's name. Much to his delight, he found that in the *New York Evening World*, between 3 April and 18 September, 1909, one Clare Victor Dwiggins had a weekday panel cartoon series entitled *School Days*, with a cast of characters and motifs he would return to over and over. In the extract from one of the panels, shown on the next page, six boys are sitting under a blackboard, apparently attending the 'J. Filliken Wilburfloss private class in Esoteric Poetry'. One student is about to respond to the demands of his classmates that he read out loud 'Oh Love is Like a Piece of Squash Pie'.

Clare Victor Dwiggins is itself such a wonderfully inventive name that I have a sneaking desire, born from hope rather than expectation, to find that it was yet another of Plum's own noms de plume, which he used when working on a hidden agenda as a cartoonist. After all, we know he used to annotate his school books with matchstick men – there is even an early manuscript of a short revue for the theatre in which such pencil jottings can be seen – so perhaps it is not such a bizarre wish!

We will never know the full story. There may be one chance in a thousand that Plum met Dwiggins in New York, and in a drunken evening one of them came up with the name which they both subsequently used – with either Plum or the *Captain* editors realising that it would be a kindly gesture to make a minor change to the name for the UK. But it is far more likely that Plum saw one of the cartoons in which J Filliken appeared, and adopted (and then adapted) the name for his own use. Neil went on to



A drawing from *School Days*, one of Dwiggins's strip cartoons, shows Wilburfloss surrounded by schoolmates.

find that Dwiggins continued to use the name in other publications (such as a strip entitled *Bill's Diary* in 1938), and that in 1945 he had claimed to have invented the name, "which I think is definitely neat". This conclusion should, I think, be accepted as 'beyond reasonable doubt'. Thanks are due to Allan Holtz of strippersguide.blogspot.com for posting the scan on his website.

Because *Psmith, Journalist* was not destined for publication in an American journal, and was never published in the USA independently as a self-standing book, the question of copyright for the character's name would not have been taken seriously – as demonstrated by the minor change

made for its UK publication. Further evidence, rather more circumstantial, that the name was not one of Plum's own invention has been adduced by another North American Wodehouse researcher, the Canadian Ian Michaud. Conscious of the fact that much of the plot of *Psmith, Journalist* was lifted directly into the American version of *The Prince and Betty*, Ian has pointed out that the equivalent character to Wilberfloss in *The Prince and Betty* was given the almost wholly new name of J. Brabazon Renshaw.

Ian has made the further point that Wodehouse also made minor changes to names first used by other authors when using similarly derived names in his later stories, pointing to Stephen Leacock's short story 'The Love Story of Mr. Peter Spillikins', from the 1914 collection *Arcadian Adventures of the Idle Rich*, as a prime example. A minor character named McAlister is an autocratic, short-tempered Scottish gardener, prone to handing in his notice at the slightest provocation and holding strong views on gravel walks (which he liked) and his employers picking 'his' flowers (which he did not). When Wodehouse's own autocratic, short-tempered Scottish gardener made his debut in 1923, he gave his name an extra letter, which seems to have made all the difference.

Clare Victor Dwiggins died in 1958 aged 84, his silent influence already almost 50 years old.

The Word Around the Clubs

Wodehouse in Durham

NICK TOWNEND reports that Durham University's Palace Green Library is staging an exhibition called *Books for Boys: Heroism, Adventure and Empire at the Dawn of the First World War*, which runs from 27 September 2014 to 11 January 2015. Wodehouse is among the authors whose works will be featured in the exhibition. According to Nick, "the Wodehouse items on display will comprise a 1910 second edition of *Mike*, a 1914 second edition of *The White Feather* (both from my collection), and a 1993 facsimile edition of *The Swoop* (from Tony Ring's collection), which was first published in 1909." Information about the exhibition is available at bit.ly/1j6vNvw.

Jeeves, Robot?

In the *Huffington Post* of May 21, 2014, an article asking whether the world should worry about the evolution of Artificial Intelligence sought help from the Jeeves and Wooster stories. The premise was whether robots are well-disposed towards humans and whether the relationship is likely to be stable. The writer pointed out that Bertie could trust Jeeves, despite his superior intelligence, as their relationship and their class environments were stable. "Wooster no more worried about Jeeves subverting the social order than he worried about the gardener entering the French windows to lay him low with the blow of a shovel to the side of the

head." He then pointed out that there is no equivalent class system to keep robots in check and that this could get tricky in a future world where robots were designing themselves.

Couplets à la Wodehouse

From CHRISTOPHER BELLEW comes word of a monthly competition run by the publisher and bookseller Slightly Foxed. In March the challenge was to write a rhyming couplet about a favourite literary character. The winner was Linda Fernley, who wrote:

Aunt Dahlia calls him her 'revolting young blot'
Ah, 'What ho!', Bertie Wooster's my favourite fop.

Christopher added that if he had known about the competition, his entry would have been:

Poor Freddie Widgeon, thought he was a magician
But when he dived in a hat he came out as a pigeon.

Bedside Reading for Jeeves

Spotted by JAMES HOGG on a shelf at the Antiques Warehouse in Clare, Suffolk, side by side: *Spinoza: His Life, Correspondence and Ethics*, by R. Willis; and *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, by Sigmund Freud. As James points out, this is "just what's required to keep the brain in good running order – ratiocination on the one hand, the psychology of the individual on the other, plus a regular diet of fish."

Wooster's Wanderings: Is Bertie Wooster the British Odysseus? (Part 1)

by Harry Hudson

Editor's note. This is an abridged version of the paper Harry wrote during his A-Levels in 2013, under the title 'Comparisons Between Homer's The Odyssey and the Jeeves and Wooster Series'. He is now at Cambridge University, studying Classics. As well he should!

You don't analyse such sunlit perfection, you just bask in its warmth and splendour.¹

– Stephen Fry on Wodehouse

While Fry's sentiment is laudable, in fact there is a remarkable amount to compare and contrast in E. V. Rieu's translation of Homer's *The Odyssey* and P. G. Wodehouse's Jeeves and Wooster series. They may seem far apart, but these two worlds have similarities, and this paper analyses the extent to which it is sensible to compare the writings. One may question such analysis: Homer wrote poetry, while Wodehouse's words are largely prose; Homer left us two monumental works, whereas Wodehouse wrote over 90 books. Is it possible to reconcile them?

Homer and Wodehouse would concur that the concept of family is eternal. *The Odyssey* revolves around one man's quest to return home to father, wife, and son:

Odysseus alone was prevented from returning to the home and wife he yearned for. (I.13–15)²

Similar references indicate the emphasis that Homeric society placed on the family. In *The Odyssey*, this is illustrated by the idyllic island of the Phaeacians. There, Queen Arete enjoys

such honour as no other woman receives who keeps house under her husband's eye in the world today. Such is the extraordinary and heartfelt devotion which she has enjoyed in the past and still does, both from her children and [King] Alcinous himself . . . (VII.66–70)

To the Greeks, one's family were not merely the companions with whom one shared the vicissitudes of daily life; they were also brothers-in-arms, united by sanguine bonds.³ Compare this with the world of Wooster. In ancient Greece, if a criminal act was committed against one's family, the onus fell upon the family to seek vengeance and protect standards of behaviour. The moral code is very similar in Wodehouse. There are numerous examples of Bertie being obliged to do something (often unwillingly) to redress a slight against another member of the Wooster clan or others close to him.



Harry Hudson sees a classical connection between Homer and Wodehouse.

Protagonists from both worlds believe they act to meet the expectations both of their families and of society at large. For Wodehouse's hero, this obligation is exemplified by the Code of the Woosters, which dictates that a gentleman should never slight a lady or let a pal down. This does not mean that Wooster regularly dons battle-garb and assembles his fleet in readiness for war. But, while Gussie Fink-Nottle's telegram to Bertie obviously differs from the message to Odysseus requesting his aid in the mission to Troy, the basic implications are similar:

Come immediately. Serious rift Madeline and self. Reply.⁴

Both Odysseus and Wooster get the poorer part of the deal, since neither seems to have any blood relatives on whom they can call when they need help. They must therefore turn to others in their hours of need.

The Greek idea of *oikos* (family) dictated that a household should exist in an equilibrium, which requires the presence of both male and female members if it is to work. Thus, *The Odyssey* exhibits a natural tendency towards an inherent human equilibrium – Odysseus' desire to 'reach my home and see the day of my return' is his 'never-failing wish' (V.219–220), and that extraordinary journey is simply the manifestation of a natural desire for such equilibrium. Homer portrays this balance in Odysseus' meeting with the Phaeacians, the ease of

whose lives and the natural stability of whose society make for a slightly monotonous existence, but nonetheless one in which they never have to fight. Thus, the arrival of the wandering Odysseus is the most exciting thing to have happened for years.⁵

The lack of a meaningful equilibrium helps to explain Wooster's character. As W. H. Auden puts it:

Scarcely a week passes without Bertie Wooster thinking he has at last met The Girl. For a week he imagines he is her Tristran, but a week later he has forgotten as completely as Don Giovanni forgets.⁶

Wooster has invariably unsuccessful romances with, amongst others, Madeline Bassett, Honoria Glossop, and Florence Craye. He does not help his cause, however, as he too often entertains a woman's supposed love for the sake of his cherished Code.⁷ The following passage exemplifies the majority of Wooster's romances:

[Aunt Dahlia]: 'What's wrong with you?'

[Bertie]: 'I'm engaged to be married to a girl I can't stand the sight of.'

'What, another? Who is it this time?'

'Vanessa Cook.'

... 'How did it happen?'

'I proposed to her a year ago, and she turned me down, and just now she blew in and said she had changed her mind and would marry me. Came as a nasty shock.'

'You should have told her to boil her head.'

'I couldn't.'⁸

Wodehouse manages this image of a hapless chump, totally in the hands of whichever girl happens to come his way, very well. Wooster's eternal bachelorhood lends itself to plots where Bertie is stuck in a perpetual cycle of thwarted attempts to reach that which Homer would have dubbed the perfect equilibrium. This is abetted by the relationship between Wooster and his aunts. He is in constant opposition to the wishes of his Aunt Agatha, 'who eats broken bottles and conducts human sacrifices by the light of the full moon'.^{9,10} Yet he enjoys a genial relationship with Aunt Dahlia, the closest he gets to a mother figure, who acts as counter-balance to her sister. Though Dahlia can be a nuisance, her nephew writes that he has 'never wavered in my cordial appreciation of her humanity, sporting qualities, and general good-eggishness'.¹¹ Even so, the attraction of the fare produced by Anatole, her cook, gives Dahlia power over her nephew:

The thought of Anatole, that peerless disher-up, coming within an ace of ceasing to operate at Brinkley Court, where I could always enjoy his output by inviting myself for a visit . . . had stirred me profoundly.¹²

Thus, Bertie can never feel sure of his position with Dahlia, as *The Code of the Woosters* illustrates.

Wooster leads a life of turmoil – a crucial point of contrast with *The Odyssey*, which Homer concludes satisfactorily, tying up loose ends, reuniting father with son and husband with wife. Homer did not have

the modern author's need for serialisation, whereas Wodehouse perceived the material benefit in keeping his protagonist in a state of permanent flux.

The inevitable question follows: are Wooster and Odysseus comparable as characters? Is the fact that Odysseus finally reaches his goal, while Wooster so often has to settle for the best possible resolution of a hopeless situation, a reflection of an intrinsic difference in character or merely the combination of other factors in the plot's development?

Both Odysseus and Wooster are repeatedly placed in situations beyond their immediate control, normally thanks to the ineptitude of those around them. In Odysseus' case, this often takes the form of ill-fated gifts or advice, whereas Wooster suffers from his friends' stupidity. This demonstrates a certain weakness in both their characters. The reader's respect for the strength of Wooster's character decreases as *The Code of the Woosters*, for example, unfolds. It becomes clear that Bertie is merely a pawn when Aunt Dahlia thrusts the cow-creamer into his hands, and he responds: 'For some moments I stood there, quacking feebly'.¹³

Odysseus fares little better, his experience with the cattle of the sun-god Hyperion demonstrating a similar powerlessness. The words of Eurylochus toll disaster for his comrades:

'So come, let us round up the best of the Sun's cows and sacrifice them in honour of the immortals in the broad sky. . . . But if in anger at the loss of his straight-horned herd he chooses to wreck our ship . . . I would sooner drown instantly in a watery grave than waste away by slow degrees on a desert island.'
(XII.343–353)

Both men often recount their moments of helplessness, and their manner of doing so is revealing. Wooster writes in the first person, while much of *The Odyssey* has Odysseus recounting his tales, a form of direct speech. Richard Osborne identifies Wooster's narrative style as being far from appropriate, since it often undermines the gravitas of the situation in which Wooster finds himself.¹⁴ The lightness of tone may be endearing, but it does not convey the gloomy set of circumstances in which Wooster is here confronted by a jealous lover:

The moment I mentioned that, I was wishing I hadn't, for it seemed to affect him as though some hidden hand had given him the hotfoot. . . . A man in love and viewing with concern the competition of a rival does not like to think of the adored object and that rival pirouetting about together at dancing classes and probably splitting a sociable milk and biscuit in the eleven o'clock interval.¹⁵

This is an unfocussed, 'magpie mind',¹⁶ saturated with irrelevant quotations and trivial facts. unable to see the wood for the trees. This does not mean that Wooster is an idiot. His innocence means the reader can accept the moral judgements he makes, and his ability to empathise with those around him and judge their moods is an undoubted asset:

And that my surmise was correct was proved by Boko's demeanour, as he rejoined me some minutes later. Even in the dim light, you could see that he was feeling like a million dollars. He walked as if on air, and the whole soul had obviously expanded, like a bath sponge placed on water.¹⁷

To be continued in the December issue.

Endnotes

- 1 Stephen Fry, quoted in Arrow Books
- 2 The Roman numeral refers to the relevant book of *The Odyssey* and the following numbers are the line numbers, according to the Rieu edition (Homer, trans. E.V. Rieu, *The Odyssey*, Penguin Books, 2003). This notation is used throughout.
- 3 M.I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, Pelican, 1979
- 4 P.G. Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters*, Arrow Books, 2008, p. 27
- 5 *The Odyssey*, XIII.129–130

- 6 W.H. Auden, 'Balaam and the Ass', *Encounter*, July 1954, quoted in R.B.D. French, *P.G. Wodehouse*, Oliver and Boyd, 1966, p. 93
- 7 R. Usborne, *Wodehouse at Work to the End*, Barrie & Jenkins, 1976, p. 190
- 8 P.G. Wodehouse, *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, Arrow Books, 2008, p. 111
- 9 P.G. Wodehouse, *Joy in the Morning*, Arrow Books, 2008, pp. 16
- 10 *Ibid.* p. 44
- 11 P.G. Wodehouse, *Right Ho, Jeeves*, Penguin, 1999, p. 28
- 12 P.G. Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters*, Arrow Books, 2008, pp. 17-18
- 13 *Ibid.* p. 239
- 14 R. Usborne, 1976, p. 176
- 15 P. G. Wodehouse, *The Mating Season*, Penguin, 1965, p. 166
- 16 R. Usborne, 1976, p. 176
- 17 P.G. Wodehouse, *Joy in the Morning*, Arrow, 2008, p.153

Buying Wodehouse on the Internet

by Phil Haigh

Buying (and selling) Wodehouse should be a pleasant and rewarding experience, but it can be tarnished by bad practices on the part of both buyers and sellers. I started the endless task of building a complete set of Wodehouse about five years ago and quickly turned to eBay, Abe, etc., to fill my gaps. Some of you will have come across me under the somewhat embarrassing 'nom de Plum' of Auditman007. (There's the first tip – pick a name you won't come to regret!) Based on my own mistakes, here are a few tips for buying online.

- Check the description properly and ensure it covers all aspects of the book: wrapper, boards, pages, hinges, etc.
- Check that the claimed edition is correct. With the best of intentions, what may seem to be a 1st/1st to a seller may, in fact, be a later edition. If it isn't clear that the description and pictures support a true first, then ask for the proof. Reference to *McIlvaine* in the listing is usually a good sign that the seller has done his/her homework. (If you are a serious buyer, *McIlvaine* is a good investment. It is usually dearer than most first editions, so if you can't afford one, find someone who has one and pester the life out of them – like I used to do!)
- Don't rely on the subjective view of the seller. 'Very Good +' to one seller is another one's 'Good'. 'For its age' is a realistic statement, but make sure you are happy with its actual condition.
- Don't buy without seeing the book. If there are no pictures (more likely on Abe), then ask for them. Also, if a picture is shown on the listing, make sure that it is of the actual book and not a 'stock' picture.

- Ask questions about the book if you have any queries. A very small minority of sellers (usually the very big ones) won't respond to questions. In that case I would always proceed with extra caution.
- Compare all sources as eBay isn't always the cheapest.
- Most dealers will listen to sensible offers, but don't insult them with silly offers. A lot of dealers are collectors themselves, know the marketplace, and will certainly have researched the price before listing.
- Check the postage charge and the method of posting. 'Free' is fine, but ensure that it is being sent with reasonable speed and insurance – and that it is being sent securely.
- Check out the seller's feedback, but do remember that every seller will have the occasional slip-up.
- Check the Returns Policy. Even if there is a No Returns policy, remember that you can still return if you're not happy, especially if the book doesn't match the description. If problems arise, the threat to send bad feedback should be avoided, but all dealers will want to avoid bad feedback and most will be happy to discuss returns irrespective of their stated policy.
- Be careful when doing a search. I recently searched eBay for 'PG Wodehouse' and only 117 books turned up. 'Wodehouse' brought up 5,324!

Happy hunting!

In the next issue, Phil will share tips on Internet selling.

Poets' Corner (Bonus)

Wodehouse Revisited

by Roger Bush

Just over 100 years ago, P. G. Wodehouse satirised the government of the day in humorous verse. 'The Parrot' and 'The Phalanx' date from 1903 and 1906, respectively. (In 1906 the Liberal Party swept to election victory with the unlikely slogan "Your food will cost you more", the words uttered by the famous parrot who decorated the pages of the Daily Express from October to December 1903.) Had Wodehouse been around today the following might have emerged.

Not Another Parrot

At the Carlton Club it's rumoured
That a parrot there is humoured
With a perch close by the entrance
Where there's no-one he can miss.
They cannot do without him,
For he cries to all about him,
With undeviating shrillness, that
"We can't go on like this".

And when Dave or George or Kenneth,
With the crisis at its zenith,
Are inclined to be discouraged,
He gives his analysis,
Which is all he's ever uttered,
Always shrieked and never muttered:
In the one undying sentence, that
"We can't go on like this".

When they've scoffed the Christmas turkey,
And the weather's pretty murky,
And the market's at its lowest,
And there's little room for bliss,
They can hear him still repeating,
Even as they are retreating,
His imperishable homily:
"We can't go on like this".

The New Phalanx

Some say that we're divided, but we know we're really not,
And that unity of purpose is the only thing we've got.
We truly love our leader and we hope that he'll go far;
We are a loyal Cabinet.
We are! We are!! We are!!!

We know that the opinion polls have shown that we're off track,
But we won't blame Gordon Brown or try to get him off our back,
Though when we visit No.10 we leave the door ajar;
We are a loyal Cabinet.
We are! We are!! We are!!!

We're conscious that the bookmakers
Have got us in third place,
But these are troubled times; it's hard
To know which way to face.
So we say 'No' to Humphrys, but say 'Yes' to Andrew Marr.
We are a loyal Cabinet.
We are! We are!! We are!!!

(Copyright Roger Bush 2010)

Français Après Quelque Booze and Some Wodehouse

or

Monty Bodkin Agonistes

by S. Subramanian

Après a certain muchness of booze
Which produces *quelque* degree de wooze,
One desires to break out in *français*,
Which *tu comprends*, I daresay.

"Er- *garçon*", one's inclined to mumble,
"*Esker vous avez-*" (fumble-fumble)
"*-Une plume* and some *café au lait*,
Or rather, a magnum of Beaujolais?

I ask, to improve my little French,
That I might impress a Paris wench,
And in general, secure the pleasing ends
Of influencing people and winning friends.

I ask in a spirit of *bonhomie*
(While consuming chicken *consommé*)
I ask in a spirit of Liber-tee
And Equali-tee and Fraternali-tee.

It occasions one a fairish wrench
To thus address the blasted French:
Despite the kindness wrought by cider –
The Frenchman is a rank outsider.

He's a ghastly sort of ghastly blighter
Who in somber mood or something lighter
Will insist on speaking *seulement* Français
With no regard for good old Anglais.

Où étais moi? Pardon, I stray
'Midst the *pâté de foie* and the Chardonnay –
Or this, at least, is what I heard you
Say of me: that I'm lost, or *perdu*.

But let me stress with force and vigour:
I lack no trace of sense nor rigour.
The fish-sauce shop of Ethelberta's
Cannot ekshpose nor otherwise hurt us.

C'est un mensonge, vile and foul,
To suggest I'm pickled, or tight as an owl:
No *oiseau de nuit* has ever been known
To have imbibed *le vin* and thereafter flown.

A strange sense of weakness and humility
swept over her. So might the cave woman
have felt when, with her back against a cliff
and unable to dodge, she watched her suitor
take his club in the interlocking grip, and,
after a preliminary waggle, start his back
swing.

(From 'The Rough Stuff', 1920)

Mastermind Quiz 12: Writers and Their Works in Wodehouse

by David Buckle

1. How did Tom Travers refer to Aunt Dahlia's magazine *Milady's Boudoir*?
2. In *Psmith Journalist*, for which periodical does Psmith contribute articles?
3. The publication (or not) of Galahad Threepwood's memoirs is central to the plot of which two Blandings novels?
4. In *The Code of the Woosters*, which of Bertie's friends writes down his thoughts on Sir Watkyn Basset and Roderick Spode in a leather-covered notebook?
5. What is the name of the Russian novelist (and keen golfer) who is the guest of honour at the Wood Hills Literary Society in *The Clicking of Cuthbert*?
6. Which two of Mr Mulliner's nephews are screenwriters in Hollywood?
7. Sir George Alexander Pyke (later Lord Tilbury) appears in six Wodehouse novels. What is the name of the publishing company that he owns?
8. In *Cocktail Time*, who is the author of the novel *Cocktail Time*?
9. 'Bill' Wilhelmina Shannon and Joe Davenport are screenwriters for the Superba-Llewellyn film company in which Wodehouse novel?
10. What is the title of Florence Craye's novel, a book destined to give Bertie Wooster many a headache?

(Answers on page 21)

Another in our occasional series, tracing its origins to the churches recorded in *The Great Sermon Handicap*, of parishes still extant in rural England whose names echo another age.

Among 'Appointments in the Clergy', the *Daily Telegraph* of May 26 recorded the posting of the Rev. Ian David Houghton, vicar of Cowesby, Felixkirk with Boltby, Kirkby Knowle, Leake with Over, and Nether Silton and Kepwick, and Osmotherley with Harsley and Ingleby Arncliffe (York), to be rural dean, Mowbray (same diocese).

(From MURRAY HEDGCOCK)

The Siren's Song: Wodehouse and Kern on Broadway

Reviewed by Peter Thompson

This CD available from Maria Jette is the sequel to *In Our Little Paradise: Songs of P. G. Wodehouse*.

However, where the first album contained the music of more than one composer, this one is confined to the man who has never been surpassed in music for musicals – namely, Jerome Kern.

Once again the lyrics are by the master wordsmith Plum Wodehouse. Never in the history of the musical has there been a writer of lyrics to compare with Sir Pelham. But if the combined efforts of Kern and Wodehouse are to be done full justice, the performers have to be first class. In this respect Maria Jette and Dan Chouinard are the perfect artists for the job. If you want to listen to Gilbert and Sullivan, the diction must be clear as a bell. So with Kern and Wodehouse.

The dexterous lyrics are given A1 treatment on this CD. We are treated to songs from *Miss Springtime*, *Have a Heart*, *Oh, Boy!*, *Leave It to Jane*, *The Riviera Girl*, *Miss 1917*, *Oh, Lady! Lady!!*, *Sally*, and *Sitting Pretty*. A quibble I raised regarding the first CD – the absence of 'Bill' – has been remedied here; I believe it was cut from *Oh, Lady! Lady!!* and only appeared much later in the Kern-Hammerstein musical *Showboat*.

Which will be your favourites is a matter of taste, but 'Ain't It a Grand and Glorious Feeling', 'All Full of Talk', 'The Church Around the Corner', and 'Bill', together with the title number, 'The Siren's Song', will be serious contenders.

You will gather from this review
That I have been smitten by
And urge you to go online and buy
This CD by Jette and Chouinard.

The accompanying booklet is most helpful and attributes the original poem of homage to George S. Kaufman. Okay, George, go on and sue me for plagiarism!

To make this essential purchase, you can go to Maria's website at mariajette.com, where all will be revealed regarding price and how to order; just click on the *Siren's Song* image on the home page.



By Jeeves in Tokyo

Reviewed by Tamaki Morimura

Jeeves, by Alan Ayckbourn and Andrew Lloyd Webber is Lloyd Webber's only flop. When the original 1975 production was planned, Wodehouse wrote to Guy Bolton (August 15, 1973): "I'm afraid the boys regard Jeeves as sacred writ and think that the more of the stuff in the stories they can cram in, the better. . . . What I would like them to do is jettison all they have done and start again with *Thank You, Jeeves*, which has everything needed for a musical."

So when it was announced that the rewritten 1996 version, *By Jeeves*, was to be staged at the Nissei Theater in Tokyo, with Samurai drama star Kotaro Satomi as Jeeves and singer/TV variety show idol Eiji Wentz as Bertie, I was both thrilled and anxious.

Certainly Mr. Satomi is a famous drama star, but he is 77 years old! Isn't that too old for Jeeves? The 28-year-old Mr. Wentz is very popular, but in *By Jeeves*, Bertie is on stage for 2 hours and 40 minutes and sings more than 15 songs. Could he cope?

Moreover, although all 14 Jeeves stories have been translated in the last 10 years, as well as four volumes of a lovely manga by Bun Katsuta, they are far from being generally well known. Were Japanese theater-goers ready for Jeeves? Would the producer and director capture the Wodehouse spirit? Could they portray the 'innocence' of Bertie Wooster and his friends?

In 1975, *Jeeves*'s Bristol tryouts were reported to be a huge disaster. But the completely rewritten *By Jeeves* was successful, reaching Broadway in 1996, and it was this version that was to be performed in Tokyo.

Clearly I was a pessimist. The opening night came, and the instant I saw Mr. Wentz's Bertie, young and guileless, behaving with typical woolly-headed duckiness, I realized that here was Bertie Wooster.

A play-within-a-play structure can be complicated for the audience. And for those with no previous knowledge of Bertie and Jeeves, Jeeves's

concealment of Bertie's banjo and the seemingly impromptu settings must have been rather puzzling. Despite this, thanks to the lovely music, the hardworking cast, and, most of all, Eiji Wentz's superb Bertie, the audience thoroughly enjoyed it.

Mr Satomi's Jeeves was dignified and majestic, and since he is a national institution, his playing an English butler struck a comic note with us. Rather than stressing Jeeves's dignity, Mr Satomi took a more human approach, and although his projection could have been better, it was a convincing interpretation.

And now let's bring on the girls! Honoria was played by Sakiho Juri of the famous Takarazuka female theatre company. She was tall, dynamic, and lively, rather masculine, a splendid Honoria. Thinking of the wild and sinister way she laughed, I still get a chill.

Then Stiffy, played by Ai Takahashi, a well-known musical actress, was diabolical and sweet at the same time.

Mari Iriki, playing Madeline, was soupiness personified. Lovely to look at and reassuringly muddle-headed, she was delightful and, sometimes, surprisingly assertive.

Moto Fuyuki's Sir Watkyn Bassett was tall, dignified, and funny. I liked the singing voice of Harold (Kenichi Ukon), who had a big scene with Stiffy singing 'Half a Moment'. Bingo, Gussie, and Cyrus Budge III Jr were played by Masahiro Ehara, Shiro Tubuyaki, and Takeshi Nadagi, respectively. All are all well-known comedians, but I didn't know how well they could sing and dance. Their 'How Do You Do' Song is still echoing in my heart. The ensemble (Takeshi Yasufuku, Kazuhiko Ohara, and Chikako Fukuyama) were good, too.

I attended six of the thirteen performances, and I am still deeply impressed by how perfectly Mr. Eiji Wentz played my beloved Bertie. How fortunate I was to be able to see Bertie Wooster and his lovely friends in Wodehousean Utopia!



Kotaro Satomi and Eiji Wentz

A Cosy Moment

This Boy, by Alan Johnson (2013)
(from Terry Taylor)

In this touching memoir of his childhood in Notting Hill, Johnson relates how, having passed his eleven-plus, he went on to Sloane Grammar School in the

King's Road. There, he went to the excellent library, where he "picked up a paperback and borrowed it on the strength of the cover. *A Damsel in Distress* by P. G. Wodehouse launched a lifelong love affair with the work of the great man."

We Remember

Bob Miller, 1947–2014



Bob Miller (front row, left) with members of the Gold Bats and umpires at the June 2010 match against the Sherlockians.

It was a cruel decision of the eternal umpire to dismiss Bob Miller prematurely at only 66, but the founder and captain *in excelsis* of the Gold Bats, the Society's cricket team, had played a fine innings before his death on August 16.

He was one of life's doers. Even when struggling with illness, he founded the Bow Tie Society, which had its first meeting at the Ritz in 2013, and remained active with the Chelmsford Boxing Club. Having left Dagenham County High, he joined the police as a cadet and, after a 32-year career that included a spell in the South Pacific, retired in 1997 as a detective inspector in the Essex CID. His most prestigious case was securing the conviction of the murderer Jeremy Bamber.

Bob was also an inspector for Ofsted from 1993. Education was important to him; his two daughters are teachers. Having studied humanities at the Open University, Bob took a masters in literature from Wolfson College, Cambridge. In 2006 he visited the US on a Churchill fellowship to study the poetry of T. S. Eliot; he founded the Eliot Society on his return.

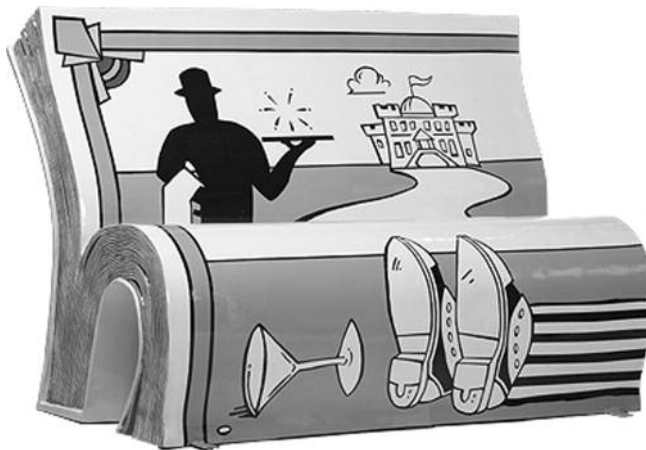
By then he had already been involved with The P G Wodehouse Society for nearly ten years, helping to organise annual cricket fixtures against, among others, the masters of Dulwich College and the Sherlock Holmes Society. Bob hit the winning run off the last ball of a memorable match against the former in 2003. While Bob roped in his friends to form the early teams – including, highly appropriately for a Wodehouse XI, a man by the name of Mike Jackson – he was keen to encourage Society members to dig out their faded whites and pads.

The annual Audley End charity match, which I co-founded with Bob in 2007, has raised several thousand pounds for charities. The Gold Bats' two-wicket win this year (see page 6) gave them a 4-2 overall lead (with one draw). We hope to retain the fixture in Bob's memory.

– Patrick Kidd

Wodehouse on the Bloomsbury Trail

What is the Bloomsbury Trail, you ask? Well, if you're an avid reader (and we're sure you are), then you already know that London's Bloomsbury area is replete with all sorts of literary links, from famous authors who have lived there to depictions or mentions of it in a multitude of works. This summer Books about Town created a trail throughout Bloomsbury that was liberally decorated with benches, shaped like open books, paying tribute to authors or literary works associated with the area.



You guessed it: one of the benches honours Wodehouse with a Jeeves & Wooster design by the artist Gordon Allum in vivid black, white, and green. In addition to silhouettes of Jeeves and images of Bertie's legs on either side, Blandings Castle can be seen in the distance on the front of the bench.



Like the other benches on the Bloomsbury Trail, this one will be auctioned on October 7, with proceeds going to the National Literacy Trust. (Benches were displayed along the Trail until September 15. The Jeeves & Wooster bench was situated in the Brunswick Centre.) Thus, it could be yours if you're willing to pay the price for it!

The Word in Season *by Dan Kaszeta*

Scrooched

As an avid reader of all things, Wodehouse or not, I have come to appreciate the Master's talents at every tier of writing. There's a lot of drivel out there, and I end up having to read some of it, which only makes Wodehouse even more important to me as a cleansing cure. PG was a master not just at writing books, but at the 'tiers of writing' – ranging from words to sentences to paragraphs, through plots and myriad subplots to entire books and series of books. Hilaire Belloc put it succinctly in his foreword to *Weekend Wodehouse* by simply stating that PG was "the best writer of English now alive".

I do not believe I am alone in stating that one of PG's talents wasn't merely in selecting words. He was a master of inventing new words, re-purposing words in use for other things, and canonising the slang of his day into print. Perhaps the greatest tribute western civilisation has paid to him is the extent to which some of his words and phrases now permeate our discourse in the English language. How many completely-un-Wodehoused friends, relations, and colleagues here in the UK (however sad their plight in life may be) would understand or use the word 'cuppa' in reference to a hot beverage? It is the work of the Master, if such sources as the *Oxford English Dictionary* are to be taken seriously. (For the record, it entered literature in "Come and have a cuppa coffee" in *Sam the Sudden* (1925).)

We owe it to Wodehouse to resurrect more of these wonderful words and bring them back into common

usage. In this modern era of Facebook and Twitter, how long did it take before everyone had heard the word 'twerking'? We now have the tools and the methods to disseminate words widely, so perhaps we can bend some of these tools to the purpose of preserving more of his words and phrases. I therefore propose to write a periodic column devoted to the restoration and promotion of those words of the Master which have not yet been cuppa-ised and integrated into our modern lexicon.

For my first word in this endeavour, I dig deep into the rich vernacular of tipsiness that has been bequeathed to us. I realise that this is low-hanging fruit, but give me a break – it's my first column in this august publication. I propose, for the good of our society and the enrichment of society at large that we reintroduce 'scrooched' as an adjective for 'drunk'. As best as anyone can tell, 'scrooched' comes to us from *The Mating Season* (1949):

It now struck me that it must have had even more authority than I had supposed and that Dame Daphne Winkworth had been perfectly correct in assuming that I was **scrooched**.

Where, precisely, 'scrooched' sits on the continuum of squiffiness is a question for the ages. It is redolent of more excess than merely 'tight' but is it equal to or greater than 'whiffled'? Perhaps this is a subject for more study and experimentation. But let us not get so scrooched that we cannot enjoy our beloved Wodehouse.

Original Thoughts

Within a week, two members reported reading articles with potential Wodehousean links as they seemed to refer to possible sources of well-known incidents or products in his novels. See what you think:

BOB RAINS spotted an article entitled 'Bad Week for – Feeling the Music' in the August 1 edition of *The Week* (US edition). It was reported that a 97-year-old man had been kicked out of a California nursing home because he ignored repeated orders to stop playing the ukulele. "Management continually suppressed my talents," said Jim Farrell, who moved to another nursing home. Bob suggests that the name, Jim Farrell, would surely be an alias, and states that although we are not provided with the name of the offending nursing-home manager, he suspects that he would have subtly arched one eyebrow.

Timothy Kearley brought our attention to an article entitled 'Who Made That Dog Biscuit?' in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* of August 3. The article concerns the origin of commercial dog biscuits, and Tim suggests that based on information received, the origins of Donaldson's Dog-Joy might just stem from Spratt's Patent Meat Fibrine Dog Cakes.

He was a man of strong passions, and the green-eyed monster ran up his leg and bit him to the bone.

(From *Full Moon*, 1947)

The Tie That Binds

by Peter Thompson

When you go to Society meetings
At The George, a pub in the Strand,
You want to look 'a la mode',
But not posh, you do understand.

To go with that shirt from John Lewis
Selected by my wife's fair hand,
You must have a Society tie
Smart, but nothing too grand.

To date nothing's forthcoming,
We look in vain each time for that tie;
Plum colour, of course, with a logo,
A vision to even Jeeves' eye

Our doubloons are burning our pockets.
'Let us buy one!' you hear us all say;
So, committee, have pity upon us
And order them up, please, today.

The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

Scoop!: Schooldays in America

Firstly, apologies to any readers who may have thought that the title of this Corner meant that it would reveal previously unknown evidence of Wodehouse having spent a spell at school in the USA! Rather more prosaically, it will survey the appearance of Wodehouse's quintessentially English public school stories in American magazines and periodicals. However, for those interested in such things, information will be provided on no less than four previously unrecorded appearances.

The first school story to appear in a magazine in the US was 'The Guardian', which was published in *Short Stories* in August 1908 (omitted by both *McIlvaine* and the *McIlvaine Addendum*). This is the only instance of a Wodehouse school story being published contemporaneously in the US (as opposed to being reprinted several years after it was written). In fact, the US publication preceded the UK publication, which occurred two months later in the *Windsor* in October 1908 (D142.5).

There was then a wait of exactly 15 years before the next Wodehouse school story appeared in a US magazine. Somewhat remarkably, two then appeared in the same month, in different magazines. In August 1923 'Pillingshot Detective' was published in *American Boy* (D3.1), while *Boys' Life*, *The Boy Scout Magazine* published 'Stone and the Weed' (D10.0). It is possible that the timing of these stories was linked to the republishing in the UK by A&C Black of six of Wodehouse's school stories in new editions from 1922 to 1924, with the same titles also being published in the US by Macmillan.

Boys' Life went on to become Wodehouse's most regular outlet for school stories in the US over the following years. In April 1931 it published 'Homeopathic Treatment' (D10.1) in the magazine, then published it again in the same year in miniature book form with paper covers as an advertising tool (A44a).

The final two appearances by Wodehouse in *Boys' Life* magazine came in March 1936 (D10.2) and March 1971 (D10.3); on both occasions this was a reprint of 'Stone and the Weed', which had first appeared in the magazine in August 1923.

Boys' Life was obviously keen to maximise its connection with Wodehouse. Another of its scouting publications was an annual, which appeared over the

years under slightly different titles, all of them being a variation on *The Boy Scouts Year Book*. First to appear in the annual was the seemingly ever-popular 'Stone and the Weed', which was published in *The Boy Scouts Year Book 1924* (omitted by both *McIlvaine* and the *McIlvaine Addendum*). Unsurprisingly, 'Homeopathic Treatment' also appeared in the annual but, unlike 'Stone and the Weed', at a distance of some years after its 1931 appearance in the magazine, finally appearing in *The Boy Scouts Year Book of Fun in Fiction*, which was published in 1938 (omitted by both *McIlvaine* and the *McIlvaine Addendum*).

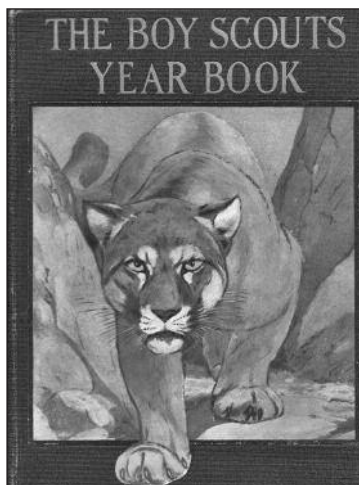
The only other appearance of a Wodehouse public school story in a US magazine was 'The Reformation of Study Sixteen', which was published in *Radio Digest* in June 1930 (omitted by both *McIlvaine* and the *McIlvaine Addendum*).

It is interesting to note that, of those Wodehouse public school stories published in US magazines, none came from *Tales of St Austin's*. This meant that when his stories were published in American magazines, none of them had previously been published in book form, which presumably made them more attractive to magazine editors.

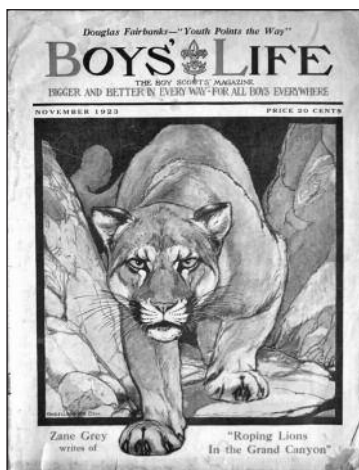
Of the 10 US appearances noted above, only two were recorded in *McIlvaine* and only four were recorded in the *McIlvaine Addendum*, indicating that this is an area that has not previously received much attention. It is therefore perfectly possible that, in addition to the four previously unrecorded appearances noted above, there exist other appearances of Wodehouse public school stories in US magazines, waiting to be rediscovered. Your columnist would be delighted to hear from any

readers who may have knowledge of any such appearances; please contact me at nick.townend@zen.co.uk.

Anyone wanting to read the stories mentioned above has no need to track down the original US magazines. All of them (and others) are contained in *Tales of Wrykyn and Elsewhere*, which was republished by Everyman in March 2014. The first publication of the book was by Porpoise Books in 1997, complete with many of the illustrations from their original appearances in *The Captain* magazine in the UK. As the Everyman edition does not contain these illustrations, it is worth tracking down the Porpoise edition; copies are always available on eBay, and at a cheaper price than the Everyman edition.



The Boy Scouts Year Book 1924 reproduced the cover of Boys' Life from November 1923.



The Latest from Everyman

Everyman's Library continues to advance steadily towards its goal of publishing every one of P. G. Wodehouse's books. March this year saw the publication of *Tales of Wrykyn* and *Performing Flea*, while *Not George Washington* and *Bring On the Girls* made their debuts in the Everyman series in May. Up next: *The Luck Stone* and *Over Seventy*, which probably reached bookstore shelves before you received this issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

In the US, the series is published by Overlook Press, generally a few months after the Everyman editions come out in the UK. The first four titles listed above have now been published stateside, while the latter two will be issued on December 26.

Perfect Nonsense Lives On

Let's hear it for *Perfect Nonsense*! The Jeeves & Wooster play written by Robert and David Goodale has been enjoying a successful run at the Duke of York's Theatre since late October 2013. That run will end on September 20, whereupon the show will go on the road with the current West End cast of John Gordon Sinclair (Jeeves), James Lance (Bertie), and Robert Goodale (Seppings). The lucky cities lined up for this touring production are (in order): Guildford (September 24–October 4), Cambridge (October 7–11), Newcastle (October 14–18), Norwich (October 21–25), Reading (October 28–November 1), Salford (November 3–8), Cheltenham (November 10–16), Southampton (November 18–22), Glasgow (November 24–29), and Bath (December 1–6). For more information, including links for ordering tickets, go to www.jeevesandwoosterplay.com/tour/.

For members who don't live in the UK, take heart: *Perfect Nonsense* has already enjoyed its first non-English production in, of course, Sweden (where Wodehouse translations are often first published). It ran at the Mellanfjärdens Teater (north of Stockholm) from August 1 to 24; fingers are crossed that we'll have a review in our December issue. We hope this means the play will be making the leap to other countries as well, and we welcome reviews from any overseas members who are fortunate enough to see it.

It is an excellent thing that women should be encouraged to take up golf. There are, I admit, certain drawbacks attendant on their presence on the links. I shall not readily forget the occasion on which a low, raking drive of mine at the eleventh struck the ladies' tee-box squarely and came back and stunned my caddie, causing me to lose stroke and distance. Nevertheless I hold that the advantages outnumber the drawbacks. Golf humanises women, humbles their haughty natures, tends, in short, to knock out of their systems a certain modicum of that superciliousness, that swank, which makes wooing such a tough proposition for the diffident male.

(From 'The Rough Stuff', 1920)

Poet's Corner

The Sailor

The vessel may shake like a jelly,
The tempest may ruffle the sea,
The oil from the engine be smelly,
But, bless you, that don't affect me.
Such details are quite to my liking,
They cause me no worry or pain,
I feel like an updated Viking,
Whatever the state of the main.

I know that full many a man'll
Turn green when the anchor is weighed,
And assume in the chops of the channel
Some even more curious shade;
Such words as "A ground swell" or "leeward"
If you whisper them soft in his ear,
Will make him call to the steward,
Explaining he feels rather queer.

Some find that systems are shaken
If men in their presence should speak
Of the merits of oysters or bacon,
Or succulent bubble and squeak.
If you mention whipped cream in their hearing,
Small pleasures their faces will show;
You notice their backs disappearing
En route to the cabin below.

Myself, be the sea smooth or rougher,
From these sorts of woes I'm exempt.
I think of the people who suffer
With pity that's mixed with contempt.
And I owe my immunity merely
(A fact I've not mentioned before)
To avoid the ocean severely,
I spend my life on the shore.

From *Novel Magazine*, April 1906

Answers to Mastermind Quiz

(Page 16)

1. *Madame's Nightshirt*
2. *Cosy Moments*
3. *Summer Lightning and Heavy Weather*
4. Gussie Fink-Nottle
5. Vladimir Brusiloff
6. George (twin brother of Alfred) and Bulstrode
7. Mammoth Publishing Company
8. Sir Raymond Bastable
9. *The Old Reliable*
10. *Spindrift*

Recent Press Comment

The Guardian, May 14

In his Reading Group blog, Sam Jordison contributed a long article entitled ‘Did P G Wodehouse succeed in creating a world beyond class?’ He concludes by admitting:

It turns out Wodehouse could speak for the people after all! I hope it isn’t going too far to say that there’s a curious sort of political wisdom in books like *The Code of the Woosters* and *Leave It to Psmith*. They mock silliness. They encourage good humour and understanding. . . .

Daily Telegraph, May 19 (from three members)

Carolyn De La Plain provided a couple of recent Wodehouse-related clues in the paper’s crosswords:

May 19: Asked for the name of an Aunt from P G Wodehouse’s Jeeves stories (6). Answer: Agatha.

June 14: The ‘- -’: one of P G Wodehouse’s Blandings Castle short stories (2-6). Answer: ‘Go-Getter’.

Susan Walker added another:

5 July: ‘Novelist whose stories including *Custody of the Pumpkin*, *Company for Gertrude*, *Pig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey* and *Lord Emsworth and the Girlfriend* were adapted into the series *Blandings* (9).’

June Arnold got in on the crossword clue theme with a clue from *The Lady* (June):

‘Original pigs niff is excellent according to PG.’
The answer was ‘Spiffing’.

The Spectator, May 24 (from Christopher Bellew)

Christopher Maclehose recalled asking PGW to review the first *Flashman* book by George Macdonald Fraser and receiving the view that “If ever there was a time when I felt that watcher-of-the-skies-when-a-new-planet stuff, it was when I read the first *Flashman*”.

The Baltimore Sun, May 30

Identified a number of comments in PGW’s *Paris Review* interview as having useful applications to journalism, such as: “Always get to the dialogue as soon as possible. I always feel the thing is to go for speed. Nothing puts the reader off more than a great slab of prose at the start.”

Daily Telegraph, May 31 (from Carolyn De La Plain)

In a television review, Michael Deacon commented on a programme about British people complaining by saying: “They assume that their money buys not only a company’s product or service but its entire staff too, which is why, when they make a complaint, they address said staff in the manner of a Wodehousean aunt rebuking an indolent and bone-headed servant.”

PetsLady.com, May 31

In an article on ‘Animals in Art Down Through History’, M. Dee Dubroff opened by slightly misquoting PGW’s comment that “cats have never completely gotten [sic] over the snootiness cause by the fact that in ancient Egypt they were worshipped as gods”.

Oxford Mail, June 1

Peter Unsworth wrote of a recent bank holiday on which, determined to embrace the holiday mood, he dressed in

striped blazer, cream trousers, white shirt, red tie, and shiny shoes. Meeting an old friend, he was hailed with the words: “You look like a P G Wodehouse reject. All you need is a monocle and you’ll pass for an aging Bertie Wooster or an over-dressed visitor’s guide.”

Albuquerque Journal American Profile, June 10

(from Sharon Mitchell)

The reply to a question about actor (and Society member) Curtis Armstrong included the information that he retained “a particular fondness for the works of authors Washington Irving, P.G. Wodehouse and Arthur Conan Doyle”.

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

The final word in the correspondence columns on the question of wearing ties with suits was given to Bob Clough-Parker:

SIR – P G Wodehouse had it right.

Wooster: What do ties matter, Jeeves, at a time like this?

Jeeves: There is no time, sir, at which ties do not matter.

Daily Telegraph, June 18 (from Carolyn De La Plain)

In an article reporting that Stephen Mangan, who played Postman Pat in a recent film, regarded being one of only three actors to have been trusted with the role as far more prestigious than being one of the seven, to date, to have played James Bond. The article notes that Mangan had “also immortalised two other ‘iconic British sex symbols’ in Bertie Wooster and Adrian Mole”.

(*The Guardian* also carried an interview with Mangan, in which he described life behind the scenes of *Perfect Nonsense*, on June 21.)

From Our Own Correspondent, Radio 4, June 21

(from Alexander Dainty)

Referred to the English Library in Alassio, in which the custodian had worked with the local English community for 45 years. It remains possible to visit the library and borrow their copies of PGW books.

This Is The Westcountry.co.uk, June 24

Yet another test of the exercise, now firmly lodged in West of England journalists’ minds as having originated with Wodehouse, as to how many envelopes left around a community would be posted to the planned recipient. Re. the latest sample, taken out in Chard and Ilminster, Daniel Milligan reported that 17 out of 20 letters were delivered.

Round Britain Quiz, Radio 4, June 28

(from Terry Taylor)

One of the questions led a pair of contestants through three converging clues (solutions: *Carry On*, *Jeeves*, *Very Good*, *Jeeves* and *Right Ho*, *Jeeves*) to the answer, which was the linking name, ‘Jeeves’.

The Observer, June 29 (from Terry Taylor)

In a review of *Authorisms: Words Wrought by Authors*, by Paul Dickson, Peter Conrad referred to ‘plobby’ as PGW’s transcription of the sound a pig makes while eating.

Irish Times, July 3 (from Paul Kerrigan)

In an interview for 'Brought to Book', Myles Duggan said that his two favourite fictional characters were Philip Marlowe and Bertie Wooster, and that Raymond Chandler and P G Wodehouse, along with Dorothy Parker, Joe O'Connor, P D James, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Joseph Heller, would be his chosen guests to an author's dinner party.

The "Quote . . . Unquote" Newsletter, July (from, and permission to quote from given by, Nigel Rees)

Nigel Rees had been a guest at the Wodehouse Poetry evening for Poet in the City in April, and had seen the title of the recent book of Wodehouse verse: *What Goes Around Comes Around*. He investigated its possible origin and noted that *The Yale Dictionary of Quotations* suggested that its earliest appearance was in *On the Yard*, by Malcolm Braly, 1967.

Bibliophile, June and July

The newspaper mail-order catalogue of this surplus book distributor has 15 PGW quotations between the two issues introducing different categories. The two perhaps least familiar are: "She had a beaky nose, tight thin lips, and her eye could have been used for splitting logs in the teak forests of Borneo" (from *Much Obligated, Jeeves*); and "There is no surer foundation for a beautiful friendship than a mutual taste in literature" (unsourced).

British Airways, July (from Christine Hewitt)

Christine reported that a friend had travelled to the USA by British Airways in July and on the outboard flight had listened to an audio-recording of 'The Aunt and the Sluggard' on their entertainment system.

The Smithsonian Magazine, July/August

(from Laura Loehr)

Spotted a new application for the famous quotation about Scotsmen, grievances and rays of sunshine. In an article about Scotsman Roderick Sloan's occupation of diving for sea urchins in the icy fjords of northern Norway to sell them for the customers of up-market restaurants, the quotation is followed by the comment: "Though Sloan has a copious supply of inner sunshine, he holds strong opinions . . . and he doesn't hesitate to express them."

With Great Pleasure, Radio 4, July 3

(from Terry Taylor, Susan Walker, et al)

Sir Terry Wogan's selections included an edited extract from Gussie's drunken speech at Market Snodsbury Grammar School *Right Ho, Jeeves*, read by Sir David Jason.

Daily Telegraph, July 6 (from David J. Anderton)

Writing about a religious concept called panentheism, Christopher Howse described one of its proponents with an apt Wodehousean reference: "Things she says make Madeline Bassett (who told Bertie Wooster 'that the stars were God's daisy chain') seem reticent."

The Observer, July 13 (from Terry Taylor)

Novelist Joe Dunthorne reported that he planned to read 'Jeeves Takes Charge' while on holiday – "Line for line, no other author brings me as much happiness."

The Times, July 14

The obituary of Cliff Severn, an actor who became a doyen of the Hollywood cricket scene, mentioned PGW's involvement as a vice president of the Hollywood Cricket Club.

Daily Telegraph, July 17

Writing about how Germany is turning to the typewriter for anti-espionage reasons, Christopher Howse mentioned how Wodehouse borrowed a typewriter while interned, which "led him into the gravest trouble".

The Hindu, July 26

A discussion about dress codes in private clubs was presented in the form of a pastiche conversation between a modern Bertie and Jeeves, which closed with Jeeves posing the question "How many dhotis shall I pack for you, sir?"

Test Match Special, Radio 3 (Long Wave), July 29

The centenary of the start of the First World War drew much comment from varied sources. Brian Halford's book *The Real Jeeves* was discussed by Jonathan Agnew and Victor Marks just after the start of the third day's play of the third Test Match against India, following the minute's silence with which proceedings at the ground had started. The book and its subject were also referred to in a wider lunch-time discussion of cricketers who fell in that war.

Wall Street Journal, August 2-3 (from Beth Carroll)

In his review of Jan Swafford's *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph*, Edmond Morris wrote: "You cannot do him justice unless you talk about his enharmonic modulations and syncopated sforzandi, but as soon as you do so, persons lacking the rudiments of music theory will protest much as Bertie Wooster did to his girl friend's readings in applied ethics - 'not the sort of thing to spring on a lad with a morning head'."

Sunday Telegraph, August 3

Featured a long article by Scyld Berry about Percy Jeeves and Frank Chester, two cricketers whose careers were cut short by the conflict, with large photographs of each.

The Times, August 9

Carried a review of an unabridged audiobook, *The Girl on the Boat*, published by audible.co.uk and read by Frederick Davidson.

Herald Scotland, August 13 (from Lesley Tapson)

Commenting on the possibility of Boris Johnson becoming Prime Minister, Robert Macneil admitted that he had

a sneaking liking for Boris, as I have for many quintessentially English things. Even his mooted seat, Uxbridge, sounds like something from a PG Wodehouse novel, though I'm probably conflating Boris's Bertie Wooster schtick with Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge, a scheming character from different Wodehouse novels. And I accept that, while we're considering characters from Wodehouse, it would be invidious to see certain anti-European parties as anything like Roderick Spode's Black Shorts.

That'll be the same Wodehouse, by the way, who coined the much recycled phrase "It is never difficult to distinguish between a Scotsman with a grievance and a ray of sunshine". Good old Wodehouse. Love him to bits. Talked routinely about Britain as England. Product of his time. Entirely forgivable. Cough-cough.

Future Events for Your Diary

September 16, 2014 Stephen Fry/Soho Literary Festival
Society patron Stephen Fry will be expounding on – who else? – P G Wodehouse in a talk that starts at 7 pm. Tickets are £9, but at press time we learned the show is sold out.

September 21, 2014 Newbury Show

This is the final year the Society will be presenting the prize for the Berkshire Champion of Champions, so be sure to join us. Details on page 3.

September 27, 2014–January 11, 2015

Exhibition at Durham University

Durham's Palace Green Library is putting on a special exhibition that includes some Wodehouse works. For further information, see page 11.

October 16, 2014 Dinner at Gray's Inn

It may yet be possible to get a place at the dinner; for details, see page 3.

October 26 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.

November 19, 2014 Society Meeting at the Savoy Tup NEWS FLASH! CHANGE OF DATE AND VENUE!

If you were planning to go to The George on the 18th November, think again. Due to a concatenation of circumstances, both the date and the venue of our next Society meeting have been changed. We will gather from 6 pm on the 19th at The Savoy Tup, London WC2 0BA. For more details, see page 3.

2015 Society Meetings

Well, the truth is we haven't actually scheduled any meetings for 2015 as yet, due to the need to identify a permanent venue. Certainly the next meeting will be sometime in February. Rest assured we will have it sorted by our December issue, so stay tuned – or just check the Society's website for updates.

Oct. 29–Nov. 1, 2015 TWS Convention in Seattle

The Wodehouse Society will be holding its 18th biennial convention, 'Psmith in Pseattle', at the Fairmount Olympic Hotel in Seattle, Washington.

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