



DRONESTAR



Proceedings of The DRONE RANGERS

The Texas Chapter of The Wodehouse Society



“Excellent browsing and sluicing and cheery conversation and what-not”

*The next Drone Rangers Meeting will take place at
Barnes & Noble Books, The Galleria
7:00p.m., March 31st, 2000*

Fellow D-Rangers —

For those who were unable to attend the February 12th **Remember Plum Party**, the Angels weep for you. Unexpectedly, this was the most rocking party in the Montrose that fateful Saturday night. There we were in a well lighted, famous old Houston Mexican restaurant, tamales, salsa and chips at our elbows and G&Ts at our fingertips – while the Wooster and Jeeves theme filled the air and tickled up the ganglions.

Perhaps it was the helium-filled balloons (which turned into helium-filled Drone Rangers). Perhaps it was the soap-bubble blowing competition which lasted the evening long. Perhaps it was our beautiful persons draped in items of apparel that would have suited Jeeves to a T, for never were Drones more beautiful.

Whatever it was, a rollicking time was had by one and all, except possibly the waiters who appeared to consider our breaking out into “Good Gnus,” as musically adapted by Mike Skupin, to be over the top. Neither did they appear to like “The Ballad of August” or “The Sitter Out,” with Carl singing and Toni doing her best to imitate a bassoon using only her vocal cords and lots of volume. However, waiters find the blue bird in their tip – so even they had a Plummy evening and happiness reigned supreme.

The sweetness that reading P. G. Wodehouse’s books imparts to the Drone Rangers is wonderful to behold as they prepare to enjoy an evening at Barnes & Noble Books rediscovering a PGW novel together. The virtue of their pleasure casts a flattering glow upon them and their natural beauty becomes brighter still, even as the demon of laughter bubbles and burbles within.

Joy in the Morning may be the best Wodehouse book ever penned. Many Drone Rangers think so, and John Hannah is among them, as was evidenced by his superb paper written for the evening’s meeting January 28th, 2000.

John is always a pleasure to drink in after he has consumed his latest Wodehouse and made it part of his blood. His spirit pours into the ear of the listener with an intoxicating thrill. The humor of his presentation slipped so cunningly unto our senses that before

we knew with what we contended, our dignity was lost and we whooped and slapped each others backs to the consternation of shoppers too near to escape our hearty howls.

Two total and unforeseen strangers (to us, but not to Wodehouse) joined our circle and stayed to help consume John’s “Joyous” morsels. Then they, along with the Drone Rangers, turned to see that she who trod upon his coat-tails as the evening’s “additional speaker” was Toni Rudersdorf, and there was nowhere to glide.

One does not wish to mislead the reader about this Toni Rudersdorf, for if it is true that the human body may be regarded as a mask behind which one may rarely glimpse the soul, this bezel revealed tonight that within her dwells the brooding, deep and mysterious soul of a scholar. Were this not the case, we would have merely noted her graceful

movements, which gladden the heart. We might have merely continued grateful to her for being so light, so volatile, so cheerful and kind. However, the paper of the evening proved that despite her dedication to shedding joy around, to radiating happiness and illumining our dark days, Toni is possessed of that power to captivate our minds as well. Tonight she shared with us the first gleanings of her reading of the letters of P. G. Wodehouse. She has collected and woven like golden threads random paragraphs about PGW's pets, making of them a

kind "Plum and the Beasts" biography. What shall this work become in the future as she adds more tales of Plum's furry family?

If you were not among those at Barnes & Noble Saturday night and did not, therefore, hear her paper yourself, then you did not feel, as we did, that she lifted the weight of that enormous chain which all the living drag after them. Perhaps you will gain some measure of pleasure by reading it in your isolation. It is published within these pages.



Net Notes

pgwnet-request@lists.best.com
"subscribe" in body of message

Junior Drones Club:
<http://www.net.on.ca/~erich/>

alt/fan/Wodehouse

From: Elliott Milstein (Robert _____)
EMilstein@aol.com

Subject: Wodehouse in the WSJ

Anyone get *The Wall Street Journal* (12/13/99)? Yesterday's editorial on Britain's new ban on men-only clubs written by Danielle Crittenden is one of the best extended pastiches I have ever seen in the popular press. If you do not get the newspaper, I am sure there is a way to download it from <http://wsj.com>, but I, for one, haven't a clue how to do it. But if you can, do so, and enjoy! Is La Crittenden a member of our club? Someone should surely invite her to join!

From: Jas Waterbury (The Greasy Bird)
McD245@aol.com

Subject: Reading & Wearing

Now that we've discussed our second favorite authors, and, in the past, our favorite Wodehouse books, I have a

question. I operate on the theory that everyone in TWS is constantly re-reading Wodehouse.

My question is, what Plum are you reading right now? For example, I am re-reading *The Butler Did It*. No reason – it was handy.

What are you reading? More important, what are you wearing?

From: Jean Tillson (Pig-Hooey)
pighooey@ici.net

Subject: Reading & Wearing

Murray Hedgecock's *Wodehouse at the Wicket* and my most comfortable flannel jammies.

From: Tom Smith (Major Brabazon-Plank)
Brimsmith@AOL.com

Subject: Reading & Wearing

I just finished *The Swoop and other Stories*, a book I purchased from an online bookseller after driving up the price on eBay, which I believe the Old Etonian outbid me for. I generally read wearing an Oxford button-down and Dockers. Unless I'm in bed when I'm reading.

From: Sara M. Morris (Ginger Winship)
saram@feist.com

Subject: Reading & Wearing

I've just finished Richard Osborne's *After Hours With P.G. Wodehouse*, a collection of his magazine articles and addresses. Very enjoyable and much insight here. (Read in sweats, my all-winter get-up.)

From: Stuart Shiffman & Andi Shechter
roscoe10@home.com

Subject: Reading & Wearing


I'm reading the *Tales From the Drones Club*, in denims and a Bryan Talbot "Heart of the Empire: The Legacy of Luther Arkwright" t-shirt.

From: From: Jas Waterbury (The Greasy Bird)
McD245@aol.com

Subject: Reading & Wearing

Great responses to my inquiry about what PGW everyone is reading. Thanks, gang. Judging from the responses to what people are wearing, all I can say is that we rule the reading world, we leave much to be desired in the sartorial dept.

Meetings and Books for 2000

	Meeting Date	Talk or something related to the current book	Paper, video or independent work on a Wodehouse subject
<i>Do Butlers Burgle Banks?</i>	March 31	Anne Bianchi	Mary Kelleher & Bethe Bugbee
Dinner at ??	April 28	" "	" "
<i>Pigs Have Wings</i>	May26	Kathy Smith"	Sushila Peterson
Dinner -	June 30	" "	" "
<i>Uncle Fred in the Springtime</i> or <i>Wodehouse Bestiary</i>	July 28	Need volunteer	Need volunteer
Dinner	August 25	" "	" "
<i>French Leave</i> or <i>Summer Moonshine</i>	September 29	Sylvia Bernicchi	Need volunteer
Dinner	October 27	" "	" "
<i>Purloined Paperweight</i>	December 1	Need volunteer	Need volunteer

**From Wodehouse Nuggets
Edited by R. Osborne**

Bingo laughed in an unpleasant, hacking manner as if he were missing on one tonsil.

"Jeeves and the Old School Chum"
Very Good, Jeeves, 1930

The goldfish made faces like Leslie Henson and withdrew.

Laughing Gas, 1936

His manner resembled that of a wolf on the steppes of Russia who, expecting a peasant, is fobbed off with a wafer biscuit.

"The Juice of an Orange"
Blandings Castle, 1934

The girl was like a chunk of ice cream with spikes all over it.

"Goodbye to All Cats"
Young Men in Spats, 1936

"You must surge round him like glue."

Heavy Weather, 1933

Plum & the Beasts

by Toni Rudersdorf

When one thinks of Wodehouse, one thinks of him at his typewriter, or in company of one or more of his animal friends – dogs, cats, horses, birds, etc. In the way other husbands and wives rejoice in their children, Plum and Ethel rejoiced in their pets. Plum did not have many friends, but those happy few joined in this furry fascination. Many letters to his family and friends contain one- or two-paragraph stories recounting the exploits of his pets.

When Plum was a child he lived at schools during the winter months and with various aunts and uncles during holidays. It was while on holiday he had most of his experiences with pets and barnyard animals, but none of these have been chronicled except possibly in disguise as the Mixer and/or Webster, etc. In fact, the earliest mention of an animal is in a letter to his young friend, Bubbles. Edward Cazalet (Plum's grandson) thought this little girl might have later been known as Mrs. Pennington, but he was not certain.

To Bubbles possibly Mrs. Pennington 1914
Written: Northumberland Avenue, London

I am staying now at the flat I took you to lunch at last winter. There are four cats there now, the two big ones and two kittens. I was woken up at six the other morning by a yowling, and there was one of the kittens which had got its paw caught in the chimney, and was hanging by it. I had to get up and set it free.

This must have been written shortly before Plum was hired to write his article on John Barrymore, which led to his traveling in company with the famous actor to New York early in August. Since WWI broke out soon afterward, his return to England was made impossible. Plum found work in America and shortly afterward met and married Ethel. Ethel was an avid animal lover and with her encouragement, that part of Plum was fully unleashed.

I did not find many letters from the early years of the Wodehouse's marriage. However, beginning six years into marriage and never ending until his death, a stream of anecdotes of Ethel and the animals flowed steadily beginning with:

To Leonora 11/24/1920
Written: London

Great excitement last night, Mummie came into my room at half-past two and woke me out of the dreamless to say that mice had been snootering her. She said one had run across her bed. To sooth her I went to her room to spend the rest of the night, thinking that there may have been mice in the room but that she had simply imagined that they had got on the bed. We had hardly turned off the light when – zip! One ran right across the pillow!!!

To Leonora 12/21/1921
Written: London

The Wodehouse home is en Fete and considerably above itself this p.m. Deep throated cheers ring out in flat 43 and every now and then I have to go out on the balcony to address the seething crowds in St. James' Street. And why? I'll tell you. (I'm glad you asked me.) This afternoon at Hurst Park dear jolly old Front Line romped home in the hurdle handicap in spite of having to carry about three tons weight. The handicappers crammed an extra ten pounds on him after his last win, so he had to carry 13 stone 3 pounds, and it seemed so impossible that he could win that I went off and played golf instead of going to Hurst Park. It was an absolute record – the Evening Standard says there has never been a case before of a horse winning a good race under such a weight.

...Mummie's judgment in buying the horse is boosted to the skies, and everybody looks on her now as the wisest guy in town. ...So, Mummie has started her career as the Curse of the Turf in great style.

To Bill Townend 6/27/1922
Written: 4 Onslow Square SW7, London

The puppy was run over by a motor bike the other day, and emerged perfectly unhurt, but a bit excited. We had to chase him half across London before he simmered down. He just started running and kept on running until he felt better.

To Townend 12/16/1922
Written: New York

The enclosed photograph is our dog, Sammy, a stout fellow with the worst breath on Long Island.

To Leonora 11/23/1923
Written: London

Jack the cat is greatly exercised these days by the goldfish, which are now in their aquarium in the porch off the drawing room. He sits and gazes at them by the hour, and if not checked by a biff on the side of the head, tries to flick them out with his paw. I heard Catherine say to him the other day, "Yack, what the matter mitt you? How you get that vay?" - than which, as you will readily agree, nothing could be fairer.

To Leonora 11/23/1923
Written: London

Jack the cat has got a red ribbon round his neck today. Looks an awful ass.

It might pop into your mind to wonder if Plum wrote anything other than letters during this period of time. Considering that anyone else writing the number of letters he did would feel they had done quite enough, it is a reasonable thing to wonder. To ease your mind, I will tell you that from 1914 to 1923 Plum wrote: *The Man Upstairs*; *Something New (Fresh)*; *Psmith, Journalist*; *Uneasy Money*; *Piccadilly Jim*; *The Man with Two Left Feet*; *My Man Jeeves*; *Their Mutual Child (The Coming of Bill)*; *A Damsel in Distress*; *The Little Warrior (Jill the Reckless)*; *Indiscretions of Archie*; *The Clicking of Cuthbert (Golf without Tears)*; *Three Men and a Maid (The Girl in the Boat)*; *The Adventures of Sally (Mostly Sally)*; *The inimitable Jeeves (Jeeves)*; and *Leave it to Psmith*.

Bounding ahead a few years of letters, I found this:

To Townend 8/17/1929
Written: Hunstanton Hall

You know, Susan's devotion is beginning to affect my liver. I can't get a bit of exercise. She won't let me out of her sight, and she won't come for long walks. If I try to take her, she just sits down and looks pathetic. What she likes is to lie in the middle of a lawn and have me walk round and round her. She won't let me go on the moat, and if I bicycle to town, I have to take her along, tucked into my sweater. I hope she won't miss me too much when I leave. I don't think she will, as she will be in London with Ethel and will have Miss Winks.

Susan was quite elderly when that letter was written and passed away shortly afterward when Plum was

away working in California. Like so many animal lovers, he knew that the cure for lost love is another love, and in a couple of years we have the following about their little Peke, Miss Winks:

To Townend
Written: California

1/16/1931

Ethel went away to Aqua Calliente for a week, leaving me in loco parentis to Winky. I let her sleep in Ethel's room the first night, and she woke me up at seven next morning, barking. So I went to soothe her, forgetting that I was still wearing the black bandage I use to protect my eyes. The moment she saw a masked stranger entering, she shot into the bathroom like a rabbit and stood there yelling at me. Her relief when I unmasked was terrific.

The Wodehouse's life in California, as everyone knows, was fraught with incident. It was in California that Plum made the bloomer of telling a journalist that he couldn't say why he was paid so well for the work he did when really he did little or nothing. (This, from a man who wrote several screen plays and fixed several others while, incidentally, writing *Very Good, Jeeves; Big Money* and *If I Were You*.) The Journalist, naturally, made much of this and soon Plum found himself given the cold, fishy eye by the movie industry. Then he became the focus of an IRS investigation (which resulted in full exoneration of any misdeeds, but was very unpleasant). The pressure of being double taxed (by the US and England) and the strain that Ethel was under to keep track of their financial obligations to both governments, combined to make France more attractive than it had ever been before. Plum and Ethel took their pets and removed to Auribeau, France where soon a letter to Bill Townend was penned:

To Townend
Written: Auribeau, France

2/09/1932

... I am absolutely isolated.

I could go and stay at a hotel in Cannes, of course, but I have got a dislike of hotels after the Dorchester. Besides, Winky would be such a burden at a hotel. My God, she's bad enough here. She won't let me out of her sight. I feel rotten if I don't get an exercise walk in the afternoon, but every time I try to start on one Winky sits on the terrace and just looks at me. You can hear her saying, "Going to leave me, eh? Well of all the dirty tricks!" So I say, "Well, come along, too." And she says, "No, I'm dashed if I do. What, sweat down that mountain and have to sweat up again? Not for me!" So it ends in my strolling about the garden.

The Wodehouses settled at the small French town, Le Touquet and bought a home just off the golf course. This house, which was recently made into a B&B according to news from the internet, was near enough to neighbors that Ethel developed quite a network of animal loving friends. It was also near a casino. The Wodehouse home soon became a popular spot for visiting friends from America and England.

Those who have read Frances Donaldson's biography of Plum will recognize the next letter to Leonora, which I lifted from it:

To Leonora
Written: Le Touquet, France

8/24/1934

Winky & Boo have just been washed preparatory to being exhibited with Mummie in the "Madame de 1934 et son chin" event in the local dog show. As far as I can gather, this is decided partly by how Madame is dressed and partly by personal influence with the judges. We have one of them in our pocket and are full of confidence.

The other night I went to the casino, had a shot at Roulette, won three mille in two minutes and came home. At seven a.m. Winky was restless, so I took her out, and we had been out about ten minutes when Mummie arrived, having been at the casino all night and lost three mille. So we took the dogs for a walk and went in and had breakfast.

California's movie world forgets and forgives easily. In 1936 Plum was back in Beverly Hills working on a screenplay for *A Damsel in Distress*. It was there Plum wrote to Leonora:

To Leonora
Written: Beverly Hills, California

2/13/1937

Did I tell you that on two successive days we found the puppy playing with enormous tarantulas in the garden? The second one was on the steps of the bathing pool, and I should probably have trodden on it with bare feet, if I hadn't seen her gruffling at it. (Local Peke Saves Master).

Winky is in marvelous shape. Nine years and two months old and brought up from infancy on cheese, sugar, cake, milk chocolate and ham, and the fittest dog in California.

To Leonora
Written: Beverly Hills, California

8/13/1937

Met a rattlesnake just outside our front gate a few days ago. Fortunately the puppy wasn't with me, or she would have started playing with it.

Plum and Ethel returned to Le Touquet November 4th of 1937 where he wrote *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*. In June of 1939 Plum was invited to the University of Oxford where the Dons bestowed on him an honorary degree in recognition of his contribution to literature. It seems impossible that in December that same year the German invasion of France was upon them. In a very short time Plum, as a foreign national, was taken prisoner and interned along with many other retirement age men of that village.

One of the first letters Plum wrote after he was released from the custody of French authorities in 1946 (he was released in 1945 but no furry tales in those first letters) was to his granddaughter, Sharon Cazalet:

To Sharon Cazalet
Written: Paris, France

3/27/1946

It is really nice being warm at last! Bea tells me you are lucky, because you have cosy stoves at Fairlawne. All we have had through the winter has been a wood fire in one room and poor little Wonder, the Peke, had to wear two sweaters all the time to keep her from freezing.

I hope your dogs are well. Wonder is very lively and happy and loves coming out in the Bois with me in the mornings. Bunny has gone to the hairdresser this afternoon and taken Wonder with her. She sits on Bunny's lap as good as gold all the time.

A few months later, still in France, unable to return to England or get to America, Plum and Ethel found themselves in trying times:

To Guy Bolton
Written: Paris, France

10/02/1946

We have got to give up this apartment two weeks from now, and it seems impossible to get another or get into a hotel, except the ones that charge the earth. The bitter part is that we keep finding nice little hotels where there are rooms, but they won't take dogs! I'm beginning to agree with the lawyer in the New Yorker - that picture where his client is being led off to the penitentiary and he says, "Look on the bright side. After all, it's three squares a day and a roof over your head."

Time passed, the Wodehouses were at last able to shake the dust of France from their feet and return to America. They took a flat on Park Avenue and Plum immersed himself in completing and publishing the book he had worked on so long in camp, *Joy (Jeeves) in the Morning*. This was quickly followed by *Full Moon*,

Spring Fever, Uncle Dynamite, The Mating Season and on and on, never less than one novel per year up to the hour of his death.

In 1948 several of his plays enjoyed revival and he was asked to re-write someone else's play called *The House on the Cliff*. This was the last of going personally to work on plays. Life was further complicated by a re-opening of the American tax question, which kept him and Ethel on tenterhooks from 1946 'til 1949 when it was finally determined they had a clean slate and he could lay claim to funds that had been frozen. None of this seemed to dampen his good humor however, as these letters show:

To Sharon
Written: New York

1/13/1949

Wonder is the weirdest dog. I took her to dinner at Guys house in Manhasset the other night, and after dinner we sat in the library, a lovely room with a log fire, very cosy, and Wonder did nothing but pace up and down like a caged tiger, crying to be let out. It completely spoiled our evening and I came home at half past nine. I can't imagine why she was like that. The same thing happened when I went there for the night about two weeks ago. I think the place must be haunted, and we can't see the ghost but she can.

To G. Bolton
Written: New York

5/12/1949

Well, first of all, Squeaky has been a stupendous success. I thought Wonder would have thrown her weight about, but they get on together like Klaw & Erlanger. The only moment of tension is when I put on Squeaky's harness (I had to get her a harness because she kept slipping her collar and I was in a panic all the time lest she slip away while crossing a street and be run over.) When Squeaky screams, Wonder edges up, looking tough, and says, "Ah, shut up!" out of the side of her mouth. But now I seem to have cured Squeaky of screaming. She lets me put her harness on without a murmur. She really is the most angelic dog in existence. She loves everybody. Her tail never stops wagging, and she is a universal pet. Her passion for me, which one noticed at Remsenburg, is now stronger than ever, and she won't let me out of her sight. If I sneak down to my study and start working, I hear yells of agony on the stairs and have to go open the door, and then she rushes in and I have to nurse her on my lap for about ten minutes before she will settle down in her arm chair (where she sleeps at night). Yesterday she insisted on lying on my desk when I was writing. The wonderful thing is that Wonder isn't a bit jealous of her. Poor Squeaks! Ethel keeps bathing her. This penthouse makes her a dirty grey in a couple of days, and then she has another bath. My gosh, what a sweet nature that dog has. The most affectionate dog I have ever seen.

To G. Bolton
Written: Park Ave, New York

11/17/1949

About a week ago the Vet reported that Squeaky was fit to come home, so I went to fetch her. I let her fun along 57th street as far as Lexington and she sniffed about quite happily. Then, while waiting to cross Lexington, I picked her up, and she instantly started screaming again. A crowd collected and a tough, indignant citizen asked me what I was doing to the dog. I explained that Squeaks had been four weeks at the Vet and was just letting off steam, and fortunately at that moment she began kissing me, thus establishing my bona fides. You never heard such a noise, and she kept it up all the way home.

To Sharon
Written: New York

3/27/1950

Are you fond of canaries? I bought Bunny one for Christmas, and it is a terrific success. It doesn't sing, but it flies about all over the flat, chirping to itself.

To Sharon
Written: New York

10/16/1950

...Sam... is a wonderful driver but has no sense of direction. We say "Turn left, Sam," and he says, "Right?" and turns right. ... He is crazy about our white Peke, Squeaky, and asks if he can take her with him when he goes to the garage to fix up the car. She really is an angel, and everybody loves her. I think we told you that she screams at the top of her voice when she is pleased about anything. When the Bolton's had her in Hollywood, the neighbors reported them to the police saying they had a dog, which they were torturing. Wonder continues very fit. She is over fourteen now, but you would never think it.

It was in 1950 that Ethel bought the house at Remsenburg (which I believe I have read lately may become a bed and breakfast too). It took a little while to get completely moved to Long Island, but once there, they remained for the rest of their lives.

Remsenburg was in the country and as people without a brain will do, many dumped unwanted pets there. Dogs and cats turned up starved at Ethel's door and she, according to Plum, never turned one away. She was good at caring for hurt and frightened animals. She was also pretty good at finding them new homes. Nobody, however, can do it all alone.

A few miles away from the Wodehouse home was a small country veterinarian/animal shelter, the Bid-a-Wee. Ethel began to volunteer at this shelter, bringing her foundlings to them and funding their care until they were adopted. It soon became clear to her that there just was not enough room or funds for the job.

In 1967 Cleveland Amory and several others in the neighborhood joined her in expanding the shelter. It was Plum, however, whose contribution was so great that the new work was named after him. In addition, the group purchased some adjoining land for a pet cemetery which is very much worth a visit. Ethel worked with the animals at the shelter and in fund raising until the inevitable happened.

Despite the good intentions of people who do animal rescue, few of them are very good with other people. From the SPCA to the small band of earnest rescuers in your neighborhood, animal people form outreach organizations and begin with high hopes and good intentions. They nearly always end up mad at each other. When the dust settled at Bide-a-Wee, Ethel found herself once again on her own, working as hard as ever to help lost and homeless animals. The Wodehouse home was always a haven for the furry homeless.

Here are a few final letters from Plum from Remsenburg to various friends and family:

To Sharon
Written: Remsenburg

7/24/1952

Our animal contingent has been added to by a divine white kitten which turned up one night wanting a home. The two dogs, Squeaky the Peke & Bill the fox hound, are angelic to it. I sit in the garden after dinner with Squeaky and kitten on my lap and Bill asleep beside me. What a relief to have dogs that don't want to murder everything they see.

To Edward
Written: Remsenburg

4/02/1964

The Colonel's (Ethel's) main interest these days is a calico cat which turns up at half past seven punctually every evening, has an enormous dinner and legs it at about eight. It is one of those cats which, when you stroke it's head, seems to be enjoying it and then without any warning swipes out at you. It took a piece out of the Colonel's finger the other night. A beastly animal in my opinion, but I suppose we shall have to go on lushing it up. It has no home..

To Guy Bolton
Written: Remsenburg

5/02/1967

Life has been rendered still gloomier by Ethel taking in s Siamese cat, which bit both her hands, fought one of the other cats and bit Ethel in both legs when she joined in. She is now in bed with her right leg propped up and feeling very sorry for herself. This, the doctor says, will go on for ten days! The Bide-a-Wee people are sending for the cat this afternoon and it is nowhere to be found. We think it must be in the rafters of the cupboard in E's room.

To Edward
Written: Remsenburg

10/14/1968

The PGW Shelter is going strong. The Colonel has lugged me into a lunch tomorrow to meet various big shots from Bide-a-Wee. It won't take long, thank goodness as they will be wanting to get back to the shelter.

To Guy Bolton
Written: Remsenburg

10/17/1969

The Blinds (across the lane) finally rebelled at Minnie's desertion and told us they would give her to us. So she is now Minnie Wodehouse. Not that it makes much difference! She now sleeps in my armchair every night as good as gold

In the preface to *A Wodehouse Bestiary* D. R. Bensen says:

The first time I met P. G. Wodehouse, he was substantially more occupied with a dachshund called Jed than with a visiting editor and publisher. As Wodehouse's attentions involved holding Jed rather as if the dog were a bolster and pulling gently at his ears, I was content to allow the animal primacy.

..In his middle years he seemed to wade in a sea of Pekingese; they occupy long stretches of his letters and appear in family photographs as full equals; their health and exploits are at least as constant concerns as how the new novel was going or what the tax authorities are up to.

Bensen wraps up his preface with these words, which seem so good, I will use them to wrap up mine as well:

Many medieval treatises contained accounts, sometimes illustrated, of "wild men of the woods," variously called *wudewasa* or *wodehouses*. These could be distinguished from great apes chiefly by the large size of the feet and the elongated big toe. Wodehouse, I believe, took a size 9, often preferring tennis shoes.

Joy in the Morning

by John Hannah

In his introduction to *Summer Lightning* Wodehouse wrote, after learning that a number of other books bore the title, "I can only hope that this story will be considered worthy of inclusion in the list of the Hundred Best Books called *Summer Lightning*."

If PGW were still with us, he would likely have Internet capability and he could discover that *Joy in the Morning* is also a popular title. Here is a partial list of books presently available with that, or similar names:

Joy in the Morning by Betty Smith,
Joy in the Morning by Raymond Woolsey
Joy in the Morning by Juliet R. Lynch
Joy in the Morning by Nancy Kennedy

Joy Cometh in the Morning by J. C. Jacobson
Joy Cometh in the Morning by Geraldine Coleman
Joy Cometh in the Morning by Jennifer Vanderford

Joy Comes in the Morning by Don Anderson
Joy Comes in the Morning by M. Kinnaird

All of these writers, as well as Wodehouse, got the phrase from Psalm 30:

Weeping will endure for the night
 But joy comes in the morning.

(My guess is that when Norman Murphy completes work on his "annotated Wodehouse" he will tally up that eighty per cent of Plum's literary allusions have Shakespeare or the Bible as their source.

I can't speak for Messrs. Woolsey, Anderson, Kinnaird, or Betty Smith, Jennifer Vanderford, et al, because I haven't read their offerings. But in the case of the Wodehouse book now under scrutiny, *Joy in the Morning* is an appropriate moniker.

There is weeping in the night at Bumbleigh Hall. The text is specific about this. Boko Fittleworth reports that his fiancée Nobby Hopwood cries buckets when Bertie Wooster fails to follow through on a scheme to obtain her uncle's blessing for their marriage. Also during the fret-filled night, many characters endure experiences

which, if not actually tear-rendering certainly [what is Plum's expression? near to a tupper of it? tucker? Something like that.] To wit: Bertie was certainly close to tears when the young terror Edwin sloshed him in the back hair with his Scout's stick; the American shipping magnate C. Chichester Clam, likewise, when he hound himself locked in the potting shed; Boko, the same, when he is ticked off by Nobby; and Lord Worpleton as, a burglary being in progress, he realizes he forgot to mail his burglary insurance premium.

But hoorah, in the morning, (actually in a morning a day or two later)

All of this lamentation is dispelled as Jeeves engineers solutions to everyone's plight. The characters who want to marry are joyful because they will be able to do so, and Bertie is joyful because he won't. And joy reigns, as they say, supreme in Steeple Bumbleigh.

In this book Wodehouse joins the literary host who develop this theme—the jubilation that morning can bring.

Thornton Wilder asks,

"For what human ill does not dawn seem to be an alleviation?"

And the poet Burns:

What is life when wanting love?
 Night without a morning.

(*Well put, Burns!*)..

And finally, Kenneth Grahame, in a carol for *The Wind in the Willows*:

Villagers all, this frosty tide,
 Let your doors swing open wide,
 Though wind may follow, and snow beside,
 Yet draw us by your fire to bide;
 Joy shall be yours in the morning."

A little Bit of Jeeves in the Morning

*A verse by Marhsall McCabe, set to the rhythm and sound of
Mambo #5, Opus 2*

A little bit of Jeeves with his high IQ
He can solve any problem, handle any miscue

A little bit of Bertie, he's a bit of an ass.
When his partner bids no trump, he is sure to pass.

A little bit of Florence, last name Craye
Engaged to another chap 'bout every other day.

A little bit of Edwin, having lots of fun
Earning his merit badge for bad deeds done.

A little bit of Cheesewright in police man blue
Wearing Bobby boots and maybe Bobby socks, too.

A little bit of Boko, he writes high class prose
Has a high class brain and wears low class clothes.

A little bit of Nobby, it's her name, not her knees
First Bertie, then Boko, was her favorite squeeze.

A little bit of Worplesdone and J. C. Clam, too
They had a toughish time arranging a rendezvous

A little bit of Agatha, a very tough aunt
She's more Madame Defarge than bon vivant.

A little bit of Jeeves goes a long, long way
So that ends the Mambo lyrics for today.

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