

WOOSTER SAUCE

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An Exciting Early Mention of PGW

by Tony Ring

In the last century or so, there have been so many articles and even books in praise of Wodehouse that reading another seems commonplace. But I commend the item here as being the first reasoned description of his work in the USA.

McIlvaine tells us that the first six of Wodehouse's books to be published in the USA consisted of imported sheets of school stories (plus *William Tell Told Again*) and bore the Macmillan publisher imprint. McIlvaine gives the month of publication of each, but it remains a mystery to me that I have never heard of a single person who has

even *seen* one of these early Macmillan titles. Ignoring those, his first authentic US book was *Love Among the Chickens*, published in 1909 by Circle Publishing Company (which had previously published its seven-part serialisation).

In 1909 and 1910, Wodehouse was living from time to time at the Hotel Earle in New York, alongside a number of other writers, including Charles Neville Buck, with whom he remained on friendly terms. He was struggling to receive a contracted payment for *Chickens* due from his agent, A. E. Baerman. Baerman, who was something of a conman, was also Buck's agent at the time, and Buck had just had his first novel, *The Key to Yesterday*, published by W. J. Watt & Co. It seems that as Baerman was owing money to Buck, he passed to him the cheque destined for Wodehouse! Both Buck and Wodehouse then appointed Seth Moyle as their agent, and he immediately made arrangements for Plum's next novel, *The Intrusion of Jimmy* (which became *A Gentleman of Leisure* on stage and in England), to be published by W. J. Watt.

It was Buck's second book, *The Lighted Match*, published by Watt in 1911, in which we have a special interest. The novel finished on page 307, but was succeeded by a few bonus pages. What would, if numbered, have been page 309 carried the legend in large type: TWO POPULAR AUTHORS AND SOMETHING ABOUT THEM. This was followed by a full-page photo of Charles Neville Buck and a two-page summary of his life and writing career to date.

This, in turn, was followed by a full-page photo of Wodehouse (seen left) and the rather longer article you see on the next page, referring to *The Intrusion of Jimmy* and the even better prospects enjoyed by his next book (*The Prince and Betty*, to be published the following year, in 1912).

It was such a shame that Wodehouse's middle name was misspelled, but I doubt if he minded getting this sort of publicity!



P. G. Wodehouse as pictured in the back section of Charles Neville Buck's *The Lighted Match* (1911)

PELHAM GRANVILLE WODEHOUSE

DURING the past year a phrase has been frequently heard among magazine and book men in New York when the name of Pelham Granville Wodehouse has been mentioned. This phrase is “the logical successor to O. Henry”—and it is misleading. Any humorist who tried to follow in the tracks of O. Henry would be merely an imitator and the task would be as unwise as though O. Henry had cramped his own freedom in an effort to walk in the footprints of Mark Twain or any other predecessor in the field of humor.

Wodehouse suggests O. Henry only in that he has suddenly come into universal recognition as a remarkable humorist. He wields a pen which commands an uncommon power of satire, without the suggestion of vitriol or bitterness. His humor has a sparkle, effervescence and spontaneity which has put him in an incredibly short time in the front rank of writers, and since the materialistic barometer at least records the opinion of the editors and since the

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editors are supposed to know, has brought him into that envied coterie whose rate per word in the magazines has soared skyward.

P. G. Wodehouse was born in Guildford, England, in 1881, and while still an infant he accompanied his parents to Hong Kong, where the elder Wodehouse was a judge. He is a cousin of the Earl of Kimberley. In his school days he went in for cricket, football and boxing, and made for himself a reputation in athletics.

For two years Mr. Wodehouse went into a London bank and observed the passing parade from a high stool, but this was not quite in keeping with his tastes, and we find him next publishing a column of humorous paragraphs in the *London Globe*, under the head of “By the Way.” Later he assumed the editorship of this department, and many of his paragraphs lived longer than the few hours’ existence of most newspaper humor. Also since all writers experimentally venture into the dramatic, he wrote several vaudeville sketches which have had popular English productions.

Three years ago P. G. Wodehouse came to New York. He liked the American field and wanted to see whether his humor would strike the American fancy. It struck. Mr. Wodehouse had tried his wings here only a few months when magazine editors

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were bidding for his manuscripts. His short stories have appeared generally in the magazines, and while one often finds the delightful touch of pathos, there is always an abundance of laughter. In *Cosmopolitan*, *Collier's Weekly*, *Ainslee's*, and many other publications these stories appear as often as Mr. Wodehouse will contribute.

His novel, “The Intrusion of Jimmy,” last year was a decided success. In it Mr. Wodehouse demonstrated his ability to hold his sprinting speed over a Marathon distance. The book, after giving the flattering returns of a large sale, found its second production on the stage. In its dramatized version with the title, “A Gentleman of Leisure,” it has had its tryout on the road and has proven a success. With Douglas Fairbanks in the reading rôle, it will be one of next Fall’s elaborate productions on Broadway.

In personality Mr. Wodehouse is quite as interesting as one might gather from his writings. Physically a man of splendid proportions and mentally a fountain of spirited humor, he is, nevertheless, modest to the point usually termed “retiring,” and is well known only after long acquaintanceship. He is fond of all sports, and on reaching America became truly the native in his enthusiasm for baseball. Mr. Wodehouse says that one epoch of his literary career dates from his purchase of an automobile in 1907. The

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purchase was an investment of considerable gravity to a young writer just commencing to command an entree. The automobile lasted some two weeks and came to a violent end against a telephone pole. Mr. Wodehouse thought out the major problems of life sitting on the turf near the pole from a more or less lacerated point of view. He decided, among other things, that his *forte* was rather writing about motors than riding about *in* motors.

Mr. Wodehouse's second novel will be an even greater success than "The Intrusion of Jimmy." Mr. Wodehouse spent last winter on the Riviera writing this book, and his friends who have read the advance pages, agree with the publishers that it will deserve and receive even greater cordiality than the first. The title will be "The Prince and Betty," and it will be something for novel readers to look forward to.

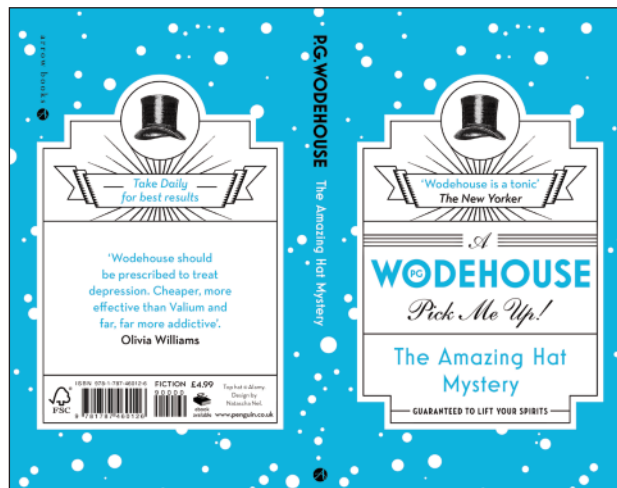
P.S. - Readers with access to The Captain for March 1910 (with the final part of Psmith, Journalist) may care to revisit the article 'Impressions of P. G. Wodehouse' by L. H. Bradshaw, which starts on page 500. Written after an initial interview with Plum in New York in September 1909, it refers in passing to the "number of American journalists – newspaper men and magazine writers – staying at [Wodehouse's] hotel".

A Chance to Win the Random House 'Pick-Me-Up's

During November, Random House published four new editions of Wodehouse stories under their Arrow imprint, designed to remind casual browsers in bookshops and elsewhere of his lasting presence in the world of comic writing. Punningly termed 'pick-me-up's' to reflect both their expected sales position near the tills and the expressed belief that Wodehouse writing offers a pick-me-up for any reader, no matter what their problems may be, they each contain three of his best stories. On each rear cover you will find an appropriate quotation from one of four approving fans: Caitlin Moran, Olivia Williams, Lynne Truss, and Marian Keyes.

Random House have kindly made two sets of the books available to the Society to offer as prizes in a competition. We will give one complete set to the selected winner and two of the books to each of two runners-up.

What we would like you to do is quite simple: list the three short stories by Wodehouse (whether or not included in the Random House



selection) which *you* would choose if you were compiling a similar 'pick-me-up' book, and say in **not more than 50 words** why you believe they would have the desired effect on the reader.

The deadline for the receipt of entries is 15 January 2018. We will invite the winners to join us at the next Society meeting at the Savile Club in London on Monday, 26

February.

The titles of the four new books, together with the titles of the other two stories in each, are:

Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo

The Spot of Art
Strychnine in the Soup

The Amazing Hat Mystery

Uncle Fred Flits By
Trouble Down at Tudsleigh

The Smile That Wins

Jeeves and the Song of Songs
The Great Sermon Handicap

Goodbye to All Cats

Ukridge's Dog College
Ukridge's Accident Syndicate

Society News

Home, Sweet Home – And Our Next Meeting

It can now be revealed that prior to the Society's debut at the Savile Club in September, your Entertainments Impresario sucked many an anxious tooth. Would anyone manage to locate 69 Brook Street, Mayfair W1? What would they make of the elegant new surroundings, the unaccustomed but not exactly onerous dress code (jackets, no jeans), and, most importantly, the provision of refreshments? He needn't have worried: as it transpired, the Savile and the Society fitted one another like a slender hand in a well-tailored glove, and we had a near-record attendance (see the report on page 5). The deal was thus sealed, and we are now overjoyed to call the Savile our new home.

For our February 2018 meeting, we are similarly chuffed to have secured the services of Sam Jordison, the editor of the *Guardian's* Reading Group. Sam is going to talk about his abiding love of Wodehouse and, in particular, *Leave It to Psmith*, which he uses as the absolute pinnacle of what his creative writing classes should aspire to in their own work. As Sam himself notes, it's perhaps a bit unfair because "I have to break it to the students that Wodehouse wrote more than any normal person can in a day and almost everything he wrote was also unattainably better. . . . I kind of say 'sorry he was a genius, and there's nothing you or I can do about that'."

Does that plunge them into despair, or spur them on to greater things? Find out by joining us from 6pm on Monday, February 26. You won't regret it!

A New Website Editor

You may have noticed from last issue's AGM Agenda that the position of Website Editor was vacant: Mike Swaddling had had to stand down because of the many local demands on his time. At the AGM, the Committee expressed thanks to him for his many years editing and improving the Society's website.

Happily, we did not have to wait long for a candidate to step forward with some smart new ideas for the site, and as soon as the Committee heard them, we invited said candidate to take on the job with immediate effect. Thus, we are delighted to introduce Christopher Bellew as the Society's new Website Editor. A long-standing

member of our Society, Christopher is a prolific blogger, writing on an eclectic mix of interesting and amusing things he has seen and learned during the regular jaunts he has enjoyed since his retirement. His blog can be found at christopherbellew.com.

Christopher has suggested some changes to our website aimed at eliminating some of the duplication of reporting between *Wooster Sauce* and the website, and which we hope will more clearly and effectively encourage browsers to join the Society. If you have thoughts or suggestions, Christopher may be contacted at websiteeditor@pgwodehousesociety.org.uk.

Our Newest Patron: Victoria Coren Mitchell

We are delighted to announce the appointment of a further distinguished Patron in the person of the writer and presenter Victoria Coren Mitchell. A newspaper columnist and, since 2008, host of the game show *Only Connect*, Ms Coren Mitchell is the daughter of the late humorous author Alan Coren, who was also one of our Patrons. Most important, of course, is the fact that, like her father, she is a long-time fan of P. G. Wodehouse and often inserts references to him into her writing and broadcasting.



We are thrilled that Victoria accepted our invitation to become a Patron and look forward to bringing you a fuller profile in a future issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

Giving the Gift of Wodehouse

Stuck for a Christmas or birthday gift? Then consider giving a Society membership to that deserving Wodehouse fan you know. It's a simple matter of applying online: just go to the gift pages on our website – www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk/gift.html – and follow the instructions. You'll find we've streamlined the system, so it should all be very simple.

Alas, this issue of *Wooster Sauce* will arrive in mailboxes too late for sending your gift in time for Christmas, but you can still do it belatedly, or as a New Year's surprise, or as a Valentine's Day present – why, the excuses for giving a gift membership are endless!

A Fresh Start in a New Venue

On the 25th September, the Society returned to clubland in style – and the good news is that that’s where we’ll be for some time to come.

Twenty years ago, when we first started congregating for thrice-yearly meetings in London, it was at the historic Savage Club, a room located within the grand building that houses the National Liberal Club. Subsequently, we moved to the roomier, glorious Arts Club, but when wholesale redevelopment of the club forced another move, we entered our Wilderness Years, first going to The George pub on the Strand, then to the Savoy Tup. Following our rather unfortunate experience at the Tup in July (see the September *Wooster Sauce*), it became clear that we must find another venue, and the answer proved to be the Savile Club in Mayfair. (Many thanks to member Patrick Kidd for ‘sponsoring’ the Society and thus making this possible!)

Our last-minute booking of the Savile led to fears that our numbers would be small for our first gathering in new surroundings. But, thanks to email, Twitter, and word of mouth, the news had made it out to the people who needed to know, and the Drawing Room was packed. Faces we hadn’t seen in a while had returned to join the throng once more; and, gratifyingly, there were numerous new faces as well. We sluiced, we chattered, and we enjoyed our glorious new surroundings to the fullest. As the evening progressed, it became clear from comments that not only were the considerable attractions of the venue boosting attendance, but having the meeting on a Monday was a draw for various reasons as well.

But this was not just any old meeting; it was also the Society’s AGM. In due course our Chairman, Hilary Bruce, called us all to order and took us speedily through the business part of the proceedings. This included information about our current membership, encouragement to buy gift memberships of the Society (see Society News, page 4), an update of our financial

situation, a review of activities over the past year, and appreciation expressed for the Wodehouse Trustees and for behind-the-scenes folks who help to keep the Society ticking along, as well as Committee members who do the same.

Following the election of officers, we took a break, following which Entertainments Impresario Paul Kent took charge. First things first: Paul thanked Hilary – as well she should be! – for her many years of service to the Society as our Chairman, for which we are all grateful. He then explained that because the speaker he had booked for our original meeting date had not been able to attend on the new date, he had prepared a paper on, appropriately enough, clubs – both those in Wodehouse’s fiction and those in the real world (including, of course, the Savile). To précis this paper would not do it justice, believe me; it is just too rich in Good Stuff to give an adequate overview here. Members will just have to wait for a future edition of *Wooster Sauce* to read and enjoy it in full.

Paul ended his talk with a quiz question, the correct answer to which was announced later in the evening. Those present were challenged as follows: “At the Drones Club outing to Le Touquet as described at the opening of *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, how many members of the Drones attempt the channel crossing?” (Answer below.)

And with that challenge, the formal part of the meeting came to a close, but many members lingered on, sluicing and chatting with gusto. Laughter rang out from all corners of the room, and conviviality was the order of the night. There was no doubt at all that we belonged in clubland, and what could be better than to come together in a beautiful, historic club in Mayfair? Plum would have approved. We certainly did!

– ELIN MURPHY

Answer to the challenge: About 87. For an expanded version of this report, see the Society’s website.

Martin Jarvis on Radio 4

In the March 2017 issue of *Wooster Sauce* (page 25), Tony Ring reported on a recording he attended at the Riverhouse Arts Centre in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, in January. There he and his wife had the pleasure of listening to Martin Jarvis record readings of Wodehouse’s classic stories ‘The Aunt and the Sluggard’ and ‘Jeeves and the Yule-Tide Spirit’. Both stories were adapted so they could be transmitted as 30-minute programmes on BBC Radio 4.



Well, the time has come for other Society members

to have that pleasure as well since both recordings are being broadcast on Radio 4 in December. Unfortunately, one of the broadcast dates will have passed by the time this edition of *Wooster Sauce* reaches mailboxes. But there will still be time to hear the other recording, and members in the UK will also be able to catch up on both broadcasts via the BBC iPlayer.

The all-important dates are:

Jeeves Live! – ‘The Aunt and the Sluggard’:

Sunday, December 10, 7.15 pm

Jeeves Live! – ‘Jeeves and the Yule-Tide

Spirit’: Sunday, December 17, 7.15 pm

A review of these recordings would be welcome from any members who would like to submit one.

A Tribute to Norman Murphy

by Hilary Bruce

Editor's note: A close friend of the Society's late Remembrancer, as well as his successor as Chairman, Hilary delivered this tribute to Norman at the US Wodehouse Society's recent convention (see pages 11-15). We regret we cannot reproduce the opening sound effects.

This was one of Norman's pipes. He always used to use his pipe to call our meetings to order, like so [*ting! ting!*] and when I succeeded him as Chairman, he bequeathed his gavel to me. And so, ladies and gentlemen . . . [*ting! ting! ting!*]

I'm proud to have been asked to present a short tribute to Norman Murphy, who died in October last year, in fact a year ago last Wednesday [October 18].

As I thought about Norman in the context of this Wodehouse Society convention, I was wondering: *What WAS it about Norman?* People all over the world knew him, remember him, and will continue to do so, but he seemed to be a particularly big hit here in America and, naturally, especially at Wodehouse conventions.

He looked the quintessential Englishman, of course, although even in England we don't see that many pipe-smoking, trilby-wearing gents with tightly furled umbrellas these days, much less a gentleman punctilious about raising said trilby in greeting, or leaping to his feet if a lady entered the room. And he had a particular wiry thin-ness that spoke of discipline and a military background. Both of those were clearly apparent when he wore his mess kit at these very dinners, a trim and snappy outfit that also showed off his nifty hoofing to best advantage.

But it wasn't just the look of him. As Bob Rains said to me, "You always knew when Norman was in the room." He was a force of nature and took up quite a lot of space in the world. Sometimes you could practically see a force field round him. In any conversation where facts – any facts – were involved, Norman tended to look as if he might burst at any moment, for there was always another crucially interesting piece of information that must urgently be conveyed. Described in obituaries as "blithely unselfconscious", "untroubled by inhibitions", and my favourite, "constitutionally quaint", Norman could, fairly reasonably, be accused of a certain obsessiveness. But that was what made his research so thorough, his books endlessly interesting, and his

famous Wodehouse Walks in London and around the English countryside so compelling.

Of course, Norman talking was quite something. I have, truly, lost count of the number of times I've been privately consulted by baffled Wodehouseans – Brits as well as Americans – confiding that they couldn't quite understand what Norman was saying. Me neither. It was the clipped accent, and of course the legendarily high-speed delivery: those facts again, bursting to come out, brain going so fast and words tripping over each other as they tried to keep up. Once, Norman and another Wodehouse scholar, mature gents both, got chucked out of the Reading Room of the British Museum for swapping Wodehouse gags at top volume. Oh, the shame!

We knew Norman for his scholarship. Wodehouse cheered him up at an anxious time in world events and thus also in his work, and he decided to put his theory – the one about Wodehouse not inventing characters and locations, but using ones he knew – to the test with hours, weeks, in fact decades of research. And what a gift that was to the world of Wodehouse, and to us all, here today. Seven Wodehouse books – eight if you count the two-volume one – and a sought-after London guide book highly rated by London's Blue Badge guides; he updated it 20 years on. What a legacy. They mean that, even though we can no longer

walk – well, sprint, more like – the streets of London with a voluble and rather eccentric Englishman brandishing his umbrella, we can still follow in his footsteps through his books, the more recent of which are still in print.

Norman was lucky: he had a good life, with two happy marriages, his last 15 years shared devotedly with Elin. He had an interesting military career in which, notwithstanding the possibly rather dry subject matter, he seemed to manage to express himself pretty fully. Norman had, and has, a worldwide fan club, and he enjoyed robust good health until just a few weeks before he died at 83.

And we are lucky too, because we knew Norman. He fascinated us, entertained us, informed us, and he will stay with us. Ladies and gentlemen, please stand and raise your glasses and, more importantly, raise your hearts for the force of nature that was Norman Murphy.



My First Wodehouse Experience

by Mike Wilton

Whilst reading *Wooster Sauce*, it occurred to me what a funny old business this writing business is. When I started following the exploits of Billy Bunter in the *Magnet* as a young lad, I had no idea that one day I would grow up to become a writer. In fact, when the time came to start work, I was persuaded by my father to take up a safe and steady job in a bank.

It was not until I had finished my National Service that I was able to escape and get involved in writing, first in publicity and then running a Press Office before becoming a scriptwriter and partner in a firm making industrial films, finally ending up in PR. All the time I was searching for something different that would capture my imagination. Like countless others, I was won over by the latest Saint and Maigret stories and went on to discover the delights of Pop Larkin and his family, courtesy of H. E. Bates.

It wasn't until I was browsing in a bookshop one day and came across a copy of *Hot Water*, written by P. G. Wodehouse in the 1930s, no doubt on one of his

visits to France, that I succumbed to the magic of his prose and became a devotee on the spot and never looked back. I still think this is one of the funniest stories he has written, despite being completely hooked on the Blandings Castle sagas and the indignities heaped upon that amiable eccentric, Lord Emsworth, by his domineering sister Constance. Luckily, his ever-helpful brother Galahad is always on hand to straighten out whatever problem may arise.



There are, of course, countless fans who have been equally captivated by stories of Bertie Wooster being threatened by, among others, his dreaded Aunt Agatha, who never fails to come up with plans for improving him, only to be saved by his faithful Jeeves at the eleventh hour.

I like to think that in my own small way I am helping to carry on the tradition of tilting at some of the absurdities of life that constantly surround us. Meanwhile, I would be fascinated to hear of anyone else who may have followed a similar path.

See Michael's website at www.michaelwilton.co.uk.

The Word Around the Clubs

Curtis's Revenge

Fans of the American actor Curtis Armstrong know that he is himself a huge fan of P. G. Wodehouse. He has spoken at three conventions of The Wodehouse Society (US), and in October 2016 he attended our biennial dinner at Gray's Inn and, with his beautiful daughter, Lily, took part in the entertainment. So it was with great pleasure that we delved into his memoirs, *Revenge of the Nerd*, and therein enjoyed several references to Wodehouse (see *Cosy Moments* on page 16 for one). The entire book, written with warmth and humour, is a joy to read and highly recommended. Equally heartening is the news that Curtis and Elliott Milstein (who gave the toast at our 2010 dinner) are currently writing a book about Wodehouse – something to look forward to!

A Gussie Tweet

From RICHARD HELLER comes a recent tweet: "This just in: top amphibianist Sir Augustus Fink-Nottle FRS called out of retirement to investigate a mysterious outbreak of Fake Newts."

Quite Right, Stanley

Thanks to PETER LOBBENBERG for sending the following from Wikipedia's article on Conservative politician R. A. (Rab) Butler:

On 11 March 1924, after taking office as President [of the Cambridge Union], he entertained the Leader of the Opposition, Stanley Baldwin, at the Change of Officers Debate to oppose the motion that 'This House has the Highest Regard for Rhetoric'. The following morning, Rab had to escort Baldwin back to the railway station, where, according to one version of the story, Baldwin bought him a copy of *Something Fresh* by P. G. Wodehouse with an admonition not to take life too seriously.

Wodehouse in the DNB

The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* emails its subscribers daily to provide a 'Life of the Day'. Appropriately enough, on October 15 the life being celebrated was our own P. G. Wodehouse. (Thanks to CHRISTOPHER BELLEW)

Four Minor Wooster Mysteries

by Jonathan Bacchus

Previously, some of the keenest intellects in the Society occupied themselves with the knotty problem of identifying the surname of the narrator of the first Jeeves-Bertie story, ‘Extricating Young Gussie’ (1915; printed in *The Man with Two Left Feet*, 1917), and their deliberations have been duly recorded in *Wooster Sauce* (see WS, December 2015 and June 2016). In the hope that they may likewise provoke discussion and comment, I offer here four minor Wooster mysteries.

The Mystery of the Missing Manuscript

In *The Code of the Woosters* (1938), Aunt Dahlia hands Bertie a ‘Husbands’ Corner’ article for *Milady’s Boudoir*, instructing him to give to Jeeves for vetting (“It’s full of deep stuff about braid on the side of men’s dress trousers. . . . For all I know, it may be Red propaganda.”) We never hear of the article again. What happened to it?

Possible solution: Bertie left the manuscript in the Turkish bath where he lingered between running away from the antique shop in the Brompton Road and returning to his flat.

The Mystery of the Monocle

If the surest sign of ignorance about matters Wodehousean is imagining that Wodehouse harboured Nazi sympathies, and the second surest is thinking that Jeeves was a butler, perhaps the third might be believing that Bertie habitually wore a monocle. Among other instances, he is pictured with one in the Penguin cover designs by Ionus, and Ian Carmichael wore one when he portrayed Bertie in the 1960s BBC TV series *The World of Wooster*. In fact, it seems unlikely that, in view of the comic mileage he got out of other characters’ eyewear – Lord Emsworth’s and Ukridge’s pince-nez (Ukridge’s attached with wire taken from a ginger beer bottle), Rupert Baxter’s spectacles, the Lady Bishopess’s lorgnette – Wodehouse would never have mentioned Bertie’s monocle if he did habitually wear one.

The fact remains that in ‘The Spot of Art’ (1929), Bertie was depicted wearing a monocle in the portrait Gwladys Pendlebury painted of him. In the artwork for posters advertising Slingsby’s Superb Soups, the monocle became magnified to “about six inches in circumference” (an indication that Bertie, or perhaps Wodehouse, was uncertain of the differences between circumference, radius, and diameter; other editions of the text have “a monocle the size of a soup plate”).

Possible solution: The plate of Slingsby’s superb soup (at which Bertie was “absolutely slaving” with a look of “bestial greed”) was obviously added to Gwladys Pendlebury’s portrait after Bertie had left for Paris and Gwladys had agreed to allow her portrait to be used as the basis for poster artwork. We can assume that the monocle was added at the same time, possibly because the poster was intended to be part of a French

advertising campaign (for Slingsby’s Bouillon Suprême). In French eyes, perhaps the monocle gave Bertie the sort of quintessentially English upper-class appearance that suited the product.

The Mystery of Bingo’s Wedding Breakfast

Bingo Little is one of Bertie’s oldest friends; they were at school and university together. Yet when Bingo marries Rosie M. Banks (in ‘All’s Well’, *The Inimitable Jeeves* (1923)), he doesn’t invite Bertie to his wedding (at a registrar’s in Holborn) or to the wedding breakfast. Why not?

Possible solutions: Perhaps Bingo and Rosie got married so hastily that there was simply no time to send invitations, even to their closest friends. A more intriguing reason might lie in Wodehouse’s attitude to the institution of marriage itself. Wodehouse clearly took marriage and its responsibilities very seriously, and it could be that he felt weddings were too important to be used as any sort of comic material. Engagements are ten a penny in Wodehouse, but I can think of no description of a wedding, unless you count the incident in ‘Ukridge’s Accident Syndicate’ (1923) in which the bridegroom, matinée idol Teddy Weeks, has an over-ripe tomato thrown at him after the ceremony, just as the photographs are about to be taken.

The Mystery of the Wooster-Emsworth Connection

Perhaps the most tantalising passage in all Wodehouse comes in ‘Jeeves Takes Charge’ (1916). Florence Craye and Bertie are discussing Bertie’s Uncle Willoughby’s book of reminiscences, *Recollections of a Long Life*. Florence, unlike Bertie, is familiar with the contents of the manuscript, and is shocked at how outrageous the stories related in it are. She finds herself unable to explain to Bertie exactly why her uncle was thrown out of a music hall in 1887 (“It must have been something pretty bad,” reflects Bertie. “It took a lot to make them chuck people out of music-halls in 1887.”) Florence then tells Bertie that one scandalous story concerns Lord Emsworth, and Bertie, astonished, says, “Lord Emsworth? Not the one we know? Not the one at Blandings?” On being told yes, he comments that Emsworth is “A most respectable old Johnnie, don’t you know. Doesn’t do a thing nowadays but dig in the garden with a spud.”

It seems pretty unlikely that Bertie and Florence would ever have come to know Lord Emsworth socially, especially as Lord Emsworth uses the Senior Conservatives club (certainly not the Drones) for his London visits. They inhabit, in effect, different worlds. Certainly some Drones Club members, such as Hugo Carmody and Ronnie Fish, have spent time at Blandings castle, but there is no record of Bertie ever doing so. Did Wodehouse plan a Wooster-Emsworth connection that he never actually followed up?

Possible solution: Others may know; I certainly don’t.

What the Well-Dressed Godfather Buys His Godchildren

by David Hoare

As I beamed genially at the crowd assembled in Gray’s Inn at the last biennial dinner, I was struck by the sea of silver heads and bald pates bobbing in animated conversation. I mean to say, we appeared to have gone long on the ‘fourscore-and-upward’, but I searched in vain for the ‘mewling-and-puking’ (keep it clean, old horse). A solution to the thorny problem of infusing the PGW Society with new blood is needed, and I thought I’d offer my personal modest proposal.

Plum was not a big fan of godparents. He claimed to have been named ‘Pelham Grenville’ after a godfather “and not a thing to show for it except a small silver mug which I lost in 1897”. He made his feelings even clearer in the story ‘Sonny Boy’. Somehow Bingo Little has persuaded Oofy Prosser to be godfather to Algernon Aubrey: “Oofy, when guardedly consenting to hold the towel for Algernon Aubrey, had expressly stipulated that there was to be no funny business and that a small silver mug was to be accepted in full settlement.”

That small silver mug seems to have rankled slightly with Plum. Later in the same story, the following exchange passes between Bingo and Oofy:

“Would you care to kiss your godson?”
Oofy shuddered strongly.
“Don’t say such things, even in fun,” he begged.

But while the concept of godchildren seems one over which Plum cast a censorious eye, I suggest that it may be the future of our beloved Society.

In a moment of weakness I ended up with two of the blighters – one boy, one girl. As I stood nervously at the font, blanching slightly at the list of things I was expected to do (I mean to say, renouncing Satan?) I pondered the next 18 years of the little gargoyles’ lives and wondered how I was going to solve the birthday/Christmas gift issue. I struggle to get anything for my beloved wife. How on earth was I going to get 36 interesting presents (and follow them up with the obligatory sign-off at 18 with something really meaningful) for two people in the springtime of their lives?

So I decided that if I really was to attend to the moral and spiritual upbringing of these babes in arms (with faces like fried eggs), what better than to deliver, over the course of 18 years, the complete works of P. G. Wodehouse? Everyman had obligingly started publishing the

comprehensive collection. As this runs to approximately 100 volumes, I could discharge my duty with three volumes at each birthday and each Christmas. Also, I would have done something meaningful and left them with a legacy that could give them endless moments of happiness.

And so it began. Sarah and Hugo – for those are the names their parents have foisted on them – started getting handsomely bound volumes from the age of one. This project takes some administrating, but with the aid of a trusty spreadsheet I’ve managed very few duplicates.

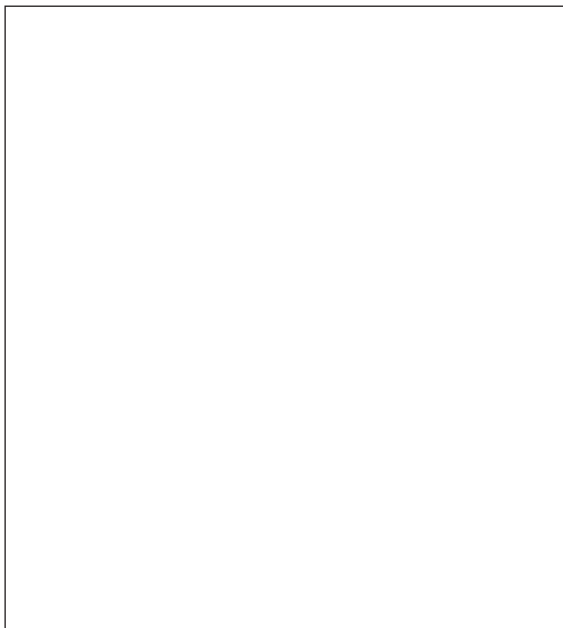
I can’t say that the regular additions to their (to-be) complete collection have been received with unfettered joy (no pastoral dances have been observed). Their parents, having been charmed at first by this glorious gift, suddenly realised that Plum had written so much that an extension to the house might be required. They’ve started to exhibit the same sense of bewildered exasperation that the girl receiving Twelve-Lords-a-Leaping must have felt.

However, I’m determined to do what’s right, not what’s popular, and the relentless stream of Plum’s masterpieces will continue to their 18th birthdays. At that point my godfatherly duties will be finally discharged with a ten-year membership of The P G Wodehouse Society, followed by attendance at the biennial dinner. I ask you, could there be a better, more memorable present from your godfather?

So, if you have been talked into moral guardianship of a “young plug-ugly” or “a small boy with a face like a prune run over by a motorbus”, don’t be put off by the infant’s “cold stare and the supercilious and up-stage way in which they dribble out of the corner of their mouths”. Simply go to Biblio.com and send them three PGW Everymans twice a year, and you have paid your debt to society. In this way we can lower the membership’s average age and bring on fresh young Wodehouseans. Maybe soon there will be some golden heads among the silver at the

Society’s estimable bashes.

Oh, and any chance of a discount on a ten-year membership (for cash)?



(Picture of Hugo deleted for privacy reasons.)

Pliny the Elder's Stuffed Eelskin

by Alan Norman

Editor's note: In the December 2016 edition of Wooster Sauce, we printed the following, which had originally appeared in Nigel Rees's Quote . . . Unquote newsletter:

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.

Alan had this to say about that.

Thanks to intensive research – well, a bit of leisurely googling – I can offer a tentative answer to Nigel Rees's inquiry about the Pliny the Elder reference in *The Girl in Blue*. I have been keeping my light under a bushel (whatever a bushel is) in the expectation that some terrifically brainy classicist would weigh in with an authoritative response, but it seems all the Society's TBCs are otherwise engaged, so here goes.

Even when he was pushing 90, PGW had no need to bluff where the classics were concerned. Dulwich College under A. H. Gilkes made sure of that. I don't recall P. the E. featuring prominently in my own schooldays, but a dip into his *Naturalis Historia* soon confirms that the 'eelskin' quote encapsulates his take on human affairs admirably. If it had occurred to him to write novels, they would have had more than a touch of the Thomas Hardy about them. When a too-close encounter with the

eruption of Vesuvius led to his demise, his last words were probably "what did I tell you?"

Whether Plum is recalling a specific passage or just giving a general impression of fatalism is less clear. The translation, if it is one, is obviously a little free. I have consulted various collections of quotable quotes without finding anything that fits the bill. The best I can come up with is this:

Cetera exempla fortunae variantis innumera sunt. etenim quae facit magna gaudia nisi ex malis aut quae mala immensa nisi ex ingentibus gaudiis?

(From *Naturalis Historia*, Book VII, chapter 42)

Or as a Victorian crib has it: "As to examples of the vicissitudes of Fortune, they are innumerable. For what great pleasures has she ever given us, which have not taken their rise in misfortunes? And what extraordinary misfortunes have not taken their first rise in great pleasures?"

With Pliny the Younger (appropriately, in Wodehouse's world, the nephew, not the son, of the Elder), I have had more luck. The reference is actually in *Ring for Jeeves* (last page of chapter 4), though the context is a gag recycled from *Right Ho, Jeeves*, making Mr Rees's slip of the finger entirely understandable. In both cases Jeeves tries to deliver an apposite quote, only to be silenced by a curt "Right ho, Jeeves" as soon as he names the author. (In *RHJ* the unspoken words are from the poet Scott.)

Anyway, what we are looking for is something expressive of Jeeves's appreciation of the need for absolute discretion, and this time I struck gold among the quotable quotes:

Patere hoc me super cetera habere amoris tui pignus, ut ea quoque norim quae nosse neminem velles.

(From *Letters*, Book XIII, letter 4)

Or, in the Loeb translation: "Give me this further pledge of your affection – let me into the secrets you would prefer no one to know."

No doubt if allowed to finish his sentence, Jeeves would have confined himself to the second half of the quote, not wishing to seem to be taking a liberty in addressing his temporary employer, Lord Rowcester.

A Wodehousean Education: From ASHOK BHATIA comes word that, as part of the Indian government's drive to reform the country's education system, he has suggested that "a special drive be launched to expose Indian students to the works of the eminent humourist, P G Wodehouse". In his letter to India's Human Resource Development Minister, Ashok pointed out the many ways in which students could acquire new and useful skill sets as a result of being steeped in Wodehouse – for example: "Following in the footsteps of Bertie Wooster, they would go to any lengths to stand by a pal in distress. Eventually, this would help them to imbibe a feeling of brotherhood." Other skills to be acquired could include rearing newts, standing up to aunts, sliding down pipes, and doing Larsen exercises, along many other advantages to a Wodehouse education. To read Ashok's letter in full, go to: <http://bit.ly/2iJNEef>

Wodehouse + Washington = Wow!

Reports of The Wodehouse Society's latest convention

Overview

The 19th biennial convention of The Wodehouse Society (TWS) – our American counterpart – took place on October 19–22 at the Hamilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. It was hosted by the local TWS chapter, appropriately named Capital! Capital! And, as these conventions always are, it was a hugely enjoyable binge from start to finish.

The real meat of any convention is tasted on the Saturday, which features a day full of talks and then a spectacular banquet in the evening. More on that in a minute, but first let's take a quick look at what happened on Friday and Sunday.

After almost two days of attendees arriving, registering, poring over the goodies on offer in the rummage sale and silent auction, and seeing the sights in Washington, the convention proper got underway on Friday evening with a reception and entertainment. First to perform were actors Hannah Shealy, Kyle Sherman, and Jack Mitchell, who, accompanied by pianist Casey Reed, presented excerpts from a forthcoming musical adaptation of *A Damsel in Distress*, written by Mr Mitchell and Alexandra Petri (who provided narration). The performance was absolutely delightful, the songs sparkling and funny. We can but hope that the full production will be staged soon (for information, see www.damselmusical.com).



Kyle Sherman (George Bevan) and Hannah Shealy (Lady Maud)

Following the *Damsel* performance, it was the turn of Maria Jette and Dan Chouinard to charm and entertain the appreciative audience with a selection of songs from 1917 – the year America entered the Great War, and also the year Wodehouse and Jerome Kern had six hit shows on Broadway. After leading off with some WWI songs (and inviting the audience to sing along with them), this amazing duo performed a selection from all six shows (*Miss Springtime*, *Have a Heart*, *Oh, Boy!*, *Leave It to Jane*, *The Riviera Girl*, and *Miss 1917*). They were, as ever, sensational, and left us all clamouring for more.



Dan Chouinard and Maria Jette

(photo by Barbara Saari Combs)

At this point official greetings were offered to the assembly. Alas, the Indian Ambassador to the United States, who had been present earlier in the evening, had to leave for another engagement, so his remarks were given by Tony Ring, who also made a presentation to The Wodehouse Society's officers on behalf of Sir Edward Cazalet: Wodehouse's last address book! I am reliably informed that this generous gift will be treasured by the Americans forever.

Finally, there was a chance to learn the Charleston from Zach Foreman, who soon had a number of happy Wodehouseans dancing about the room in flapper fashion.

The convention began with entertainment, and that was how it ended on Sunday morning, this time with a skit presented at the end of the traditional brunch. And what a skit! Written by Ken Ludwig, a Tony Award-winning playwright, 'Jeeves and the American Revolution' centred on Bertie and Jeeves's mission to lure Anatole – now working for the Hamilton Hotel – back into service as Aunt Dahlia's chef. Doing this required Bertie to become engaged simultaneously to Florence Craye, Madeline Bassett, and Honoria Glossop, but, as usual, Jeeves saved the day. Cast members included both Wodehouseans and professional actors, and they did a superlative job, bringing a successful convention to a rousing close.

What follows are two reports detailing the Saturday talks and banquet; then we will hear from a UK Society member for whom this was his first convention – and it surely won't be his last!

– ELIN WOODGER MURPHY

The Riveting Talks

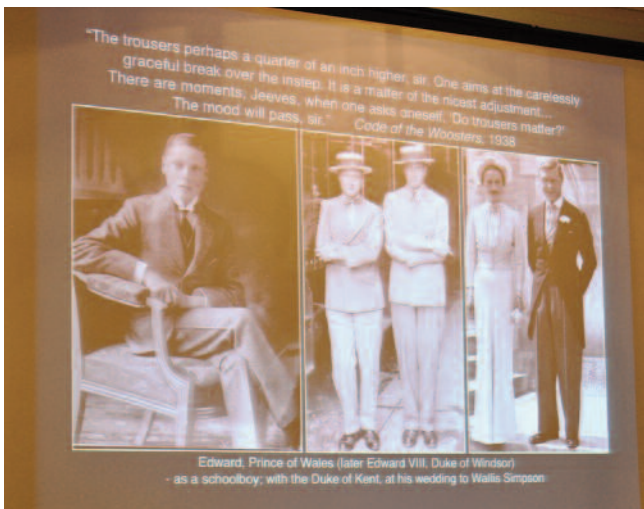
When The Wodehouse Society runs a day of 'riveting talks' at its biennial convention, there is a danger. Sometimes there can be the odd lapse. Some talks can fail to reach the high bar of the 'riveting'

classification. But at the Washington convention, there was no doubt. Even if Rosie the Riveter herself had been on the bill, the talks could not have been more riveting.

Take the twilight zone, the last talk of the day. It can be the point when, after a day of intense concentration, the crowd may have started to turn its thoughts to cocktails, costumes, and dinner. Not so this year. Madelyn Shaw took to the catwalk. She is Curator of Textiles at the National Museum of American History, and her subject was – what else – ‘What the Well-Dressed Man Was Wearing’. We had an amazing whistle-stop tour of the fashions of the Bertie Wooster days. The screen was inundated with examples of the good, the bad, and the downright ugly. Jeeves would have had a field day. She even came up with a contemporary headline of ‘What the Oddly-Dressed Man Is Wearing’. The whole presentation was a brilliant *tour de force, de horizon*, what you will.



A happy assortment of conventioners, including Robert Bruce (centre) and UK Society Chairman Hilary Bruce (far right) (photo by Barbara Saari Combs)



A slide from Madelyn Shaw's talk (photo by Barbara Saari Combs)

But back to the beginning. Elliott Milstein, an old hand at the breakfast slot, had started the day with a talk on ‘The Supercilious Sisters of Galahad Threepwood (and a long, lingering look at the best of them)’. He steered a complex path through the hierarchy of sisters. Who was Emsworth’s nephew Wilfred’s mother? Could she be an as-yet-unnamed sister? And so on. Our minds reeled. Could the ‘powerful, strong-willed and malevolent’ Lady Constance have been Baxter’s lover? But Elliott settled on his favourite sister and favourite character in the person of Lady Julia Fish. And he ended by reading a passage from *Heavy Weather* that he often reads to sceptical souls to convince them of the joy of Wodehouse.

After that talk we were on to a real-life Constance: Constance Walker (who acknowledged the wise work of

her parents at the font) is Professor of English and the Liberal Arts at Carleton College. Her talk was ‘Plum Among the Undergraduates’. She teaches Jane Austen, amongst others, and in answer to undergraduates’ questions about who else was as funny, she told them of Wodehouse. It was a heartening tale. With Jeeves among the hipsters, she asked, “Would my course make Wodehouse a gateway drug?” She now teaches a nine-week course, and her undergraduates adore it and

love him. Millennials enjoy irony, she said, so they love the situational irony of Jeeves always winning and Bertie always losing, and all the structural incongruities along the way. They love the style. They long for a Jeeves of their own to ensure they are wearing the right things as they curate their clothes and lifestyle. They are creative with their language and so love Wodehouse doing the same. They can see the relationship between ‘cool story, bro’, and ‘tinkerty tonk’. Her conclusion? She was very happy to have put Wodehouse onto the syllabus.

After that we came to ‘The Times of P. G. Wodehouse’ by a convention favourite, Chris Dueker. Time in Wodehouse was, he suggested, elastic. Angelica Briscoe appeared in 1936 and was still a troublesome young person in 1974. Emerald Stoker seems to have been born twice, in 1934 and 1963, “a marvel in obstetrics literature”. Bertie’s age appears to be the same in 1915 and in 1974. Dueker meandered pleasantly before reaching his conclusion that this was the Value of Fiction. Time can slow down and speed up. “If you make things fiction all the problems fade away.”

Then came Tom Smith on “P. G. Wodehouse: Master Spy?” Smith had delved into the archive and found that J. Edgar Hoover, in obsessive command of the FBI, fondly believed that a copy of *Piccadilly Jim* had been used as a codebook during the war. Agents all over the world scoured libraries for copies. The FBI checked the Library of Congress for copies six times before concluding they were lost. Copies in Paris were checked out by scientists, who found no evidence, but, discovering that they were on to a good thing, kept them for their own library.

Further conspiracy theories were unearthed by Peter Nieuwenhuizen, President of the Dutch Wodehouse Society, in work on Han van Meegeren, the famed Dutch forger of paintings. Why does Wodehouse suddenly cite him in *Something Fishy*, some years after van Meegeren’s death? It turns out that for a time Plum and van Meegeren had visited the same towns and same casinos. Could they have known each other? Is a painting in the background of a photograph of Wodehouse at home at the time a van Meegeren? There were no answers. But intriguing thoughts were provoked.

And the same was true for Karen Shotting in her riveting talk on ‘George Ade: A Brilliant Hoosier’s Influence on P. G. Wodehouse’. Ade had been a great humourist in the pre-1917 days and one we know Wodehouse admired. Impeccable detective work by Shotting, showing paragraphs of Ade and of Wodehouse side by side, revealed Plum “freely adopting, adapting, and appropriating” Ade’s work. Even the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists Ade as being the first in the language to use the description ‘pie-eyed’.

Resplendent in cricket kit, Bruce Montgomery talked us through ‘1917: Plum’s Great Year of Music’, examples of which had beguiled us the night before from Maria Jette and Dan Chouinard. He showed the joy of such lyrics as “Keep your courage steady Freddie / because she’s got the harpoon ready”. And he triumphantly demonstrated how Wodehouse had changed the history of musicals by leading them from the world of Ruritania into real life.

Real life in the shape of riveting talks will next be heard in, as the business meeting revealed, Cincinnati, venue of the 2019 convention. The good, pig-obsessed city has a lot to live up to.

– ROBERT BRUCE

A Banquet to Remember

As the applause died down after the last of the Riveting Talks, there was a collective sigh of relief from the delegates as they realised that they could stop concentrating for a couple of hours. So they prepared for a reception and banquet in the Sphinx Grand Ballroom of the adjacent Almas Temple (a Masonic building, more on which can be found on the internet). As we all congregated there, newly clothed in different forms of finery, it was clear that some 25–30 members had accepted the invitation to dress in period costume or as a Wodehouse character. We had a newt, a black pig and a pink pig, a May Queen, two representatives of the Red Dawn, Captain Biggar, two Aunt Elizabeths (one human and one from the farmyard), Doctor Sally, and many more who would later parade before a judging panel, who themselves had a lot of decisions to take before the eleven prizes could be awarded.

As the time for eating approached, the tables were filled and the MC, Ken Clevenger, took centre stage. Almost before he had a chance to speak, a recognisable voice started speaking to all the diners, seemingly from the fourth dimension. The organisers had arranged for a welcome from



During the post-lunch business meeting on Saturday, outgoing President Bob Rains presented new President Tom Smith with the presidential regalia, now including the address book given to TWS by Sir Edward Cazalet.

(photo by Barbara Saari Combs)

Wodehouse Society’s evolution and development and explained that, with the approval of Elin Woodger Murphy, the Society had created an award in his memory, with the object of continuing his legacy and recognising the ability to share information while subliminally educating and overtly entertaining. On this occasion, two awards were made – the first to a surprised and somewhat overwhelmed Elin herself, and the second to Gary Hall, the present editor of *Plum Lines* and the person who undertook some crucial investigation work for Norman in tracing the descendants of Fred Patzel and the history of ‘Pig-hoo-o-o-ey’.

Gary then returned to the stage to speak in affectionate terms of another respected authority who had died earlier in the year – Charles E. Gould, Jr. It was Charles’s quiz book *What’s in Wodehouse* which had first drawn me into the clutches of The Wodehouse Society, and his unexpected passing was, like Norman’s,

a body blow. Gary also offered a toast to other members of the Society who had died since the previous convention.

The only overseas chapter of the Society is ‘The Right Honourable Knights of Sir Philip Sidney’, based in Amsterdam, and Peter Nieuwenhuizen represented them in reporting how he, as President of the Dutch Wodehouse Society as a whole, had attended a recent 70th birthday party at Clarence House for the Duchess of Cornwall, who is Patroness of the Dutch Society. He expressed the hope that one year it may be possible for the group to host one of the biennial conventions.

After a Costume Parade that gave the judges (and us) one more look at many ingenious outfits, our dinner was served. Nobody



The two Aunts named Elizabeth from Love Among the Chickens – in reality Shirley Sampson and Laura Loehr – strut their stuff during the Costume Parade at the banquet.

(photo by Barbara Saari Combs)

would expect the meal at a convention like this to meet the highest gourmet quality, but there were three courses, including a choice of main dishes which had been specified on the application forms, and some people, at least, could remember their selection. A couple of drinks were included at Society expense, and the atmosphere of genial conviviality became even more in evidence.

When the plates had been cleared away, the formal part of the evening continued with a Keynote Address by Michael Dirda, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who has been interested in the Society's activities for some 20 years. Michael pointed out that Wodehouse was such a prolific writer, and had generated so many books about his writing or his life, that there might be 150 books to interest members present. Even at the rapid rate of one per week, it would take three years to complete the reading of a Wodehouse cycle. He went on to wonder whether, before starting a second voyage through the Wodehouse universe, there might be other comic masterpieces worth reading from "that half-imaginary, golden afternoon of English life, the period between 1885 and 1925, when – day after day – the dappled sunlight shone down on Blandings Castle".

Michael's experience as reviewer and essayist led him to conclude there were, and he drew attention to a number of authors who could "create situations of comic mayhem that rival those of the Drones Club". There is no space to expand on his argument, except to list the authors discussed, so that our members also have the opportunity to follow up the suggestions Michael made: F. Anstey, Jerome K. Jerome, Max Beerbohm, H. H. Munro (Saki), Edith Nesbit, Ronald Firbank, E. F. Benson, H. H. Bashford, and A. P. Herbert. He closed by regretting that he had no time to talk about yet more writers, of whom two with particular Wodehousean relevance might be Barry Pain (an early influence) and George Grossmith (father of George Jr, with whom Wodehouse wrote a number of musical comedies).

There just remained the award of the prizes for the Costume Parade. Again, as space is limited, I cannot name all 11 prize winners, but would like to draw attention to the deserved winner of the 'Most Obscure Reference' award, Janet Nickerson. She dressed as 'The Girl in Green', who makes a fleeting offstage appearance towards the end of chapter 3 in *The Girl in Blue*. Check it out if you don't believe me, and spend a moment marvelling at the sheer awareness that Wodehouse fans have of the detail of their favourite author's writing.

– TONY RING



The cast of 'Jeeves and the American Revolution' pose for post-performance pictures with Ken Ludwig (far right).

A First-Timer's View of the Lunacy

I can't say I wasn't warned before I toddled off to Washington, D.C., to mingle with The Wodehouse Society gang at their 2017 convention, Mr. Wodehouse Goes to Washington.

"They're as good a bunch of eggs as likely to assemble anywhere," said Honoria Plum (aka Jen Scheppers) in an e-mail, and so I had my guard up from the off. Those damned Yankees weren't going to duress me with their friendliness and good humour. From the first "what ho" to the final "pip, pip", I was determined to maintain a haughty reserve, like Jeeves contemplating soft silk shirts with evening costume (as worn by the Prince of Wales).

Well, I was undone pretty much from the moment I wandered into the registration room and the convention convenor, Scott Daniels, offered me a hearty handshake and welcome despite still being busy with the odd loose end. Others in the room carried on more or less as if I'd always been there and not just blown in from Australia, via San Francisco and Amtrak's somewhat less than splendid rail services across the country. Acceptance, this is called, and dammit if that wasn't the case the whole weekend.

For my part I was happy to put faces to names with which I had become familiar during my shortish career with the Wodehouse societies on both sides of the ditch. There were Ian Michaud and Neil Midkiff, regular debaters on PGWnet (TWS's email network), and Ken Clevenger, a regular there, too, and also on Honoria's Plumtopia. Tony Ring, whom I'd dubbed "formidable" in various bits of correspondence, arrived from England and almost immediately invited me to dine with him, wife Elaine, and various other interesting personages.

One of the convention's Riveting Speakers, Chris Dueker, had already introduced himself in an email



Dutch Society President Peter Nieuwenhuizen and Emcee Ken Clevenger (photo by Barbara Saari Combs)

during my stately transcontinental progress, indicating he was one of the vast global readership of my blog. I had the pleasure of his company at the convention dinner.

Robert (the) Bruce acted as if he'd never heard that joke before, which was kind of him.

This is all very well, I can hear a carper or two saying, but why would a fellow travel half a world just to go browsing and sluicing with a bunch of like-minded lunatics?

The short answer is: curiosity. I mean, I know why I love Wodehouse . . . but what about all you others? The usual answers apply – the wit, the words, the wonderful world of Wodehouse – but is there anything we all have in common that drew us to Wodehouse in the first place and keeps us there? Do we all have some defective gene that predisposes us to think distorted quotes and mashed-up plots are the stuff to give the troops?

I don't think I'm any the wiser after my weekend with Wodehouseans in Washington, except that everyone seems to be searching for this common



Convention speaker Chris Dueker with Noel Bushnell

ground. The two constant topics of conversation were first encounters with the canon and favourite stories. The stories of first encounters were all over the place, as might be expected, but there seemed to be a consensus that *Leave It to Psmith* was, if not the best Wodehouse yarn, certainly in contention for the Silver Medal. Indeed, among the conventioners, the Blandings novels appeared to be favoured over the Jeeves cycle. This is amazing to me, but let it go. It's like arguing

the merits of Bollinger over Dom Perignon, or vice versa.

My one regret out of the whole affair was the absence of Mrs Plum. Circumstances conspired to keep her away from this biennial feast of soul and reason, virtually ensuring I would be the only Australian there and therefore without a partner for the Aussie cross-talk act with which people in England are wearily familiar but Americans are vulnerably less so.

Geez, it woulda been grouse, cobber.

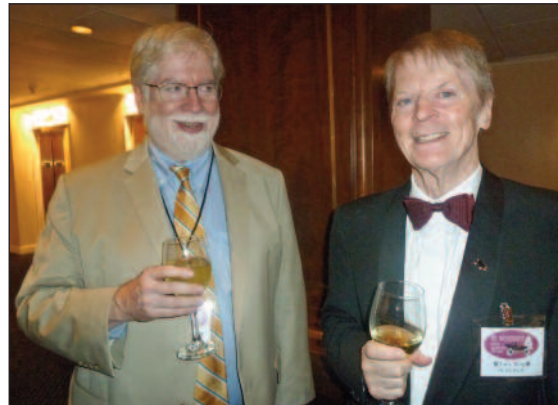
– NOEL BUSHNELL

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More Photos of a Smashing Time



A spot of Charleston dancing (photo by Barbara S. Combs)



Convention organiser Scott Daniels with Tony Ring



Dan and Tina Garrison as Ukridge and the May Queen



A view of the banquet (photo by Barbara Saari Combs)



Elin Murphy & Gary Hall, winners of the newly created Norman Murphy Award (photo by Barbara S. Combs)

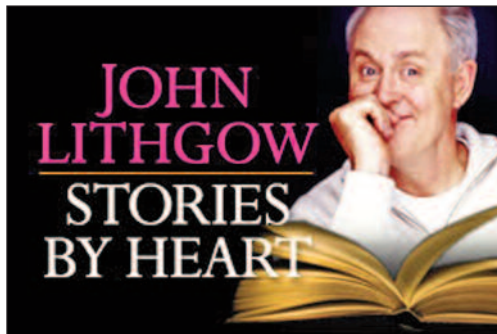
Wodehouse on the Boards

Word has arrived of several productions that Wodehouseans would enjoy – two in the US, one in the UK, as below. If you know of others coming up soon, please send your information to the Editor (contact details on the back page). We'd also welcome reviews!

December 21, 2017–March 4, 2018:

John Lithgow: *Stories by Heart*

The American actor John Lithgow became a fan of Wodehouse as a boy, when his father would read PGW stories to him and his siblings. In 2008 Lithgow began reading his favourite, 'Uncle Fred Flits By', in a one-man show that he gradually refined over the years to



include a sharply contrasting Ring Lardner story, 'The Haircut'. The result, *Stories by Heart*, has earned rave reviews from Wodehouseans who have been fortunate enough to see his show. Now is your chance! Mr Lithgow will be performing on the above dates at the American Airlines Theatre, 227 West 42nd Street, New York City. Previews begin on December 21, and the official opening is on January 11. For tickets, go to: <https://goo.gl/wQrpxo>

January 24–February 18, 2018:

Jeeves Takes a Bow

Margaret Raether has now adapted several Wodehouse stories for the stage, but this one appears to be the most

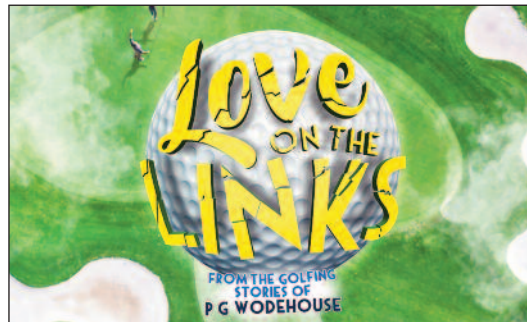
popular, and it has received excellent reviews wherever it has played. If you're planning a visit to the States during the winter, a trip to the NC Stage Company in Asheville, North Carolina, may be in order. For details and tickets, see their website at www.ncstage.org.

May 31–June 23, 2018: *Love on the Links*

This new play, adapted from Wodehouse's stories by Jon Glover and Edward Taylor, will be staged at the Salisbury Playhouse on the above dates. Their publicity material reads as follows: "In the rarefied surroundings of Wood Hills Golf Club in deepest Surrey, all is very genteel. The Oldest Member is having a snooze in the corner while the barman is pouring another White Horse and Malvern at the '19th Hole'. It's soon time, however, for The Oldest Member to stir in his armchair and regale us with stories of seduction, canoodling and thwarted love, with

the help of some biffy club members, not to mention the ever graceful Daphne Cartwright and the dashing Jack Ramage. Do join us for this topping evening of high-jinks and hilarity (plus-fours optional)."

Sounds good? Yes, it does to us, too! Members who live reasonably close



to Salisbury may wish to organise a joint outing; we'd be glad to help with arranging contacts if somebody in the immediate area would like to take on organisation responsibilities. For more information on how to obtain tickets, go to the Salisbury Playhouse's website at: goo.gl/QfmHxd

Cosy Moments

***Revenge of the Nerd*, by Curtis Armstrong (2017)**

Actor, writer, and Wodehouse fan Curtis Armstrong has several references to PGW in his show-biz memoir; this is the first: "I was a Jeeves/Wooster devotee and he [Elliott Milstein] a Blandings Castle aficionado, and neither of us had much patience for the other's saga, but we patiently guided each other, Anglophiles both, through Wodehouse's entire oeuvre."

***Pomfret Towers*, by Angela Thirkell (1938)**

(from Susan Collicott)

Susan writes: "This one always makes me smile." In this scene the house party is gathered for the evening:

When everyone who had no inhibitions about good manners had escaped, and those who had enough presence of mind were pretending to write letters at distant writing-tables, Mrs Rivers said it would be such a treat if the archdeacon

would read to them. The archdeacon had no objection. The question then arose of what he should read. Peter said P. G. Wodehouse was jolly good, and in case anyone had not quite understood him he said P. G. Wodehouse was jolly good.

***Sheer Folly*, by Carola Dunn (2009)**

(from Gwen Williams via Roger Bowen)

This book is the 18th in a series featuring journalist Daisy Dalrymple, set in 1920s Hampshire, England. Gwen was delighted to come across this exchange:

"Barker, You're a regular Jeeves," Daisy said warmly.

"Jeeves?" asked Julia.

"A fictional butler who's a genius at dealing with extraordinary circumstances. Your reading has been altogether too serious."

Wodehouse Quiz 25 Jeeves Short Stories

by David Buckle

1. The first Jeeves short story, 'Extricating Young Gussie', originally published in 1915, saw Bertie extricating Gussie Mannering-Phipps from what?
2. Which two fun-loving characters first appear in 'Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch'?
3. In which story, first published in 1916, does Jeeves take over from Meadows, Bertie's valet, who has been dismissed for stealing some silk socks?
4. At the end of 'Jeeves and the Hard Boiled Egg', what does Bertie ask Jeeves to remove, much to the valet's approval?
5. In 'Jeeves and the Kid Clementina', why are Bertie and Jeeves staying at the Hotel Splendide, Bingley-on-Sea?
6. In which story, in order to help his Aunt Dahlia, does Bertie try and steal the painting 'The Fothergill Venus' but ends up stealing the wrong work of art?
7. In 'Without the Option', Bertie, on his appearance at Boshier Street Police Court, has to pay a fine of £5 for committing what crime?
8. Who owns McIntosh, an Aberdeen terrier that Bertie unsuccessfully looks after in 'The Episode of the Dog McIntosh'?
9. What is unusual about the storytelling of 'Bertie Changes His Mind'?
10. The last Jeeves short story, 'Jeeves and the Greasy Bird', first published in 1965, sees Bertie re-engaged to which of his former fiancées?

(Answers on page 19)

A Sermon Handicap Contender

From the Bishop of Derby's office, October 2017:

The Revd Jane Legh, Assistant Curate in the Benefice of the South Dales and in the Benefice of Boylestone, Church Broughton, Dalbury, Longford, Long Lane, Radbourne, Sutton-on-the-Hill and Trusley, Diocese of Derby, has been appointed Interim Part-Time Priest-in-Charge of the Benefice of Boylestone, Church Broughton, Dalbury, Longford, Long Lane, Radbourne, Sutton-on-the-Hill and Trusley. Mrs Legh hopes to take up her new appointment later in the year. She will remain as Assistant Curate in the Benefice of the South Dales and her contact details will be unchanged.

(Submitted by JOHN SELBORNE)

The Wooster Source

by Graeme Davidson

*This is the real Tabasco,
It's the word from Bertie Wooster,
The less than hapful half of that wondrous
duo Jeeves and Wooster
Tales of whose exploits many of us have now
for years devoured
Alongside the writings of Sir Noel Coward
Since moving on from tales of childhood heroes
Such as Jennings and Darbshire,
and Bleep and Booster.*



I was conscious of a rather pronounced sinking feeling, which the appearance of the Pringles did nothing to allay.

Sippy had described them as England's premier warts, and it looked to me as though he might be about right. Professor Pringle was a thinnish, baldish, dyspeptic-lookingish cove with an eye like a haddock, while Mrs Pringle's aspect was that of one who had had bad news round about the year 1900 and never really got over it.

.....

"Well, well, well!" I said cheerily. "Hullo-ullo-ullo!"

I always like to make something in the way of an entrance speech, it seeming to me to lend a chummy tone to the proceedings.

The girl Heloise looked at me reproachfully.

"Where have you been all day?" she asked.

"I went to my room after lunch."

"You weren't there at five."

"No. After putting in a spell of work on the good old colleges I went for a stroll. Fellow must have exercise if he means to keep fit."

"*Mens sana in corpore sano*," observed the prof.

"I shouldn't wonder," I said cordially.

.....

"Jeeves," I said, when I got him alone that night, "I am no faint heart, but I am inclined to think that this binge is going to prove a shade above the odds."

"You are not enjoying your visit, sir?"

"I am not, Jeeves. Have you seen Miss Pringle?"

"Yes, sir, from a distance."

"The best way to see her."

All from 'Without the Option', *Carry on, Jeeves* (1925)

You may say what you like against Bingo, but nobody has ever found him a depressing host. Why, many a time in the days of his bachelorhood I've known him to start throwing bread before the soup course. Yet now he and Uncle Thomas were a pair. He looked haggard and careworn, like a Borgia who has suddenly remembered that he has forgotten to shove cyanide in the *consommé*, and the dinner-gong due any moment.

(From 'Clustering Round Young Bingo', 1925)



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Patrick Kidd

I was amused/reassured by the Percyphobia piece in the September *Wooster Sauce*.

After six years of being just a one-child family, with all the potential for bringing back extra bottles of wine from the continent that entails, we added a second to the brood in May, a son. Throughout the pregnancy, and for a few years before, the bookies' favourite name for a boy was Percy. My wife had often discussed it – being a wise woman she had noted the Percy Jeeves connection – but something kept stopping us from committing to it, even when he was born. She says it's because at the back of her mind the name just felt a little 'wet' (that Gallic sibilance), but one blocker for me was that I couldn't find, as your correspondent noted, a single admirable Percy in the whole Wodehouse canon. Throw in the sad end of another inspiration – Percy Chapman, who captained England to an Ashes win in the 1920s but died an alcoholic – and the name was shelved.

We went for Humphrey instead, another old-fashioned one but with good vibes for those who like jazz and political satire. And no negative forebears in Wodehouse as far as I'm aware. No positive ones either, I think, though wiser heads may correct me.

A Few Last Words on Macdonell

In the September *Wooster Sauce*, we printed reactions from readers regarding your Editor's gaffe in the June issue that referred to "Evelyn Waugh's *England, Their England*"; that book was, of course, written by A. G. Macdonell. We shall consider the following two letters to be the final punctuation on the discussion.

From Murray Hedgcock

For those who have enjoyed the A. G. Macdonell masterpiece *England, Their England*, a later book by the same author should be drawn to their attention, if they have not yet met it.

A year after *England*, Macdonell produced *How Like an Angel*, a biting satire on much in English life, including marketing and publicity methods. The first study is best known, as *Wooster Sauce* indicated, for its riotous account of a village cricket match; the second switches cricketing attention to Lord's.

A sensational and previously unknown discovery is rushed into the England team for the vital Test match against Borealia, and stands the game on its head with bowling tactics which get immediate results but greatly upset many, to the point that the controversial new star is promptly evicted from the match.

Bear in mind that this book appeared the year after Bodyline shocked the cricketing world and threatened Anglo-Australian relations, and you may guess the cause of the Lords furore. *How Like an Angel* has been a personal favourite for years.

From Simon Frazer

A while back I re-read *England, Their England* and before I had read much, I realised that Macdonell was familiar with the work of PGW. Lo and behold, on page 166 of my Pan Edition was a

From Di Latham

What a lovely time I had at my first AGM on the 25th September! I met delightful people, and of course everyone got on like a house on fire as we had one burning topic of conversation. I had felt intimidated by the academic expertise on PGW shown in the journal, but in the end it was all fun.

I have found it startling that I can't go into a bookshop, pick up Wodehouse number 1, read a bibliography at the front, and set forth to read them in order. Instead, all I do, rather shambolically, is buy what is almost inevitably a compilation which contains at least three stories I've already got, and although I re-read them with a happy smile, it's not what I really want. It seems I have to go to Google, specialist booksellers, or fairs just to make progress, and this is an unexpected challenge.

Many of the folks at the AGM had been started off by their dads many moons ago and were able to follow through at a steady pace, whereas I'm feeling lost in the undergrowth. I shall, of course, rise to the challenge, but what a shame to make following such a hero the trial it has become, when it should just be enormous fun. Perhaps London-based fans can give me clues to which bookshops – or, sorry to say it, websites – I have to follow.

Editor's note. There are numerous resources that should make it easy for Di to find the information she needs, and I have already given her a few, but any suggestions are welcome.

reference to "the immortal butler Jeeves". [See extract below. –Ed.]

One further point: one of your correspondents rightly said that Macdonell died young (age 45, in 1941). He had suffered ill health since the Great War, in which he served in the 51st Highland Division. Your correspondent was not correct in saying he wrote little. Prior to the publication of *England, Their England*, he had written nine detective stories/thrillers. After 1935 he wrote five more novels; a book of short stories; and three works of nonfiction, including *Napoleon and His Generals*. He also contributed frequently to the *London Mercury*, a literary journal founded by J. C. Squire (to whom *England, Their England* is dedicated), and he was "a pugnacious and perceptive drama critic". His complete works have recently been published by Fonthill.

A cosy moment from *England, Their England*

"Do you wish to travel, sir?" he asked gently, and when Donald said that he was desirous of going as far as Aylesbury, the guard touched his hat and said in a more respectful manner, "If you wish it, sir." He reminded Donald of the immortal butler, Jeeves. Donald fancied, but he was not quite sure, that he heard the guard whisper to the engine-driver, "I think we might make a start now, Gerald," and he rather thinks the engine-driver replied in the same undertone, "Just as you wish, Horace."

A New Jeeves and Wooster Book on the Horizon

In October, Wodehouseans the world over were either overjoyed or deeply dismayed (depending on their point of view) to learn that another author will be writing a new Jeeves and Wooster novel, with the blessing of the Wodehouse Estate.

In 2013 it was Sebastian Faulks who was given the challenge of creating an original story featuring some of our best-loved characters. This time around it is Ben Schott who has been given the green light, and the plot of the proposed new book, *Jeeves and the King of Clubs*, sounds – well, interesting. Wodehouse purists may not appreciate seeing Bertie Wooster and Jeeves acting as spies during the interwar period and the Junior Ganymede being turned into a branch of the Secret Service. But, as with *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells*, kind-hearted and accommodating Plummys will give it a chance, and if it succeeds in attracting a new readership to Wodehouse's works, then all to the good.



Mr Schott is a journalist and photographer best known for his two series of books, *Schott's Almanac* (six volumes, 2005–2010) and *Schott's Miscellanies* (the original book, published in 2002, and four sequels). He has described being given the commission to write the next Jeeves novel as “like being lent the Crown

Jewels”. In an interview with the *Guardian* (see goo.gl/4qUK7z), he noted that the key to writing a Jeeves story “is not to mimic the Wodehouse voice, but to find its unique rhythm. The best impersonators don't caricature, they inhabit.” For an example of how Mr Schott will inhabit Wodehouse, see his recent article ‘Jeeves and a Man Called The Donald’ at goo.gl/ExToUH.

Jeeves and the King of Clubs will be published by Hutchinson in November 2018.

“Could you lend me a tenner, Oofy, old man?”

“No, I couldn't.”

“It would save my life.”

“There,” said Oofy, “you have put your finger on the insuperable objection to the scheme. I see no percentage in your being alive. I wish you were a corpse, preferably a mangled one. I should like to dance on your remains.”

Bingo was surprised.

“Dance on my remains?”

“All over them.”

Bingo drew himself up. He has his pride.

“Oh?” he said. “Well, in that case, tinkerty-tonk.”

(From ‘Sonny Boy’, 1938)

Poet's Corner

Flannel

Full many a maxim, old and pat,

I learned in childhood's happy days;
They taught me not to tease the cat,

To shrink from all “contrairy” ways.

And, if reluctant to be spanked,

Not to assault my brother's shin.

But first of all this precept ranked,

“Always wear flannel next your skin.”

With praise of it my mind they fired;

They dinned its merits into me,

Until it gradually acquired

A sort of magic potency.

I grew to think the vilest knave

A heavenly crown might hope to win,

Were it but written on his grave

“This man wore flannel next his skin.”

In later years, I'm much afraid,

Not recking subsequent remorse,

From Virtue's narrow path I strayed:

Once I put money on a horse,

And sometimes drained the festive cup;

But still, however I might sin,

This thought would always buoy me up:

“At least I've flannel next my skin.”

But now – how runs the fatal rede? –

To don, they say, a flannel vest

Is very, very bad indeed;

Cotton or silk is far the best.

But I'll not change my ways, not I;

I'm far too aged to begin.

If it should kill me – well, I'll die

Still wearing flannel next my skin.

From *Daily Chronicle*, 6 June 1904

Answers to Wodehouse Quiz (Page 17)

1. Marriage to Ray Denison (or Danby), a New York chorus girl
2. Bertie's cousins Claude and Eustace
3. 'Jeeves Takes Charge'
4. His moustache
5. Bertie is taking part in the Drones's annual golf tournament.
6. 'Jeeves Makes an Omelette'
7. Stealing a policeman's helmet on Boat Race night
8. His Aunt Agatha (Mrs Spencer Gregson)
9. It's the only Jeeves story narrated by Jeeves himself.
10. Honoria Glossop

The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

The Prince and Betty

The UK version of *The Prince and Betty* is an anomalous Wodehouse novel, both in content and in publishing history. Wodehouse himself was enthusiastic about it, writing to Leslie Havergal Bradshaw on 19 January 1911 that “I have started my new novel. It’s going to be a corker – good love interest – rapid action from first chapter – length about 100,000 words” (Sophie Ratcliffe, *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*, 2001, p80). Certain critics have been less keen, most notably Barry Phelps: “The UK version of *The Prince and Betty* is the only Wodehouse book I find unreadable. [It] is a standard Mills and Boon romance written to their exact formula and requirements for what in those days was called ‘the shop-girl market.’” (*P.G. Wodehouse: Man and Myth*, 1992, p15, p99)

The book was first published by Mills and Boon on 1 May 1912 (*McIlvaine*, A15b), bound in light red boards with black lettering on the front cover and gold lettering on the spine, without any advertising supplement. The title is one of the scarcest UK first editions (‘The Bibliographic Corner: The Ten Scarcest Wodehouse UK First Editions’, *Wooster Sauce*, March 2016, pp20–21). At the same time, an edition was also published with a 32-page advertising supplement (A15b2); a presentation copy, inscribed by Wodehouse to his parents in May 1912, contained the advertising supplement, so both versions, without and with the supplement, are usually each treated as true first editions (*McIlvaine Addendum*, A15b2).

The Prince and Betty was the only Wodehouse title published by Mills and Boon, and they did not reprint it. Publication rights subsequently passed to

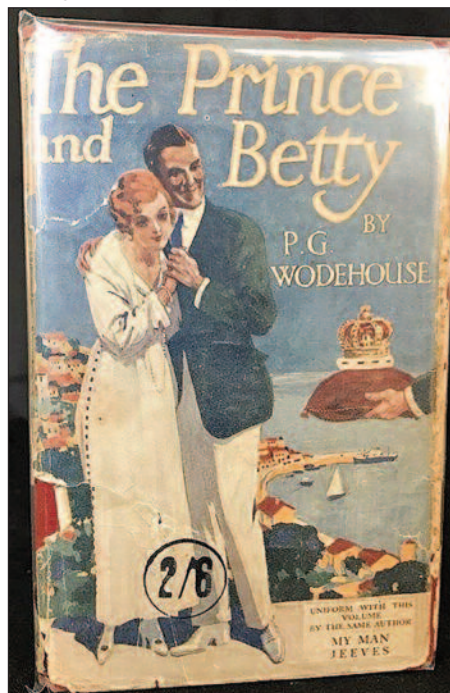
Newnes, who reset it and published a new edition in February 1921 (A15b3). Further reprints followed through to 1935. Unhelpfully, Newnes did not include the publication date in any of the reprints, which means that, without the aid of a bibliography, it is difficult to tell when a reprint was published. *McIlvaine* seems to have used the dates in the *English Catalogue of Books* to attribute dates (in square brackets) to the various reprints, although there are also occasional references to British Museum reception dates. The table below summarises the

salient features, as per *McIlvaine*, of the various reprints, and should improve a reader’s chances of being able to identify any particular reprint.

Based on the evidence of *McIlvaine*, summarised in the table below, the only two editions which are difficult to tell apart are A15b5 and A15b6 (both 186 pages, both 5 x 7½).

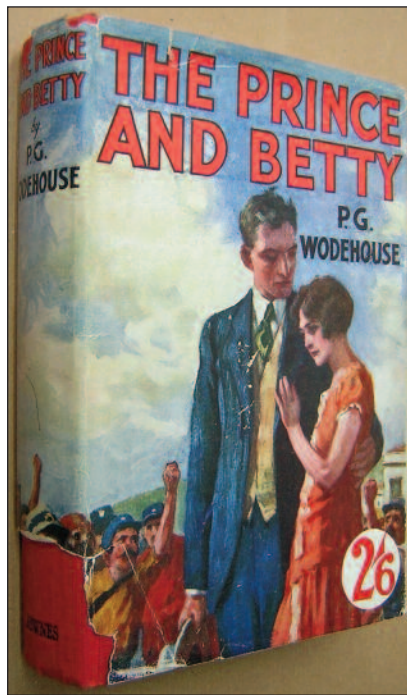
The dust wrapper of A15b4 (pictured left) states that it is uniform with Wodehouse’s *My Man Jeeves*, which was first published, by George Newnes, in May 1919 (A22a).

The next dust wrapper pictured is more problematic. It has a price of 2s 6d and accompanies a red-bound reprint sized 5 x 7½. The rear of the dust wrapper advertises Richmal Crompton’s *Still William* (first published in 1925) as “just published”. Comparing the evidence of the book and the dust wrapper with the details in *McIlvaine*, A15b5 and A15b6 are both stated by *McIlvaine* to



McIlv.	Date	Boards	Size (inches)	Pages	Price
A15b3	[February 1921]	???	5½ x 7	252	2s
A15b4	[April 1924] BM: 3 Feb 1921 (sic)	Red cloth, black design and lettering, cheap paper	4½ x 7	252	2s
A15b5	[July 1925] BM: 30 Jul 1925	Red cloth, black lettering, thick paper	5 x 7½	186	2s (see below)
A15b6	[April 1928]	???	5 x 7½	186	2s
A15b7	[c1930]	Paperback, picture cover	???	128	6d
A15b8	[April 1931]	Reissue of 1925	5½ x 8½	186	2s 6d
A15b9	[December 1935] BM: 2 Dec 1935	Blue cloth, black lettering, thick paper	5 x 7½	188	2s 6d

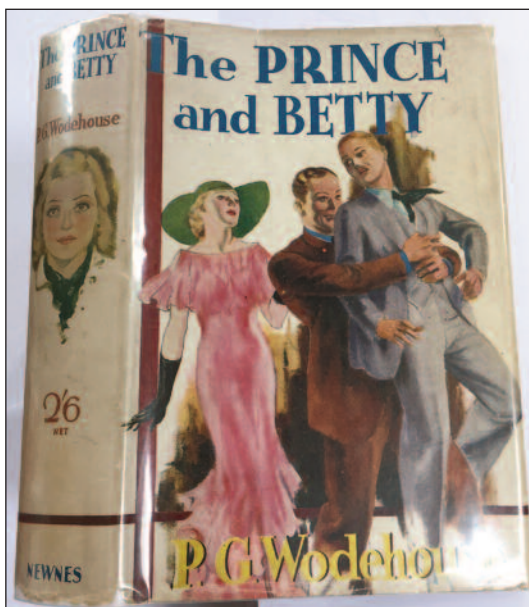
have a price of 2s, whereas the dust wrapper has a price of 2s 6d. *McIlvaine* states that A15b8 had a price of 2s 6d, which corresponds with the dust wrapper, but gives the dimensions of A15b8 as 5½ x 8½, which is distinctly larger than the 5 x 7½ book inside the dust wrapper. There seem to be two possible solutions to this conundrum. First, one can surmise that *McIlvaine* is wrong about the 2s price of A15b5 (pictured right). Second, one can surmise that *McIlvaine* is wrong about the dimensions of A15b8. On balance, I prefer the first option, that *McIlvaine* is wrong about the 2s price of A15b5, as this allows us to identify the dust wrapper as A15b5 from 1925, which fits with the advert for the “just published” *Still William*. If one were to prefer the second option, it would seem odd that the dust wrapper accompanying A15b8 of 1931 (admittedly described by *McIlvaine* as a reissue of the 1925 A15b5) was updated to increase the price from 2s to 2s 6d, but was not updated to include the *William* titles published in the intervening years, and so still referred to *Still William* as “just published”.



of Herbert Jenkins, Wodehouse’s usual publisher, of using the same illustration on the dust wrapper of every edition. It appears that Newnes liked to vary their illustrations, as the dust wrappers for *My Man Jeeves* also had at least three different illustrations (‘The Bibliographic Corner: My Man Jeeves’, *Wooster Sauce*, June 2003, pp18–19).

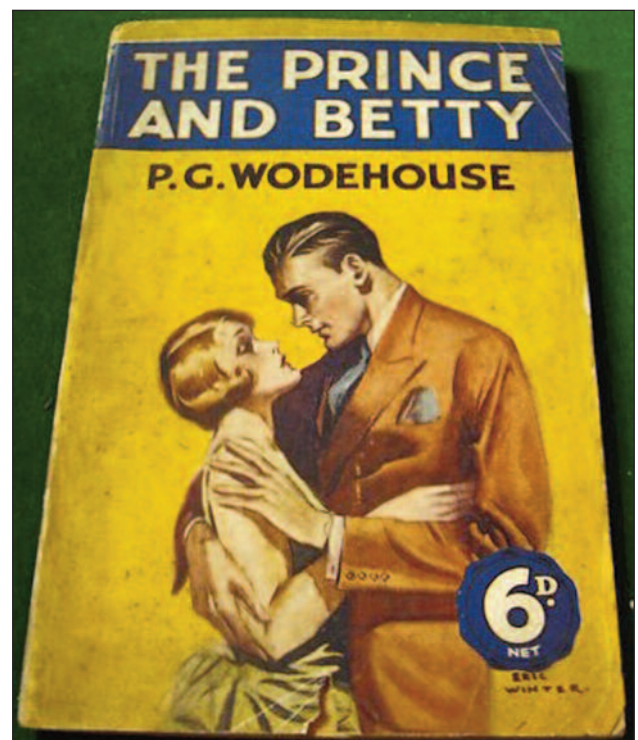
Newnes also issued a paperback (A15b7) of *The Prince and Betty*, pictured below, with yet another illustration on the front. This too was consistent with their treatment of other Wodehouse titles which they published in paperback: *My Man Jeeves*, which has two paperback editions (A22a4, A22a5) with subtly different illustrations; *A Gentleman of Leisure*, which has at least two paperback editions (A13b13, A13b14); and *Love Among the Chickens*, which also has two paperback editions (A7c14, A7c15).

The hardback reprints mentioned above (A15b4, A15b5, A15b9) are all reasonably common, with A15b5 being the most common, albeit they are much scarcer in dust wrappers. I have only ever seen one copy in dust wrapper of each of A15b4 and A15b5, and about half a dozen copies of A15b9. The paperback reprint (A15b7) is also very scarce. As regards the other hardback reprints (A15b3, A15b6, A15b8), I have never, to the best of my knowledge, seen a copy of any of them (unless A15b6 and A15b8 are identical to A15b5, which would explain the relative frequency of A15b5).



The dust wrapper of A15b9 (pictured above) supports the first option proposed above, as the rear panel of it contains an advertisement for all 17 of the *William* titles published by 1935. This was the last reprint of *The Prince and Betty* to be published until it appeared in the Everyman series in 2015.

It is noticeable that each of the Newnes dust wrappers discussed had a different illustration on the front panel. This is in contrast to the normal practice



As usual, if any readers are able to shed any more light on the various editions mentioned above, I would be delighted to hear directly from them. My thanks to Ananth Kaitharam for providing the image of A15b5.

Recent Press Comment

The Times, August 12 (From David Lindsay)

In his review of Sotheby's restaurant, Giles Coren wrote of one course: "It might have graced the finest modern table (if such a thing exists any more) but in this setting felt like something Bertie Wooster's Aunt Dahlia might have had her chef, Anatole, serve her at home for luncheon on a quiet Thursday."

The Times, August 15 (From David Anderton)

The obituary of Richard Gordon, creator of *Doctor in the House*, mentioned his affection for the works of Wodehouse and noted that "One critic described his work as PG Wodehouse grafted on to The Lancet".

The Times, August 19 (from David Lindsay)

In a discussion that could be entitled "When is a homburg not a homburg?" Rose Wild quoted from *The Inimitable Jeeves*: "'Bring me my whangee, my yellowest shoes and the old green Homburg,' carolled Bertie Wooster. 'I'm going to the Park to do pastoral dances.'"

San Diego Union Tribune, August 22

In his 'beer-stained notes from a European vacation', Peter Rowe referred to drinking in Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese in Fleet Street, whose customers, he noted, included P. G. Wodehouse.

Times of India, August 24

Lt. Col. Shrikant Purohit, who was incarcerated for nine years, attributed a strict regime, which included delving into P. G. Wodehouse each night, to his ability to cope with his time in prison.

The Times, August 27

According to Alan Campbell, "to misquote P.G. Wodehouse, it can be difficult to distinguish between Pedro Caixinha and a ray of sunshine". Football lovers will no doubt be aware that Mr Caixinha is the manager of Glasgow Rangers.

The Guardian, August 28

In a letter to the Editor, Kevin Bannon noted how the late Richard Gordon (see August 15, above) eventually acceded to being a guest on *This Is Your Life* when he learned that "among the awaiting accolades was a recorded tribute from the US by that legend of the comedy genre, PG Wodehouse. . . . He was clearly bowled over by the maestro's glowing praise."

Business Standard, August 30

Mihir Sharma wrote: "When a well-loved writer dies, we don't just mourn her passing; we mourn also, the books she will never write. This isn't just true for those who die young, or with just one or two books to their name: P.G. Wodehouse may have died in his nineties, having written a novel for every year of his life – but even so one wonders whether or not, had he been granted another year or so, we might have been given one more look at Blandings Castle or perhaps at Psmith."

Chichester Observer, September 5

In an article marking the publication of our patron Simon Brett's 100th book, Phil Hewitt made the point that PGW "managed just the 94". (Many sources say 98.)

The Lady, September 9 (From June Arnold)

In the weekly feature 'This Week I Am Reading', Jonathan Lynn was asked which books or authors had influenced him the most? His answer included "anything by P.G. Wodehouse".

The Guardian, September 10 (from Mike Swaddling)

In his article 'P.G. Wodehouse can't save me now', Martin Anderson, writing about the fact that Brexit Britain wants him out because he's Danish, lamented: "I will still be considered an undesirable immigrant. My passion for (inter alia) P.G. Wodehouse quips won't be considered of any value."

The Hindu, September 12

In discussion with Srivithsan Nadadthur, the film director V Jayashankar said that he was influenced by the works of Friedrich Nietzsche . . . and P. G. Wodehouse. Rays of sunshine?

National Post, September 15 (from Tony Ring)

In a piece on Justin Trudeau's premiership, Rex Murphy made an aside: "The works of P.G. Wodehouse will offer the studious inquirer a nearly perfect overlay to the politics of Newfoundland and Labrador, right up to the present day." I'm sure we all agree on that!

Daily Telegraph Magazine, September 16

(from Carolyn de la Plain)

An article by Mick Brown on the film *Goodbye Christopher Robin* devoted a whole paragraph to the feud between A. A. Milne and Wodehouse.

Irish Times, September 16 (from Eoin McCann)

Keith Duggan's piece on the Irish Gaelic footballer Jim Gavin noted that "Gavin in press conference mode is a vivid tableau of the brilliant Wodehouse line about a man who 'if not actually disgruntled, then he was very far from grunted'."

Culture Clash, September 18 (from Tony Ring)

The frontman of the band Enter Shikari, Rou Reynolds, wrote that "one of the authors I return to most is P.G. Wodehouse and his seemingly endless series of Jeeves and Wooster stories. . . . The plots are clever, the characters are hilarious and there's just something reassuringly homely (however unrealistic) about his writing."

Globe and Mail, September 22 (from Roger Baxter)

Writer Adam Gopnik stated that the books he has reread most are PGW's "Jeeves novels and even more his Jeeves and Bertie short stories . . . [which] seem inexhaustible. That he wrote these comic masterpieces in the darkest of human hours, which he managed to blunder into first-hand during the Second World War,

should force our professors to think more handily than they like to about the actual relations of life and art."

The Times, September 23

Hilary Spurling, referring to her biography of Anthony Powell, wrote: "P.G. Wodehouse said he got the thrill of a lifetime when he opened a parcel that arrived out of the blue containing one of Anthony Powell's early novels, which he read at a single sitting. Powell was . . . writing *A Dance to the Music of Time* and stunned Wodehouse by posting the next three instalments. . . . 'I study the stuff under a microscope,' said the inventor of Jeeves and Bertie Wooster, 'and I still can't see how you do it.'"

The Guardian, September 23 (from Terry Taylor)

Writing on the film *Goodbye Christopher Robin*, Frank Cottrell Boyce mentioned that Pooh was not universally admired and that several writers satirised what they saw as the mawkishness of the books. He quoted PGW: "Timothy Bobbin goes happily hoppity hoppity hop."

South Coast Herald, September 30

Judi Davis noted some of her favourite cat quotes, including PGW's "Cats, as a class, have never completely got over the snootiness caused by the fact that in ancient Egypt they were worshipped as gods".

Times of India, October 2

Following the death of Hugh Hefner, Chidanand Rajghattia wrote that "Playboy tucked in stories by P.G. Wodehouse . . . between tantalising déshabillé and taut derrière."

Daily Telegraph, October 9 (from Carolyn de la Plain)

Ben Lawrence wrote a profile of playwright Alan Ayckbourn that included five paragraphs devoted to the 1993 musical *Jeeves* and its 1996 revival, *By Jeeves*.

The Telegraph (Calcutta), October 15

(from Ashok Bhatia)

This e-newspaper celebrated Wodehouse's 136th birthday with an article by Ramona Sen that examined the Jeeves and Wooster series of books as well as Plum's school stories. "The reason the school stories ring so true even a hundred years later is because, in spite of the advent of technology and perhaps less archaic rules, classroom experiences remain inherently the same."

Glen Falls Post-Star, October 17

Will Doolittle wrote: "Every once in a while, I have to take a dip into the refreshing, silly, brilliant prose of P.G. Wodehouse. . . . There are so many pleasures in a Wodehouse novel . . . the novels are like beautiful,

ornate watches that always tell the wrong time. The content is nonsense but the structure is astonishing."

Daily Telegraph, October 17

(from Carolyn de la Plain and Dave Anderton)

In a political sketch entitled 'Bertie Wooster's next aunt and a night of the living dead', Michael Deacon commented on Amber Rudd: "A tip, for any producers trying to cast a new adaptation of the Jeeves and Wooster stories: the Home Secretary would make an excellent Wodehousian aunt. She's blisteringly loud, furiously brisk, and, in the manner of all terrifying aristocratic women, pronounces almost every vowel as 'AR'."

DNA India, October 22

In writing about the joys of Le Touquet and those who visited there, Ornella D'Souza referred to PGW as being one of a number of "frequent, glitzy frolickers".

The Lady, November 2 (From June Arnold)

In the weekly feature 'This Week I Am Reading', Susan Hill's reply to the question of what was on her winter reading list included PGW's Blandings books.

Baltimore Sun, November 11

An obituary of Virginia Reinecke, a Baltimore pianist and organist, referred to her strong personality and quoted a colleague: "I always felt that if she didn't play the piano, she would have been a great fox hunter and a grande dame. . . . She always reminded me of Bertie Wooster's Aunt Dahlia."

The Sunday Times, November 12 (from Tony Ring)

At a literary festival in Hong Kong, Ian Rankin gave a speech that predicted a move away from bleak crime novels towards novels with "a more comforting message". In the column that accompanied the *Sunday Times* report of Rankin's speech, Literary Editor Andrew Holgate wrote: "What you want from a comfort read is nostalgia, gentility and a cast-iron certainty that the established order will not change for long. . . . P. G. Wodehouse's Blandings novels are the ultimate comfort reads (and far funnier and more all-embracing than Jeeves and Wooster). An idyllic castle, endless summer days, gloriously eccentric characters, and plots about nothing more terrifying than the fate of a prize pig."

South China Morning Post Magazine, November 16

In 'Why colonial Hong Kong didn't appeal to literary big hitters', Jason Wordie examined P. G. Wodehouse's connections to that city: his father was a Hong Kong magistrate, his brother Philip was born there and worked for its police force, and PG himself almost ended up there when he worked for the bank. To read the full article, see goo.gl/VKybyo.

"Adams, who is the gentleman over by the window? The gentleman in the brown suit?"

"That is a Mr. Simmonds, your lordship. He joined us last year."

"I never saw a man take such large mouthfuls. Did you ever see a man take such large mouthfuls. Adams?"

Adams refrained from expressing an opinion, but inwardly he was thrilling with artistic fervour. Mr. Simmonds, eating, was one of his best imitations, though Mrs. Adams was inclined to object to it on the score that it was a bad example for the children. To be privileged to witness Lord Emsworth watching and criticizing Mr. Simmonds was to collect material for a double-barrelled character-study which would assuredly make the hit of the evening.

(From *Something Fresh*, 1915)

Future Events for Your Diary

December 17, 2017 Martin Jarvis on Radio 4

At 7.15 pm, tune into BBC Radio 4 to hear Martin Jarvis read 'Jeeves and the Yule-Tide Spirit', recorded earlier this year. See page 5 for more.

December 21, 2017–March 4, 2018

John Lithgow's *Stories by Heart* in New York City

American actor John Lithgow will read/perform 'Uncle Fred Flits By' in his renowned one-man show at the American Airlines Theatre, 227 West 42nd Street, New York City. For more information, see page 16.

February 26, 2018 Society Meeting at the Savile Club

As reported on page 4, the Savile Club will be our home for the foreseeable future – huzzah! Our February meeting will feature the *Guardian's* Sam Jordison as our guest speaker. Another huzzah! We gather from 6 pm onwards, and please remember the Savile's dress code: no jeans or trainers, and gentlemen must wear a jacket (tie is not required). The address is 69 Brook Street, London W1K 4ER.

January 14, 2018 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Richard Burnip will lead a Wodehouse-themed walk for London Walks. 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 24–February 18, 2018 *Jeeves Takes a Bow* at the North Carolina Stage Company

See page 16 for more about this play, adapted from

PGW by Margaret Raether. For tickets, see the NC Stage Company's website at www.ncstage.org.

April 8, 2018 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Take a walk with Richard Burnip and enjoy a lot about and by Wodehouse along the way! See January 14, above, for details on when and where.

May 25, 2018 Gold Bats vs Dulwich Dusters

The Gold Bats will be playing their traditional match against the Dulwich Dusters. The tentative start time is 6 pm, but this may change, so check the website as well as the March issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

May 31–June 23, 2018

Love on the Links at the Salisbury Playhouse

A new play adapted from PGW's golf stories will be presented in Salisbury, and it seems like a great opportunity for a local outing. For more information, see page 16. Go to goo.gl/QfmHxd for tickets.

July 16, 2018 & September 17, 2018

Society Meetings at the Savile Club

Fuller information regarding these two meetings will be provided in future issues. We start from 6 pm; the address is 69 Brook Street, London W1K 4ER.

October 11, 2018 Dinner at Gray's Inn

Mark your calendars now! The Society's biennial dinner will be held at our customary venue of Gray's Inn, London. There will be more details and an application form in the June 2018 edition of *Wooster Sauce*.

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