

# WOOSTER SAUCE

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## Lt Col Norman 'Spud' Murphy, 1933—2016

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Norman Murphy, noted Wodehousean author, scholar, and founder Chairman of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK).

Wodehouse enthusiasts the world over will join Norman's family and friends in mourning the loss of one of the great characters in the world of Wodehouse scholarship. Natty in his trilby, gesturing



Photo by Tamaki Morimura

dramatically with his tightly furled umbrella, Norman Murphy made an arresting and unforgettable sight on the streets of Mayfair as he conducted his now world-famous Wodehouse Walks. The high-speed staccato of his vocal delivery, the quick march that was his habitual walking pace, the strong sense that if he couldn't immediately share his latest nugget of information, then he would simply burst – all were endearing and entirely memorable.

But Norman's Walks were based on solid scholarship over many years, as were the books he wrote to inform and enthrall other Wodehouse readers; these are described in the obituary by Murray Hedgcock that starts on page 2; a list of his publications can be found on page 5.

Norman served as the Society's Chairman for its first six years and did much to set its tone for the future, combining scholarship with wit and, overall, that lighthearted touch at which Wodehouse himself excelled. Norman stood down when he turned 70, assuming the self-chosen title of Remembrancer and generously providing information and advice while rigorously applying the 'only when asked' rule.



Norman and pipe in Cumbria

Our sympathy goes to Norman's son, Tim; Tim's wife, Anne; and their daughter, Rachael, Norman's granddaughter. But in this forum, our love and thoughts go very especially to Elin Woodger Murphy, Norman's devoted wife of 15 years and Editor of *Wooster Sauce*; she began work on this issue just a week after Norman's funeral.

In addition to Murray's obituary, members may read those from *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, posted

on the Society's website. Also on our website, you are invited to contribute your memories of Norman to the Society's virtual Book of Remembrance. And see page 5 for details of how to buy the DVD of one of Norman's famous Wodehouse Walks.

– HILARY BRUCE

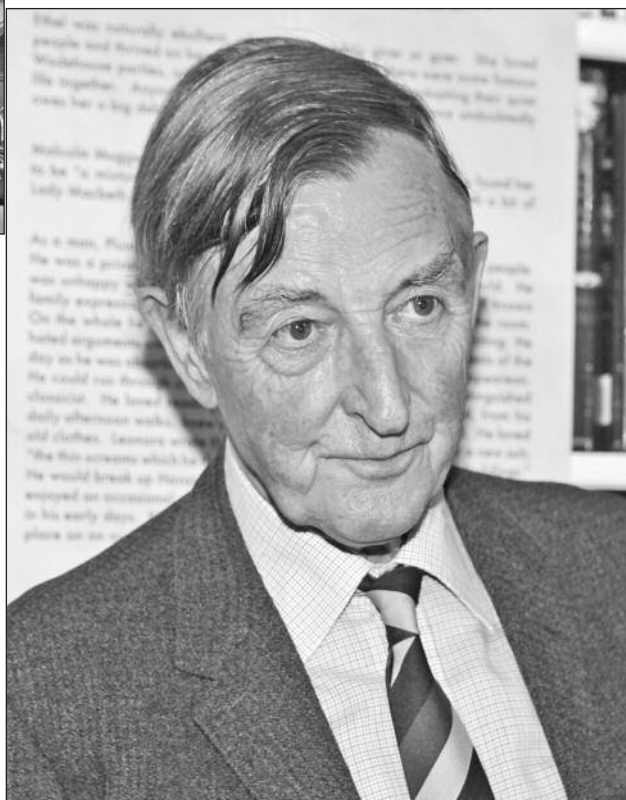


Photo by Ginni Beard

# Unforgettable Norman Murphy

by Murray Hedgcock

For years, *The Reader's Digest* ran a popular series entitled "The Most Unforgettable Character I Ever Met". As a journalist, I have met interesting people in my time – Jesse Owens, Margaret Thatcher, the first Plum (Warner), Prince Philip, the Rev. Lord (Donald) Soper, Don Bradman. (If any of those names is unfamiliar, you can always check online.)

Norman Murphy must take his unquestioned place in my list of the unforgettable, and the tributes paid him on PGWnet, the Society website, and at his funeral confirm what he meant to Wodehouseans and many others across the world.

He was accorded the rare and rightful accolade of a full page in the Obituaries section of *The Times* (October 20), decorated with a charming personal shot of Norman and Elin Murphy – termed in the caption "his co-conspirator". The *Daily Telegraph* (same date) also recorded his life and times in a long obituary, with much detail of his impressive military career. Both were pleasingly accurate, although *The Times* claimed that on completing one of his famed Wodehouse Walks, "Norman would steer his students into a pub on Northumberland Avenue, inviting those who appreciated his efforts to buy him a Plymouth gin martini". As Elin observed: "A Plymouth gin martini? Where did that come from? It was always a gin and tonic – he never drank martinis."

I am proud to claim some sort of seniority in the matter of knowing Norman Murphy, as set out in this tribute recorded on the Society's website:

It was on May 18, 1973 – yes, 1973 – that I met a lively, youthful soldier-in-civvies at a Wodehouse seminar in Surrey. This was at Moor Park College outside Farnham, when 40 or so enthusiasts, long pre-dating formation of The PG Wodehouse Society (UK), gathered to mull over and enjoy the works of Pelham Grenville Wodehouse. I recorded the event in my newspaper, *The Australian*, noting that among the gathering was "the voluble Major 'Spud' Murphy, a supply officer from Whitehall, whose hours of studying London history led him to his great theory; the tales of Wodehouse's Drones club were based on real life". "Spud" (the "Norman" does not appear to have impacted at that stage) expanded on his discoveries, and we were rightly impressed.

The Major and I travelled back to Waterloo together, when he enlivened the journey with anecdotes and references to matters of London history seen en route. I was not to know how much more I would learn years later of Wodehouse, and of London, from the Major (soon to be Lieutenant Colonel), when his books, his walks, and his vital role in the new Wodehouse society provided a proper platform from which he could enlighten us about the world of PGW. We are much the losers for the passing of this lovable character, but we are much the winners for all that he shared with us – his learning, and his generous, breezy, unique personality. Thank, you, Spud, for so much.

It would be interesting to learn how many of that Farnham group gathered together 43 years ago are members of our Society today. There was no Wodehouse organisation in the UK at that time, the Americans having got there first.

The Wodehouse Society, with members worldwide, was founded in Pennsylvania in 1980 by retired U.S. Army Captain Bill Blood. In 1994, Northampton journalist Richard Morris set up The P.G. Wodehouse Society, later renamed The Wodehouse Society (UK), but membership was modest, and lack of a London base a handicap.

The Society was reconstituted and went public under the name we now know at a lively Press launch at the Savage Club on July 10, 1997, with Norman as its Chairman. *The Times* Diary recorded the launch, suggesting the record for words per minute was held by "Lt. Col. Norman Murphy, chairman of the society, and the last word on Wodehouse. Told several Wodehouse stories in his speech, barely pausing for breath. He slows down when lecturing in Texas."

Norman was to serve as a driving force and the public face of the Society for six years, standing down on his 70th birthday.

So where and how did Norman steep himself in the lore of Wodehouse and London, finding time for such indulgence during his Army career?

Norman Thomas Philip Murphy was born in London on May 20, 1933, of Irish parents – his father was a doctor – and schooled by Jesuits at Wimbledon College. He was commissioned into the Green Howards for National Service, and an interest



in Latin then gained him a place at University College, Oxford. A fellow student summed up: “He was no academic success, probably because he spent much time studying the American Civil War, and Wodehouse, when he was meant to be reading Law. Or it could have been that he wrote some brilliant first-class material in the Finals, but no-one could read it. Or understand him in the oral examination!”

But Norman, termed “a good College man”, was active in many College activities and much involved in the Oxford athletics team, running its events “with military precision”. He was recalled as “a born eccentric, not a put-up, pretend one like Sebastian Flyte. He was a well-known figure around the pubs of Oxford in his saffron kilt, and I remember him drinking his beer out of his hat one evening.”

After he graduated with no particular idea of his future, brief experience as a schoolmaster and an IBM salesman could not satisfy so questioning a personality, so Norman rejoined the Army in 1959, serving with the Royal Army Service Corps in Egypt, Aden, and Germany. A posting to Northern Ireland was not always comfortable for a Catholic with a Protestant wife: in 1961 Norman married Charlotte Archibald, daughter of a Scottish Presbyterian clergyman.

In time he was moved to a Whitehall desk as a Ministry of Defence logistics officer, where long lunch-hour research into Wodehouse and growing interest in the history of central London provided welcome relief from his military duties. But this was never at the expense of his official role: he was diligent, resourceful and innovative. He responded to the national switch to metric currency in 1972, when camouflage nets needed to be designed in metres rather than yards. The sharp-eyed young officer pointed out to his superiors that if the standard net were to be rounded to the nearest square half-metre rather than a full metre, it could save considerable sums – which he estimated at £50 million over 20 years.

Norman burst into the public eye in 1981 when he published privately his ground-breaking *In Search of Blandings*, subtitled *The Facts Behind the Wodehouse Fiction*. In this he argued with convincing authority that the people and places of Wodehouse’s world had genuine, real-life origins. The card-bound book made headlines well beyond the literary pages, arousing so much interest that in 1986 it was reprinted in commercial format by Secker & Warburg, while Penguin also published it a year later.

Norman’s duties in time went well beyond the measuring of

netting, when as a member of the tri-Service Central staff he served as a British representative on NATO committees. In 1986, just retired, he was recalled by the Thatcher Government – he always claimed this was by the Prime Minister herself – to run a one-man study on NATO logistics. This led to production of the first NATO Logistics Handbook, after a year commuting between Brussels and the Murphy home in Cumbria.

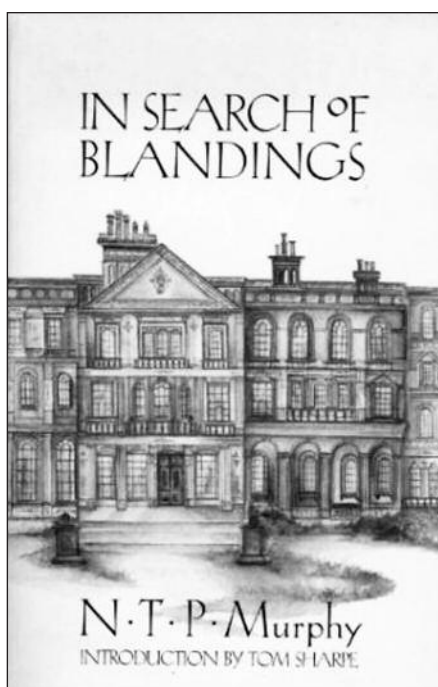
Before addressing the Senior NATO Logistic Conference in Brussels to introduce his handbook, Norman presented the draft of his speech to US General Homer Smith, “theoretically in charge/responsible for me, who nearly fainted. They don’t make jokes in the American Army, apparently, and he forbade me to use any of them”.

Norman always acknowledged that his French was “execrable”, and so began his address: “Secretary-General, Gentlemen. At the request of my French-speaking colleagues, I shall address you in English.’ (I paused, and got my laugh.) ‘At the much more urgent request of my English-speaking colleagues, I shall speak at one-third of my normal speed’”. This drew shouts of laughter, “mingled with cries of incredulity from those who knew me best”.

Final retirement allowed Norman to return virtually full-time to his special interest in Wodehouse and London. When he became Chairman – a logical choice – on the 1997 Society relaunch, he was to establish one of the great institutions of the Wodehouse world. This was heralded in the *Wooster Sauce* of September 1997: “Our Chairman, Norman Murphy, has offered to conduct walks around Bertie Wooster’s London on the 11th October and 8th November, 1997. The walk takes about three hours, and covers unusual aspects of London, as well as Wodehouse topography. Participants are strongly advised to wear comfortable walking shoes.”

When, in 2009, the in-house publisher Popgood & Groolley produced the delightful *Three Wodehouse Walks*, it was a proper tribute to Norman’s achievement. The original Walk, covering Bertie Wooster’s West End, was soon joined by a jaunt around ‘Valley Fields’ (the Dulwich of Wodehouse’s time), and in 2007 Norman created a new Walk through the London of Gally Threepwood and Stanley Featherstonehaugh Utridge.

A quaint record of the precursor of the walks is set out in a charming little book, *A True and Faithful Account of the Amazing Adventures of the Wodehouse Society on Their Pilgrimage July 1989*. Still freely available online, this is a delicious account of the week-long visit to London of 21 Wodehouse enthusiasts



*The first of his ground-breaking books*

from the United States and the Netherlands, plus one local enthusiast in the person of the late, much-loved John Fletcher. They were royally entertained at Dulwich College before trekking around Plum's London, overcoming the handicaps of a public transport strike, followed by a journey to Plum's countryside. The enterprise was directed and marshalled by Norman Murphy, listed in the record of those attending as "Native Guide". He set new sophisticated standards in that traditional occupation, and his safari party was duly grateful. [Editor's note. Large parts of this tour were recorded by the BBC and included in their 1989 documentary 'Plum: A Portrait of P.G. Wodehouse'. It can be viewed online at <http://bit.ly/292dNRL>.]

Books came regularly from Norman's busy typewriter in his crammed office-cum-library, his magnum opus being the all-embracing reference work *A Wodehouse Handbook*, published in two volumes in 2006, with a revised edition in 2013. The first volume, *The World of Wodehouse*, recalls the life and times, people, and places providing the factual background to PGW's writings. The second, *The Words of Wodehouse*, explains the usages, words, phrases, and references common in Wodehouse's day, as used in his books, articles, verses and songs. Together they tally nearly 1,000 pages – essential reading for any 21st-century Wodehouse enthusiast.

Norman's other speciality saw fruition in *One Man's London*, a guidebook like no other, the fruits of "years asking questions of office-keepers, doormen and caretakers, and I have taken up the time of foremen on building sites". Published in 1989, it became a collector's item, and a revised edition, *One Man's London: Twenty Years On*, was produced in 2012.

Wodehouse endured: Norman returned to his role as "native guide" for three memorable tours conducted by the Society. The Millennium Tour in 2000 set the pattern, followed by A Week With Wodehouse in 2007 and A Weekend in Norfolk in 2012. All drew enthusiasts from other countries, notably the United States, as well as many British members. These jaunts were enormous fun, as Norman explained the origins of *In Search of Blandings* and much else, visiting Wodehousean haunts and shrines across the country, always ready for animated debate to expand on his theories.

Sadly, personal tragedy struck twice. Charlotte Murphy, never at the forefront but always serene and supportive, died of cancer in 1999. Then, in 2004,

their daughter, Helen, died at 38 of pneumonia. She shared an encyclopaedic knowledge of Wodehouse with her father, presenting papers to Society meetings and US conventions. Helen was a key figure in early Society days, serving as membership secretary and treasurer until the roles were divided.

After Charlotte's death, Norman found comfort in correspondence with America's then President of The Wodehouse Society, Elin Woodger. In 2001, they married quietly – and Norman enjoyed the opportunity to announce at the biennial Wodehouse convention in Philadelphia that Elin had made "the final sacrifice in this great cause". Puzzled silence changed to cheering as he explained: "Elin and I are wife and husband!"

Elin brought New World verve to the solid Old World basics of Norman's life, and together they were to flourish personally and as freshly inspired workers in the world of Wodehouse.

Norman was always involved and enthusiastic, ready to respond and if necessary lead the way when Wodehousean matters arose. His breadth of knowledge was recognised by the term widely applied when he was asked for information: TMWKNE – The Man Who Knows Nearly Everything. (A variant offered: TMWKAE – The Man Who Knows Almost Everything.)

He was a golfer by inclination, but his interest in cricket took him regularly to West Wycombe for the annual fixture between the Society eleven, the Gold Bats, and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. His air of easy authority made him a natural umpire,

his unbuttoned white coat worn like an academic gown. As he also sported a games sweater emblazoned with the distinctive emblem of Oxford University, his natural status was distinctly enhanced, to the point that any slightly questionable decision was – well, not questioned.

His interpretation of the leg-before wicket law, like his character, tended to

be different. Batsmen given out when struck on the front pad two yards down the pitch usually shrugged it off as just another act of Murphy.

How the Society felt about Norman Murphy was demonstrated most satisfyingly on May 23, 2003, after he had announced he was standing down as Chairman, on reaching the grand age of 70. He was the Committee's guest of honour at a dinner at Boodle's (founded 1762); the setting was highly appropriate, given Norman's interest in and



Norman's enthusiasm was boundless!  
(Photos by Barbara Combs and Jean Tillson)

knowledge of London’s clubland. For once, he had to sit more or less silently and listen to others. President Richard Briers declared the guest of honour “a powerhouse of scholarship”, who would always be for him, “Uncle Norman in the Springtime”. I was able to recall that first meeting with Spud Murphy in 1973.

Edward Cazalet delivered a fully justified eulogy, referring to Norman’s “huge creativity”, which he likened to “a rocket which has taken off”. Asserting that Norman “knows more about Wodehouse than anyone else alive”, he added that he had “an encyclopaedic knowledge about virtually everything else in the world”.

Edward drew a parallel between Norman’s love of his pipe and the similar affection held by Plum, who “liked to smoke crushed-up cigars in it”. He then presented Norman with the silver matchbox which PGW had used to light his tobacco. As Robert Bruce reported in the *Wooster Sauce*

account of the evening, “It was at this moment that a singular event occurred. Colonel Murphy was speechless”. Recovering speech eventually, he announced that the first research work of his retirement would be to identify the maker of the matchbox. [*Alas, he never did as the hallmarks were too worn. –Ed.*]



Norman was never one to go quietly. On his retirement as Chairman, he was officially acclaimed the Society’s Remembrancer, as the fount of Wodehousean wisdom, and he continued at hand, always ready to inform, advise, and entertain. His many books form a comprehensive Wodehouse library on their own. The seeker after Plummy truth would do well to collect them all, and have them always at hand.

Norman Murphy was a totally committed keeper of the Wodehouse flame. It burns ever the more brightly for his many years of scholarly, quirky, and whole-hearted devotion. Wodehouse lovers across the world are eternally grateful.

## Books by N.T.P. Murphy

### *In Search of Blandings*

Originally self-published, 1981  
Hardcover, Secker & Warburg, 1986  
Paperback, Penguin, 1987

### *One Man’s London*

Hutchinson, 1989

### *A True and Faithful Account of the Amazing Adventures of The Wodehouse Society on Their Pilgrimage July 1989*

James H. Heineman, Inc., 1990

### *The Reminiscences of the Hon. Galahad Threepwood*

Porpoise Books:  
Hardback, 1993; Paperback, 1995

### *A Wodehouse Handbook: The World and Words of P.G. Wodehouse* (two volumes)

Published by Popgood & Groolley in 2006  
Revised edition published by Sybertooth in 2013

### *Three Wodehouse Walks*

Popgood & Groolley, 2009

### *One Man’s London: Twenty Years On*

Popgood & Groolley, 2012

### *Phrases and Notes:*

### *P. G. Wodehouse’s Notebooks, 1902–1905*

Popgood & Groolley, 2014

### *The P.G. Wodehouse Miscellany*

The History Press, 2015

*Note:* The last five titles remain in print, with the exception of the original (2006) edition of *A Wodehouse Handbook*. Norman’s later self-published books were produced under his own imprint of Popgood & Groolley.

# A Sweet, Bittersweet Night at Gray's Inn

by Bob Rains and Andrea Jacobsen

October 20 found UK Society members and friends gathered at Gray's Inn for the Society's biennial dinner. Sadly, one towering figure could no longer share his wit, erudition, and charm with us: Norman Murphy had passed away two days earlier. Nevertheless, as he would have wished, we soldiered on for a wonderful, memorable evening, feeling his spirit amidst us.

As the celebrants arrived, we were directed upstairs for informal drinks of sparkling wine and equally sparkling conversation. Old friends were met and new friends made.

Then, with an impressively loud bang, we were summoned to the banqueting hall, which smacked of Henry the Eighth or some other grand nob. And, indeed, HRH The Duke of Kent was among the high and mighty present and accounted for.

We found our ways to our designated seats, which had been carefully assigned by Tim Andrew to balance opportunities to make new acquaintances with the occasion for reminiscences between old friends. We sat down to beautiful tables, each of us facing an elegant setting with an array of crystal, cutlery and tableware sufficient to make one glad for some prior knowledge of Miss Manners. Prior to our commencement of serious browsing and sluicing, Society committee member Oliver Wise offered the Grace in Latin, which, we are informed, in translation begs that we listen obediently to sermons of whatever length they may be, whether or not we

may be having a flutter on the timing thereof. This was followed by a Loyal Toast to the Queen proposed by Sir Edward Cazalet.

Dutch Society President Peter Nieuwenhuizen brought us greetings in his flawless English and reminded us that the Dutch Wodehouse Society was already a stropmy teenager before the UK Society came into existence. He invited us to a gathering of the Dutch to be held a few days later.

Time, space, and limitations of language will not permit an adequate description of the libations and viands with which we were presented. Suffice it to say that each diner enjoyed an array of delicious courses worthy of the great Anatole, as well as wines elegantly presented.

After we had done ourselves proud (and then some), Tony Ring called the evening's main entertainment to order. The occasion honored the centenary of the two weeks in 1917 when Wodehouse set a record, as yet unbroken, by having his lyrics in more Broadway shows simultaneously than any other lyricist. HRH The Duke of Kent read from the introduction to the 2001 CD *The Land Where the Good Songs Go*, in which Tim Rice admitted to being chuffed at having his lyrics being sung in four Broadway shows simultaneously, but tipped his hat to Wodehouse, who had bested him by one.

In a program also written by the indefatigable Tony, we were regaled with tales and songs presented



by a talented array of amateur and professional players. These included Robert Goodale (of *Perfect Nonsense* fame) as Plum's longtime friend and collaborator Guy Bolton, Ann Briers as the narrator, and broadcaster Nigel Rees as Plum himself. American actor Curtis Armstrong read the parts of various Broadway directors, and his talented and beautiful daughter, Lily Armstrong, performed a number of ingénue roles. This included the part of an actress mistaken by Plum for a lady who had called about repairing some furniture and was surprised to find PG directing her to the sofa and informing her that there would be quite a bit of work for her if her figure was all right.

We began with the Wodehouse-Bolton-Kern show *Miss Springtime*, which played 227 performances at the New Amsterdam Theatre, from which

Hal Cazalet performed the song 'My Castle in the Air'. Although the next show, *Heart to Heart*, tallied only 78 performances, it gave us the comic song 'Napoleon', also belted out by Hal with great panache.

Ray Comstock produced the highly successful *Oh, Boy!* at the legendary Princess Theatre with superstar ingénues Marion Davies and Justine Johnson. *Leave It to Jane* (based on George Ade's *The College Widow*) followed on, with fewer performances but in a much larger venue. From that homage to American football we have 'The Siren's Song', which was winsomely sung by that stunning siren, Lara Cazalet. (And this was not the full quota of Cazalets in attendance, as David also graced us with his presence, although he did not perform. Sadly, Lady Cazalet was not able to attend due, it was noted, to a recent unfortunate run-in with some blueberries at a local Waitrose.

We understand that she has since recovered, and we wish her the best.)

The centenary remembrance continued with a reference to *The Riviera Girl* and its song 'Bungalow in Quogue', which was recalled but not performed. The trio's next show, *Miss 1917*, was a flop that closed after only 48 shows, but was nonetheless noteworthy for two reasons: it had a rehearsal pianist named Gershwin, who went on to some degree of fame; and it gave us 'The Land Where the Good



Above & below: revellers revelling



Hal and Lara Cazalet wowed the masses.

Songs Go', a haunting song that was hauntingly performed for us by Hal and Lara.

The final project for the season was *Oh, Lady! Lady!!*, which enjoyed a good run of 219 performances at the

Princess Theater the following year, after tryouts that started in 1917. The history of the show includes the decision to drop a particular song during rehearsals. Eight years after its initial rejection, and post some tinkering by Oscar Hammerstein, 'Bill' appeared in the ground-breaking musical *Show Boat*. Lara ended the musical portion of our evening with a rendition of 'Bill', fittingly encouraging her somewhat tipsy and misty-eyed

audience to join her in a repeat of the final chorus in special memory of Norman, who was recalled for his usually first and loudest insistence on an encore by Lara.

Hilary Bruce closed the proceedings. She noted with sadness the passing not only of Norman Murphy but also of Terry Wogan, much beloved past President of the Society. Hilary applauded Gray's Inn for its gracious hospitality; reminded us of our debt to our sponsors, Rathbone Investment Management and Oldfield Partners, for their generosity; and, of course, thanked our entertainers and MC.

We were also reminded that, in addition to the anniversary of Plum's Broadway record, 2016 also marked 100 years since the first UK published appearance of Jeeves in the story 'Extricating Young Gussie' (*Strand Magazine*, 1916). In celebration, Phil Bowen had specially written the poem *Bertie's*

*Ballad in Praise of Jeeves*, a copy of which was presented to all in attendance.

In a final postscript to the evening, US Society President Oily Carlisle (actually one of your humble reporters) extended an invitation to all present to attend that society's October 2017 convention in Washington, D.C. Oily confidently offered his personal guarantee that a good time would be had by all.

Thanks to Ginni Beard for all photos.

# Society News

## February Meeting: A Celebration at the Tup

A note from *Our Impresario/ Butlin's Redcoat*: It has been decreed that 2017 be a year of celebration, being the 20th anniversary of our glorious Society's founding – and quite right, too. The usual tri-annual schedule of masques, glees, and pageants will continue as normal, but with added lustre as we usher in our third decade of existence. An even-more-than-usually Fiendish Quiz is promised for our July eisteddfod, and we're threatening a full-scale theatrical performance for October.

But on February 15, we are taking time out to mark the recent passing of our Founding Chairman, the late Norman Murphy, without whose Herculean efforts we might not be here at all.



Norman had many roles within the Society, including that of its Remembrancer. Now it is our turn to remember this unique Wodehousean, and to celebrate his many achievements via readings, reminiscences, and archives. The raising of glasses will commence at 6 pm (for 6.30)

upstairs at the Savoy Tup, and if there is anything you would care to personally contribute to the evening, please do come along and approach me on the night. Although inevitably tinged with sadness, this will most decidedly *not* be a solemn occasion! Please come along if you can.

– PAUL KENT

## Stuck for a Christmas Gift? Here's an Idea!

Membership of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) makes an excellent Christmas gift for any friends or family who love to read Wodehouse – or, for that matter, anyone who loves reading. Or a good laugh. So why not arrange a gift subscription for a deserving Wodehouse fan?

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## Casey Court Explained

by Keith Hollis

In his article 'Where Was Wodehouse? And When?' (*Wooster Sauce*, September 2016, page 12), Norman Murphy endeavours to explain Plum's two Emsworth addresses in his entry in *Who's Who* for 1908 and 1909. Norman speculates on the whereabouts of Casey's Court, Emsworth, which he has been unable to trace.

Could this have been – a joke? The expression "It's a bit of Casey's Court" was quite common in the first half of the twentieth century, in reference to a gathering of unruly children. My mother frequently used it. I always understood the term to stem from Will Murray's Casey's Court Circus, a popular music hall turn, including children, which was certainly running in 1906 and went on in one form or another until the middle of the century. I believe that at one stage Charlie Chaplin was one of the performers, before he went into silent films.

The expression would have been going by 1908. Could [PGW's entry in *Who's Who*] have been a joke

at the expense of Baldwin King-Hall's school, and Plum was, as previous biographers have stated, still staying at Threepwood in Record Road, a house backing onto the school, and where he seems to have been very much part of school life when in Emsworth?

There's a good tradition of cracks like this in *Who's Who* entries.

*Editor's note. This letter arrived a month before Norman's death, and I passed it on to him, knowing it would make him very happy – and it did. He wrote to Keith: "I am sure you are right. A VERY obscure reference, but as you say, it is not the only joke to appear in Who's Who over the years. In 1931, PG happily registered his telegraphic address as 'Blandings, Audley, London'. Audley Street was the nearest telegraph office to his then address in Dunraven Street."*

*Many thanks to Keith for solving this mystery, which had been pestering Norman for a long time.*



# Klimowski + Green Swizzles = Joy!

by Robert Bruce

In early September, several enthusiastic Wodehouseans attended a reception for the opening of an exhibition featuring the *Everyman* cover illustrations designed by Andrzej Klimowski. Here Robert describes the proceedings on that occasion.

It was, of course, a riot. And why not? There were Green Swizzles galore, those cocktails beloved of any Wodehouse crowd. And they were being downed with enthusiasm for a good cause. The gathering at the London Print Studio was there to celebrate the art of Andrzej Klimowski, whose cover illustrations grace the 99 Wodehouse books in the *Everyman* Overlook edition. The exhibition also showed the sketches and drawings for the final linocuts that appear on the covers. And, as if that was not enough, for the first time limited-edition prints of the cover art were available for sale from the Studio. No wonder glasses were being raised.

At the centre of it all was a very happy Klimowski, Emeritus Professor at the Royal College of Art. He had originally met David Campbell, the publisher of the *Everyman* Library, through a friend. “He asked who I thought should illustrate the books,” Klimowski said, “thinking I’d recommend a graduate of mine. And I recommended myself.” And he has loved it. “It was the opportunity to do something very different, something light-hearted.” The only times he had to change something were when he portrayed Bertie Wooster wearing a monocle, which in the books he never did, and



Andrzej Klimowski and just some of his *Everyman* covers

when he drew a right-handed golfer when, in the book, the character was left-handed. It has obviously been a very happy time.

The Director of the London Print Studio, John Phillips, was equally happy. “His work is wonderful,” he said. “It mixes an English tradition with a Polish graphic tradition.” Also happy was Chisato Tamabayashi, an RCA graduate who had made the models and frames for the exhibition, including a large typewriter with only seven keys, which spelled out WHAT HO!

But the final happiness came from the Green Swizzles, made from “absinthe, white rum, and a few other things”. We duly toasted the wonderful Klimowski, his covers, and his prints.



The joy of swizzling:  
Kris Fowler and Hilary Bruce

*The exhibition ‘What Ho! The Linocuts of Andrzej Klimowski’ ran at the London Print Studio from September 8 until November 12. The limited-edition prints are available from the Studio’s shop.*

## Stuffing the Eelskin

In the October 2016 edition of his *Quote . . . Unquote* newsletter, writer, broadcaster, and Society patron Nigel Rees had this to say:

I had thought that my thorough assault on the quotations and allusions in P.G. Wodehouse had gone as far as it could go. But then I came across this reference in *The Girl in Blue* (1970): “How true is the old saying, attributed to Pliny the Elder, that a man who lets himself get above himself is simply asking for it, for it is just when things seem to be running as smooth as treacle out of a jug that he finds Fate waiting for him round the corner with the stuffed eelskin.” Now PGW may just be teasing us with the erudite reference but there is usually a core of truth in his allusiveness. So, any suggestions? (The stuffed eelskin is, of course, one of his favourite tropes.) In *Right Ho, Jeeves* (1934), reference is made to a saying by Pliny the *Younger* but it is not spelt out. Both these examples may just be PGW’s way of vaguely attributing something to some ancient authority.



# Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

## From Simon Gordon Clark

The confusion between the banjolele and the ukulele (*Letters to the Editor, Wooster Sauce, September 2016*) can be blamed on the late, great George Formby. As has been previously pointed out, he played the banjolele. But he called it the ukulele; there was even a song in one of his films, ‘I’m the Ukulele Man’, which he wasn’t.

But the decision to substitute a trombone as Bertie’s instrument in the *Jeeves and Wooster* series can be defended. It hinges on the difference between a printed and a visual medium. In the book, to mention how the banjolele had been reduced to ashes was powerful enough. But a small pile of unidentifiable ashes would not have made good television, whereas the trombone reduced to twisted metal made a good visual point.

## From Christopher Bellew

*Cocktail Time* is so ingeniously plotted that if it were to be put on the stage it would be a farce of the highest calibre. While keeping so many plot points up in the air, PGW commits a small and unimportant error. Lord Ickenham, staying at Hammer Hall, takes a well-earned rest from spreading sweetness and light to go fishing in a punt on the lake. However, when Phoebe, Sir Raymond (“Beefy”) Bastable’s sister, summons him ashore, he rows. Subsequently, Sir Raymond, with reluctant passenger Howard Saxby on board, rows “like a galley slave” to an island on the lake. Punts are ideal for a reflective Earl to fish from: they don’t wobble – but nor do they have oars.

There could, of course, be two boats, but Uncle Fred was in a punt that he then rowed. Actually, an ornamental, artificial lake would be quite shallow and ideal for punting, so long as the pole didn’t make the clay lining leak.

## From Penelope Forrest

I will never understand how judges of literary awards reach their decisions! I bought both the joint winners of this year’s Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize. While *The Improbability of Love* didn’t make me laugh, it was certainly a delightful and entertaining book whose author juggled her large cast of characters with Wodehousian skill.

But – it seems to me sacrilegious to mention *The Mark and the Void* in the same breath as the Master’s name. Far from producing laughter, it induced nausea. When I gave up at page 220, I kicked myself for having wasted that much time. The thought of Wodehouse reading the description of the visit to the Velvet Dream made me cringe. I could only hope that in his innocence he wouldn’t have understood it. I thought of his remark in *Over Seventy*: “All that frank, outspoken stuff with

those fearless four-letter words. It was a black day for literature, I often think, when the authorities started glazing the walls of public lavatories . . . for the result was that hundreds of young littérateurs, withheld from expressing themselves in the medium they would have preferred, began turning the stuff out in stiff-covered volumes.” I have obviously missed the point, but my only regret is the waste of time and money. Do any other members share my feelings?

## From Murray Hedgcock

Laurence Ogram (*Letters to the Editor, Wooster Sauce, September 2016*), writing on PGW books offered by the dealer Adrian Harrington, caught my attention with his account of “a book called *Twenty-Five Cricket Stories* (George Newnes ca 1900)”. Noting that this includes four Wodehouse short stories, the letter adds: “Harrington describes the book as ‘the first and only edition, exceedingly scarce’, which is why the price tag is £2,500!”

As (comparatively) recently as 2012, the same dealer offered the same book at £4,500, at least six years since he had first listed it, at a similar price. In June 2006, an online catalogue had Harrington present *Twenty-Five Cricket Stories*, suggesting it was published in 1909, and explaining that three of the four stories were in book form for the first time. “The present copy is the publisher’s own file copy. We are unable to find a note of any copy offered for sale or appearing at auction. The bibliographer McIlvaine mentions the title, but does not provide a description. A companion volume, *Twenty-Five Football Stories*, was also mooted by Newnes the following year, but again this has proved virtually impossible to locate. The sheer paucity of copies suggests that both these sporting volumes were offered for sale, but either printed in tiny numbers, possibly withdrawn, or perhaps never issued. The fact that this copy is the publisher’s own copy (and sold as part of the Newnes/Warne archive many years later) may support this as being one of an exceedingly small surviving number. Whatever the actual story, this remains an exceptionally rare book.”

A Sotheran’s catalogue, unfortunately undated, offered a copy with this note: “A curiously rare anthology with only five copies recorded in institutions.” It is recorded as sold, no price given.

And this is where my story really starts . . .

My collection has included, for many years, a rebound copy of *Twenty-Five Cricket Stories*, the inside cover carrying the stamp “Royal Naval War Libraries”.

I have no record of where I found it, or what I paid.

But I am quite willing to consider best offers around £2,500.

# My First Wodehouse Experience

by Eliza Easton

**M**y first experience of PGW was not exactly a good one.

I was eight years old and taking piano lessons every Saturday with my sister. Our teacher preferred my sister (which might have had something to do with our varying practice schedules) and on Flora's eleventh birthday gave her a copy of *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*, the collection of Plum's short stories published in 1940.

After I had plonked my way through a few of the best in 'John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course', Flora was taken for her lesson, and I started to read. Unfortunately, sitting on our tutor's steps and listening to my sister playing Chopin, I fell under the dangerous impression that *real* eggs, beans, and crumpets populated the book. I therefore discarded it, believing it to be impenetrable rubbish for little kids. At eight years old I had decided that I was over anthropomorphism, and positioned myself as staunchly anti-Wodehouse.

I like to think how different it might have been had my sister been given a Jeeves or Blandings book.

It would be six years until I picked up Wodehouse again – having seen Society patron Stephen Fry singing his praises on the BBC. I was a fan of Fry. In fact, just a few weeks before, I had made him the focus of a school essay. It hadn't gone

down particularly well, but I couldn't blame him for that.

So I took the same volume down from the shelves – the only Wodehouse we owned at that time – and sat down to try and understand what Fry could find so comforting in this bizarre author's works. By the second paragraph I realised my mistake. I was besotted.

Since then the books have been constant companions. Wodehouse's ability to see the best in people – and, perhaps more importantly, the humour in their worst – has helped me to do the same. When I went to Oxford, he came with me. When I was in a Russian hospital, he replaced an ill-chosen (pun intended) copy of Dostoevsky. Almost all of my books have curled corners, having been read repeatedly in the bath.

For a year I was lucky enough to live at Waddesdon Manor, the Rothschild property in Buckinghamshire, working with

the wonderful art collection there. It was magical, but could be lonely. Fortunately, the local library was well stocked with PGW – and I always had a Blandings book to remind me just how ridiculous other humans could be, and what a blessing it was to be able to enjoy a quiet glass of red in the local, then walk back to my cottage without bumping into anybody. I didn't have a pig, but I had an equally genial companion in Wodehouse.




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## The Word Around the Clubs

### *The Source of the Dosh?*

The Saturday Briefing of September 3rd's *Daily Express* included a question about where Bertie Wooster got the money to live his extravagant lifestyle and be so well turned out. The response: "This is a hotly debated topic at which Wodehouse's writing offers only hints. We know Bertie's parents are dead and left him with a good inheritance but this seems to take the form of an annual allowance rather than property or assets. His Aunt Agatha and Uncle Wilberforce are definitely very rich as is his uncle George 'Piggy' Wooster, the Earl of Yaxley. Bertie does deny being financially dependent upon Aunt Agatha but as nearly all of the stories are in his voice it's impossible to know whether he is being completely honest." Answers on a postcard, please, from those of you in the know! (Thanks to ALEXANDER DAINTY.)

### *Further Connections*

In the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, we reported the appearance of Society member Mark Smith on the BBC game show *Only Connect* in July. Calling themselves the Psmiths, Mark and his two team members – who were put together when producers discovered they were all Wodehouse fans – won their game convincingly and advanced into the next round. That round aired on November 14, and – hurrah! – once again the Psmiths triumphed over their competition. So they are now through to the third round, and we are, of course, rooting for them to win the brass ring in the final round, whenever that may be. (Keep an eyeball on the BBC schedule.)

# The First Chapter of *Frozen Assets*

by Tony Ring

When it came to finding new plots, most of the successful 19th-century authors had it easy. Jane Austen completed six novels; the Bronte sisters managed seven between them. Over in France, Gustave Flaubert stopped at eight. Admittedly Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and, towards the end of the century, Arthur Conan Doyle were more productive, but they benefitted from the demand from the ever-increasing number of weekly and monthly fiction papers which were desperate for good new material.

Wodehouse's writing apprenticeship also fed those papers in both the UK and the USA, and he realised just how remunerative regular contributions – whether as a series of short stories or as a serialised novel – could be. But the downside of the intense workload that he gave himself was the risk of plot repetition: no matter how well it was disguised, or how long there was between different versions of the same idea, readers and critics would eventually spot the similarities.

Thus, a common lament in his correspondence to close friends such as his daughter, Leonora, his Dulwich roommate Bill Townend, and his long-time collaborator Guy Bolton was that he needed new plots. He was happy to share the royalties for successful ideas: much of *Love Among the Chickens* was based on the experience of one of Townend's friends, and even in those early days, Townend received something for his trouble. In later years Wodehouse virtually formalised this policy on a commercial basis – he and Guy used to swap royalty rights in return for mutual assistance in various ways.

Wodehouse's agreement with George S. Kaufman for the right to utilise most of the latter's play *The Butter and Egg Man* as the second half of *Barmy in Wonderland* (with Wodehouse creating the prequel to the plot of the play in the first part of the book) has been well documented, royalties for the venture being equally shared. He actually incorporated much of Kaufman's colloquial American dialogue unchanged, and was much amused by a review on

May 11, 1952, in the *New York Times* by Ted Robinson, Jr. Not being aware of the book's history, the snooty critic complained:

After all these years not even Wodehouse, by the way, has learned how to imitate colloquial American; his Broadway characters still talk like Aaron Slick of Punkin Creek, which rather tends to spoil the effect.

A similar arrangement arose in relation to a play, much of whose dialogue was used for the opening chapter of the 1964 novel *Frozen Assets*. Guy Bolton went to see a play in Paris, and mentioned it to Plum, presumably suggesting that it had the sort of plot which he might be able to turn into a novel. Exactly

how the arrangements evolved is unclear, but Wodehouse bought the English language rights to the script and incorporated much of the first act in the situation and dialogue of the opening chapter of his novel.

The play, *Le monsieur qui a perdu ses clés*, by Michel Perrin, was presented at the Théâtre Édouard VII in Paris in 1957, and a later production was recorded for French television and televised as part of the *Au théâtre ce soir* series on Christmas Day in 1976. By that time, Wodehouse had long since obtained his English translation of the script, entitled *The Man Who Lost His Keys* (a copy of which was found in Sir Edward Cazalet's Wodehouse



Jean-Jacques Steen as the Sergeant in a Paris Police Station, in the 1957 production of *Le Monsieur qui a perdu ses clés* at the Théâtre Édouard VII in Paris.

archive).

Wodehouse's first chapter simplified the first act of the script, which had involved a husband and wife visiting adjacent offices in the same municipal buildings in Paris to report problems and ask for help. He concentrated on the part of the plot which involved the husband, Gérard Aubin (in the rest of this article, 'Gerard'), a film screenwriter based in Paris visiting the Sergeant of Police to report the loss of his wallet, containing some money and keys to the place where he was staying. Plum's character, Gerald Shoesmith ('Jerry'), who underwent a similar experience, was English and due to return home the following day.

Wodehouse drew on the script's setting, descriptions, and dialogue to present a powerful representation of post-war French bureaucracy, presumably enhanced by his own experiences of living there in the 1930s and 1940s. In the book, Jerry enters the Police Station and soon starts to lose patience with the Sergeant, who does not look up or acknowledge his arrival, merely carrying on the routine of stamping documents. After a while, Jerry speaks:

"Pardon, monsieur."  
 "Sir?"  
 "It's about my wallet. I've lost my wallet."  
 "Next door. Office of the Commissaire's Secretary."  
 "But I've just been there, and he told me to come here."  
 "Quite in order. You notify him again, and then you notify me."  
 "So if I notify him again, he will notify me to notify you."  
 "Precisely."  
 "You mean I go to him . . . ?"  
 "Just so."  
 "And he sends me to you?"  
 "Exactly."  
 "And then you send me to him?"  
 "It is the official procedure in the case of lost property."

Not surprisingly, Jerry's spirits sink to an even lower low. Wodehouse summarises his feelings from his own imagination and experience, rather than from Perrin's script, which is so good it bears repeating:

He perceived that he was up against French red tape, compared to which that of Great Britain and America is only pinkish. Where in the matter of rules and regulations London and New York merely scratch the surface, these Gauls plumb the depths. It is estimated that a French minor official, with his heart really in his work, can turn more hairs grey and have more clients tearing those hairs than any six of his opposite numbers on the payrolls of other nations.

The Sergeant eventually listens to his problem, and the dialogue in which it is explained is closely adapted from the Perrin play, as is the story of how the wallet came to be lost. Although incidental details inevitably differ, much remains intact. Jerry explains how he had been to see a film, and the Sergeant asks what is showing. Jerry replies:

"I can't remember the name of the film, but Caroline Jasmin was in it. It was about a little flower-girl who becomes a great movie star because she has such a fascinating look in her eyes. Then one day it's discovered that one of her eyes is glass, and her career is ruined."

The Sergeant says they must have changed the bill, for in the film he saw:

". . . a girl, very poor and innocent, who meets a man, very rich and dissolute. He falls in love with her, and she gives herself to him in the hope of reforming him. But associating with him turns her into a trollop, while he, transformed by her original purity, repents and goes into a monastery."

In the play, Gerard describes both of these scenarios in virtually the same language, and claims

credit for both of them during his career as a film screenwriter.

The two lost wallets prove to have both been made of crocodile leather, maroon in colour and about six inches long, and each contains two keys, one big, one small. The discussion in the book concerning the keys – especially whether the 'keybit' of one of them is grooved or not – seems absurdly whimsical, and comes almost straight from the play.

In each case, the Sergeant then admits that he might actually have the wallet with him, as the keys fit the descriptions given, and the sums in the wallet are more or less in accordance with the amounts reported as lost. So Gerard and Jerry are asked to sign a report which he draws up. But even that simple step is fraught:

"Your name?"  
 "Gerald Shoosmith."  
 "Gerald . . . is that your surname?"  
 "No, my Christian name."  
 "In that case you should say Zoosmeet, Gerald."

As you might guess, Gerard Aubin is requested to say Aubin, Gerard.

So Jerry (or Gerard) signs the document, reaches for his wallet, and is stopped by the Sergeant, as the cost of the stamps to be attached to the report has to be paid. When Jerry suggests deducting it from the contents, at first the Sergeant is merely shocked, but then, when it is suggested as an alternative that the Sergeant should make Jerry a temporary loan – with substantial interest – of the 20 francs required – he stonily enquires whether it is an attempt to bribe him. He even threatens to arrest Gerard for vagrancy:

"I'm not a tramp."  
 "You've got no papers and no money on your person."  
 "Of course I haven't. You've got them!"

Jerry then makes the practical suggestion that the Sergeant should amend the report to reduce the amount of money stated to be in the wallet by the 20 francs needed for the stamps. The Sergeant checks with his superior to see if that is in order, and one rather feels he is disappointed when told that it is. However, it does enable him to complete the *coup de grâce*. After rewriting the report – with the correct number of carbons – he hands it over to Jerry for signature.

He stamped the paper, put it on top of the pile already stamped, opened the drawer in which he had placed the wallet, took out the wallet, took twenty francs from it, replaced it in the drawer, locked the drawer.

"Now everything is in order," he said. "Here is a copy of your statement. The top copy and one carbon are reserved for the files."

He seemed to consider the affair closed, and Jerry was obliged to point out that there still remained something to be done.

"But you haven't given me my wallet."

A faint smile passed over the Sergeant's face. How little, he was feeling, the public knew about official procedure.

"You will call for that in three days time at the Lost Property Office, 36 Rue Bourdillion," he said with the genial air of one imparting good news.

Jerry had shot from his seat and was clutching his hair.

"Three *days!* But I'm leaving for England tomorrow!"

"I remember, yes, you told me, did you not?"

"Then where am I going to sleep tonight?"

"Ah," said the Sergeant, seeming to admit that he had a point there.

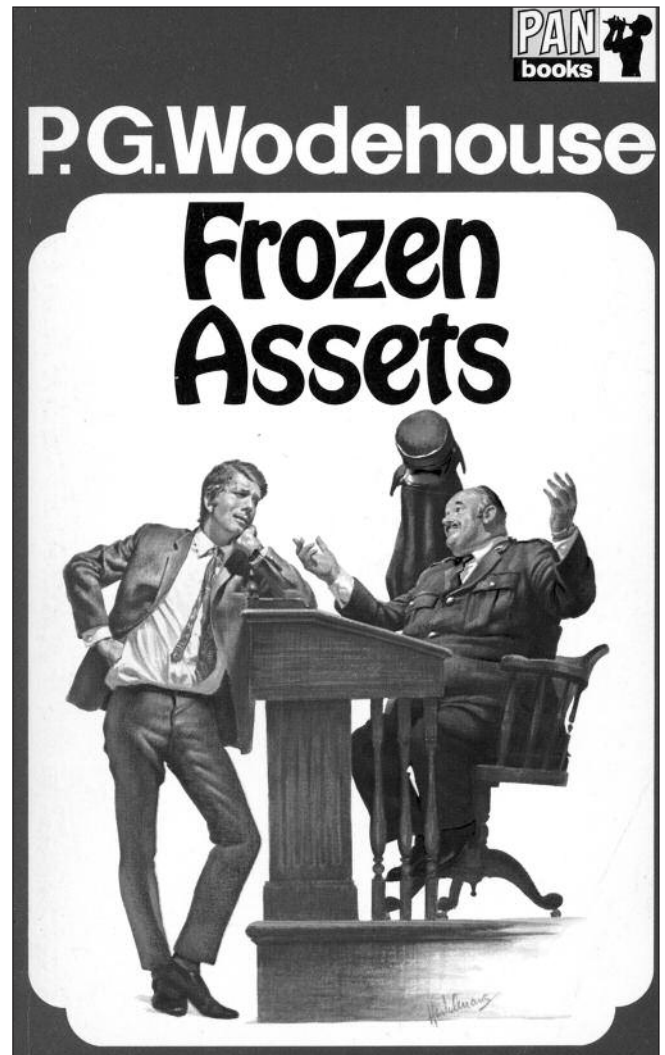
He began stamping papers again.

Gerard's experience, though similar, sends him instead in three days' time to 36 Rue Morillous. Paris seems stuffed with Lost Property offices!

The remainder of *Frozen Assets* proceeds on more traditional Wodehousean lines, but his take on the comic work of a French playwright is well worth a look if the book is not familiar to you.

Wodehouse converted several of his own plays (or plays/libretti in which he had a hand) to novels, and they are frequently regarded as second-rate. If you bear in mind that to read a typical Wodehouse novel out loud, it will take between six and eight hours, whereas a play may last between two and two-and-a-half hours of stage time, you realise that he has to create twice as much narrative and new dialogue to support the original plot without unduly distorting the original. Reread *If I Were You*, *Spring Fever*, *The Old Reliable*, or *Ring for Jeeves* – all converted from plays – and see if you agree that the quality of his writing is just that little bit lower than normal.

There is another Wodehouse novel based on a play which was performed almost 50 years earlier. I hope to look at that one in a future article – all I will say now is that there is an unexpected twist in the tale.



## Wodehouse Quiz 21: *The Sporting Life*

by David Buckle

1. In *Mike and Smith*, where is Mr Downing cricket master and head of the fire brigade?
2. Which friend of Bertie Wooster and fiancé (later husband) of Stephanie 'Stiffy' Byng, is the curate at Market Snodsbury and once played rugby for Oxford and England?
3. Of which boxer does Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge briefly become the manager?
4. Which friend of Freddie Threepwood in his university days at Oxford successfully took part in rowing (for which he nearly got his blue) and swimming (for which he did)?
5. In 'Scratch Man', which former British amateur champion golfer named his children Sandwich, Hoylake, St. Andrew, Troon, and Prestwick?
6. In *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, which horse was the main rival to Simla for the big race at the Bridmouth-on-Sea meeting?
7. In which Blandings novel does the Reverend Cuthbert 'Bill' Bailey, former boxing champion at Oxford, get blackmailed into stealing a pig?
8. The Wodehouse short story 'Against the Clock' features which sport?
9. In 'The Heel of Achilles', who hires Open champion Sandy McHoots to teach him how to play golf?
10. From which Wodehouse novel comes the quote "The fascination of shooting as a sport depends almost wholly on whether you are at the right or wrong end of the gun"?

(Answers on page 19)

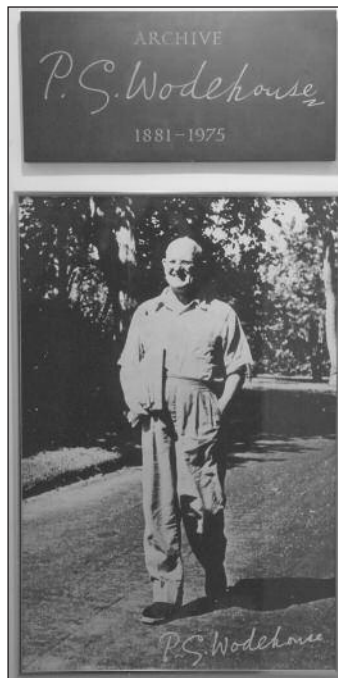
# The Wodehouse Archive Finds a Home

On the 1st December, Wodehouseans the world over rejoiced to learn that P. G. Wodehouse's personal archive has been made available to the British Library by Sir Edward Cazalet, PGW's step-grandson.

As noted in the official announcement, "The archive spans material dating from 1900–2005 and includes manuscript drafts and notebooks relating to Wodehouse's fiction and essays (including *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, the last novel in the Jeeves and Wooster books, and his final published novel, *Sunset at Blandings*) and material relating to his writing for film and cinema alongside extensive correspondence with family, friends and fellow artists including Evelyn Waugh and Ira Gershwin, and his 'Camp Diary.'" Kathryn Johnson, the BL's Curator of

Theatrical Archives and Manuscripts, added: "It is a privilege for the British Library to take on the P.G. Wodehouse Archive, which will be an extremely valuable resource for researchers and for everyone with an interest in twentieth century literature."

The archive was conceived by Sir Edward in consultation with his grandmother, Lady Wodehouse, following Wodehouse's death in 1975. Some years later he enlisted Kristin Thompson to help him in organising and conserving his ever-growing collection of material, which took up residence in specially created rooms in his home. Thompson eventually published *Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes* as a result of her work on the archive. Meanwhile, over the years Sir Edward generously gave numerous Wodehouse scholars, researchers, and enthusiasts opportunities to plumb the archive's



wealth of books, letters, manuscripts, and personal PGW items. In the BL's announcement, he is quoted as follows:

I am so delighted that the British Library is to provide a home for my P.G. Wodehouse Archive. Given that Wodehouse is now ranked as one of the leading, if not *the* leading, humorous authors of the 20th century writing in the English language, I believe that this broad-based collection will not only bring much pleasure and laughter to its readers but will also prove to be critical to any serious study of 20th-century humour and literature.

PGW would have been so proud to know that he is now counted amongst his great literary heroes, headed by Shakespeare, Tennyson and so many others. This archive I have built up over a period of more than 40 years since Plum's death in 1975. It contains many of his drafts and manuscripts, and has copious quantities of correspondence with composers, authors, relations and close friends, as well as a wide range of other interesting documents.

The British Library has been greatly enriched by this valuable addition to their already outstanding literary archive collections – and the P. G. Wodehouse Archive has found a great new home!



Sir Edward Cazalet and his assistant, Pauline Grant, with some archive treasures

All photos courtesy of Sir Edward Cazalet.



Some personal PGW items – including that famous umbrella!

"Have no anxiety, my dear boy," said Lord Ickenham. "It is like your kind heart to be so concerned, but have no anxiety. I shall tell her that I was compelled to give the money to you to enable you to buy back some compromising letters from a Spanish *demi-mondaine*. She will scarcely be able to blame me for rescuing a fondly-loved nephew from the clutches of an adventuress. It may be that she will feel a little vexed with you for a while, and that you may have to allow a certain time to elapse before you visit Ickenham again, but then I shan't be wanting you at Ickenham till the rattng season starts, so all is well."

(From 'Uncle Fred Flits By', 1935)

# The German Wodehouse Centenary

by Martin Breit

The year 2017 marks a Wodehousian jubilee of which few may be aware: 100 years ago the first German translation of a Wodehouse novel was published, starting an enduring stream of publications. Although Wodehouse never really became a household name in Germany, sixty-one of his novels, nine anthologies, two biographical works, and one dissertation have been published, to name only the printed word.

*Jimmy, der Eindringling* is the very first German title of a Wodehouse story, published in 1917 by Engelborns Roman-Bibliothek. A translation of the 1910 novel *The Intrusion of Jimmy* (UK title *A Gentleman of Leisure*), the book contains the faulty note “translated from the American”, probably because the USA had not yet entered the Great War at the time.<sup>1</sup>

Whether or not the book enjoyed great popularity remains uncertain, but it is not likely. The next translation of a Wodehouse text into German would only appear ten years later, but that time the ball really started rolling. In 1927 alone there were three new translations, followed by fourteen others, up to 1937. The year 1929 also saw the printing of the play *Kikeriki* by Austrian playwright Rudolf Lothar and P. G. Wodehouse. I have never seen that book, but I suspect this to be an adaptation of *Love Among the Chickens*, which is suggested by the title (‘kikeriki’ is our equivalent of ‘cock-a-doodle-doo’).

The last publication of Wodehouse in Germany before the outbreak of the Second World War was a reissue of *Heavy Weather*. Under the title *Ein X für ein U*, it appeared as a 30-Pfennig-Roman – a dime novel. The price was as cheap as the title.

After that, Plum’s only books issued by German publishers in the Third Reich were the famous Tauchnitz editions in the original language, primarily produced for foreign markets.<sup>2</sup> The Tauchnitz editions started in 1841 and are considered to be the earliest modern paperback books. The foreign author editions ran for more than 5,000 publications up to 1943, when the company’s premises were bombed.

The last titles in the long history of books were Wodehouse’s *Money in the Bank* (the first European edition of that novel) and a reissue of *Summer Lightning*, the last of forty Wodehouse novels in the edition.

*Ein X für ein U* was also the working title for a German theatrical motion picture. This version of *Heavy Weather* finally premiered as *Der Meisterdetektiv* in 1944, without Plum ever having known of its existence. The film portrayed an idyllic world that no longer existed in war-torn Germany, in a setting that was transferred from Shropshire to Pomerania. Although the film featured some well-known actors, it was not greatly successful. A contemporary critic voiced her disappointment, saying she expected a film of “Sherlock-Holmesian style”. The best part of the movie, she said, was the

lovely credit sequence, while the story sinks into buffoonery and antique humour.<sup>3</sup>

Although this was, for a time, the only German adaptation of Wodehouse for the big screen, between the 1960s and 1980s a number of TV shows were produced based on Plum’s stories, making Germany the biggest producer of Wodehouse adaptations, apart from the U.K. and the U.S.A. I have no idea of the quality of these

productions, since they were made before I came into the world and they have never managed to rerun. (Although it is possible to buy copies from the German television network archives, they are very expensive. I have not attempted to buy one myself, as I don’t expect them to be corkers.)

The 1940s remain the only decade in which Wodehouse was not published in the German language. The first postwar publication in West Germany came in 1950, but on the other side of the iron curtain Wodehouse became extinct. The reasons why can only be speculated – possibly because his work was unwanted in Russia, possibly because his aristocratic world was seen as a glorification of the enemies of socialism. But it’s also possible that simply no one in the GDR took any notice of him.



Almost a century of Wodehouse:  
The good, the bad, and the ugly ranging from 1917 to 2007



In West Germany, however, things started once again to liven up. Numerous new books and reissues were published, climaxing in the mid-1970s. In 1976 alone, six new translations were available to the avid reader. Why this sudden increase in popularity? Possibly because the cliché of the English rural idyll was, and still is, enormously admired in Germany. Nowadays, every year, German television produces en masse the novels, preferably set in Cornwall, by Rosamunde Pilcher, Katie Fforde, or Rosie M. Banks (well, surely not Banks, but I'm sure those responsible for the less ambitious fictional productions at ZDF<sup>4</sup> would love to get a hold of masterpieces like *'Twas Once in May* or *Only A Factory Girl*). It is noteworthy that all the German Wodehouse films and shows – with one exception from the silent film era – are set at Blandings Castle. Countryside idyll in its purest form.

Reading the translated novels is not always a pleasure. Many of the books seemed to be translated without any love, wit was eliminated, and the novels were reduced to pure plot with hardly a pinch of humorous language left. They were touted as *heiterer Roman* (humorous/cheerful novel) or another deterring label. (My personal advice: keep away from everything that is called 'heiter'. It is definitely not.) I once found an edition of *The Little Nugget* in a second-hand bookshop. Had it not had the name Wodehouse on it, I would have never even considered taking the book into my hands. The cover shows a ginger-headed brat, innocently giggling, surrounded by a stylized bay leaf wreath. Underneath came the misleading title *Ein Goldjunge* – a translation that while technically correct, has a totally false connotation. If you see the book, you might think (well, at least I did): "Oh dear, this is a *heiterer Roman* about the mildly fascinating adventures of a kid who is a little bit cheeky, but never so much as to upset his grandma." Does that sound like Ogden Ford? I don't think so.

Despite such examples as I have mentioned here, there were, of course, good and enjoyable translations throughout the years. Unfortunately, most were hardly able to do justice to the originals. No wonder that Wodehouse – if German people ever came across the name to begin with – is somehow ill-reputed over

here. My experience has been that whenever I mentioned the name Wodehouse during my studies of Anglistics, he was not known or not liked, because he "is only an author of light fiction". Well, I know of a couple of academic titles (including my own humble effort and a much more notable doctorate degree by a young lady from Stuttgart) that have been acquired with Wodehousian topics. Obviously, there's much more potential in Wodehouse than many academics would grant.

Fortunately, on the other hand, there is the recent edition of highly enjoyable translations by Thomas Schlachter, begun in the early 2000s by Edition Epoca. During the publication of these wonderful books, some feuilleton publishers publicly showed their admiration for Plum, as did bestselling author Daniel Kehlmann. Hence, it was a sad moment when Epoca had to cease publication after only twelve books for unknown reasons. All the translated books were republished as paperbacks by one of the big houses, so it seems safe to say they sold solidly. Too bad for all those hoping for a complete German Wodehouse edition.

Nevertheless, P. G. Wodehouse has been on the map of the German literary landscape for one century now, and will continue to be. There have been ups and downs and long intervals without new material being published, but maybe in the coming decades interest in his work will again flourish in Germany as it did in the 1970s. Plum has his faithful audience, even if unorganized.

And who knows – perhaps someday even a German Wodehouse Society will be founded. An appealing idea indeed.

#### Notes

1. Read Randall Bytwerk's essay 'Wodehouse gets a German Trim' in *Plum Lines*, Summer 2016, to learn more.
2. Randall Bytwerk made a detailed analysis in the above mentioned essay. You really should read it!
3. If you want to learn more about this movie and its background, see my essay 'Blandings in Berlin' in *Plum Lines*, Winter 2013.
4. ZDF = Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, Germany's second public-service television broadcaster.

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## Two Cosy Moments

***Life, the Universe and Everything*, by Douglas Adams (Folio Society, 2014)**

(from Barry Chapman)

The introduction to this Folio edition of Adams's book has an introduction in which Jon Canter refers to Adams as "a P. G. Wodehouse for the digital age".

***Death of a Gossip*, by M. C. Beaton (1985)**

(from Carolyn De La Plain)

This book is the first in the series featuring Scottish

constable Hamish Macbeth . The following passage is found in chapter 1:

Alice sat down on the bed, one leg in her trousers and one out. Her ideas of American men had been pretty much based on the works of P. G. Wodehouse. Men who looked like Marvin were supposed to be sweet and deferential to their wives, although they might belong to the class of Sing-Sing '45.

# An Original, Refreshing, and Stimulating Tonic

## Tony Ring Reviews Highballs for Breakfast

When an author has been in no position to write a new book for some forty years, yet retains an underlying popularity which needs to be passed on to a new generation, what can the author's publisher do?

Where Wodehouse is concerned, Hutchinson's answer this year has been to compile an omnibus of the best of his writing on the subject of drink. Alcoholic liquor. Prohibition. Getting scrooched. The six varieties of hangover. Even the soul-sadness of a Russian peasant. (And if you don't recognise that reference, read on. It will remind you that there are still plenty of Wodehouse's books you have not yet read!)

The book was compiled by Richard T. Kelly, an evidently well-read Wodehousean, who in 15 chapters has quoted from 33 books, some one-third of Wodehouse's total output. While concentrating on short extracts and quotations illustrating the book's 15 chapters (some with eye-catching titles such as 'God's Own English Country Pub', 'Puritans and Bores', and 'The Back of the Drinks Cabinet'), the book contains two extensive quotations. The first is from *The Story of William* and is definitely the best Wodehouse short story dealing with the effects of alcohol. The second is the famous Speech-Day scene from *Right Ho, Jeeves*, when the overflowing Gussie Fink-Nottle, forsaking his normal orange juice, presents the prizes at Market Snodsbury Grammar School in a state of inebriation unprecedented in the annals of education. These two certainly have valid claims to their places in the book.

Are there highlights in the shorter quotations which may offer a welcome reminder of the writing skills we so enjoy – or which can tempt you to reread some books or start anew? I mentioned Russian peasants earlier, a reference to the despair which Freddie Rooke felt in *Jill the Reckless* when seated in the Drones Club awaiting his host's arrival for a binge (but, not being a member himself, unable to acquire a cocktail):

No wonder Freddie experienced the sort of abysmal soul-sadness which afflicts one of Tolstoi's Russian peasants when, after putting in a heavy day's work strangling his father, beating his wife, and dropping the baby into the city reservoir, he turns to the cupboard, only to find the vodka-bottle empty.

You can read again Uncle Fred's eulogy to the May Queen, from *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*:

"Do we by any chance know a beverage called May Queen? Its foundation is any good, dry

champagne, to which is added liqueur brandy, armagnac, kummel, yellow chartreuse and old stout, to taste."

. . . and Eggy Mannering's surprise on learning of the apparent activities of the Temple of the New Dawn in California, shortly after Prohibition ended:

"Haven't you ever heard of the Temple of the New Dawn?"

"Not that I remember."

"Haven't you ever heard of Sister Lora Luella Scott?"

"No. Who is she?"

"She is the woman who is leading California out of the swamp of alcohol."

"Good God!" I could tell by Eggy's voice that he was interested. "Is there a swamp of alcohol in these parts?"

The book's concluding pages are a treat worth waiting for – and the penultimate sentence explains the title. An article by Plum for *Vanity Fair* in 1915, entitled 'My Battle with Drink', could easily be one of the *Tales of the Unexpected* and will be new to you!

And if you have forgotten the six varieties of hangover – or believe your nearest and dearest should learn about them – this may be the book to solve your Christmas present problems. Its relatively modest length is matched by the equally modest price of £9.99 for a well-presented hardback book with a neat jacket similar to those adorning other recent Hutchinson editions.

Better yet, it is in the shops now.



# The Wooster Source

by Graeme Davidson

*This is the real Tabasco,  
It's the word from Bertie Wooster,  
Who, to help his chums, oft devises  
damnfool plans where he deceives  
And then perceives he needs to be  
bailed out by his valet Jeeves.*



"My uncle has given the little woman's proofs the once-over and admits her claim. I've just been having five snappy minutes with him on the telephone. He says that you and I made a fool of him, and he could hardly speak, he was so shirty. Still, he made it clear all right that my allowance has gone phut again."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't waste time being sorry for me," said young Bingo grimly. "He's coming to call on you to-day to demand a personal explanation."

"Great Scott!"

"And the little woman is coming to call on you to demand a personal explanation."

"Good Lord!"

"I shall watch your future career with some considerable interest," said young Bingo.

I bellowed for Jeeves.

"Jeeves!"

"Sir?"

"I'm in the soup."

*'All's Well', The Inimitable Jeeves (1923)*

"There are all sorts of ways of nobbling favourites," he said, in a sort of death-bed voice. "You ought to read some of these racing novels. In *Pipped on the Post*, Lord Jasper Mauleverer as near as a toucher outed Bonny Betsy by bribing the head lad to slip a cobra into her stable the night before the Derby!"

"What are the chances of a cobra biting Harold, Jeeves?"

"Slight I should imagine, sir. And in such an event, knowing the boy as intimately as I do, my anxiety would be entirely for the snake."

'Still, unceasing vigilance, Jeeves.'

'Most certainly, sir.'

*'The Purity of the Turf', The Inimitable Jeeves (1923)*

# Poet's Corner

## The Maiden's Tragedy

(The *Spectator* complains that closer acquaintance with a favourite novelist is generally disappointing.)

I'd read his books since I was ten,  
My love for him was frantic.  
He was my noblest, best of men,  
So strong and so romantic.  
I waited on in patience, for  
I'd heard he was a bachelor.

At last when time had hurried by  
(His usual occupation),  
And I had put my hair up, I  
Received an invitation  
"To meet" – I read as through a mist –  
"John Blank, the famous novelist".

I came, I saw, I turned away.  
Ah, disillusion's dread ache!  
My host and hostess bade me stay:  
I said I had a headache.  
I add no more, save only that  
Not merely was he bald, but fat!

Oh, years have come and years have flown  
Since first my youthful love erred,  
But, though I'm better now, I own,  
I've never quite recovered.  
Cannot a law be passed, I ask,  
To make each writer wear a mask?

From *Vanity Fair*, April 13, 1905

## Answers to Mastermind Quiz

(Page 14)

1. Sedleigh School
2. The Reverend Harold 'Stinker' Pinker
3. Wilberforce 'Battling' Billson
4. The Reverend Rupert 'Beefy' Bingham
5. John Rockett
6. Potato Chip
7. *Service with a Smile*
8. Cricket
9. American multi-millionaire Vincent Jopp
10. *The Adventures of Sally*

It was one of those still evenings you get in the summer, when you can hear a snail clear its throat a mile away.

(From 'Jeeves Takes Charge', 1916)

# The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

## Don't Overlook Recent US First Editions: Part One

The publication in the UK by Everyman of a uniform hardback series of 99 Wodehouse titles concluded in 2015 (Jonathan Bacchus, 'The Everyman Wodehouse', *Wooster Sauce*, September 2015, p9). The series included two titles containing stories which had not previously been published in book form in the UK and which therefore constituted UK first editions, namely *Kid Brady Stories & A Man of Means* and *The Swoop! & The Military Invasion of America* (see 'The Bibliographic Corner: Two New Wodehouse First Editions', *Wooster Sauce*, December 2013, p20). All the Everyman titles were also published in the US by the Overlook Press, using both the titles and the texts of the Everyman editions. Until recently, I had negligently overlooked the fact that, for various reasons, several of these Overlook titles represent US first editions. I am extremely grateful to Graeme Davidson for drawing this principle to my attention.

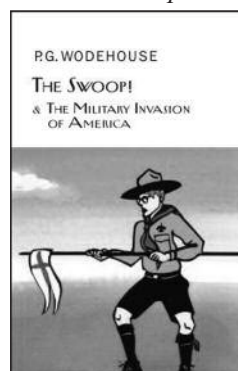
The various grounds on which some of the Overlook titles can be considered US first editions are listed below. The first category incontrovertibly represents US first editions. The other three categories are more subject to debate, and different readers, depending on how tightly or loosely they define 'first editions', will have different views.

- Books never previously published in the US; now published by Overlook in the US.
- Books previously published in the US under a different title to the corresponding UK title, and where the text of the previous US publication varied materially from the UK text; now published by Overlook in the US using the UK title and the UK text.
- Books previously published in the US under the same title as in the UK, but where the text of the previous US publication varied materially from the UK text; now published by Overlook in the US using the UK text.
- Books previously published in the US under a different title to the corresponding UK title, but where the text of the US edition was essentially the same as the UK text; now published by Overlook in the US using the UK title.

Examining the first category in more detail, the following books had not previously been published in the US until the recent Overlook editions appeared, or at least not as far as I am aware. (This discounts some print-on-demand versions of pre-1923 material which is out of copyright in the US, being publications which I always struggle to

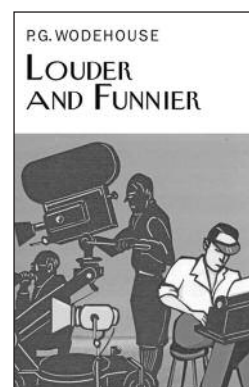
regard as bona fide for bibliographic purposes.) My knowledge of US first editions is primarily derived from the *McIlvaine* bibliography and *Addendum*, so it is possible that editions published more recently have escaped my notice; I would be pleased to receive notice of any errors or omissions from more knowledgeable readers. The publication dates of the Overlook editions, as shown on the publisher's website, are given in brackets after each title.

- *Tales of Wrykyn and Elsewhere* (14 August 2014). These school short stories, originally published in UK magazines between 1901 and 1911, had not previously been published in book form in the US.
- *Kid Brady Stories & A Man of Means* (10 April 2014). The seven Kid Brady stories were originally published in *Pearson's Magazine* in the US between September 1905 and March 1907 (*McIlvaine*, D48.1-7), and *A Man of Means* was first serialised in the UK, in *The Strand*, between April and September 1914 (D133.30-35), but neither of these items had previously been published in book form in the US.
- *The Swoop! & The Military Invasion of America* (10



April 2014). *The Swoop!* had previously been published in book form in the US, in the Heineman facsimile edition of 1993 (AAbj11), but *The Military Invasion of America* had not previously been published in book form in the US, having originally appeared in the US magazine *Vanity Fair* in July and August 1915 (D67.13-14).

- *The Man Upstairs and Other Stories* (14 April 2011). This was originally published by Methuen in the UK in 1914 (A17a), but never published in the US until the Overlook edition.
- *My Man Jeeves* (10 May 2007). Originally published by George Newnes in the UK in 1919 (A22a), this was never published in the US until the Overlook edition.
- *Louder and Funnier* (11 August 2015). This was originally published by Faber & Faber in the UK in 1932 (A45a), but never published in the US until the Overlook edition.



- *Doctor Sally* (2 April 2009). Originally published by Methuen in the UK in 1932 (A46a), this was never published in the US until the Overlook edition.

The second category comprises books previously published in the US under a different title to the corresponding UK title, and where the text of the previous US publication varied materially from the UK text. These comprise the following titles now published by Overlook in the US, using both the title and the text of the UK first edition.

- *Something Fresh* (30 April 2005). Originally published in the US as *Something New* (A18a). *Something New* had included a reworking of the



“boots” episode from *Mike* (A12a), but this was omitted from *Something Fresh* (A18b).

- *Performing Flea* (14 August 2014). This was originally published in the US as *Author! Author!* (A76b), which, as *McIlvaine* says, “is extensively revised from the London edition of *Performing Flea* [A76a]”.
- *Over Seventy* (9 April 2015). Originally published in the US as *America, I Like You* (A79a). A review of the latter’s contents, as listed by *McIlvaine*, reveals fundamental differences to the contents of *Over Seventy* (A79b).

In part two of this column we will examine the titles in the third and fourth categories.

## An Arboreal Baptism for Plum

by Martin Breit

The year 2017 sees not only the centenary of Wodehouse publications in Germany (see page 16), but also a unique event that I hope will attract some interest.

As you may have read in the September 2015 issue of *Wooster Sauce*, there is a tree of special interest in the park of Degenershausen, that rural refuge where Plum was allowed to spend two joyful summers after being released from German internment. He was a guest of the Bodenhausen family and was able to reunite with Ethel, his dog, and his work. To think about the latter, Wodehouse used to sit underneath a little-leaf linden, situated solitarily on the meadow facing the manor house.

Now, more than 70 years later, this tree is to be officially baptized ‘Wodehouse-Linde’ in a celebration that will also see the unveiling of an information board about Plum’s time at this special place. It will also be possible to obtain original cuttings from that tree, so that everybody can plant his own genuine Wodehouse-Linde at home.

As Degenershausen is only a stone’s throw away from many remarkable places, it is definitely worth considering attending the event. There’s Quedlinburg, one of Europe’s most remarkable medieval cities, with more than 1,300 timber-framed buildings; Burg Falkenstein, the magnificent medieval castle just round the corner, which Plum also visited; and the Harz mountains, with many great places to visit. And of course there is the park, which today is run by volunteers and is a beautiful sight itself.

The event will probably take place in the second half of May 2017, at Degenershausen 8, 06543 Falkenstein/Harz, Germany. There are no details of the exact date and programme at this moment; more information will be provided in the March 2017 issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

You can find Degenershausen online at [www.landschaftspark-degenershausen.de/](http://www.landschaftspark-degenershausen.de/).



### A Cross for Percy Jeeves

In the year when we marked the centenary of Percy Jeeves’s death on the Somme (see *Wooster Sauce*, September 2016), it seemed appropriate to also commemorate him on Remembrance Day in November. For that reason, ROBERT BRUCE thoughtfully made this cross, which he planted in the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

“If half of what he has written is true,” said Florence, “your uncle’s youth must have been perfectly appalling. The moment we began to read he plunged straight into a most scandalous story of how he and my father were thrown out of a music-hall in 1887!”

“Why?”

“I decline to tell you why.”

It must have been something pretty bad. It took a lot to make them chuck people out of music-halls in 1887.

(From ‘Jeeves Takes Charge’, 1916)

# Recent Press Comment

**Country Life, July 6** (from Beth Carroll)

In 'The Best of Britain', PGW got three mentions.

**The Guardian, August 13** (from Terry Taylor)

In comparing Donald Trump with prewar demagogues, Jonathan Freedland said that, in some cases, derision was the right response. He recalled that "Britian's own would-be Hitler, Oswald Mosley, was mocked into oblivion by P. G. Wodehouse's fictional version, Roderick Spode".

**The Spectator, August 27** (from Christopher Bellew)

Mary Wakefield said of Boris Johnson that "he's popular because he's funny, but for all of his Wodehousian ways he doesn't see himself as part of a superior, more serious class".

**The Globe and Mail, August 26**

When asked, "Is there a book you return to again and again, a work that would make life on a desert island bearable?", columnist Marcus Gee chose *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*: "Comic writers of real genius are rare. Wodehouse came closer than anyone in making comedy into art. What flowed from his clattering typewriter is itself a kind of music. He had perfect pitch. That's why he bears rereading again and again, just for the pure pleasure of it."

**The Daily Telegraph, August 29**

A review of the update of *Are You Being Served?* made its point by saying that it "made Mrs Brown's Boys look like PG Wodehouse". They meant it to sting, by Jove!

**The Daily Telegraph, August 31**

In her piece entitled 'Peru fails to see funny side of its leader's British sense of humour, Donna Bowater wrote: "From Basil Fawlty to PG Wodehouse, the sarcastic wit and dry humour of the British would seem to have a universal appeal. But not for the president of Peru, it appears, whose sense of humour – honed at Oxford University – has left his compatriots puzzled, if not offended."

In the Fashions & Features section of the same issue, there was a raft of references to the Master, all connected to the former obits editor Hugh Massingberd, who was said to "owe much to PG Wodehouse". The current editor, Andrew M Brown added that "Massingberd's vision was essentially a comic one. His chief inspirations [included] PG Wodehouse". Additionally, Georgia Powell wrote of Massingberd's "Wodehousian turn of phrase".

**The Oldie, September 2016** (from Jonathan Bacchus)

Contained an article by Michael Leapman describing a meeting he had with Wodehouse in 1971.

**The Boston Musical Intelligencer, September 2**

Reported that the College of Wooster, Ohio (surely not a coincidence) performed *Have A Heart*. The pre-

performance was about "P. G. Wodehouse, who wrote the book and lyrics with Guy Bolton. Few people realise that Wodehouse was active for many years writing for the Broadway stage, creating some of the screwball comedy plots of the shows that turned Broadway away from big Ruritanian operetta to the modern musical comedy."

**The Observer, September 4** (from Terry Taylor)

Philip Norman wrote that he interviewed P.G. Wodehouse at his home on Long Island in 1969, noting that Plum "gave me autographed copies of two of his books, one a pristine 1909 paperback subsequently valued at £2000". When he came home on the newly launched QE2, "Wodehouse sent me a box of cigars as a "sailing gift" and – sweet man! – a dust-jacket quote for my debut novel".

**Financial Times, September 10**

A letter to David Tang, responding to his article on 'How to Choose the Right Tie', contained the following: "I think your yellow tie is smashing. Can you give us some tips on how to choose a good tie and would you agree with Jeeves's views on pink ties as being quite unsuitable? Jeeves did not disapprove of ties that were specifically pink. Rather he regarded ties that were 'ornate' as unsuitable. It was Wooster who assumed that Jeeves didn't like 'the cheerful pink' in a tie he wanted to wear. In the end Jeeves won because, following the incident of Lady Malvern, Wooster, feeling it 'an occasion for rich rewards', instructed Jeeves to burn 'that pink tie'."

**Albuquerque Journal, September 13**

(from Sharon Mitchell)

Crossword clue to 24 across to be read with 26 across. 1982 Al Pacino film (6) and 1962 P.G. Wodehouse book (6). The answers were "Author, Author".

**The Hindu, September 14**

In 'The inscrutable (sic) Jeeves' Arathi M wrote: "Ladies and gentlemen, we present to you one of the funniest and witty characters in literature – Jeeves. He serves as butler [Grrrrr!] and valet to a foppish and foolish English gentleman called Bertie Wooster . . . PG Wodehouse treated Jeeves and Bertie stories like a typical romance. They fought, they separated and then reconciled in the most funny and dramatic of plots."

**Financial Times, September 19**

Writing about The Strand (as in the thoroughfare), Hugo Greenhalgh wrote: "The Savoy Hotel . . . has played host to Bertie Wooster, PG Wodehouse's fictional toff. While much has changed over the years, Norman Murphy, the author of several books on both Wodehouse and London, said the creator of Jeeves would still recognise much of the street [including] the enormous trolleys of beef [which] are still pushed around Simpson's to allow customers to indicate which cut they want, and the Savoy is still there with its gas lamp marking Carting Lane."

**The Daily Telegraph, September 20**

A lead article by Allison Pearson, entitled ‘Rebels don’t wear tattoos any more – conformists do’, included the following. “Any tattoo to mark a romance is asking for trouble. Remember the PG Wodehouse story about Jack Bellamy–Johnstone: ‘He fell in love with a girl called Esmerelda Parkinson–Willoughby and had the whole thing tattooed on his chest with a heart round it. The wounds had barely started to heal when they had a row and within three months he was engaged to May Todd. Tricky.’” (FYI, this came from *Heavy Weather*.)

**Evening Standard, September 22**

In his review of Ben McIntyre’s new book, *SAS Rogue Heroes: The Authorised Wartime History*, Robert Fox wrote: “As you would expect . . . McIntyre has a wonderful eye for eccentricity. At times there is more than a whiff of PG Wodehouse or Evelyn Waugh about the narrative – the clubland of the Drones and Basil Seal going to war.”

**The Daily Telegraph, September 24**

The Saturday magazine included an article entitled ‘Wildlife: Fun and Games on the Fairway’, featuring famous people playing golf. The introduction included PGW’s famous observation that “the only way of really finding out a man’s true character is to play golf with him. In no other walk of life does the cloven hoof so quickly display itself.” The article noted: “Wodehouse was rarely wrong, and sure enough, men – and women, despite certain clubs’ prehistoric membership rules – have been sizing one another up over the bunkers for centuries.”

**The Guardian, September 25**

Kate Molleson’s review of Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love* was headed “Scottish Opera flirts with PG Wodehouse” and described the production as “a PG Wodehouse-era romp”.

**The Daily Telegraph, September 30**

(from David Anderton)

Matters sartorial featured in an article by Rob Bagchi headed “Stand by for a very dubious fashion parade” during the Ryder Cup. “Read any of PG Wodehouse’s imperishable short stories and clothes are a constant theme, from arresting, gleaming ‘heather-mixture’ trousers in *The Heart of a Goof*, any number of hats Jeeves disapproves of and the marvellous ‘vivid pink’ main motif of *The Magic Plus Fours* ‘that had so much variety in the way of chessboard squares of white, yellow, violet and green that the eye swam as it looked upon them’.”

**Bibliophile, October 2016** (from Tony Ring)

Issue no. 345 of the mail-order book magazine often uses short quotations from eminent authors to head sections offering remainders in various categories. Of the 14 PGW quotes used in this one issue, the following from *A Damsel in Distress* sounded terribly apposite: “The proprietor of the grocery store on the corner was bidding a silent farewell to a tomato which even he, though a dauntless optimist, had been compelled to recognise as having outlived its utility.”

**The Guardian, October 7** (from Terry Taylor)

In discussing Brexit, Martin Kettle said the international trade secretary, Liam Fox, had a whiff of Wodehouse’s absurd man of destiny, Roderick Spode, about him.

**Lynn News, October 20**

In ‘Old Hunstanton, PG Wodehouse and a story of “buried treasure”, Gareth Calway finished his observations on PGW’s use of Hunstanton Hall as a location in many of his stories with this conversation in the tale ‘Buried Treasure’ about two moustache-wearing Norfolk landowners: “The situation in Germany had come up for discussion in the Bar Parlour of The Angler’s Rest, and it was generally agreed that Hitler was standing at a crossroads and would soon be compelled to do something definite. . . . ‘He’ll have to let it grow or shave it off. . . . He can’t go on sitting on the fence like this. Either a man has a moustache or he has not.’”

**The Times and The Daily Telegraph, October 20**

Both contained excellent obituaries of the late Wodehouse scholar Norman Murphy that referred to his eccentric character, vast fount of knowledge, and exceedingly fast style of speech.

**The Week, October 22**

The Wit and Wisdom column contained PGW’s words in ‘The Man Upstairs’ as quoted in *The Times*: “It is a good rule in life never to apologise. The right sort of people do not want apologies, and the wrong sort take a mean advantage of them.”

**DNA India, October 28**

In a ‘round-up of ten authors that every teen should read’, first on the list was PGW on the basis that “if wit and humour are what you are looking for then nobody can beat [him]”. He was quoted as saying, “I always advise people never to give advice.”

**The Daily Telegraph, November 3**

(from Carolyn De La Plain)

Harry Mount wrote: “It’s wartime in London’s clubland! This week, members of the Reform Club passed a vote of no confidence in the selection of Rod Craig . . . as the club’s new secretary. In a twist P G Wodehouse – clubland’s master chronicler – would have loved, members took against Commander Craig for being too old, at 66, for the job.”

**The Asian Age, November 4**

In ‘How the Woosters Captured Delhi’, Society patron Shashi Tharoor, described how the Brits influenced Indians to read Wodehouse and drink tea. Tharoor noted that, “if anything, Wodehouse was one British writer whom Indian nationalists could admire without fear of political incorrectness. Saroj Mukherji. . . the daughter of a prominent Indian nationalist politician, remembers introducing Lord Mountbatten to the works of Wodehouse in 1948: it was typical that the symbol of the British empire had not read the ‘quintessentially English’ Wodehouse but that the Indian freedom fighter had.” (The full article can be read online at <http://bit.ly/2f1RAae>.)

# Future Events for Your Diary

**December 6–10, 2016**

**Perfect Nonsense at the Tower Theatre**

The Tower Theatre Company will stage *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense* for a limited run at the Bridewell Theatre, off Fleet Street in London. Performances will include a matinee on Saturday, December 10.

**January 22, 2017 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk**

Richard Burnip will lead a Wodehouse-themed walk for London Walks (note: this is not a Society-sponsored event). The usual fee is £10, but our members get a discounted price of £8. 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.

**January 23–28, 2017 Perfect Nonsense in Manchester**

An amateur production of *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense* will be staged at the Droylsden Little Theatre in Manchester, for a total of six performances.

**January 25–February 19, 2017**

***Jeeves in Bloom* in Asheville, NC**

The NC Stage Company in Asheville, North Carolina (USA) will be staging *Jeeves in Bloom*, one of Margaret Raether's highly praised adaptations of PGW's stories. For information and tickets, go to NC Stage's website.

**February 15, 2017 Society Meeting at the Tup**

Our next meeting will be a special one: a tribute to the late, great Norman Murphy. The Entertainments Impresario would welcome contributions to the evening; see page 8. We convene from 6 p.m. onwards at the Savoy Tup.

**April 30, 2017 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk**

Take a walk with Richard Burnip and get not just Wodehouse facts but Wodehouse quotes! See January 22 for details on when and where to meet.

**May 2017 Special Event at Degenershausen**

A 'tree baptism' will mark Wodehouse's time at Degenershausen, Germany, following his release from internment. For details, see page 21.

**July 12 and October 4, 2017**

**Future Society Meetings**

The dates and venue for the Society's other two meetings in 2017 remain provisional. We should have firm information by the March issue, but also check the Society's website.

**October 19–22, 2017**

**TWS Convention in Washington, D.C.**

The Wodehouse Society will be holding its 19th biennial convention, 'Mr. Wodehouse Goes to Washington', in, appropriately enough, Washington, D.C., at the Hamilton Crowne Plaza..

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