

WOOSTER SAUCE

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Love on the Links: How It Came to Be

by Jon Glover

Editor's note. Those members who were lucky enough to get to Salisbury between 31 May and 23 June this year had the joy of experiencing a superbly funny adaptation of six golf stories by PGW, co-written by Jon Glover, who describes his own experiences here. The play is reviewed by Caroline Franklyn on page 7.

I wouldn't say that I'm that keen on golf. As a boy, trudging 'round the sodden Brighton links with my Uncle Braham, musing over the ecclesiastical language employed in the course of the round – "Hell's bells", "Christ almighty", etc. – I can't say that the Royal & Ancient held me in its thrall. (And we are Jewish. Wouldn't the Yiddish "oy gevalt" be more suitable?)

Later, as a young married man, I was persuaded to follow my parents-in-law round their home course set in the mountains above Lake Como, mainly on the promise of lunch in the Clubhouse. Mind you, the scenery to gaze upon between shots on the Como course was somewhat different from the Brighton view of the grey, storm-tossed Channel and the chimneys of the cement works at Portslade. How anyone could concentrate on 'biffing the pill' against a panorama of the Swiss Alps surrounding St Moritz was beyond me.

But between puffs on their respective gaspers, carefully placed by the greens for putting, then replaced in mouths as emollient for the inevitable roll of the easy short one past the hole, concentrate

dear Ma- and Pa-in-law did. You see, they were taking this game seriously, even to the point of an afternoon's depression ensuing should the golf not go well before lunch.

I was often invited to 'have a go', but as a member of the precarious Acting Profession, I didn't feel I needed to add to the inevitable glumness attached to yet another fruitless phone call to my theatrical agent by then going out in the pouring rain and topping my drive. Possibly that might have been less black dog-inducing than one's phone call to the agent being greeted by the answering assistant with "You're who? Could you spell that?"

But–

While not being keen on 'a good walk spoiled', I have always been a keen fan of the literary efforts of a certain Pelham Grenville Wodehouse KBE, ever since I was a very young lad with a torch after 'lights out'. I met him on the pages of his 1938 effort, *The Code of the Woosters*, and gave away my torch misdemeanour by laughing so hard at Roderick Spode and his Black

Shorts that it alerted my father to the fact that I was ruining my eyes.

Throughout my following life – with glasses – I continued to enjoy Plum and his world, but I didn't encounter his golfing stories until 1994, when, as a now experienced radio actor, I was cast in the BBC radio adaptations of same, starring Maurice Denham as the Oldest Member and produced by Edward Taylor, an old mate.



Rob Witcomb, Tiffany Graves, Jenna Boyd, and David Shelley played Club members who helped enact the OM's tales of golf and love.

(Photo courtesy of Robert Workman and the Salisbury Playhouse)



Jon Glover with Michael Fenton Stevens, who played the OM

In 2005, during a summer when the aforementioned theatrical agent seemed to mislay my phone number for several months, I happened upon Plum's two collections of golf stories, *The Clicking of Cuthbert* and *The Heart of a Goof*, which I read in an afternoon. It seemed to me that they might make the basis of a theatrical evening, and adapting them for the stage might give me something to do while I waited for my agent to rediscover my number in his Filofax.

I rang Ted Taylor and suggested we might collaborate on a joint venture to bring Wodehouse's golfing tales to the stage. He thought this was a splendid idea, which would fit nicely between swimming in Hampstead Ponds, adapting his *Men from the Ministry* BBC series for Finnish radio, and listening to the match reports of his beloved Essex County Cricket Club on the wireless.

I had never adapted anything; my writing experiences were confined to contributing sketch material for the various radio and television comedy shows I'd appeared in during what is laughably known as 'my career'. Buoyed up by the enthusiasm of the true ignoramus, I volunteered to find a theme and a form within the stories and choose those to adapt, then we would build a play to fit. How hard could it be? Broadway, here we come!

From the beginning we decided to completely forget the radio series and start afresh. We knew that, as in many of the original stories, we would use the Oldest Member as our leading character in the same role of entertaining his fellow members with his golfing anecdotes.

Several weeks later, the true ignoramus realized that there was more to this adaptation lark than meets the old optic! Yes, the Oldest Member sits in his armchair in the Club smoking room, relating anecdotes – *but* – which? To whom? And more importantly – *why*?

Many of the stories are about love, both thwarted and nurtured on the golf course. That would be our *raison d'être*. We fixed on 'A Woman Is Only a

Woman', 'A Mixed Threesome', 'Sundered Hearts', 'Jane Gets off the Fairway', 'Rodney Fails to Qualify', and 'The Purification of Rodney Spelvin' as containing the characters, plots, and some of the original words we needed to build our evening of Golf, Love, and Laughs.

Favourite characters emerged (of ours and Plum's): Mortimer Sturgis, Betty Weston, Eddie Denton, Jane Packard, William Bates (whose last name we changed to Page), Rodney Spelvin. We invented a new young member, Jack, who is pursuing Daphne, the Club's epitome of female grace, beauty, and intelligence, with little confidence.

It's the day of the Club's annual dance. The Oldest Member, as he is duty-bound to do for a fellow member, will guide Jack in his romantic pursuit of Daphne by relating golfing love stories.

Hmm! Slowly it comes together. We produce a first draft. It has a title: *Love on the Links*.

It doesn't work – it's just four stories strung together.

We decide that the Oldest Member can speak directly to the audience. Maybe we are here to be introduced to the Club as prospective members?

Better.

Then we invent a young foursome of Club members to help the OM, as well as a curmudgeonly barman to be an onstage stage manager and facilitator. These five could act out the stories. They could use the contents of the Club smoking room as props as they dramatize the stories.

Another draft is written. We start to tout the idea around the Home Counties theatres where we see our potential audience. People like the idea but don't want to do it –

"Budgets – could it be a one-man show?"

"Lovely, but we have our plays for the foreseeable future."

"Very Wodehousian, but could it be more like *The 39 Steps*?"

Down the years Ted and I revisit, revise, enjoy our meetings, but . . . no takers! Then, in 2015 – yes, ten years after that initial good idea – a bite, and a very lucky one!

My acting mate Callum Coates is appearing in a Noel Coward at Salisbury Playhouse. Light bulb! Perfect audience for Golf, Love, and Wodehouse, surely? Can Callum slip our now dusty and well-thumbed script to theatre director – praise be this name – Gareth Machin?

He can and does! A few days later, Machin is on the phone.

He likes it!

He wants to put it on!

He wants to . . . what???

Suddenly it's that easy – or, rather, time for the old ignoramus again.

I have about as much knowledge of getting a play produced as the Oldest Member has of getting married. The many slips 'twixt "Yes" and "Rehearsals

start next week” are enough to fill another article, and, frankly, the memory of them fills your correspondent with fatigue. It was almost another two years before our first audience was greeted by the Oldest Member with a description of the Wood Hills Course and an attempted cadge of a free drink!

I could mention the many rewrites, the workshop with actors in 2017, the tortuous negotiations with the Wodehouse Estate, the many rewrites, a final production date – June 2018 – our cast chosen, the rehearsals, the many rewrites . . .

Suffice it to say, we finally produced a script that satisfied the demands of cast and audience – not least a merry band from your very own P G Wodehouse Society, who attended a Saturday matinee and were delightfully complimentary.

I’m just popping back out to the chair in the garden now, don’t you know. I’ve just discovered *Laughing Gas*. Now there’s an idea . . . full circle?

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Postscript: The Agent Thing

As I sit here in the parched Heatwave Garden – no longer, these days, straining for the sound of the house phone, but staring instead at a handheld device that doesn’t light up with emails from my theatrical agent – I comfort myself with



Jon Glover, surrounded by Society members who attended a matinee performance of Love on the Links in June. From left to right: Tony Ring, Elaine Ring, Judie Ralph, Jon, Christine Hewitt, and Robert Ralph. (The photographer was Elin Murphy.)

the knowledge that since 2004 I have *played* a theatrical agent – Maurice – who represents feckless actor Charles Paris, played by Bill Nighy, in the BBC radio series of Simon Brett’s *Charles Paris*. Playing Maurice is like therapy for me – roll on, December, to the next series and further revenge!

Till then . . . has the battery died on this thing??

Society News

A Treat for Our AGM

Richard T. Kelly’s students can’t quite believe their luck when they enrol on his undergraduate courses – because he teaches them P G Wodehouse. After a period when they demonstrate “an instinctual resistance to the idea of comedy as a subject for academic inquiry” – no doubt because, like most of us, they weren’t brought up to believe that education can be fun – they fall in with his fiendish plot to indoctrinate them into a love of the greatest comic writer who ever lived. Soon, they are “no more suspicious of Wodehouse than of James Joyce or Chinua Achebe”, and Richard’s work is done.

If you’d like to find out how the youth of today can be the Wodehouse fans of tomorrow, Richard, himself a novelist and the editor of *Highballs for Breakfast*, will be at our next Society meeting to let us in on a few of his trade secrets and share his experiences. His talk will be preceded by our mercifully swift AGM.

We meet at the Savile Club, London W1K 4ER, on Monday, 17 September, starting from 6 pm. There will be ample time for sipping cups of the blushful Hippocrene before and after Richard’s talk. And, gentlemen, please remember to sport a jacket.

Membership Renewals

In June many of our members received notices that their subscriptions were up for renewal. Thank you to all those

who have renewed their memberships of the Society. For those who have not yet done so, this will be your last issue of *Wooster Sauce* unless you sign up again now. Renewing is very easy and can be done in a variety of ways, including Direct Debit (our preferred method), PayPal, and cheque. If you have received a yellow notice with this issue, simply follow the instructions thereon to continue enjoying the benefits of membership.

Browsing and Sluicing in North Britain

John Wood, a member from Edinburgh, has contacted the Society offering to organise a lunch that would give members in Scotland and the North of England the opportunity to fraternise. “It is fervently to be hoped that there would be sufficient interest in a luncheon later this year,” he says, and suggests the New Club in Princes Street, Edinburgh, to be a suitable location for what may be an inaugural event.

If John receives sufficient indication of interest together with email and telephone contact details, then he will push the venture on. Just contact:

Here’s hoping for a successful gathering!

A Tale of Two Gold Bats Matches

by Robert Bruce



The Gold Bats at Dulwich with Chairman Hilary Bruce

Dulwich, May 25

Not for the first time the P G Wodehouse Society found that a pink chap had turned up for the annual cricket match against the Dulwich College teaching staff, the Dulwich Dusters. But this chap wasn't a chap. It was a ball.

It was a perfect summer's evening in late May, and the Dusters' team thought that a pink ball might be more visible in the dusk of the second innings. But first, as is the tradition, the Gold Bats went in to bat. As the college clock struck five, the openers struck several beefy blows, though a great diving catch from a Dulwich PE teacher and a neat stumping had the Gold Bats 48 for 2 and then 50 for 3 as a plump fielder found he couldn't avoid a catch and, with a despairing 'oof', clutched it to his stomach. One of the Dulwich bowlers, James Walsh, turned out to have played Grade cricket in Sydney, while another admitted this was only the third game of cricket he had ever played. He promptly took two wickets in his first three balls. The Gold Bats were on the slide and, despite a huge six from the flamboyant Archie Hill, were all out for a less-than-par 106.

The Dusters innings was delayed as some geese were cleared from the pitch and it was discovered that the pink ball had been mislaid. It was found to be in the possession of Society Chairman Hilary Bruce, who, with an action reminiscent of baseball, then threw the first pitch out onto the field. The pink ball, despite assertions that it might move about and baffle the Dusters, only moved in an upward direction. The third ball of the innings was reverse-swept for four, and the fourth ended up clattering off the pavilion roof for six.

It was then discovered that, not content with having a Grade cricketer from Sydney in the side,

another, Steve Kelly, had played at under-19s level for Gloucestershire. Twenty-nine runs were hit off three overs, and Kelly was retired. This only inspired Walsh, the Sydney man, and with a very Australian touch he hit a six into the barbecue. "This is not a dream start," muttered the Gold Bats captain. A Dusters player then walked off thinking he had been bowled, was summoned back, and neatly stumped next ball. Then there was a chaotic run-out, and Julian Hill immediately bowled the next man in. It was 97 for 5.

But there was to be no storybook ending. A Reginald Jeeves did not materialise to take a hat trick with wily leg breaks. Instead, a Dulwich Duster called Murphy, who coached cricket but had never played it, saw them home. It was 7.30. The swifts were dipping through the soft light of the evening in the grove of trees just beyond the cricket pitch. And around the barbecue, tales of what might have been were being roundly disputed and debated. Perfect evening, really.

West Wycombe, June 24

The England football team may have been scoring goal after World Cup goal during what was our luncheon interval, but the finest sporting performance of the day was undoubtedly when the Gold Bats at last defeated the Sherlock Holmes Society of London off the last ball of the penultimate over of their annual cricket match.

As ever, Wodehouseans and Sherlockians had gathered to play under 1895 rules. To many of the Gold Bats team it felt like it had been 1895 since they had last won this fixture. It started chaotically. Neither side had a scorebook in which to record the game. The PGW Society Chairman was prevailed upon to lend the notebook in which she had been



The Gold Bats' Andrew Bishop plays it straight.

painstakingly transcribing the recipe for a delicious pink drink made by two Wodehouseans who had driven down from Yorkshire for the day. Finally, marginally late, the game – played as ever on the idyllic West Wycombe ground and on a summer’s day as perfect as any Blandings Castle afternoon – began.

As is the tradition, the Gold Bats batted first and promptly took off at a fast lick. Forty-five runs were scored off the first seven overs, and the first wicket didn’t fall until a Spedegue-like steeper was caught with the score on 65. The hundred came up and then a yes/no/yes run out meant the fall of another wicket. The Sherlockians turned, this being 1895, to their designated lob bowler, Zelia Young. She was unplayable, except for a plethora of wides.

At 118 for 2 it was lunchtime, and the sizeable crowd browsed and sluiced and swigged until ready for the fray once more. “Good lunch?” said someone to the opening bowler pacing out his run. “Prosecco,” he responded. And just in case the joys of this rustic ground had been lost on anyone, a deer bounded over the fence at long leg, ran round the pitch and players, and departed into a field beyond long on. The Gold Bats progressed briskly. Martin Southwell reached his 50 and retired. And the innings was closed mid-afternoon on 214 for 4.

After a break it was the Sherlockians’ turn to bat. A brief conversation was heard on the boundary’s edge. “Are we going out now?” “Yes.” “Have I got time for a beer?” “Yes.” The Gold Bats vowed to up the over rate to give them more time to press for the elusive victory. Vaughan van der Linde, a local batsman, hit out. By tea the Sherlockians were 42 for 0. Further refreshments were taken. And shortly afterwards Vaughan was out to a traditional Gold Bats father-and-son wicket, caught behind by Graham Stokes off the bowling of young Brad Stokes.



The Gold Bats and the Sherlockians at West Wycombe

The score was slowly mounting. It was time for the Gold Bats to hold their nerve and up their verve. Oliver Wise took a wicket with his lobbs. But by 125-5 late in the day, it looked as though a draw was again likely. Then a wondrous sequence of left-arm spin from Southwell took the game away. In a spell of ten overs, he took five wickets for only nine runs. He won the game. But it was a close-run thing.

The win also owed much to the nous of Oliver Wise. Hamill had hit a huge six, and the ball was temporarily lost in the long nettles beyond the boundary. So Wise ran into the pavilion and grabbed a spare ball. The extra time gained was vital. Nine wickets down and five minutes to go. With the six o’clock close of play looming, it was off the last ball of the game’s penultimate over that the final Sherlockian wicket fell to the triumphant Southwell. The redoubtable Edward Hamill, who had come in at first wicket down, remained unbeaten on 78 out of the final 163. Gold Bats Captain Jack Corsan led his team from the field in jubilation at a famous victory.

It was time to head for the pub.

Tweeting Mr Brandreth

In the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, we shared a number of tweets sent out by writer, actor, and broadcaster Gyles Brandreth, in which he shared some favourite PGW quotes. Well, it seems the man can’t keep himself from tweeting quotes on an almost daily basis, and our thanks go to CAROLINE FRANKLYN for passing them on, day after day, until the flood became too much for your Editor. Herewith some favourites from the torrent he produced in June and July:



P G Wodehouse had a special way with words. Here’s a line from ‘Very Good, Jeeves’, 1930: “My Aunt Dahlia has a carrying voice . . . If all sources of income failed, she could make a good living calling the cattle home across the Sands of Dee.”

P G Wodehouse on Monday: “Whenever I meet Ukridge’s Aunt Julia I have the same curious illusion of having just committed some particularly unsavoury crime & of having done it

with swollen hands, enlarged feet, & trousers bagging at the knee on a morning when I had omitted to shave.”

A touch of P G Wodehouse on Sunday: “There are girls, few perhaps but to be found if one searches carefully, who when their advice is ignored and disaster ensues, do not say ‘I told you so’. Mavis was not of their number.”

P G Wodehouse on Wednesday: “It isn’t often that Aunt Dahlia lets her angry passions rise, but when she does, strong men climb trees and pull them up after them.”

P G Wodehouse on Thursday: “He wore the unmistakable look of a man about to be present at a row between women, and only a wet cat in a strange backyard bears itself with less jauntiness than a man faced by such a prospect.”

Mr Brandreth’s output on Twitter has also included dialogue exchanges from the canon.

Quiz Night at the Savile

by Peter Read

On Monday, 16 July, I made my first visit to a Society meeting at the Savile Club. This was for the now annual quiz night, and my first meeting since the quiz that had ended outdoors on Savoy Street after our eviction from the previous HQ, the Savoy Tup. On both counts it was a great experience, and I strongly recommend both location and quiz to you at the next opportunity.

Clearly made for the followers of PGW, the Savile Club is situated behind an anonymous door in Mayfair, but one which opens into what would have been a Gentlemen's Club at the time of Bertie Wooster. Membership is still open to gentlemen only, apart, apparently, from one now transgendered into a woman! Thank goodness our Lady Chairman, the wonderful Hilary Bruce, did not have to jump this hurdle to be accepted as a guest, nor did other female Society members. We were all welcomed into the splendid Drawing Room full of portraits of prominent figures, a portent of solemnity which was never achieved, buoyed up by ample liquid refreshment on tap on this balmy/barmy evening.

Our Quiz Master, as usual, was entertainments maestro Paul Kent, and what a feast of a quiz he set out for us! I don't know how Masha, a Russian member on holiday in this country, fared, but I do know from talking to her afterwards that she was well impressed. Perhaps a typical British scene as a memory to take home!

The quiz itself proved an eclectic joy in the evening, although it started off fairly conventionally with questions about the first Jeeves and Wooster appearances and novels. Paul then got his eyeglass in with one round including multipart questions on Wodehouse titles misquoting famous phrases such as 'For Those in Peril on the Tee'. For one mark, give the correct quote; for a second, the first line of the hymn; and for the third the writer (William Whiting!). So, no knowledge of Wodehouse required, and we all basked in the sense of achievement at part one, with one amazing team knowing the answer to part three! Other rounds challenged our general knowledge. Wodehouse and the Arts: Where did the term 'Blushful Hippocrene' come from? (Keats, 'Ode to a Nightingale') Who created the Infant Samuel at Prayer, as smashed (in statuette form) by Aunt Dahlia and others? (Joshua Reynolds in an oil painting) And so on.



The Savile Club sparkled with brainy, cheerful Wodehouseans in July!

Team names were also ingenious. In one corner a group without chairs named themselves the Stand-Up Comics. Other teams were called The Drones; We Used To Know That; and Eggs, Beans, and Clueless. Our team, One Martini Wooster, was certainly helped by a ringer, a guest with a wide knowledge of the Arts, and we grew increasingly confident, although put off by the disapproving portrait of Henry Hood, the Club's auditor in the Victorian era, looking straight at us. However, we perked up on realising it was not us his glare was aimed at, but the picture of the bare-chested lady immediately behind us!

Tension rose as the scores were read out, and we realised we were in competition with the Wise Guys – otherwise identified as Tony Ring, Oliver Wise, Robert Bruce, Tim Andrew, and Christine Hewitt – for first place. In the end they pipped us by one point, although we did identify the countries with the most translated PGW titles published and the country which published the first title translated. Unfortunately, we had them the wrong way round, and lost the critical marks. For the few of you who may not know the answer, they are Italy and Sweden, in that order!

And thus it was the Wise Guys who squeaked past the finishing line and won the prizes, rare copies of Maria Jette's *In Our Little Paradise – Songs of P.G. Wodehouse*. However, neither we nor any of the other teams felt any sense of disappointment, learning much, laughing a lot, enjoying great company, and gaining enormous satisfaction from those questions we could answer!

Quite rightly, Paul was praised for a superb job, offering variety beyond belief and complexity pitched at just the right level. As a quiz master myself, I particularly appreciated the vast amount of work he had put in to create a completely original quiz of this nature. It may have looked effortless, but don't believe it!

Love on the Links at the Salisbury Playhouse

Reviewed by Caroline Franklyn

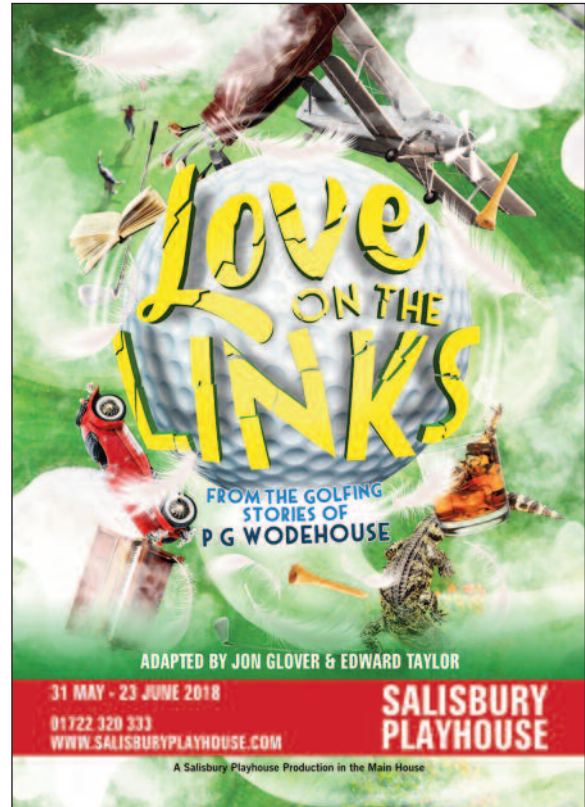
I was lucky enough to attend the world premiere of a brand-new Wodehouse adaptation. Jon Glover and Edward Taylor have used several of PGW's golf stories (in particular, 'Sundered Hearts', 'A Mixed Threesome', and 'Rodney Fails to Qualify') to produce *Love on the Links*, directed by Ryan McBryde – and it was pure pleasure.

Michael Fenton Stevens played the Oldest Member of the Wood Hills Golf Club in Surrey ("That suburban paradise . . . combining the advantages of town life with the healthful air of the country") and Tim Frances played Fitt, the grumpy barman, who was also the accomplished Club pianist. The rest of the cast played four younger members of the club and a young golfer pining for his beloved. The set, designed by James Button, consisted of a highly realistic club room, complete with well-stocked bar, an honours board, cabinet of photos and silver cups, piano, pot plants, and appropriate golf club paraphernalia.

The premise of the play – as in all of the golf stories – is that Golf is Life, and those who do not share this view, if they cannot be cured, are to be pitied rather than censured.

The OM takes it upon himself to advise young Jack Ramage how to win back the love of his life, the novelist Daphne Cartwright, author of *The Man with the Missing Eyeball* – the only existing manuscript of which, disastrously, Jack has lost.

The advice comes in the form of re-enactments of the stories. In hilarious 'am-dram' style, the four



young club members use the furniture and assorted objects as props: the sofa becomes a boat, the golf club cases and a handbag become a crocodile, and so on. Needless to say, we need not worry about young Jack. The manuscript is found in the nick of time, and he wins back the L of his L.

My companion, who has never yet read a word of PGW, chortled throughout the show. I am sure there would have been plenty of PGW fans there, who, like me, were poised to notice favourite nuggets. I uttered a silent "hoorah" and mentally punched the air at the mention of the destruction of the ornament depicting *The Infant Samuel at Prayer*.

The play does not aspire to be profound; it is pure escapist fun – particularly necessary in these difficult times, and even more acutely sweet to experience in this lovely city, Salisbury, still visibly in recovery.

As the OM mentions at the start of the play: "There should be a lot more written about golf, and a lot less about politics. Take that Bolshevik nonsense for example. If that chap Stalin learned to use a putter, Russia would be a happier place."



Michael Fenton Stevens played the Oldest Member.
(Photo courtesy of Robert Workman & the Salisbury Playhouse)

There are other proverbs fully as wise as the one which Mortimer had translated from the Swahili, and one of the wisest is that quaint old East London saying, handed down from one generation of costermongers to another, and whispered at midnight in the wigwams of the whelk-seller: "Never introduce your donah to a pal." In these seven words is contained the wisdom of the ages.
(From 'A Mixed Threesome', 1920)

My PGW Collection

by Elliott Milstein

I never intended to collect Wodehouse. Or anything for that matter. It's not like I grew up collecting coins or stamps or baseball cards or beetles or even comic books, which most kids did in those days. Acquisitive habits just didn't come naturally to me. I didn't even collect books, although I was a voracious reader from quite a young age. Most of my reading material came from the public library or my father's library (which consisted primarily of paperbacks). No, it happened quite by chance.

I had just started reading Wodehouse in my final year of high school (this is related in more detail in *A Plum Assignment: Discourses on P. G. Wodehouse and His World* by Curtis Armstrong and myself), and when I had decamped to Toronto to attend University there, the first thing I did was scrounge the local bookstores for titles not available in the US. I knew from experience that the Canadian Penguin list was much larger than their American offering. Unfortunately, the pickings were still ridiculously slim at the stores. I had yet to learn the full extent of Wodehouse's output, but I had a vague sense it was in the dozens and I had only read ten or so at that time, so I knew there was so much more to unearth.

After the third or fourth bookstore, I happened upon a particularly friendly clerk who took the time to look up Wodehouse in some catalogue. He then uttered the words that were to change my life: "It seems his publisher is Barrie & Jenkins. Their Canadian distributor is Clarke, Irwin. Let me give you their address and you can write them directly."

I did. Shortly after, I received a very polite reply that they had only a few titles in their warehouse: *Service with a Smile*, *Cocktail Time*, *Uncle Dynamite*, *Spring Fever*, *Full Moon*, and *Money in the Bank*. The prices were curious, however. If memory serves, they were around \$5 each. Far too much for a paperback, but quite cheap as hardcovers. What the heck, I thought.

Get them all. Off went my reply and a check (actually, since I was now in Canada, make that 'cheque').

The box arrived only a few days later, and when I opened it, I was astonished. Nestled inside the box, carefully protected by scrunched-up plain brown wrapping paper were six mint-condition, never-opened first editions. Well, as my friend Curtis would say, I hadn't just fallen off the turnip truck. I knew I had struck gold.

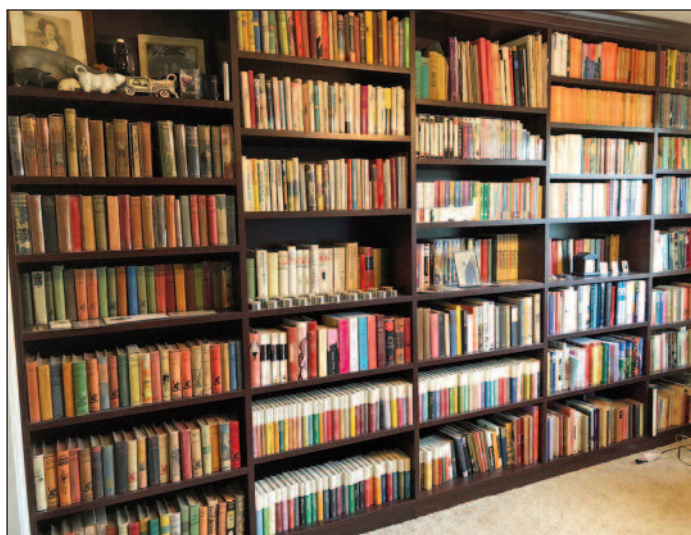
As I handled each of these pristine volumes in their pristine dust jackets, a strange feeling came over me. Heroin addicts know the feeling well. That sudden warmth of the blood coursing through your body, the slightly dizzy sensation that makes you feel you have left the ground and are floating 10 feet up, looking down on yourself as your vision blurs and your hands and feet begin to tingle.

Soon I was combing used-book stores and ripping through catalogues. I became a regular at Else Fine, About Books, and Around Again. I regularly communicated with (and purchased from) Nigel Williams, Quill & Brush, and Gryphon Bookshop in the UK. I got to know (and, yes, purchased quite a bit from) Frits Menschaar, Wilfrid de Freitas, and, most especially, Charles Gould. As each volume was added to the others, my appetite grew by what it fed on.

In the late 1990s I came into some money, having sold my business, and did some serious damage at the auction of James Heineman's collection, which dramatically expanded my own, now including ephemera and many other items besides books (including, most notably, Wodehouse's waistcoat – which I wear to all Wodehousean functions – and, the pride of my collection, the engraved invitation Oxford University sent him to accept his honorary PhD).

I have a story for nearly every acquisition, but my favorite (besides the Heineman auction) was when Charles Gould called me to let me know he had secured quite a nice copy of *The Swoop*. The price tag, however, was rather astounding, more than I had ever paid for any book by several orders of magnitude. The old dope peddler (may he rest in peace) had been nurturing my habit carefully, preparing this moment for years, and now I was in a frenzy and he knew it. Still, I was having some difficulty bringing myself to write a check (I'm back in America now) so large for something that was, let's face it, originally nothing more than a throw-away shilling shocker.

Of course, I called Curtis. My old friend, I knew, would talk me down. Unfortunately, I happened to get him shortly after he had recently unbelted a rather impressive sum himself for a unique piece of Sherlockiana and was still vibrating from the experience. He said, rather sadly as I recall, "You simply must accept the fact that it is a sickness and



that financial considerations just don't enter into it. Go for it, and try not to let it ruin your family." Of course, I did.

My Wodehouse collection is, literally and figuratively, the western wall of my home office, separated from the rest of my library, which is on a different floor. When I am at my desk, as I am now while typing this, it is as if Wodehouse himself is standing behind me, cheering me on. When I swing my chair around and look at them, each volume tells a short story of my life, and I get to live it all again. But the collecting madness has thankfully passed. I no longer subscribe to catalogues, go to used-book stores or check eBay. I simply enjoy what I have.

Unless, of course, someone out there knows where I can get a first-edition *Globe By The Way Book*.



Talking Up Plum

by Michael Chacksfield

It was a perfect summer's day on Sunday, 10 June, at Earls Barton Literary Festival.

My day began with an interview on BBC Radio Northampton with John Griff, who asked about the appeal of Plum's work and how relevant it remains today. I explained how his entire oeuvre continues to delight readers, offering them pure escapism, now arguably more valuable than ever with the relentless commotion of modern-day living.

Interview over, I popped next door to my eager audience, and with a well-rehearsed "What ho! What ho!", play was soon underway.

I had originally lured enthusiasts to the Saxon Tavern for a talk listed in the official programme as 'Wooster Sauce', hinting perhaps at only covering stories about young Bertram Wilberforce and the inimitable Jeeves. But dash it all, it soon became clear to those assembled in landlady Polly H's micro-pub that there was more in store as I quickly 'fessed up in my preliminaries and let them have it all from a writer who was the real tabasco.

With only an hour slot available, I had planned my talk around what I would have to leave out, rather than what I might leave in. From a career spanning more than seventy years, I could only select a few of my favourite anecdotes, poems, music, and readings and still deliver them with the energy and panache they deserve.

After reminding everyone that Evelyn Waugh frequently referred to PGW as 'The Master', I provided some background on Plum's school life at Dulwich College and early career at the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank in Lombard Street. I read passages from his first published article in February 1900 in *Public School*

Magazine, 'Some Aspects of Game Captaincy', and went on to read some humorous extracts (American accent and all!), starting with 'The Aunt and the Sluggard'. I then examined his dedication to the craft of writing and shared contributions he made to *The Globe* newspaper's 'By The Way' column. I also covered his period of internment in Nazi Germany and how he was wrongly accused of treachery during the hysteria of WWII, reading extracts from two of his amusing broadcasts, along with George Orwell's open letter written in defence of Plum. The audience was left in no doubt of his innocence in the whole unfortunate affair.



We listened to 'Put Me in My Little Cell' from *Sergeant Brue* (1904) and 'Anything Goes' (1934/5), and I shared amusing stories of Plum, including his dedication in

The Heart of a Goof (1926) to his darling daughter Snorky, "without whose never-failing sympathy and encouragement this book would have been finished in half the time".

After bringing the session to a close by covering Wodehouse's well-deserved knighthood in 1975, and mentioning that the Queen Mother was disappointed she was unable to travel to Long Island to present it to him personally, I finished on a high with a reading from 'Jeeves and the Yule-Tide Spirit'. The voice of Mrs Spenser Gregson was performed with double helpings of gusto as she explained to Bertie that he must be on his best behaviour over Christmas while visiting Lady Wickham's Skeldings. Bertie had hung up the receiver, "Shaken. S. to the core".

After a generous round of applause, so was I, shoving off stage left with a "Tinkety Tonk!"

Wodehouse and Railway Stations

by Roger Baxter

The railways have an incidental though purposeful role in some of P. G. Wodehouse's story lines: a number of scenes are set in railway carriages or at railway stations. Railway architecture plays a subtler part in most of these. Enthusiasts of British railway architecture will find Simon Jenkins's beautifully illustrated *Britain's 100 Best Railway Stations* (Penguin/Viking 2017) worthy of their attention. Readers of *Wooster Sauce* are advised to look elsewhere for longer reviews of this title. Of interest here is the fact that the book includes two references to Wodehouse. The text in boldface, below, indicates the PGW quotations that Jenkins used.

In his introduction, Jenkins notes society's reaction against Victorian (railway) architecture – the “rejection of diversity and ornament in favour of minimalism” – in the early 20th century. He quotes from *Summer Moonshine*, erroneously attributing this remark to Bertie Wooster: “Whatever may be said in favour of the Victorians, **it's pretty generally admitted that very few of them were to be trusted within reach of a trowel and a pile of bricks**”. Here the reference is to Sir Wellington Abbott's mid-19th century restoration of Walsingford Hall. Jenkins's inclusion of this quote illustrates an early 20th-century view of Victorian-era buildings. The present owner, Sir Buckstone Abbott “liked [Walsingford Hall] less every time he saw it”. *Summer Moonshine* was written in 1937, and Wodehouse's world then was full of buildings of an awkward age: between 40 and 70 years – that is, built during the last quarter of the 19th century. Late Victorian stations were solidly designed and constructed (and many remained almost unaltered for decades). In the 1920s and '30s, these were likely seen as too old to be edgy and probably needing repairs, yet not old enough to be distinguished or (to use a modern term) ‘listed’ as being of historic importance.

In his essay about another Victorian pile, Paddington Station (to which he awards five stars), arrivals and departures at Paddington Station feature in a number of Wodehouse's works, and Jenkins again quotes him: As the aspirationally patrician Lord Ickenham sees it in *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, at Paddington “a leisured peace prevails and you get **only the best people – cultured men accustomed to mingling with basset hounds and women in tailored suits who look like horses**”. This is more evocation of atmosphere than description of architecture, but it is the architecture that creates the atmosphere. In the same novel, Ickenham connects

the two themes when he calls Paddington a “decorous station” and praises the “something very soothing in the note of refined calm which Paddington strikes”. Jenkins continues, again with Wodehouse/Ickenham opining, that Paddington trains have “**that air of well-bred reserve**”.



Wodehouse was writing fiction; analyzing his (or anyone's) novels for personal beliefs can be dubious and unreliable. (In a 1961 *Guardian* interview, Wodehouse described literary analysis of his work as “rather unsettling . . . rather uncomfortable”.) Of course, architectural fashions and trends do change. If the word ‘Victorian’ was viewed as derogatory during the 1920s and '30s, it is less certain

that Wodehouse held this view. In his *In Search of Blandings*, Norman Murphy speculates that Wodehouse modelled Walsingford Hall on Impney Hotel (ca. 1869), an eye-catchingly ugly hotel, in Murphy's opinion. Wodehouse apparently quite liked the Chateau Impney: Murphy adds that during the 1920s Wodehouse retreated to this hotel when he needed respite from London. From 1927 until sometime in the mid 1930s, Wodehouse lived in a late Victorian house – built circa 1897 – in Mayfair.

Jenkins's book focuses (although not exclusively) on the Victorian survivors of the railways' destructive period where, in the words of John Betjeman, “the architects of British Rail never cease[d] to destroy their heritage of stone, brick, cast iron and wood and replace it with windy wastes of concrete”. Today Paddington Station thrives; Market Blandings Station apparently survived the Beeching cuts, offering passenger service to the end. The two stations are architectural opposites: one the gateway to the metropolis, the other serving a pre-modern market town, “which modern progress [had] failed to touch except by the addition of a railway station. . . . To alight at Blandings Station,” Wodehouse wrote in *Something Fresh*, “is to be smitten with the feeling that one is at the edge of the world with no friends near.”

Architecture needs to be uplifting. Railway stations should be designed to convey the best possible impression to intending travellers. Wodehouse's characters passed through stations that were usually perfectly matched to their surroundings – the stonework, the roofline, the pitch of the roof and canopy, the chimney designs, the platform furniture – even if they could not always articulate this. In his writings, Wodehouse took full advantage of this very idiosyncratic feature of the urban and rural landscapes, one that existed in formidable number before this great destruction.

The Word Around the Clubs

A Patron Writes

Note: The following will be printed in the October edition of Quote . . . Unquote. The author is very kindly allowing us to have this advance peek.

As a Patron of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK), I tend to assume that everyone else is a fan of the great man's works. Apparently not – but in the case of Alan Bennett, for a specific reason. I happened upon his rather sour assessment in a book that brought together excerpts from the BBC Radio 4 show *With Great Pleasure*, in which notables select bits of prose and poetry that they like. In his 1977 script (and I suppose Alan might have mellowed since then, but probably not), he begins by explaining his approach to the choices he has made:

When it comes to reading I am easily put off. I am put off a book if too many people like it. I am put off a book if some people like it too much. Lewis Carroll is a case in point, Tolkien another. Both to some extent *picketed* by their admirers. **I have never managed to read Wodehouse because I'm depressed by the enthusiasm of the people who do.**

I am sure this is foolish and a failing on my part, but I'm also sure with books you're more likely to have a love-affair after a casual pick-up than after an "I'm sure you two are going to get on like a house on fire" sort of introduction.

On the other hand, Alan does come up with a quotation from Florence Nightingale, with which I have some sympathy:

What it is to be read aloud to. The most miserable exercise of the human intellect. It is like lying on one's back with one's hands tied and having liquid poured down one's throat.

Did she *really* say that?

– NIGEL REES

Seeking Agreement

It should come as no surprise that P. G. Wodehouse has exerted a huge influence on the English language: he has been credited often with either creating new words/phrases or being the first to use them in print. All the same, we were a bit surprised by an item that JO JACOBUS sent in from *The National*. In an article on Scottish devolution, Carolyn Leckie wrote: "As a recently qualified lawyer, one thing I have learned is the crucial importance of absolute precision in the wording of complex arrangements. Back in the 1920s, the novelist P.G. Wodehouse popularised the term 'gentlemen's agreement' – an informal arrangement based on mutual trust and relying on the honour of both parties."

Really? Well, yes, as it turns out. The phrase itself has been around since the 1820s, but the *Oxford English Dictionary* credits Wodehouse – again – for its first use in print, this time in a Mr Mulliner book published in 1929. That would make it *Mr Mulliner Speaking*, in which there are nine stories – but which one contains the term in question? The reader who can identify the particular passage gets the brass ring!

Setting It All Straight

Readers of *The Times* will have noticed that in May there was a flurry of Wodehouse-related letters to the editor, including two commenting favourably on Plum's attitude towards women, in response to an article labelling him a misogynist (see Recent Press Comment, May 19 & 20). Additionally, the paper had published an article on butlers' pay in which Jeeves was referred to, early and often, as a butler. Not surprisingly, one reader wrote in to say, in effect, *You silly ass, Jeeves was a valet, not a butler*. Enter Society Chairman Hilary Bruce, who was able to clarify the whole matter in a letter published on 24 May:

Sir, Jeeves was certainly not a butler but may I challenge Christopher Aylwin's assertion (May 23) that Jeeves was Bertie Wooster's valet? He was not. Jeeves himself made it quite clear: "I am in his employment as gentlemen's personal gentleman." As the Wodehouse scholar NTP Murphy explained in *A Wodehouse Handbook*, there is a clear distinction between the roles. A valet would look after his master's clothes, run errands, book theatre tickets and so on, but had no household activities and would not cook. Jeeves acted as a "personal attendant" and looked after Bertie Wooster in every way: tidying the flat, cooking, dealing with the household accounts, looking after (and indeed supervising) his clothes, and much else besides.

HILARY BRUCE

Chairman, P G Wodehouse Society

So that should settle the matter, what?

Worplesdon Revealed

The Winter 2017 issue of *Slightly Foxed* revealed a delightful Wodehouse mention, sent along by CHRISTOPHER BELLEW. In 'Secrets of the Hive', Nicholas Asprey wrote that his childhood home "was in the village of Worplesdon. . . . My father bought the house from [three spinster sisters], each of them called Miss Thompson. They were cousins of P.G. Wodehouse and he used to stay with them before the war. No doubt this accounts for the character known as Lord Worplesdon, who, it will be recalled, was the husband of Aunt Agatha and once chased a young Bertie Wooster 'a mile across difficult terrain with a hunting crop' for smoking one of his special cigars."

He liked his curates substantial, and Bill proved definitely the large economy size, the sort of curate whom one could picture giving the local backslider the choice between seeing the light or getting plugged in the eye.

(From *Service with a Smile*, 1961)

Rockett Man: Part 1

by Graeme W. I. Davidson

Readers may recall that David Buckle's Wodehouse Mastermind Quiz in *Wooster Sauce's* December 2016 issue posed the following question:

Which former British Amateur Champion golfer named his children Sandwich, Hoylake, St. Andrew (sic), Troon and Prestwick?

The answer to the question was the Wodehouse fictional character John Rockett from the golfing story 'Scratch Man' (*Strand Magazine*, September 1940, later published in *A Few Quick Ones* (Herbert Jenkins, 1959)).

A similar question and answer (with slight variation) could also be applied to the US version of that story, 'Tee for Two' (*Saturday Evening Post*, 20 January 1940, later published under the title 'Scratch Man' in *A Few Quick Ones* (Simon & Schuster, 1959)).

In the *Saturday Evening Post* story 'Tee for Two', the US equivalent of John Rockett is called Walter Rockett, though he is called John Rockett in the version of the story appearing in the US edition of *A Few Quick Ones*. He is described in the *SEP* version as being three times American and twice British Amateur Champion. (In the UK version published in *A Few Quick Ones*, in addition to being three times runner-up in the Open, he is described as twice Amateur Champion as well as three times runner-up in the Open, eschewing the word 'British' – for, as all golfers know, there is only one Open, the Open Championship, which is the one held in this country.)

In the US version of *A Few Quick Ones*, Rockett is described as having named his five children (three sons and two daughters) Pinehurst, Baltusrol, Winged Foot, Minikahda, and Merion, which are celebrated golf courses and venues of major US golf tournaments. Different renderings of the story have used slight variants on the courses after which the children are named. In the UK rendering, the courses, noted in the opening question above, are celebrated venues of major British golf tournaments. In the *Saturday Evening Post* story, Wykagl and National (two further notable US golf courses) are cited instead of Pinehurst and Winged Foot (and the two daughters in that version are called Troon and Prestwick, so a transatlantic rendering). In both the UK and the US versions, after indicating the names Rockett had given his children, Wodehouse adds the clarifying statement: "He called

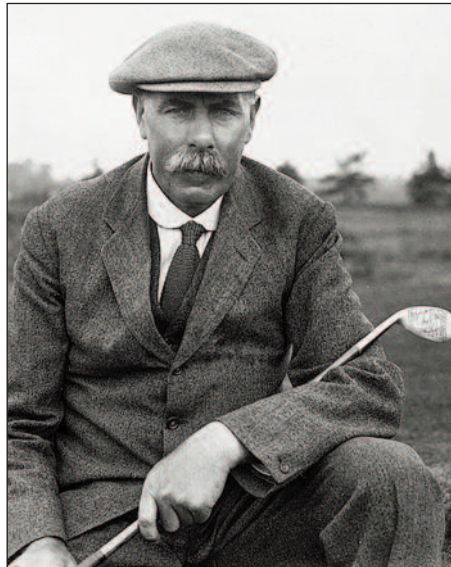
his children after the courses on which he had won renown."

Wykagl may not have quite the same history as some of the other clubs named, but a particular feature about its history, found in a history of the Club on its website, may explain Wodehouse's selection of it for use. The Wykagl golf course is part of the Wykagl Country Club (located in the New York area), which was previously called the *Pelham Country Club*. (Its name was changed on 15 June 1905.)*

Regardless of the variants, the quirk of a multi-winning Champion golfer naming his offspring after courses on which he won renown remains constant in the different renderings of the story.

There is a certain felicitous symmetry and neatness in the fact that the question posed by David Buckle was in the same issue of *Wooster Sauce* that contained tributes to the late Norman Murphy. Norman's towering achievements are well known: he highlighted and identified many characters and incidents in Wodehouse's writings as being frequently derived from or inspired by actual people and events, which Wodehouse then chronicled with light embellishment and some frothy, educated, and dextrous prose. All this leads me to the following.

Some years ago I purchased a painting of a Scottish landscape which had previously been owned by the son of James Braid. For the non-golfers among you, James Braid (1870–1950) is one of the gods in golf's pantheon of legendary figures. He was one of the triumvirate of golfing greats, along with the similarly revered Harry Vardon and John H. Taylor, who together totally dominated the game in the early part of the last century. Braid was frequently name-checked or otherwise invoked by Wodehouse in works such as *The Clicking of Cuthbert* (1922), *Golf Without Tears* (1924), *The Heart of a Goof* (1926), *Divots*



James Braid

* Note: The discovery of this fact is way up in the same league as my discovery very recently of the following. The place of birth in New York of James Montgomery Flagg, the US illustrator noted for his prototypical rendering of Jeeves, was Pelham Manor. And remember that Flagg was born back in 1877. So talk about predestination and celestial chuckling following exclamations by us Earthlings of the quirkiness of coincidence!

(1927), *Good Morning, Bill* (play, 1928), and *Doctor Sally* (novel, 1932). He won the Open Championship in Britain on five occasions (1901, 1905, 1906, 1908, and 1910) and was runner-up in that Championship on four occasions (1897, 1902 (tied), 1904 (tied), and 1909 (tied)), plus he had ten other top ten finishes in the Open Championship in Britain (1894 (tied), 1896, 1898 (tied), 1899 (tied), 1900, 1903, 1907 (tied), 1911 (tied), 1912 and 1914 (tied)).

In 1901 Braid became a father to a son for the second time. That son was born on 31 May 1901 within days of Braid's first Open victory at Muirfield, Scotland (home of The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers), on 6 June 1901. In 1958 the same son bought the landscape painting that I purchased half a century or so later, and I wanted to learn more about him after I acquired the painting.

I discovered that Braid had called his son Harry Muirfield Braid. As to the Harry, I speculate that James Braid may have given his son this name as a nod to his fellow golfing great, Harry Vardon. What is not a matter of speculation is why he also called his son Muirfield. The answer to that is self-evident. Detective work to reach that kind of conclusion is not rocket science, though it might be described as Rockett science.

Delightfully, I also discovered that James Braid was not alone among Champion golfers in naming a child after a golf course which had witnessed a particular victory. A year or two back, while I was golfing in Biarritz with some chums (not Drones but solid chaps; we make up The Flying Divots), I decided to learn a bit about Biarritz's golfing history. A fact I discovered is that one of Biarritz's golfing greats – indeed, probably France's greatest ever golfing hero – was Arnaud George Watson Massy (1877–1950), the man who, on multiple occasions, won different Open Championships held in various European countries. Massy – this is the biggie – was the first non-Briton to win Britain's Open – *the Open*. He won it at Hoylake in 1907 (and was runner-up in the Open in 1911 at Sandwich, and had eight other top ten finishes in the Open (1902 (tied), 1905 (tied), 1906, 1908, 1912, 1913 (tied), 1914 (tied)), and 1921 (tied)).

Massy had a daughter who was born in 1907, within a week of his winning the Open that year. And what was her name? Margot Lockhart *Hoylake* Massy. No kidding!

Wodehouse had French connections and played courses in France. He likely picked up French golfing lore, and that, along with his general golfing

knowledge, made me think it not improbable that Wodehouse could have been aware of Massy's daughter's name. He was certainly aware of Massy himself, who is mentioned in Wodehouse's writings (see 'Those in Peril on the Tee' (*Strand Magazine*, June 1927, later published in *Mr Mulliner Speaking* (1929)). That both Massy and Wodehouse named offspring of a Champion golfer as Hoylake seems too incredible for it to be mere coincidence.

From the above, it becomes apparent that Wodehouse was not imagining wildly when he wrote of John Rockett as he did. Absent an incredible coincidence, Wodehouse was undoubtedly inspired by hearing of James Braid's child-naming, and perhaps also that of Massy. One wonders whether Braid and Massy were unusual or whether around their time there was a wider fashion for golf Champions to name their offspring after scenes of their triumphs. If anyone knows of any other examples, please pipe up. (There may be a new research game there, such as discovering footballers who have called their son 'Wembley' or 'Hampden' or some such name, and jockeys who have called their offspring names such as 'Epsom' or 'Saratoga' or the like – the list goes on.)

Even if no further examples are uncovered by me or others of a child named after a golf course by a Champion golfer, I continue to be hugely tickled by the fact that it is now apparent to me that Wodehouse clearly was inspired by real events. And I particularly relish the fact that one child of a Champion golfer actually was called Hoylake, and that the child was a daughter of a golfer from France, a country with which Wodehouse had particularly strong connections in the decade running up to the story's publication in 1940.

The matter of a real Champion golfer naming, in the manner of Rockett, a child after a course on which he had a great victory does not appear to be covered either in Norman's splendid *A Wodehouse Handbook* or in Volume 1 (*Golf, Wodehouse in the Clubhouse*) of the similarly wonderful *The Millennium Wodehouse Concordance*, by Tony Ring and Geoffrey Jaggard (Porpoise Books). It appears that this particular discovery of Wodehouse having again been inspired by real events

may be a new revelation.

And, for prompting that particular revelation, I raise a glass by way of a toast of thanks and acknowledgement to Norman Murphy!

Note. In Part 2 of this article, to be published in December 2018, Graeme will focus on players whom John Rockett may have mirrored and who might have provided inspiration for Wodehouse in confecting Rockett.



Arnaud Massy

Clubs, Wodehouse, and the Savile

by Paul Kent

This is an edited version of the talk Paul presented to the Society's first meeting at its current venue, the Savile Club, in September last year.

I will start with a quotation from the page facing the title page of the first edition of *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets* (not, sadly, included in the Everyman reprint):

In the heart of London's clubland there stands a tall and grimly forbidding building known to taxi drivers and the elegant young men who frequent its precincts as the Drones Club. Yet its somewhat austere exterior belies the atmosphere of cheerful optimism and bonhomie that prevails within.

The classic gentleman's club is an odd institution, which makes it a perfect target for a writer like P. G. Wodehouse. And London, according to one historian writing in 1866 (two years before the Savile Club opened its doors), is "par excellence the land of clubs. There are more clubs in London alone than in all the chief European cities together." When Plum first moved to London in the early years of the 20th century, there were about 140 of them dotted around the West End.

Yet despite this superfluity, and no doubt because of their private nature, no thorough chronicling of their history had been attempted prior to the late Victorian era. What had emerged up to that point was a gallimaufry of snippets, reminiscences, shaggy-dog stories and anecdotes published in memoirs or autobiographies of the great and the good which had combined to create a certain kind of mystique about what went on behind those often unmarked and anonymous front doors – doors which were, in the main, closed to everyone except men of a certain class, status, or, latterly, wealth. Within this story-cloud, some are true, others embroidered or pure fiction. But one of my favourites, perhaps apocryphal (but let's hope not), arrives somewhat inevitably from Norman Murphy's collection, and it goes like this:

A police inspector new to London decided to make his name by raiding the quiet building on the corner of Charing Cross Road and Irving Street, which he suspected to be either a brothel or an illegal drinking den. It was and is the highly respectable Beefsteak Club, and he questioned closely the three men he found inside. The first said, "I am the Belgian ambassador." The second said, "I am the speaker of the House of Commons." The exasperated officer turned to the third: "And I suppose you're the Prime Minister?" "As a matter of fact I am," replied A.J. Balfour.

(N.T.P. Murphy, *A Wodehouse Handbook*, Vol. 1, 2013)

Clubs seem to both attract and generate great yarns, and Plum added to this stock in his core of 21 short stories that focus on the Drones Club and its members. Its most prominent luminaries are, of course, Bertie Wooster and Psmith, but other notables who regularly emerge from the supporting cast include Richard 'Bingo' Little, who features in nine of the stories; Frederick 'Freddie' Widgeon, who can be found in eight; Cyril 'Barmy' Fotheringay-Phipps; G. D'Arcy 'Stilton' Cheesewright; Hildebrand 'Tuppy' Glossop; and many others. The tie worn by its members probably would not have been sanctioned by Jeeves as even Bertie, that most patriotic of Drones, has admitted it is "a little on the loud side and should not be sprung suddenly on nervous people and invalids".

Plum first mentions the Drones by name – I think – in a scene from *Jill the Reckless* (1920) between "that priceless old bean" Freddie Rooke and Algy Martin. Various other references can be found in his novels and stories of the '20s, most notably in *The Inimitable Jeeves* and *Leave It to Psmith*, but the habit of using the Drones as a vehicle for a series of stories didn't really occur to Plum until the early 1930s. Prior to the publication of *Tales from the Drones Club* in 1982, you would have had to buy a number of collections of Plum's stories in order to get the full set. Drones stories crop up in, of course, *Young Men in Spats* and *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*, but also in *Lord Emsworth and Others*, *Nothing Serious*, *Plum Pie*, and *A Few Quick Ones*.

Plum knew whereof he wrote, being himself a member, at various times, of the Garrick, the Savage, the aforementioned Beefsteak, and his reported favourite, the Constitutional (which his wife Ethel described as "that awful club in Northumberland Avenue", perhaps because Plum escaped there whenever she threw parties at their home in Norfolk Street). Plum was a regular from around 1903 until his membership lapsed due to his being unavoidably detained during the Second World War. In fact, it was something of a Wodehouse family institution, his father and Uncle Philip also being members.

Being a club member was not, however, always an unalloyed pleasure. Writing to Bill Townend, Plum once commented: "Isn't it curious how few people there are in the world one wants to see. Yesterday, I looked in at the Garrick at lunchtime, took one glance of loathing at the mob, and went off to lunch by myself at the Cheshire Cheese."

Plum had joined the Garrick in 1922, after which he quickly dubbed it "the pest house" before resigning, certainly by 1929. In a letter to Richard

Usborne dating from the mid-1950s, he wrote: “I hated the Garrick more than any of them. All those hearty barristers!” Clearly on a roll, he continued: “At a very early stage I was a member of a ghastly little bohemian club called the Yorick, and later, of course, the Dramatists Club. But I hated them all and almost never went into them. I loathe clubs.” Nor did he fare any better in America, where he belonged to the Coffee House and the Lotos, but wasn’t exactly enamoured of them, either.

Yet the Drones appears a remarkably attractive place to hang around, particularly if you’re a young, idle male with very little else to occupy himself. The truth is that clubs were – like public schools, banks, golf clubs, the bar of the Angler’s Rest, and stately homes – self-enclosed ecosystems of precisely the kind Plum loved to write about. These clottings of humanity were great places to gather people and stories, and the Drones was a particularly fertile locus, despite, as Plum tells us, being “pure invention”.

Only, of course, it wasn’t. As Norman Murphy’s exhaustive researches revealed, it was loosely based on aspects of at least three separate establishments, chief among which is Buck’s Club, still going strong at 18 Clifford St, W1, and home to the Buck’s Fizz.

Nor was the Pelican Club, of which Uncle Fred and Gally Threepwood were august members in the so-called Naughty Nineties, fictitious. Indeed, to hear Gally, who “apparently never went to bed until he was fifty”, expound on the differences between club members of his era and the current crop, the latter seem very dull indeed. Take the ultra-respectable Athenaeum. “That morgue?” Gally erupts at the mere mention of its name:

He might be wronging the institution, but he doubted it contained on its membership list a single sportsman capable of throwing soft-boiled eggs at an electric fan or smashing the piano on a Saturday night.

Indeed, when Gally threatens to lift the lid on his younger days in *Summer Lightning*, the whole of London’s establishment prepares to dive for cover.

Plum identifies something of a generation gap here: the Eggs, Beans, and Crumpets (and let’s not forget the “pie-faces”) of Bertie Wooster’s era regard the clubs of Gally’s era as terminally dull, too, as we find out in ‘Bingo and the Little Woman’:

Once a year the committee of the Drones decides that the old club could do with a wash and brush-up, so they shoo us out and dump us down for a few weeks at some other institution. This time we were roosting at the Senior Liberal, and personally I had found the strain pretty fearful. I mean, when you’ve got used to a club where everything’s nice and cheery, and where, if you want to attract a chappie’s attention, you heave a bit of bread at him, it kind of damps you to come to a place where the youngest member is about eighty-seven and it isn’t considered good form to talk to anyone unless you and he were

through the Peninsular War together. It was a relief to come across Bingo. We started to talk in hushed tones.

“This club”, I said, “is the limit.”

“It is the eel’s eyebrows,” agreed young Bingo.

“I believe that old boy over by the window has been dead three days, but I don’t like to mention it to anyone.”

This is the sort of place you’ll find your uncle if you happen to lose him. Indeed, “Slip a ferret into any good club between Piccadilly and Pall Mall, and you would start half a dozen Uncle Georges” (‘Indian Summer of an Uncle’, 1930). The Drones, supposedly situated in Dover Street, is, of course, north of Piccadilly and not tarred with the same traditional (some would say boring) brush. Indeed, many of the racier, more raucous clubs could be found between Piccadilly and Oxford Street – and now the Society meets in one of them.

The Savile Club was founded in 1868. Its motto of *Sodalitas Convivium* conveys the meaning of enjoyable companionship, which makes it an entirely appropriate venue for a sociable society such as our own.

The Savile is the fifth venue in which our Society has held meetings since our founding,* yet in being slightly nomadic we are echoing the best traditions of the London club. Take the Savile, for example – it is now in its fourth home. As often happens in club history, it was originally formed as the result of a schism in an older establishment – in this case the Eclectic Club, which prided itself on free thinking. Initially, and not terribly originally, it called itself the New Club, quickly outgrowing its first-floor rooms which overlooked Trafalgar Square at 9 Spring Gardens.

In 1871 the club moved to its second home in 15 Savile Row, from which thoroughfare it takes its name, before lack of space forced it to move again in 1882, this time to 107 Piccadilly, a building owned by Lord Rosebery, whose given name was Archibald Primrose. Notwithstanding this handicap, he went on to become British Prime Minister in 1894 following the resignation of William Ewart Gladstone, but only lasted some 15 months at the top of the greasy pole.

With its views over Green Park, this third home was described by members as the “ideal clubhouse”. However, after 50 years, demolition of the building next door to create the Park Lane Hotel (now the Sheraton Crown) caused the old clubhouse such structural problems that, in 1927, the club moved to its current home at 69 Brook Street, part of the Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair.

The present building, which dates from the 1720s, is a combination of 69 and 71 Brook Street. It owes its beautiful interior to Walter Burns, the brother-in-law of financier J. P. Morgan, who adapted it for his wife Fanny to entertain in suitable style

.....
* - For our first ten years, the Society met at the Savage Club, of which Wodehouse had once been a member. -Ed.

when they lived there in the 1890s. The elegant hall, the grand staircase, and the lavish ballroom all date from this period in the building's history.

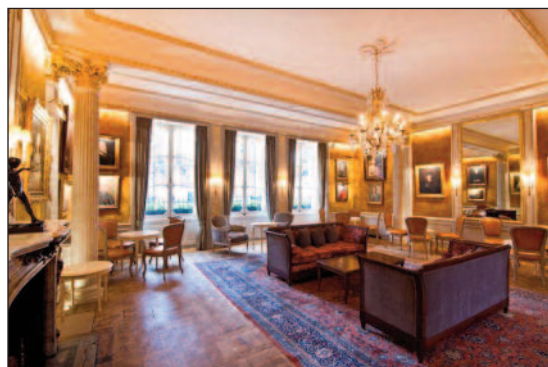
The building has a somewhat chequered past, being the former home of 'Loulou' Harcourt, 1st Viscount Harcourt, a Liberal Party cabinet minister who was known as a sexual predator attracted to both genders. For some reason his criminal perversion was tolerated among the upper classes and therefore by the police. However, when he attempted to rape a 12-year-old boy, the lid could no longer be kept on his activities, and the boy's mother made the matter public. Faced with public exposure, Harcourt committed suicide by taking an overdose of sedatives on 24 February 1922, age 59, in one of the upstairs rooms. Five years later, the club moved in, and it has been there ever since, quickly banishing any of its more unfortunate associations.

Famous members, past and present, include our own Stephen Fry and Patrick Kidd, along with several writers who had connections with Plum: Rudyard Kipling, J. M. Barrie, H. G. Wells, Evelyn Waugh, E. W. Hornung, and Compton Mackenzie. Other members of note have included John le Carré, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Thomas Hardy, Frank Muir, and Robert Louis Stevenson.

And now it has provided a home for our Society's meetings. Sodalitas Convivium!



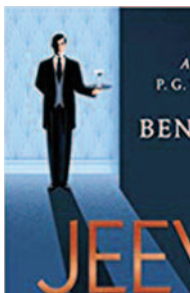
The Savile's front entrance and Drawing Room



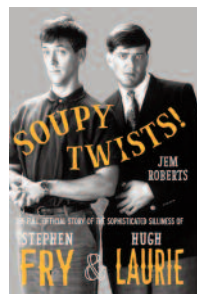
New Book News

Some members may have noticed that in June this year, Arrow Books republished five of the Jeeves and Wooster titles with newly designed jackets, at £8.99 each. The titles are *Carry On, Jeeves*; *Thank You, Jeeves*; *Right Ho, Jeeves*; *The Code of the Woosters*; and *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*. They can be purchased at bookstores and online.

A new title, *Jeeves and the King of Clubs*, is scheduled to be published on 1 November. The author is Ben Schott, who has imagined the Junior Ganyemede – the club for gentlemen's gentlemen of which Jeeves is a member – as a branch of the British Secret Service, and that Bertie Wooster becomes involved in its activities. Its publication has been authorised by the Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate. We hope to have a review of this book in the next *Wooster Sauce*.



Finally, from JEM ROBERTS comes word of his new book, *Soupy Twists! The Full Official Story of the Sophisticated Silliness of Fry and Laurie*, published in early September and available in bookstores and online. Needless to say, there is plenty to be found about Wodehouse in a book whose subjects are well known to be devoted PGW fans and have played Jeeves and Wooster on the telly. Jem writes that "the Granada *Jeeves and Wooster* series is absolutely central to the story, and is covered in greater depth than any previous book". He did his research thoroughly, interviewing Brian Eastman, Robert Daws, and (of course) Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie themselves. He adds: "I have gone to town on the 'Plumbo Jumbo' nonsense at the end, and tried to get some explanations from everyone involved in why they strayed so far from the source, with at least a couple of books and short stories left unadapted." The book certainly sounds like a winner, so do go and pick up a copy instanter!



The Empress

by David Charles

The Earl of Emsworth
Clarence by name
would show off
his prize Berkshire Sow
with pride and with fame.

Worthy of a pedigree breed
to grace Blandings Castle indeed,
he'd stand and feed
her cabbages and swedes
and lean and meditate
on the sty gate
scratching her back
while she gladly ate
her daily ration
in a hearty hog-like fashion.

She never stinted
from the trough –
that was never enough –
while Clarence would peruse
her in her sty.
Empress of Blandings
the apple of his eye.

The Wooster Source

by Graeme Davidson

*This is the real Tabasco,
It's the word from Bertie Wooster,
The Drone whose Code is the mother lode
for so many of Plum's wonderful
sparkling stories and tales,
Against which, in stark contrast, so much
of the writing of others palls and pales.*



This Spode, I must explain for the benefit of the newcomers who have not read the earlier chapters of my memoirs, was a character whose path had crossed mine many a time and oft, as the expression is, and always with the most disturbing results. I have spoken of the improbability of a beautiful friendship ever getting under way between me and the camera chap, but the likelihood of any such fusion of souls, as I have heard Jeeves call it, between me and Spode was even more remote. Our views on each other were definite. His was that what England needed if it was to become a land fit for heroes to live in was fewer and better Woosters, while I had always felt that there was nothing wrong with England that a ton of bricks falling from a height on Spode's head wouldn't cure.

Much Obliged, Jeeves (1971)

"Jeeves," I said, "listen attentively. I don't want to give the impression that I consider myself one of those deadly coves who exercise an irresistible fascination over one and all and can't meet a girl without wrecking her peace of mind in the first half-minute. As a matter of fact, it's rather the other way with me, for girls on entering my presence are mostly inclined to give me the raised eyebrow and the twitching upper lip. Nobody, therefore, can say that I am a man who's likely to take alarm unnecessarily. You admit that, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Nevertheless, Jeeves, it is a known scientific fact that there is a particular style of female that does seem strangely attracted to the sort of fellow I am."

"Very true, sir."

"I mean to say, I know perfectly well that I've got, roughly speaking, half the amount of brain a normal bloke ought to possess. And when a girl comes along who has about twice the regular allowance, she too often makes a beeline for me with the love light in her eyes. I don't know how to account for it, but it is so."

"It may be Nature's provision for maintaining the balance of the species, sir."

"Very possibly."

'Without the Option', Carry On, Jeeves (1925)

The still summer air was disturbed by a sound like beer coming out of a bottle. It was Pop Glossop gurgling. His eyes were round, his nose wiggled, and one could readily discern that this news item had come to him not as rare and refreshing fruit but more like a buffet on the base of the skull with a sock full of wet sand.

Jeeves in the Offing (1960)

Wodehouse Quiz 28

Holy Orders

by David Buckle

1. Which curate and later parson, a friend of Freddie Threepwood and Tuppy Glossop from Oxford, runs a lads club in the East End and puts on evenings of wholesome entertainment, as featured in 'Jeeves and the Song of Songs'?
2. Which of Mr Mulliner's nephews features in three stories and was secretary to the Bishop of Stortford, later becoming the vicar of Walsingford-below-Chiveney-on-Thame?
3. In which novel is the Reverend Aubrey Brotherhood prevented from judging the Ashenden Oakshott Fête Bonny Babies competition because of his having contracted measles? (Uncle Fred Twistleton, impersonating Major Brabazon-Plank, stepped in to do the honours.)
4. The Reverend James Beckett is the headmaster of Beckford College in which of Wodehouse's school stories?
5. In *Heavy Weather*, Canon Fosberry is the vicar of which parish?
6. Who runs a book on the outcome of the length of ecclesiastical addresses in 'The Great Sermon Handicap'?
7. The Reverend Aubrey Jerningham, author of 'Is There a Hell?', is the vicar of Valley Fields in which Wodehouse novel?
8. In 'Aunt Agatha Takes the Count', who pretends to be a clergyman in order to steal the eponymous lady's pearl necklace?
9. The Reverend Cyril Ferguson, mistakenly dispenses advice on the virtues of temperance to Lord Belpher in which Wodehouse book?
10. Which formidable member of the clergy was the headmaster of Malvern House, Bertie Wooster's prep school?

(Answers on page 21)

Mortimer Sturgis, as you know, had been engaged before, but Betty Weston had never inspired the tumultuous rush of emotion which the mere sight of this girl had set loose in him. He told me later that just to watch her holing out her soup gave him a sort of feeling you get when your drive collides with a rock in the middle of a tangle of rough and kicks back into the middle of the fairway.

(From 'Sundered Hearts', 1920)



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Margaret Rogers

I'm sure Mike Swaddling must be the envy of every PGW book collector, owning as he does a beautiful full set of the Folio Society's editions. However, your readers might like to know that the editions amassed over the years by Emsworth Museum also include some in Dutch, Russian, Hungarian, Danish, and Swedish. As well as overseas visitors' donations of PG's works, if anyone in our neighbourhood is moving or wishes to dispose of their copies of his books, they seem automatically to gravitate in our direction, for which we are profoundly grateful. In addition to his written works, DVDs and CDs are also making their way here. I'm sure the great man himself would be amused at the contortions we go to to ensure his tomes are securely and attractively displayed in the small space we have available, and it cannot be too far into the future before the cabinet erupts and groans *enough, enough!* Ah, well, that is the price we gladly pay to ensure our little museum is able to continue welcoming PGW's aficionados from near and wide.

Note: We strongly encourage all members to visit the delightful Emsworth Museum if they're in Hampshire. It is open this year until 11 November. Hours are Saturdays and Bank Holidays, 10.30–16.30; Sundays, 14.30–16.30. For more information, go to: <https://goo.gl/VgNRCv>

From Ken Clevenger

Mike Swaddling's piece 'My PGW Collection' in your June 2018 number was a good read on several levels, not the least of which were his apt remarks on the inscriptions to be found in some of his previously owned Wodehouse books. Inspired by a *Wooster Sauce* note, I had occasion to write about the inscriptions in my own set of PGW books, often found in used bookshops and on Oxfam shop shelves. In the June 2012 issue you kindly printed my remarks on 'Whose Library Is It?' An expanded version may be read in my 2013 Amazon-published collection *Rannygazoo Too*.

But I write to commend your editorial note appended to Mr. Swaddling's piece, asking for others to tell of their own collection's stories. Interesting inscriptions are just one aspect of a venerable Wodehouse collection, but to my mind a very fascinating, intriguing bit. Indeed, the former owner of one of my books responded to my 2012 *Wooster Sauce* article, and that connection makes my copy of *Mulliner Nights*, a Herbert Jenkins 1933 first edition, even more special and precious.

From Linda Tyler

In light of the non-award of this year's Everyman Bollinger Wodehouse Prize for comic fiction, perhaps we could nominate our favourites. I'd like to start with *Miss Blaine's Prefect and the Golden Samovar* by Olga Wojtas.

From Mike Swaddling

You invited comments about the Everyman Bollinger Wodehouse prize. My views are quite clear: not one of the winners that I have read has even raised the slightest titter in me, and I think the whole thing should be scrapped. If there has to be an award for comic novel writing, then do it without Wodehouse's name. No one is ever going to come near him.

From Dave Patterson

Reading the Richard T. Kelly article in the June 2018 issue of *Wooster Sauce* inspired me to read *Remains of the Day* and *The Code of the Woosters* simultaneously. This was the first time I read Ishiguro, but it won't be the last.

As a collector of words, I have a question. What does 'porpentine' mean? On page 243 of my edition of *The Code of the Woosters* there appears: ". . . and there was more than a touch of the fretful porpentine about his hair." Anyone? It's not in my large hernia-inducing dictionary.

The Editor replies: 'Porpentine' is simply an archaic spelling of 'porcupine'. The phrase that appears in The Code of the Woosters (and in numerous variations in other Wodehouse stories as well) is taken from Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 5: "Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres, / Thy knotted and combined locks to part, / And each particular hair to stand on end, / Like quills upon the fretful porpentine."

From Mark Taha

I have just reread *Laughing Gas* after forty years and found it hilarious – again. Has anyone ever wondered what happened next? For instance, might Reggie have taken Joey back to England as his guest, with his mother as cook? Say a properly fed Joey resumed his career in England – I doubt if he and Eton would have suited each other!

From Timothy Kearley (via PGWnet)

If you enjoyed *Types of Ethical Theory*, you'll love 'Nodal humor in comic narrative: a semantic analysis of two stories by Twain and Wodehouse', which is available here: <https://goo.gl/JczHqG>

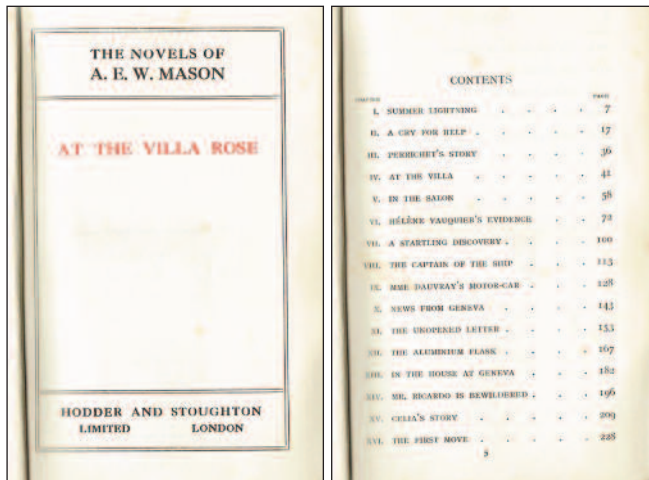
The essay originally appeared in *Humor: The International Journal of Humor Research*, 5:233 (1990). According to the abstract: "In this paper, humor is said to reside not simply in jokes but in joke-like constructions, for which the term 'nodal points of humor' is used. These nodes can be identified by the presence of a semantic script opposition which is evoked, either explicitly or implicitly."

Not exactly the sort of thing to spring on someone with a morning head, what? One readily imagines Twain and Wodehouse reading the piece together in humorist heaven, puffing their pipes and agreeing that, yes, by Jove, slipping a bit of semantic script opposition over on

the unsuspecting reader was the main thing. (Actually, discounting the fact it was written for folks in the linguistics trade, I thought the piece was interesting.)

From Frances Soar

Amongst my modest but growing collection is the *Weekend Wodehouse* anthology, which includes PGW’s disarming preface to *Summer Lightning*. I was recently delighted to discover that ‘Summer Lightning’ is the title of Chapter 1 of *At the Villa Rose*, a 1910 detective story by A. E. Mason (who, like PGW, had attended Dulwich College). See below – just in case you have taken up PGW’s implied challenge of compiling a list of the 100 best books (or in this case, bits of books) called *Summer Lightning*.



From Terry Betts

As a man with two great literary loves, I feel starved of one while there is (blessedly) a surfeit of the other. Plum’s characters are as immortal as those of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, but we have to survive on the existing canon, plus the almost five-year-old *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells*. Where is the justice in this? One merely needs to type ‘Holmes’, ‘Watson’, ‘Hudson’, ‘Lestrade’, etc., to be offered an almost overwhelming choice of old and new short stories and novels about the residents of Baker Street.

But Jeeves, Ukridge, Psmith, Blandings and others who inhabit our favourite immortal world? Apparently, what there is, is what there is! But why? Why no long queues of professional or merely inspired writers attempting to recreate the love and laughter The Master gave us? I can only imagine it is a copyright issue, and if so I would plead with those in control of this (the family / estate / executors?) to allow the world more from our beloved characters.

I am hoping to inspire a debate here, and possibly even a revolution if it supplies more of the sublime material needed to satiate my soul.

The Editor replies: There are indeed copyright issues, plus the opinion of many Wodehouseans that as Wodehouse’s style is inimitable, nobody else should attempt to mess with his characters. However, the Wodehouse Estate is open to the idea, and to that end members are reminded that the writer Ben Schott will be producing a new Jeeves and Wooster book, Jeeves and the King of Clubs, on 1 November. See page 16.

From Gerard Palmer

I see from the latest *Wooster Sauce* that you are inviting contributions, and this made me draw in the breath to some extent. I mean, have you considered the possibility of bearded ex-headmasters turning up on your doorstep demanding prominent billing for their articles on ‘Some little-known aspects of Tacitus’ or ‘The Old School Cloisters’?

In my own case I am brimming over with good ideas for other people to write about, and freely offer these to those whose expertise enables them to dash off a thousand words before you can say “What ho”. For what they are worth, my suggestions are: (1) Some information on Wodehouse the man – his beliefs, politics, and attitude to money, animals, children, politicians, the clergy and so forth. Although I have read quite a bit about him, his true self seems to be hidden away. (2) A piece on memorials/statues or blue plaques, and where PGW is buried. (3) An analysis of the numerous ways used to describe persons, viz. ‘cove’, ‘fellow’, ‘chap’, ‘blighter’, ‘young prune’, etc.

I would also like to suggest that when members have finished perusing their copies of *Wooster Sauce* and do not wish to retain them, they should deposit them in some public place – in the supermarket or hairdressers, or in a bus or taxi. In this way the good word may be spread far and wide, bringing joy to the masses and increasing the membership.

The Editor replies: We welcome articles on all sorts of subjects as long as they relate to Wodehouse in some way. If anybody would like to tackle any of the topics Gerard suggests, go to it!

And a Note from the Editor

Wow! When I ask for contributions, boy do I get them! Sincerest thanks to all who responded to my call for articles in the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*. The flood has been overwhelming and most gratifying – with the result that once again I have a backlog of material. That’s great for me, but not all that great for contributors who will now be disappointed because they have to wait until there is enough room to publish their prose (or, in some cases, photos). So if you have sent me something recently and you don’t see it in this issue, please be patient. Your time will come, but it may take a while. (As an example, two of the articles in this issue were submitted to me last year.)

For future reference, I must bring one small caveat to your attention: I will not print any pastiches or parodies written in a Wodehousean style. Some of these attempts are quite creditable, but many are not, and I prefer not to be a judge of which ones do or don’t pass muster. So the policy is: just about anything will be accepted for publication, as long as it focuses on Wodehouse and is not a pastiche or parody.

Keep ’em coming, folks! Your contributions are the lifeblood of *Wooster Sauce*!

– ELIN MURPHY

The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

“With a New Preface by the Author”: Part Two

Continuing our review of the series of new prefaces contributed by Wodehouse to 14 reprints of his books issued by Herbert Jenkins/Barrie & Jenkins between 1969 and 1975, the next preface to appear after *Something Fresh* was for *Uneasy Money*. This repeated the order in which the two titles had first appeared, as *Uneasy Money* (1917) had been Wodehouse’s next book to be published after *Something Fresh* (1915) and had followed it into the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Wodehouse’s preface deals with his early success in America (quickly placing short stories with *Collier’s* and *Cosmopolitan* upon his arrival in 1909); his struggles thereafter; his success with *Something Fresh* “as I have recorded elsewhere”, which is clearly a reference to the first preface; and his success in getting a second story into the *Saturday Evening Post*. As often in his reminiscences, Wodehouse did not let the facts get in the way of a good story. After his initial success with *Collier’s* and *Cosmopolitan*, “not another story did either of them buy”. In fact, after Wodehouse’s first appearance in *Collier’s* on 19 March 1910 (McIlvaine, D15.1), he had eight further short stories published in the magazine (D15.2-9) before *Something Fresh* appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*. As for *Cosmopolitan*, it published four of his short stories (D17.1-4) before *Something Fresh*.

Wodehouse’s preface goes on to state: “I had no means of knowing, when I started to write *Uneasy Money*, that the *Post* would not prove to be a second *Cosmopolitan*. Could I, in a word, repeat?” Again, this overlooks the fact that, immediately after the serialisation of *Something Fresh* had concluded on 14 August 1915, the *Post* had published Wodehouse’s short story ‘At Geisenheimer’s’ in its next issue on 21 August 1915 (D59.9) and went on to publish another of his short stories, ‘Extricating Young Gussie’, on 18 September 1915 (D59.10), before starting the serialisation of *Uneasy Money* on 4 December 1915 (D59.11).

The Herbert Jenkins reprint of *Uneasy Money* containing Wodehouse’s new preface was published in 1969 (A19b24). McIlvaine omits to mention the presence of the new preface. As was the case with the dust-wrapper of *Something Fresh*, the front flap of the wrapper states “With a new Foreword by the Author”, but Wodehouse’s three-page introduction is again clearly headed “Preface” in the text.

The title was reprinted in 1976 (A19b25); McIlvaine does this time record “a new foreword by the author”. McIlvaine also states it was published by Herbert Jenkins, but in fact it was Barrie & Jenkins. Interestingly

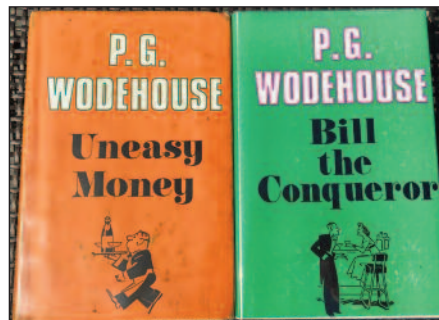
the dust-wrapper states “WITH A NEW FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR”, whereas (as we shall see later) all other Barrie & Jenkins reprints after 1972 state “WITH A NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR”.

The third preface to appear was for *Bill the Conqueror*, which was reprinted by Barrie & Jenkins in 1970 (A33a22). McIlvaine states “with a New Foreword by the Author”. However, unlike *Something Fresh* and *Uneasy Money*, the “New Foreword” is not mentioned on the front flap of the dust-wrapper (although, like its predecessors, it is clearly headed “Preface” in the text), so there is no indication anywhere on the dust-wrapper that the book contains a new preface. In fact, the only clue in the book that the preface is new is a discreet “© 1970 by P. G. Wodehouse” on the copyright page. The preface was reprinted in the Sphere paperback edition of 1972 (A33a24). McIlvaine omits to mention the preface.

The preface itself continues the chronological approach to Wodehouse’s career evident in the first two prefaces, as its first sentence shows: “Between 1915 and 1924, when *Bill the Conqueror* was published, I was not only writing an annual novel (if you can call my things novels) serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post* but helping Guy Bolton and Jerome Kern flood the New York stage with what were called intimate musical comedies.” Once again, a statement from Wodehouse about the publishing history of his work is unreliable, as he exaggerates his appearances in the *Post*: after *Something New* (1915) and *Uneasy Money* (1915–16), the *Post* serialised only *Piccadilly Jim* (1916), *A Damsel in Distress* (1919), and *Leave It to Psmith* (1923) before *Bill the Conqueror* appeared in 1924.

The preface reveals that “The core or nub of *Bill the Conqueror* was an intimate musical comedy called *Sitting Pretty*. . . . All the part about Professor Appleby and Horace and the latter’s adoption by Cooley Paradene came from *Sitting Pretty*.” Wodehouse ends the preface by mentioning that “*Bill the Conqueror* was written in New York, but I don’t think there are any mistakes with respect to the details of life in an England which was three thousand miles away. I wish I could say the same of all my brain children. In one of them I have characters going overland to Madeira [‘The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace’ in *The Inimitable Jeeves*] and in another – still worse – Surrey playing Kent at Lord’s [*Piccadilly Jim*].”

As always, please contact Nick at nick.townend@zen.co.uk if you have any further information on this subject, particularly in respect of later reprints containing the prefaces.



News from the British Library

Later this year, the British Library is presenting a free-to-view display on P G Wodehouse in its Sir John Ritblat Treasures Gallery. The display will draw extensively on Sir Edward Cazalet's Wodehouse archive, which is now held at the Library. It will seek to position both famous and lesser-known works within the context of Wodehouse's life, tracing his development as a writer. The display will open on 27 November and run until late February 2019, and it will be supported by two events at the library.

On the evening of 6 December 2018, Tony Ring will give an illustrated talk on 'The Wit and Wisdom of P G Wodehouse'. This will be followed in the New Year by a second event, details of which will be announced in December. For both of these events, members of the British Library will have a week's priority in booking tickets, so readers are advised to refer to our website or the BL website for further details.

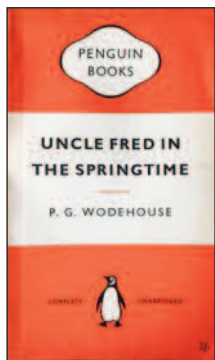
It is hoped that the December issue of *Wooster Sauce* will include a full report about the exhibition and full information about the New Year event.

Joy in the Penguin

Amongst collectors of early Penguin Books, particularly members of the Penguin Collectors' Society, the first thousand, numbered chronologically, are much sought after. It was a time, through the middle of the last century, when keenly priced paperback books produced to a good standard revolutionized the reading habits of UK readers and many others around the world. But the numbering system also creates delicious incongruities. One of the most influential of postwar books was *1984*, George Orwell's dire warning of a Stalinist future. The date of that year strikes a chord whenever it is heard. It is the heaviest of political portends.

Under the Penguin Books numbering system it is No. 972 in the canon, and was published in February 1954. Check one book earlier, to No. 971, and you find that *1984* has a strange bedfellow and one that provides fun and laughter as counterpoint to the gloom, doom, and dire warnings of Orwell's book. For No. 971 is none other than *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, one of the most delightful flights of fun, fancy, and frivolity ever produced by P. G. Wodehouse. And I think we know which of the two we would prefer to be reading as the shutters come down.

– ROBERT BRUCE



Another Great Sermon Handicap Contender

From 'Appointments in the Clergy', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 July 2018: The Rev Margaret Maureen Desborough, assistant curate, Skirlaugh, Catwick, Long Riston, Swine with Ellerby and of Siggleshorpe with Nunkeeling and Bewholme (Diocese of York), to be assistant curate (house for duty – i.e. no stipend, but a house rent-free) Aldbrough and Mappleton with Goxhill and Withernwick, Beeford with Frodingham and Foston, Brandesburton and Leven, Hornsea, Atwick and Skipsea, Skirlaugh, Catwick, Long Riston, Swine with Ellerby, and Siggleshorpe with Nunkeeling and Bewholme (same diocese)

(Thanks to MURRAY HEDGCOCK)

Poet's Corner

For the Defence

(A doctor states that beer is better for one than tea, 'if one has the wickedness to drink it'.)

Doctor, why this innuendo?
Why this bitter thrust at beer?
Why this attitude, my friend? Oh,
Why this keen, sub-acid sneer?
Scores of men of limpid virtue
Hold the view that ale can't hurt you.

On this interesting topic,
Let me tell you that I know
Men who're highly philanthropic
On a daily pint or so.
Who, with souls by sin uncankered,
Quaff the matutinal tankard.

Men of learning, modern Platos,
When the hour of lunch draws near,
With their chop and fried potatoes
Order – say, a pint of beer.
Even Shakespeare, some affirm, made
Light of bitter at the "Mermaid."

So, where genius, saint and martyr
All securely place their feet,
Shall I pose as a non-starter
When a friend would fain stand treat?
Never, till my life desert me!
(Thanks, another wouldn't hurt me.)

From *Daily Chronicle*, 19 September, 1906

Answers to Wodehouse Quiz (Page 17)

1. The Reverend Rupert 'Beefy' Bingham
2. The Reverend Augustine Mulliner
3. *Uncle Dynamite*
4. *A Prefect's Uncle*
5. Market Blandings
6. Rupert Steggles
7. *Sam the Sudden*
8. 'Soapy' Sid Hemmingway
9. *A Damsel in Distress*
10. The Reverend Aubrey Upjohn (in some stories known as Arnold Abney)

She looked like a vicar's daughter who plays hockey and ticks off the villagers when they want to marry their deceased wives' sisters.

(From *Laughing Gas*, 1936)

Recent Press Comment

Daily Telegraph, April 28 (from Carolyn de la Plain) Number 56 across in the General Knowledge crossword: 'P.G. Wodehouse character played by Hugh Laurie in a television series along with Stephen Fry (7)'.

The Week (online), May 14

In 'The Trump Labyrinth' Matthew Walther wrote: "The only books that are going to help you make sense of the headlines are spy thrillers, detective novels and the comedies of P.G. Wodehouse."

NJArts.net, May 15

Following the death of Tom Wolfe, Jay Lustig wrote of Wolfe's wish in his early career to be a chameleon and blend in with his surroundings when writing articles.

When writing a story on a stock car racer, Wolfe said, "I thought I'd better try to fit in, so I very carefully picked out the clothes I'd wear. I had a knit tie, some brown suede shoes and a brown Borsalino hat with a half inch of beaver fur around it. Somehow I thought this was very casual and suitable for the races. I guess I'd been reading too many P.G. Wodehouse novels."

The Herald, May 15

In his diary, Ken Smith reported: "The wit of our sheriffs in Scotland is often overlooked. Lawyer Brian Crystal was reading a case report and tells us, 'Just to show that the spirit of P.G. Wodehouse and Rumpole has not completely died in our legal system, the Sheriff, required to assess the reliability of an expert witness, wrote that 'The witness treated cross-examination in the manner a man might hold a crocodile.'" Snappy.

The Times, May 19 (from Alexander Dainty)

In a letter to the Editor, Edward Turner criticised reporter Kathy Lette's assessment of PGW's humour "to be that of 'the musty, fusty send-your-shirts-out-to-be-stuffed, misogynistic 1930s': This "does him a great disservice. Wodehouse's characters are wry caricatures. The patriarchal conventions of the age required Wodehouse to portray women as seemingly subordinate to men, yet he always affectionately presented his women as the actual wielders of power. One need look no further than Ashe Marson's first meeting with Joan Valentine in *Something Fresh*: 'Women being ever better equipped with poise than man, it was she who spoke first.'"

The Times, May 20 (from Alexander Dainty)

Responding to the previous day's letter, Monica Collantine wrote: "I couldn't agree more with Edward

Turner. Who could read any of P.G. Wodehouse's novels without knowing that Bertie Wooster and his chums were in awe of the women in their life? The Aunts Agatha and Dahlia were formidable foes who always achieved their wishes, and Honoria Glossop, who 'has a voice like a lion tamer making some authoritative announcement to one of the troop' almost managed to snare Bertie into marriage; he was saved, only by his excellent, if unintended, impression of being soft in the head – a 'poltroon' as Aunt Agatha referred to him. Misogynistic? Far from it."

The Conversation, May 24

Philip Sergeant discussed the decline in popularity of the name 'Donald': "As the novelist P.G. Wodehouse wrote, 'There's some raw work pulled at the font from time to time.'"

The Times, May 27

(from Jo Jacobius) Roya Nikkhah, the royal correspondent, wrote: "When Bertie Wooster took up with an attractive young redhead in one of P.G. Wodehouse's short stories, Jeeves solemnly warned him: 'Red hair, sir, in my opinion, is dangerous.'" She then referred to the Duke of Sussex's best man taking aim at the Duke's 'ginger' locks.

Waitrose Weekend, 31 May (from Stephen Payne)

Marian Keyes picked her favourite books, one of which was *The Best of Wodehouse: An Anthology*. She noted that it was "the ultimate in comfort reading, because nothing bad ever happens in Wodehouse-land. Or even if it does, it's always sorted out by the end. For as long as I'm immersed in a Wodehouse, it's possible to keep the real world at bay and live in a far nicer, funnier one."

Financial Times, June 2/3 (from Christopher Bellew)

In the Weekend Magazine, quiz question 7 was: "What surname is shared by the British actor Ralf, the PG Wodehouse character Bingo, and the fictional mouse Stuart?"

Radio Times, June 5 (from Roger Bowen)

Our Patron James Naughtie discussed his favourite authors, saying, "When I need to laugh, I reach – with utter confidence – for P.G. Wodehouse. . . . Put *The Code of the Woosters* by the bedside and I am a happy man. Take me to Blandings Castle, where the Empress snuffles contentedly in her sty, and the cares of the world seem to pass away."

The Guardian, June 9 (from Caroline Franklyn)

In discussing 'Books that made me', Carol Ann Duffy

The Oldie, June 2018

(from Jo Jacobius, Andrew Bishop, and Christopher Bellew)

Richard Osborne described Dame Ethel Smyth, the suffragette who threw a brick through the window of the Colonial Secretary's house, as a "Wodehousian aunt": "Caricatures of Ethel appear in two of Virginia Woolf's novels, though I suspect a closer match might be Bertie Wooster's Aunt Dahlia, a woman in whose presence no alabaster figure of the Infant Samuel at Prayer was ever entirely safe."



Wodehousian aunt: Ethel Smyth, 1913

said that her comfort read was “the eternal prose maestro P.G. Wodehouse’s Jeeves stories.”

The Week, June 9 (from Alexander Dainty)

A review of the Hotel Tresanton referred in turn to a review in the *Sunday Telegraph*, which had stated that “the 30 bedrooms are ‘heaven’ with their generous supplies of P.G. Wodehouse books and nautical décor”.

Hindustantimes, June 10

In ‘Random Forays: Finding humour amid cynicism’, Vivek Atray wrote: “P.G. Wodehouse was the master of ironical humour, of course, and he would implant a not-so subtle dose into even torrid proceedings. Samples of his writings . . . if read in the midst of a harrowing day would surely change the mood within minutes: ‘He had just about enough intelligence to open his mouth when he wanted to eat, but certainly no more.’”

Daily Beast, June 15

In listing ‘The Best Summer Reads of All Time’, Malcolm Jones included *Thank You, Jeeves*: “Here, as elsewhere with Wodehouse, you will find yourself laughing and not know exactly why. Or be able to stop. Authors are often called inimitable. Wodehouse truly is.”

The Times, June 21 (from Hilary Bruce)

Referring to a Richard Briers reading of *What Ho, Jeeves* on Radio 4 Extra, Catherine Nixey commented: “Has any doctor ever prescribed Jeeves? If not, listening to this, one can’t help thinking that they should. For complaints of mild ennui and general malaise, PG Wodehouse and what Stephen Fry called the ‘sunlit perfection’ of his prose would surely be a perfect cure. It is hard to listen to anything by Wodehouse and not feel cheered. Especially when it’s read by Richard Briers who . . . captures his bounce perfectly.”

Daily Telegraph, June 29

(from David Salter and Carolyn de la Plain)
One of the leaders, ‘Life on the level’, started with: “Bertie Wooster once called his Aunt Agatha’s reaction to bad news to being like that of one who, picking daisies on the railway, has just caught the down express in the small of the back.”

In the same edition, clue number 1 of the General Knowledge crossword was: “Nicknamed Plum, the novelist remembered for his tales about Bertie Wooster, valet Jeeves and the Blandings Castle and Drones Club sets (9).”

Country Music People, July 2018 (from Cyril Hershon)

Included a description of the recently published book *Asylum: P. G. Wodehouse Meets St Paul* and a brief interview with its author, Tom Travis.

The Times, July 8

In her restaurant review, Dolly Alderton wrote of “P.G. Wodehouse’s classification for hangovers that, increasingly over the years, I have found to be one of the most profoundly accurate things I have ever read.”

Daily Telegraph, July 13

In ‘The Magnificent Seven of British Comedy’ Charles Moore analysed why *Dad’s Army* is so successful,

including this comment: “Like P.G. Wodehouse, though in quite different style, the authors understood that English humour relies on catching exactly what it is that people say.”

The Mail on Sunday, July 14

Chris Hastings wrote of the “touching friendship between crime writer Agatha Christie and Jeeves creator PG Wodehouse [that] formed in their twilight years”. One of Agatha Christie’s secrets for longevity was “occasionally short periods in bed and reading one’s favourite books like those of PG Wodehouse”. In what proved to be her final letter to PGW, she signed off, “Goodbye for now and thanks for all the laughs.”

Daily Mail, July 15

(from Stephen Payne and Terry Taylor)

Craig Brown described some of the acerbic comments that Wodehouse made about fellow authors. PGW was, apparently, “bored stiff” by Jane Austen, thought Nancy Mitford was “dull”, and considered Henry James to be “a dull, pompous chump”, while saying of Joseph Conrad: “What a mess.” Brown then noted: “He was a fan of Agatha Christie, however, and told Guy Bolton that he wrote her ‘a long, gushing letter and what comes back? About three lines, the sort of thing you write to an unknown fan. ‘So glad you have enjoyed my criminal adventures’ – that sort of thing . . . and the maddening thing is that one has got to go on reading her, because she is about the only writer today who is readable.”

Irish Times, July 21

N. J. McGarrigle finished his article on “Famous writers and their vices” with “something from the pen of P.G. Wodehouse, a renowned toper who lived to 93, a fact justly celebrated with the booze concoction *Highballs for Breakfast*. Here is Wodehouse’s ‘Squiffy’ Bixby aka Lord Tidmouth: ‘They say,’ continued Lord Tidmouth earnestly, ‘that strong drink biteth like a serpent and – if I remember correctly – stingeth like a jolly old adder. Well, all I have to say is – let it! That’s what I say, Bill – let it! It’s what it’s there for. Excuse me for a minute, old man, whilst I mix myself a stiffish serpent and soda.’”

The Mail on Sunday, July 22 (from June Arnold)

A letter regarding an article published in the previous week’s edition referred to the idea of making Jeeves ‘sexy’: “This made me smile,” wrote Susan Cooper, “as my great uncle Cecil Redvers Pavey was Mr Wodehouse’s valet. We often thought Jeeves was modelled on him, as he was what would be termed a quintessentially English gentleman.”

Weekly Standard, July 25

In his obituary of Lord Carrington, Philip Terzian described his grandfather as “the sort of reckless spendthrift who populates the novels of P.G. Wodehouse”.

The Lady, July 27 (from Caroline Franklyn)

On Lynne Truss’s reading list for the summer holidays (or any holiday) was “a P.G. Wodehouse. It doesn’t matter if I’ve read it before.”

Future Events for Your Diary

May 24–October 27, 2018

Perfect Nonsense at Theatre by the Lake

The Goodale brothers' *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense* is enjoying a long run at Theatre by the Lake in Keswick.

September 11–15, 2018 Perfect Nonsense in Lincolnshire

Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense will be staged by the Stamford Shoestring Theatre Company (Stamford, Lincs.), which has been praised by the national press for their sell-out productions. For more information, visit the company's website at www.stamfordshoestring.com.

September 15–21, 2018 Perfect Nonsense in Hampton Hill

Yet another production of *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*, this one being staged by the Teddington Theatre Club, can be seen at Hampton Hill Theatre. Further details can be found on Teddington's website.

September 17, 2018 AGM at the Savile Club

The Society will hold its annual general meeting on this night, in addition to which we will have a special guest speaker, author and lecturer Richard T. Kelly (see page 3). The Savile Club is located at 69 Brook Street, London W1K 4ER; we meet from 6 pm onwards.

September 30, 2018 Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Richard Burnip will lead a Wodehouse-themed walk for London Walks (note: this is not a Society-sponsored event). The usual fee is £10, but our members get a discounted price of £8. No need to book a place; just be at exit 2 (Park

Lane east side) of Marble Arch Underground station at 2.30 p.m., and identify yourself as a Society member.

November 25, 2018

Richard Burnip's Wodehouse Walk

Take a walk with Richard Burnip and enjoy a lot about and by Wodehouse along the way! See September 30, above, for details on when and where.

March 21–April 14, 2019

Perfect Nonsense in Hartford, Connecticut

Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense will make its North American debut at the Hartford Stage next spring.

May 11–18, 2019

A Damsel in Distress at the Whitefield Garrick

The Whitefield Garrick Society will perform *A Damsel in Distress*, by Ian Hay and P. G. Wodehouse, at the Whitefield Garrick Theatre in Bury, outside Manchester. The Director, Andrew Close, hopes to meet Society members attending this production.

October 17–20, 2019 TWS Convention in Cincinnati

The Wodehouse Society will be holding its 20th biennial convention, 'Pigs Have Wings', at the Netherland Plaza Hilton in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The closing of the door was followed by a silence, followed in its turn by an odd, whining noise like gas escaping from a pipe. It was Lord Emsworth trying to hum carelessly.

(From 'The Crime Wave at Blandings', 1936)

CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Love on the Links</i> : How It Came to Be | 16 | New Book News |
| 3 | Society News | 16 | The Empress |
| 4 | A Tale of Two Gold Bats Matches | 17 | The Wooster Source |
| 5 | Tweeting Mr Brandreth | 17 | Wodehouse Quiz 28: Holy Orders |
| 6 | Quiz Night at the Savile | 18 | Letters to the Editor |
| 7 | <i>Love on the Links</i> at the Salisbury Playhouse | 20 | The Bibliographic Corner: "With a New Preface by the Author": Part Two |
| 8 | My PGW Collection | 21 | News from the British Library |
| 9 | Talking Up Plum | 21 | Joy in the Penguin |
| 10 | Wodehouse and Railway Stations | 21 | Another Great Sermon Handicap Contender |
| 11 | The Word Around the Clubs | 21 | Poet's Corner: <i>For the Defence</i> |
| 12 | Rockett Man: Part 1 | 22 | Recent Press Comment |
| 14 | Clubs, Wodehouse, and the Savile | | |

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