



SPRING 1993

The works of P. G. Wodehouse, like those of other great authors, have their little mysteries. What song the sirens sang may not be beyond all conjecture, but it doesn't readily spring to mind. Similarly, in the scene just quoted, we do not know how R. V. Smethurst won that drawing prize, or what question Gussie wished to ask him. But possibilities suggest themselves: Gussie wished to ask R. V. Smethurst how he won the prize, and the answer is, of course, that he won it by drawing this picture of the Empress.

I find this to be a most satisfying conclusion.

It's only fair to tell you that R. V. Smethurst is masquerading, these days and in the Netherlands, as Dirk Kramer. George van Capelle explains:

"The pictures I sent are a product of the pen of one of my employees, a fine technician by the name of Dirk Kramer. He once told me that he enjoyed reading the Dutch translations of the Master's works and I tried to guide him on the way to a more pure understanding of PGW's genius."

The one remaining mystery is the cause of the Empress's hauteur, or disgust, or disdain, or whatever emotion she is displaying in the picture. After I figure out what song the sirens sang, I'll work on this one.

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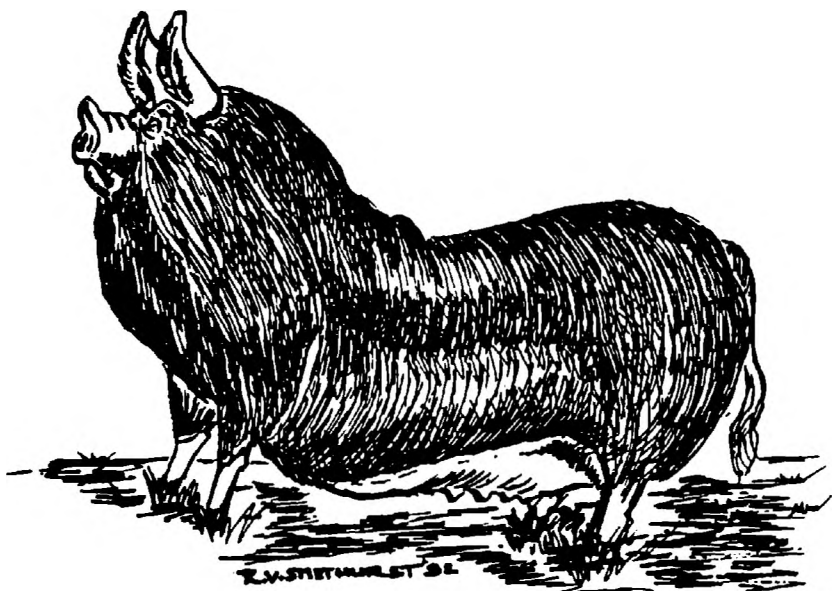
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From the fact that he spoke as if he had a hot potato in his mouth without getting the raspberry from the lads in the ringside seats I deduced that he must be the headmaster.

*Right Ho, Jeeves, 1934*



# If I Were You: another Wodehouse first

by Frits  
Menschaar

**I** recently came across a most unusual Wodehousian item:

*If I Were You, a Comedy in Three Acts*  
by Guy Bolton and P. G. Wodehouse

On the title page the following notation appears: "Specially compiled for the use of amateur societies." It was printed by Butler and Tanner. No publisher or price is mentioned. There is no copyright notice. The text is a dramatization of Wodehouse's 1931 novel of the same title.

The 1990 McIlvaine bibliography informs us that the novel *If I Were You* was dramatized as *Who's Who* in 1934. Nowhere does it mention a play entitled *If I Were You*. The text of the two plays is identical. Neither Jimmy Heinemann, eminent Wodehouse collector and publisher, nor Lee Davis, author of a book on the Wodehouse/Bolton/Kern trio to appear shortly, knew of the *If I Were You* play.

What do we make of this hitherto unknown edition? No publisher is mentioned. No publication date is given. The printer's name, however, gives a clue. Butler and Tanner printed for Faber & Faber, with whom Wodehouse had a brief connection in early 1932 (refer page 198 of Barry Phelps' splendid new biography). The only Faber & Faber Wodehouse book is *Louder and Funnier*; all books before and after that title were published/printed by different companies. Hence, we may conclude that the play *If I Were You* was printed during that brief span in early 1932.

Why was it reprinted 2 years later under a different name? Barry's biography provides a clue on page 184. A Wodehouse letter of August 27, 1934 mentions an argument with Bolton about royalties on the play *If I Were You* (the play was to be produced for a run at the Duke of York's Theater, starting September 1934 under the name *Who's Who*, as we learn from McIlvaine). Barry, unaware of the existence of the *If I Were You* play, notes that Wodehouse must have been mistaken and meant *Who's Who*. We now know that Wodehouse was right on the

button. The reason for reissuing the play under a different name is also obvious. The 1932 privately published *If I Were You* was not copyrighted. To enable trousering royalties on the 1934 London production, the authors had to reissue the play afresh, this time duly copyrighted, under a new title.

The novel, published in September 1931, was produced in America before Wodehouse's return to England that month. Dramatization, by Bolton alone or by the two of them, was probably done at that time as well. It could well have been the reason why the novel was dedicated to Bolton. Back in England in the autumn of 1931 Wodehouse must have arranged the private publication of the play, exactly why we will probably never know, quite possibly without consulting Bolton, which may have triggered the argument about royalties two years later when the play was selected for a commercial run.

When the play was reissued in 1934 under the new name, the 1932 privately published edition, which likely had sold few copies only, must have been withdrawn from further circulation. Remaining copies were probably destroyed. This would explain why it has not popped up earlier. At this time there seems to be only one known copy.

I would appreciate any information that any member might have on this.



# Wodehouse and the *New Statesman*

by Peter  
Morris

**A**t first glance, this topic seems an unpromising one, since the *New Statesman* was founded in 1913 by the Webbs to promote independent socialist debate of the serious controversies of the day—hardly P. G. Wodehouse's cup of tea. At the start of 1934, however, the *New Statesman* inherited from the *Week-End Review* a literary competition which has been one of its features ever since. The premise was simple; each week a new assignment was given out and in a subsequent issue the winning entries were printed. The assignments have, however, been sufficiently varied to keep the competition fresh. For example, there are the deceptively simple ones such as "Offer a Sonnet to Autumn, written without an adjective" and "Write a 150 word essay on English prose style without using the same word twice." Then there are the more challenging ones—"The Concise Oxford Dictionary gives the following definition: 'Sonnet, n. Poem of fourteen lines usually rhyming thus; pig bat cat wig jig hat rat fig; lie red sob die bed rob or lie red die bed pie wed.' Write a sonnet using these words as line endings" and "Give a sample of Kingsley Amis' *Lord Jim* or Joseph Conrad's *Lucky Jim*." Finally there are those which can best be described as conceptually bizarre, including "Compteitors are invited to compose a Calypso on events in the recent cricket Test Match at Port of Spain" and "George Steiner once remarked, on tv, that 'modernism' began when Lytton Strachey pointed to a stain on Vanessa Bell's skirt and announced it was semen. Describe another ism and its equally murky and untold beginning."<sup>1</sup>

To all these and many others, respondents have responded with entries most notable for two qualities—dexterity with words and a sense of comic incongruity. Now, this is of course where P. G. Wodehouse enters in, for what could better describe Plum's most abundant virtues as a writer? A number of contests over the years have either been designed to include Wodehouse or have featured winning entries about him. The most recent one came in May

of 1991, when the assignment asked for a scene of Shakespeare rewritten by Wodehouse or vice versa. Most of the winning entrants were ones who opted for the former course, in large part because of the judge's refusal to accept "thingummy" and the like as additions to the Shakespearian lexicon. Here they are:

## Wodehouse's *Twelfth Night* by Noel Petty

We Aguecheeks are nothing if not loyal to our chums. We may not be nimblest off the mark at collection-plate time, but a friend in need will never get the know-thee-not-old-man treatment from us. So it seemed a good wheeze after an exhausting afternoon at the bear-baiting to drop in on poor old Toby Belch.

Now Toby is an absolute brick. Indeed, on the scale of brickishness he is a veritable Hampton Court. Fate, however, has dealt him a joker, for Toby Belch has nieces the way other people have aunts. Moreover, Olivia, the niece he is currently billeted with—the aforesaid Fate having failed to supply the needful primogeniture and so forth—has decidedly wet blanket tendencies.

Thus it was that we were below stairs, barely on the kinder side of midnight, innocently sluicing out the old madrigal, when who should appear but Malvolio, Olivia's butler and a counter-jumper if ever I saw one.

"Are you mad?" he said. "Don't you know the time?"

Toby, believing his rubato impugned, rose and stretched to his full width. "Go," he said slowly and distinctly, "and boil your shirt."

"I say!" I gasped. "Steady on, old chap."

## Shakespeare's *Carry On*, Jeeves by M. R. Macintyre

Jeeves: Some eighty-seven honest citizens  
Of Birdsburg, each of whom will give two  
crowns

Merely to behold at ample view  
The Duke of Chiswick, the esteemed uncle  
To cruelly-fortuned Master Bickersteth.  
Worcester: But why, good Jeeves, should  
these Missouri birds

(Birds come from Birdsburg; it is very apt)  
Be willing to dispense their hard-earned  
gold

For that which you or I or Bicky here  
May easily attain to any day?

Bickersteth: Alas, we may, and would that  
we might not.

Jeeves: So please you, sir, their rulers will not  
brook

The outward trappings of nobility.  
No plumes, no lozenges or quarterings  
Are found in their republic. None of them  
Has ever seen a duke. Thus rarity  
Exalts what law enjoins them to despise.

Worcester: Enough, Jeeves. Go and set this  
marvel on. (Exit Jeeves)

See, Bicky, where the Duke of Chiswick  
comes.

(Enter Chiswick)

Bickersteth: Uncle, well met. Some friends  
of mine attend you

Who crave to learn from you the state of  
England.

Chiswick: Will there be any tattle-tales  
among them?

Bickersteth: Not one, I warrant you.

Chiswick: Where are they stayed?

Bickersteth: Below. Come, let us find them  
presently. (Exeunt)

P. G. Wodehouse's *Macbeth*  
by A. R. Frith

"Knock!" carolled a voice within,  
"Knock, knock!"

Thane looked at thane with a wild  
surmise.

"?"

"!"

Their peril was unmistakable. One  
careless word, or rather, two, would invite a  
tedious colloquy about bells on bicycles, or,  
worse, tree-climbing without knickers.  
Leading, in all probability, to accounts of  
noseless dogs, named, not without reason,  
Isiah. Thus it was for Macduff and Lennox  
the work of a moment to mouth a few choice

Gaelic expletives, bound forward and biff the  
door, with all the vim and urgency of a  
Wembley prizefighter who remembers in  
Round Three that he's left the bathwater  
running in Hoxton.

At length, it opened. The owner of the  
voice, a small, tartan-clad menial of revolting  
aspect, had evidently been doing his bit to  
boost the Highland economy, for he was  
swaying like a metronome in a high wind,  
and his breath would blister paint at sixty  
paces. Had Macduff been less of a sportsman  
he would have turned and fled at a single  
whiff, but Fife breeds his sons of sterner stuff,  
and thrusting the aromatic ancient to lee-  
ward he strode into the courtyard. However,  
before he had silenced the aged babbler, he  
perceived their host, bearing down with the  
air of one whose innocent sleep has been  
foully murdered and who dashed well means  
to know why.

P. G. Wodehouse's *Othello*  
by John Marriott

Iago: You will pardon my asking, sir, but  
did Mr. Cassio have privy knowledge of your  
relationship with Lady Desdemona?

Othello: Of course he did. Why do you  
ask?

Iago: It was just a thought, sir. I had the  
impression that he was not acquainted with  
the lady at the time.

Othello: Oh, Mick and Dezzy were old  
friends. You know, the girl next door and all  
that. So, when first she hove upon my sight . .

Iago: Gleamed, sir.

Othello: What?

Iago: "She was a phantom of delight when  
first she gleamed upon my sight" is the  
quotation from the poet Wordsworth to  
which you may have been referring.

Othello: All right, gleamed it is then.  
Where was I? Oh, yes, well, as I said, Mick  
and Dezzy being only friends, it was natural  
that Mick should know how I felt about her.  
What's more, he acted as a sort of go-be-  
tween . .

Iago: Indeed, sir!

Othello: What do you mean, "indeed"? I  
don't like the way you said that, Iago. You  
can't fool me, you know. I may not have your

super brain-power, but I can tell you when "indeed" means more than meets the ear. What are you suggesting?  
Iago: Suggesting, sir?

P. G. Wodehouse's *Macbeth*  
by Andrew Jackson

The shades of evening were falling fairly fast as I spurred self and suitcase along that dusty travail, if travail is the word I'm groping for. Banquo was his usual ebullient self, as I served a smashing meteorological musing over to his side of the net.

"I say! It's a stinker of a day, isn't it?"

"I'll say! There's a certain quality of gloom which I find most distressing. And this with the cricket season about to fall upon us, old chap!"

Well, I can't say I'm terribly fond of the game, but I was set on humoring him in his way, when the old nag beneath me gave a greasy splutter, as if it had just come in last in the Cesarewitch.

I heard Banquo splutter the same splutter.

"I say—who the devil are you?" he yipped in the general direction of three wholly unappetising women who had wafted out of the gloom.

"What-ho, Macbeth, Thane of Glamis!"

"What-ho, Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor!"

"What-ho, Macbeth, and a pretty good egg into the bargain!"

I must say that these weird sisters, if not exactly unkempt in their appearance, were far from being kempt...

<sup>1</sup> Two of the winning entries were "Nepotism began when God chose his only begotten son as savior of the world" and "Post-modernism began with Vanessa Bell's unprintable response."

I took my place among the standees at the back of the concert hall. I devoted my time to studying the faces of my neighbors, hoping to detect in them some traces of ruth and pity and what is known as kind indulgence. But not a glimmer. Like all rustics standees, these were stern implacable men, utterly incapable of taking the broad, charitable view and realising that a fellow who comes on a platform and starts reciting about Christopher Robin going hoppity-hop does not do so from sheer wantonness but because he is a helpless victim of circumstances beyond his control.

*The Mating Season, 1949*

## Replicates, anyone?

by Thomas Gifford

I'm a member of something called The First Edition Book Club here in NYC and it has become quite successful. The gag is that they replicate great American novels' first editions in precise detail, including dust-jacket, the cloth cover, the paper, etc. The books are all the same price, a shade under \$40—they truly are extraordinary pieces of work. In other words, it can be done as long as there is a "target" copy. Clearly the club has mastered the various legal and mechanical problems involved.

My point, obviously, is that I see no particular reason why somebody should not undertake a similar publishing programme for the works of Wodehouse. The membership of the society would surely produce a good starting base of membership for subscriptions and I have to believe that a market at least big enough exists to support such an undertaking. Franklin or Easton Press publications, for example, wouldn't interest me as much—it's the idea of replicating the first editions that really appeals to me, not something bound in leather with gilt edges, etc.

Who would publish such a series? Ideally it would be wonderful to have the society publish it based on investors within the society—buying shares as it were. But, I suppose, that's absolutely unrealistic—more's the pity. In any case, I'm curious as to how the idea of such a series strikes you.

How does the idea strike you? Write and let him know:

# "Pack, Jeeves, pack with care"

Paul Schnacke has dug up the obscure source of a quote in the short story "The Ordeal of Young Tuppy" in the volume *Very Good Jeeves*. (It's "Tuppy Changes His Mind" in the American edition.) The story opens as Bertie sees Jeeves packing for a Christmas visit:

"Pack on!" I said approvingly. "Pack, Jeeves, pack with care. Pack in the presence of the passenjare."

That last sentence sounds like a quotation, and a good many of us must have wondered where on earth Wodehouse found it. Paul Schnacke discovered it in the 1980 *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, where it is credited to one Isaac Bromley (1833-1898). Four lines of verse are given (we'll come to them in a minute), with a note that they are "based on a New York streetcar sign. Erroneously attributed to Mark Twain, who wrote about the verse in *A Literary Nightmare* (1876)."

In the *Nightmare*, in an article entitled "Punch, Brother, Punch," Twain says "...I came across these jingling rhymes in a newspaper a little while ago..."

"Where," asks Paul, "did Wodehouse come across them?"

The question may be impossible to answer with certainty, but we have some evidence. Isaac Bromley was an editor of the *New York Tribune* in 1877, as shown by another Bartlett quote, so Twain probably found the verses in the *Tribune*, at least as early as 1876. It's unlikely that Wodehouse saw a newspaper published in America several years before he was born. The verses may have been reprinted in a number of places, but Twain's *Nightmare* is a likely source for Plum's quote.

Here in all their glory are eight lines of the doggerel, printed in the 1947 *Bartlett's* and attributed at that time to Noah Brooks:

Conductor, when you receive a fare,  
Punch in the presence of the passenjare.  
A blue trip slip for an eight cent fare,  
A buff trip slip for a six cent fare,  
A pink trip slip for a five cent fare,  
Punch in the presence of the passenjare.  
Punch, brothers, punch with care,  
Punch in the presence of the passenjare.

A note adds, "Inspired by a notice to conductors, posted in New York horse-cars." Paul's discovery reminded me that, many years ago, I had seen this and several other stanzas in an American grammar school textbook printed in the 1890s.

## Dedications

Jay Weiss found this in Robert Hendrickson's 1990 *British Literary Anecdotes*:

[Wodehouse's] *Heart of a Goof* contains the most humorous dedication of his more than 120 [?] books. It is dedicated to his daughter "without whose never-failing encouragement and sympathy this book would have been written in half the time." That is a funny line. Many writers have pinched it without bothering to acknowledge the source. But Walter Isaacson, in his splendid biography, *Kissinger*, is more honorable. In his Acknowledgements he writes, "I would also like to thank my daughter for her, well . . . to be honest she was quite a distraction . . . but as distractions go, she was the most magical one imaginable, and she made it all worthwhile. And so to paraphrase P. G. Wodehouse, I would like to dedicate this book to Betsy Isaacson, without whose invaluable help it would have been written in half the time."

Kristin Thompson's splendid new book, *Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes*, also uses the dedication. No acknowledgment of source was necessary—anyone likely to read her book would know exactly where the dedication came from.

TO SIR EDWARD CAZALET,  
without whose never-failing sympathy and encouragement  
this book would have been finished in half the time—  
because I would have known so much less  
about Wodehouse.

We'll review the book in the next issue of *Plum Lines*.

# Make way for newts

by Sylvia  
Rubin

Marilyn MacGregor found this remarkable account of newt life and love in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in January. Because the facts are presented with unblushing frankness (this is Berkeley, after all), certain passages relating to the earthier aspects of newt love have been omitted here.

**N**ewt love takes place in the rain, in rushing brooks or ponds. It involves hugging, male bonding and getting stoned. It's kind of '60s, kind of '90s and kind of weird, but what love isn't?

But first, the little amphibians of Tilden Park in Berkeley have to cross the road that separates the woodsy hills where they hibernate from the mossy waters where they mate. This can be a fatal attraction, since newts are not very fast on their feet.

It may take the six-inch salamanders ten or fifteen minutes to get from one side to the other. Splat. There goes another one. Poor little guy. He only wanted some loving.

In a single day—October 30, 1991, to be precise—nearly 200 newts were flattened by cars on South Park Drive in Tilden Park. More than 2,500 have been killed since the naturalists started counting them in 1988.

To help the creatures reach the water of Wildcat Creek alive, the two-mile-long South Park Drive in Tilden Park will be closed to cars through March, the most extreme measure the park has taken to help save the salamanders.

Although newts can be found throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, Dave Zuckermann, a naturalist, says that to his knowledge only Tilden Park has taken this precaution. The creatures inhabit the several hundred acres of the park, hibernating from April to October under logs and rocks among the coyote brush, bay laurel, and oak trees. In the winter they move to the creeks and ponds, filling up on earthworms and beetles along the way. Their major predator is the car.

Zuckermann holds up a male he found on the road to love last week. The little beast is dark brown on top, golden-yellow on his belly. Newts, which are near the top of their food chain, live surprisingly long lives, up to 30 years in the wild.

The telltale sign that this newt is ready to mate can be found on his toes and palms, also called "nuptial pads," if you want to get romantic about it. The underside of the toes, usually smooth and gold, are turning black and coarse, so he can better hold onto the female.

This young male is ready, after a six month hibernation, to get back to the waters where he was born, following a mysterious homing instinct scientists can't fully explain. Once there, he will metamorphose from a slim land dweller into a slimy, bloated water lover ready for a hug.

Hugging is a big thing with newts. The males arrive at the creek a good month ahead of the females, their sandpaper-like feet ready for squeezing, but there are no females around, so they hug each other.

"We call it a newt ball," Zuckermann says. "The newts are biologically primed to mate, so they practice their clasping technique, but they do not release sperm."

When the ladies finally do arrive, the guys try out the same technique that worked so well on their buddies.

"The male and female clasp, they swim together, then he lets go and swims to the bottom where he deposits a little jellylike pack full of sperm," Zuckermann explains. "If she likes him, she'll follow him to the bottom and she picks up the sperm pack through the 'vent' in her pelvic region and stores it inside her.

Within a week, she lays a sac of eggs the size of a table tennis ball. Five to ten weeks later, a new generation is born [hatched?].

But that comes later. Now is the time when the newts cross the road, which is still open to hikers and bikers. Closing the road to cars "is buying us some time to study the newts and determine the effect of the slaughter on the population," says Zuckermann, who wonders if the population is in decline.

"The situation in the park is unique because we have an opportunity to do something about the slaughter," he adds.

Besides, he admits, "I think they're cute."

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Gussie Fink-Nottle, where are you?



# The Rhyme of an Ancient Mulliner

by Charles  
Gould

P. G. Wodehouse

Never rhymed with "roadhouse,"

Regardless of whether his audience was a Wednesday  
matinee in black shorts—a Spode house—

Or a good house.

He could rhyme with almost anything else, though,  
Going other practitioners of his craft well beyond.

And when his critical attention turns

To the poet Burns,

He is the first to point out, unassailably, that in  
song or story,

No matter how perfectly uttered, no matter how distinctly  
you say it, "Afore ye"

Does not, never did, never will rhyme at all with "Loch Lomond."

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<sup>1</sup>*Editor's Note:* This piece of verse was lately discovered among the papers of one Ogden Nash Mulliner, the nephew who left the Angler's Rest for the comparative tranquility of Long Island. It is here published for the first time. The manuscript shows that the poet Ogden Nash Mulliner had in mind two possible titles for the poem: "Purple Doom," or "Plumb Dead." These seemingly needlessly lugubrious, the editor has devised the title under which the work now appears. It is, of course, an allusion to one of Wodehouse's favorite poems, about the cricket batter who "stoppeth one of three," by Stanley Featherstonehaugh Coleridge (1772-1834).

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## Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes

Kristin Thompson's analysis and discussion of Plum's writing has been published by Jimmy Heineman under the above title. Excerpts from the publisher's announcement follow. (Look for a review in the next issue.)

**N**ever analyze humor. It cannot be done without finding its darker side." Kristin Thompson, in her appealing *Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes*, puts paid to this chestnut. Wooster and Jeeves are placed stage center in this book, in which the author emphasizes Wodehouse's sensitive touch and explains how he maintains the interest of his readers in the two characters.

Thompson, a film and history scholar at the University of Wisconsin and archivist of the P. G. Wodehouse Archives (of the Wodehouse estate) in England, focuses on Wodehouse's techniques, particularly his continual parodying of Edwardian styles, epitomized by the relentless overuse of cliché, repetition, and exaggeration.

*Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes, or, Le Mot Juste: A Fresh Look at the Masterpieces of P. G. Wodehouse*, by Kristin Thompson, 390 pages, \$24.95. ISBN 0-87008-139-X Distributed by Bookworld Services, Inc., 1933 Whitfield Loop, Sarasota FL 34234, phone (800) 444-2524.

# Scott Meredith

by Bruce  
Weber

Jan Kaufman found this obituary in the *New York Times* of February 13, 1993

Scott Meredith, the literary agent who represented Norman Mailer and who introduced the concept of the book auction to publishing, died on Thursday at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, Long Island. He was 69 and lived in Kings Point, Long Island.

The cause of his death was cancer, his wife, Helen, said.

Mr. Meredith, who began his career in publishing as a short-story writer, founded the Scott Meredith Literary Agency with his brother Sidney in 1946, and landed his first big-name client, the British humorist P. G. Wodehouse, shortly thereafter.

He was known as a publishing iconoclast, a tough, finance-minded negotiator who looked out for himself as well as his clients. He once said of other agents: "I'd like them all to be assassinated and there be one agent and that's us."

In addition to Mr. Mailer and Mr. Wodehouse, Mr. Meredith represented the science-fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, Margaret Truman, Spiro T. Agnew, Judith Campbell Exner and Roseanne Arnold.

In 1952, Mr. Meredith initiated the book auction: the offer of a manuscript to many publishing houses at once, with publication rights going to the highest bidder. Considered an outrageous maneuver at the time in the once staid and polite publishing world, the book auction has since become a standard operating procedure, one that has helped increase the fees that publishers pay writers. Oddly, no one seems to remember the book that started it all.

"A lot of people have asked that," said Jack Scovil, a vice president of the Meredith Agency, who has been working there since 1967. "It didn't start with one property that was super-spectacular. I suspect it was something more mundane. The author needed a sale right away, and this was a device to get an answer more quickly. When Scott discovered it was a very good idea and nobody killed him for doing it, he made it a

part of the regular practice."

Mr. Mailer signed on with the Meredith agency in 1963, and has been outspoken in his loyalty. On Friday he issued a statement that read, in part: "Scott Meredith was my agent for more than 40 years, and in that period he became one of my best friends. He was a wonderfully intelligent man, lucid in his analyses of publishing situations, fiercely loyal to his clients, and wise and warm in his relation to 100 other matters."

Mr. Meredith was born in Michigan in 1923 and attended public high schools. As a teen-ager he began publishing short stories in pulp magazines, then joined the Air Force at the beginning of World War II.

"He wanted to be a pilot, but he had truly poor vision," said his wife, whom he married in 1944. Instead, he worked on the editorial staff of Air Force magazine, a publication for servicemen. He founded the literary agency when he left the service.

David Jasen's biography, *P. G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master*, provides some details about the beginning of the relationship between Wodehouse and Meredith. Just at war's end in mid-1945, Meredith, still in the service, wrote a well-wishing letter to Plum, in Paris, regarding his wartime broadcasts. Wodehouse responded gratefully, and Meredith, in turn, worked hard to correct the impression that Wodehouse had been a German collaborator. Meredith became Plum's literary agent even before the Wodehouses arrived in America in April, 1947.

Plum's view of Meredith is shown in a letter he wrote to his friend William Townsend a month later (from *Performing Flea*):

Did I ever tell you about Scott? An amazing chap. Only about twenty-five years old, but already one of the leading literary agents in New York. He started off as a writer at the age of fourteen, and by the time he was twenty had sold over 400 things to the *Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines. He was then in the army, and on coming out got a job with a moribund literary agency . . . From then on he went steadily ahead, first with a tiny business and now with one that employs a whole squad of assistants. I don't know anyone I admire more. When I think how utterly incompetent I was at his age!

# New members

# What about that day at the dog races?

by John A.  
Dern

**A**fter reading and rereading the Uncle Fred novels, I have often found myself asking the following questions: What exactly did happen during that day that Uncle Fred and Pongo spent at the dog races? Moreover, why does the Master torture me, and surely many other Uncle Fred loyalists, by not revealing the particulars of that event? Using farcical logic and a pinch of Wodehousian intuition I believe I have deduced an answer to this vexing problem.

Wodehouse as narrator refers to the day at the dog races in every Uncle Fred novel. All the reader really knows about this important-but-never-elucidated event is that the suave Lord Ickenham and Pongo found themselves, as Richard Osborne succinctly puts it in his magnum opus, the *Wodehouse Companion*, "in the hands of the constabulary in ten minutes" and that the fifth earl "complained that they were letting a rather neurotic type of man into the Force these days."

Now, why does Wodehouse keep rattling the bare bones of this episode without any hint as to the particulars? It seems a cruel and heartless thing to do at first glance. After just a bit of thought, however, much less than Lord Ickenham devotes to the spreading of sweetness and light, The Master's logic becomes clear: The constant rehashing of this episode helps Wodehouse create an almost mythical reputation for Uncle Fred. The particulars of the event, with which the members of the Drones Club are apparently familiar, collectively constitute the main reason for Pongo's unrest when the sap rises in his Uncle's veins. The devout reader, knowing this, will attempt to imagine what really happened at the dog races. And as fancy flits about in the reader's mind, Uncle Fred becomes the stuff of myth and legend. Then we admire him all the more.

So don't worry about what happened that day at the dog races. Although it almost surely involved sweetness and light, the Master intended that we never know, exactly. He prefers that we just dream about it.

# Financial report for 1992

Tom Wainwright, treasurer

Beginning balance, Dec 31, 1991	\$3013.17
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## Income

Dues and other charges	\$5816.25
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Contributions to cover New York convention cost overrun	705.00
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Interest earned	<u>82.79</u>
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Total income	6604.14
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## Expenses

Plum Lines (copying, mailing)	\$3897.44
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Bank fee	3.42
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Correspondence (stationery, supplies, postage, back issues)	550.37
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Delayed payment of Kalamazoo convention expenses	<u>500.00</u>
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Total expenses	<u>4951.23</u>
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Ending balance, Dec 31, 1992	\$4665.98
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# Only to Psmith?

by Philip  
A. Shreffler

LEAVE IT TO PSMITH!  
Psmith will Help You  
Psmith is Ready For Anything  
DO YOU WANT  
Someone To Manage Your Affairs?  
Someone To Handle Your Business?  
Someone To Take The Dog For A Run?  
Someone To Assassinate Your Aunt?  
PSMITH WILL DO IT  
CRIME NOT OBJECTED TO

Address Applications to 'R. Psmith, Box 365'

Such, of course, is the ripe and fruity advert. placed in the *Morning Globe* by the indomitable Ronald (but actually Rupert) Eustace Psmith (Drones and Senior Conservative)—a chap who is not only a nexus for adventure but whom, not to put too fine a point on it, fish get right in amongst. However, Psmith does not own the patent on that sort of notice in the public prints.

How's this for a trifling bagatelle of data that's a little co-, er, co-incidental, no, that's not quite right; it's co-something—perhaps coaxial? It is another personal notation in the London newspapers that appeared three years before Psmith's and it reads:

Demobilised officer, finding peace  
incredibly tedious, would welcome  
diversion. Legitimate if possible, but  
crime, if of a comparatively humorous description,  
no objection. Excitement  
essential. Would be prepared to consider permanent  
job if suitably impressed by applicant for his  
services.

Reply at once Box X10.

This one comes from the pen of Capt. Hugh "Bulldog" Drummond, D.S.O., M.C. (Junior and Senior Sports), in the 1920 first novel of the Drummond series by "Sapper" (H. C. McNeile). The juxtaposition, if that's the word I want, of these two clippings can but send us scurrying to our typewriters and fetching a brace of postal stamps with the intention of responding both to Box 365 and Box X10: what memorable wheezes might Psmith and Comrade Drummond work in tandem? It sunders the imagination.

# Skin Deep

Way back in 1990 I mentioned in *Plum Lines* a slim volume bound in limp purple cardboard, a first novel by our very own Amanda DeWees entitled *Skin Deep*, "a fairy tale for adults who may not be quite grown up."

I'm holding a copy in my hands right now, and the cover is just as purple as many of the books about Plum Wodehouse, though not for the same reason. I don't propose to tell you the reason—you'll have to read the book to find out, and when you've read it, I think you'll be glad you did.

It's a fairy tale about Mirabella, a beautiful young princess who's so sick of waiting around for her prince to come that she takes matters into her own hands. By doing so, she sets in motion a bizarre, hilarious, delightful set of circumstances. She and her beloved must set out on a quest, and along the way they are besieged by enchanted frogs, vicious cooks, attack pen-guins, witches, waitresses, and chaperones, but everything comes out right in the end—it is a fairy tale, after all.

This is Amanda's first novel, but surely not her first writing: she knows how to put words together and I enjoy the result.

What impelled me to write this belated notice about the book was a letter from Peter Morris, who wrote as follows:

This term, I'm teaching the novel *Skin Deep* by Amanda DeWees, TWS, in my introductory literature class. I read about the book in *Plum Lines* and got a copy of it. I enjoyed it so much that I attempted to teach it in my summer course, but the textbook store was unable to obtain sufficient copies. When I was in Atlanta last summer, I called Amanda and had the pleasure of having dinner with her and she was able to arrange for enough copies so that I could teach it this term. Not only that, but having talked to her about it, any time a student challenges my interpretation, I can simply reply "But the author told me that's what it means!"

*Skin Deep* by Amanda DeWees. University Editions, 59 Oak Lane, Spring Valley, Huntingdon, West Virginia 25704.

Amanda's address: 999 Rosedale Road NE, Atlanta GA 30306.

## Want ads

### Offered

Ten first American editions including five in DJ:

1. *Sam in the Suburbs* (VG ex. lib.) \$25;
  2. *Mr. Mulliner Speaking* (VG) \$40;
  3. *Fish Preferred* (G+) \$20;
  4. *Hot Water* (VG-) \$25;
  5. *Luck of the Bodkins* (VG) \$25;
  6. *Laughing Gas* (NF in NF Sundial reprint DJ) \$40;
  7. *Joy in the Morning* (NF in NF somewhat faded DJ) \$60;
  8. *The Purloined Paperweight* (G ex. lib. in NF DJ) \$20;
  9. *Do Butlers Burgle Banks?* (VG ex. lib. in NF DJ) \$20;
  10. *The Girl in Blue* (VG in G DJ) \$20;
- John Graham, 847 Emerson Ave., Elizabeth NJ 07208. (Feel free to telephone at (908) 820-9557.)

*Ruggles of Red Gap* by Harry Leon Wilson. Doubleday, Page and Co, 1915. Red cloth with gold lettering. Tight copy, ex. lib., very good condition. Referenced in Donaldson's PGW biography (p. 100) "... a classic of American humour... virtually unobtainable." Believed to be a primary influence on the origin of the Jeeves character. Best offer. H. Edenborn, 137 Briarcliff Rd., Beaver Falls PA 15010.

## Bulletin board

The Trollope Society, 9a North Street, London SW4, England

The Jane Austen Society. The Hon. Secretary, Yield House, Overton, nr Basingstoke, Hampshire RG25 3HT, England

The Jane Austen Society of North America. Canada: Nancy Thurston, 200 Kingsmount Blvd, Sudbury, Ontario P3E 1K9. USA: Viki Barie, 2650D Matheson Way, Sacramento CA 95864

## Jeeves and the OED

by David Landman

It will no doubt be of interest to your readers that "Jeevesian" and "Jeeves-like" appear in the latest edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Jeeves is defined as "The name of a character in the novels of P. G. Wodehouse represented as the perfect valet, used allusively," a definition which does not do justice to the many talents of that Renaissance man. "Perfect valet" hardly suggests that brainy man's fancy wrist-work with a cosh, his soothing manner with irate swans, and the hundred-and-one other duties he performs with such—what's the word I want? It starts with 'a' and has to do with fruit. Ah, yes, aplomb. The duties he performs with such aplomb. Yet perhaps the clever editors have planted a subtle subtext for us to discern, for Jeeves appears just a few entries from Jehovah.

"Jeevesian" and "Jeeves-like" are defined as "resembling Jeeves." The entry is supported by citations beginning with Waugh in 1930 and ending with a 1972 quotation from E. Routley's *Puritan Pleasures and the Detective Story* to the effect that "Bunter is about 70 per cent Jeeves," and, if you ask me, that's about as close as he or any other fictional character is likely to get!

The Jeeves-words did not appear in the first edition of the dictionary nor in its 1933 supplement, but are present in the 1980s supplement and in the second edition. In that half century Jeeves may be said to have shimmered into existence, lexicographically speaking.



# A few quick ones

**J**ohn Hoppe found this line in a short story:

Phillips appeared. He never entered; he invariably appeared, like a well-oiled genie.

Phillips sounds Jeevesian, doesn't he? He is distinctly pre-Jeevesian. He appears in "A Madison Square Arabian Night," by O. Henry, collected in *The Trimmed Lamp*, copyrighted 1907.

**P**eter Cannon came across this pleasing nugget in Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* (Knopf 1992):

I packed pajamas, toothbrush, shaving kit, and a couple of paperback books (P. G. Wodehouse, who I thought might cheer him up) and left the suitcase with the receptionist.

**D**onna Loyd, not to be outdone, dug up the following in *The Death-Cap Dancers* by Gladys Mitchell (New York, Paperjacks, 1981). A woman is recounting her discussion with an "eminent psychiatrist" on the subject of children's behavior:

"... She then referred me to the famous speech made by Gussie Fink-Nottle to the boys of Market Snodsbury Grammar School in which, quoting no doubt from a higher authority, he had assured the lads that education was a drawing-out, not a putting-in. She then reminded me that Mr Fink-Nottle was strongly under the influence of alcohol at the time, and hoped she had answered my question to my satisfaction."

"The Delphic Oracle could have taken her correspondence course," replied her friend.

**R**ichard Nolan, feeling the sap rising everywhere around him in Amherst, Massachusetts, reports that "We are looking forward to standing on the first tee at the beginning of the spring golf season to recite the greatest of all opening lines, 'It was a morning when all nature shouted 'Fore!'"

**E**laine Ring found this item in the *English Times* on a certain day in January. I cannot resist the temptation to include it here.

On Wednesday night, however, just a few hours after the swearing-in ceremony, the new leader of the United States did what no president has done before: he picked up a tenor saxophone and played "Your Momma Don't Dance and Your Daddy Don't Rock and Roll," and played it well.

The choice of tune seemed appropriate for here, after all, was the man who came to power by speaking for a generation of people whose mothers generally did not dance and whose fathers did not approve of Elvis the Pelvis. As the president picked up the saxophone, the now familiar Arkansas pig-calling cheer rang around the 12,000-strong crowd at the Washington Convention Center: "Wooooo pig! Sooooooooey!"

Surely, as the vast bellow died away, another, softer sound succeeded it—unheard in the roar of the crowd—a sort of gully, gurgly, plobby, squishy, wofflesome sound, like a thousand eager men drinking soup in a foreign restaurant. And just as surely, somewhere, Lord Emsworth uttered a cry of rapture.

The Empress was feeding.

**H**irayama Yuichi, our first member in Japan, tells how he discovered Wodehouse:

There are seldom Wodehouse books in Japan. However, there were many translations before the war. We had a magazine "Shin-seinen," resembling the *Strand*, and it contained many western detective, humour and adventure stories by Doyle, Freeman, Crofts, Saki, Beeston and of course Wodehouse. As I am interested in pre-war detective stories in Japan, I read many old magazines, and found Wodehouse.

**B**ill Horn's comment on Barry Phelps's new biography: "The essential biography—the many explanations of British culture of the period will be of particular worth to American readers."

OM

The Oldest Member



# Sponge bag trousers

*Oxford English Dictionary* (first quote 1858), and sponge bag trousers are "men's checked trousers, patterned in the style of many sponge-bags" (first quote Virginia Woolf, *Voyage Out*, 1915).

**D**avid Landman has provided what ought to be, as he says, the very last word on sponge bag trousers. "Back in 1980," David says, "I asked a friendly Banbury book dealer what sponge bags were. She in turn asked the venerable Moss Bros and received the attached reply which she passed on to me."

Sponge bags themselves are simply oil-skin bags for bath sponges, according to the

It looks as if the name may have been transferred to trousers in two steps. First the name was given to waterproof trousers with drawstring waist, then the trousers were given patterns like the bags for which they were named. Finally the trousers went upscale and appeared in St. George, Hanover Square—without, one presumes, the draw-string waist.

Moss Bros Limited  
Bedford Street Covent Garden  
London WC2E 8JB  
Telephone 01-240 4567  
Registered Office  
20 King Street London  
Registered No. 134995 London

Tailors and complete outfitters  
Service uniform and liveries  
Sports and travel goods  
Saddlery, fishing tackle  
Formal wear hire service  
for men and women  
Valet service

## Moss Bros

Open Thursdays till 7  
Nearest station Leicester Square

Our commissionaires  
will help you with parking

Mrs J Butt  
S/H Dept  
Banbury Bookshop  
White Lion Walk  
Banbury  
Oxon OX16 8UD

18th February 1980

Dear Mrs Butt

Thank you for your card of 14th February and your P G Woodhouse query.

Nowadays the word sponge bag is attributed to trousers which have a small gingham check pattern as opposed to a dogtooth pattern and the material can be wool or worsted.

Years ago they were first introduced made of waterproof cloth with a drawstring waist very similar to the material which was used for sponge bags and that was how they got their nickname.

I trust that this information will be of value to your American professor.

Yours faithfully

J. Byatt

J Byatt  
Publicity Manager



# Puns

John Hanna's request for pun information in the last Plum Lines drew only a couple of responses.

Bob Elliott reports that, without research, he knows of only one pun in the canon:

Englishmen on a walking tour stride into a town, and one asks another, "Is this Wembley?" The hard-of-hearing one replies, "No, Thursday."

Bob says this is not a verbatim quote (he hasn't located the original in the 96 books). He adds that it has been reprinted many times with an addition:

A third hard-of-hearing gentlemen responded, "So am I. Let's go get a drink."

Bob noted, after seeing the second "Jeeves and Wooster" series (recently shown in America), that Bertie told this story in the series, with the third gentleman included. "I still believe," says Bob, "that Plum's story did not include this third portion. If I am right then the writers of the episode took a lot upon themselves in adding the thirsty third." If the writers had confined themselves to altering Plum's work only to that extent, some of us would be happier with the series.

Frank Axe sends along some examples of Wodehouse puns from *Contemporary Authors*, New Revision Series, Volume 33: When, in *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*, Bertie is released from jail and is asked, "Are you all right, now?" he replies, "Well, I have a pinched look." And when Jeeves says, in *The Mating Season*, "...but I have unquestionably seen you more *soigne*," Bertie notes that "it crossed my mind for an instant that with a little thought one might throw together something rather clever about 'Way down upon the *soigne* river,' but I was too listless to follow up."

These and other quoted examples remind me of just how often Wodehouse used puns. I suppose they tend to go unnoticed in the great wave of more dazzling stylistic devices that sweep over us every time we read a page of the Master. I've just finished rereading

*Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, and, with my pun-consciousness raised, I found them by the bushel.

By the way, *Contemporary Authors* refers to our own Robert Hall's book, *The Comic Style of P. G. Wodehouse*, which it calls "a thorough study of the stylistic devices Wodehouse used for comic effect." My copy has been loaned or misplaced, and I am bereft. It's well worth reading. (Archon Books, Hamden, Connecticut, 1974.)

## Plum's theater

David Rosedahl found these remarks on the contributions of P. G. Wodehouse to the development of musical theater in the early part of the century. They are from an article on Richard Rogers, Lorenz Hart, and Oscar Hammerstein II in *Columbia, the Magazine of Columbia University*, Winter 1993:

During the teens, a new kind of musical theater began to emerge, embodied in the shows written by Jerome Kern, Guy Bolton, and P. G. Wodehouse for the Princess Theatre in New York. In his memoirs Rodgers recalled these productions:

They were intimate and uncluttered and tried to deal in a humorous way with modern, everyday characters. They were certainly different—and far more appealing to me—from the overblown operettas, mostly imported, that dominated the Broadway scene... I was watching and listening to the beginning of a new form of musical theatre in this country. Somehow I knew it and wanted desperately to be a part of it.

If Rodgers and other young composers were inspired by the freshness of Kern's music, Hart for his part was attracted by Wodehouse's lyrics, which were light years in sophistication beyond the sentimental schmaltz of the operetta texts.



# Thank You, Jeeves

by Jon  
Lellenberg

Noticing the query about the 1936 movie *Thank You, Jeeves* in the latest *Plum Lines*, I offer the following review to reassure readers who fear that they're missing something good.

*Thank You, Jeeves*, starring Arthur Treacher and David Niven. Screenplay by Joseph Hoffman and Stephen Gross. Directed by Arthur Greville Collins. 20th Century Fox, 1936. 57 minutes.

In the Winter 1992 *Plum Lines*, Thomas Gifford asked what had become of this movie. Len Lawson was able to say that it had recently been shown on TV. To be specific, it was shown not long ago on the American Movie Classics cable channel—and given the decline in public taste, it may well be again. But those who miss it should not fear that they are missing very much. Not only is it not based on the Wodehouse novel, as Len pointed out: there is little evidence that anyone connected with it, before or behind the camera, had ever heard of Wodehouse.

It opens on a rainy night. Bertie is banging frenetically on a set of drums to the radio's accompaniment, Jeeves handing him one pair of drumsticks after another as each goes flying. A neighbor's complaint halts the exhibition, and Bertie seethes in frustration over his boring London life. "I need a new adventure, Jeeves!"

He gets one in short order. A beautiful stranger, pursued by two sinister men, knocks frantically for admission. Without providing any sort of explanation, she is allowed to spend the night on the couch (Jeeves taking the precaution of locking his young master in his bedroom). She is gone in the morning, but Bertie has noticed a clue to where she may be found, an inn in the countryside. Off he goes with Jeeves, in what is far more a Bulldog Drummond escapade than a Bertie Wooster story—but Bulldog Drummond was a silly ass.

Once out on the open road, the movie rapidly descends from mediocrity to worse. Bertie and Jeeves sing hunting songs as they

drive along, Jeeves imitating the cries of the hounds. They pick up a colorfully garbed hitchhiker, none other than Stepin Fetchit-wannabe Willie Best. (I'm not making this up.) He teaches them swing music on his saxophone. Their car is chased by the mysterious girl's pursuers. They arrive at the inn, which is staffed down to the cook by villains of the deepest dye, determined to get a secret paper that the young woman is carrying. Bertie, the brave but silly ass, believing that she is in trouble with Scotland Yard and making her situation worse, disarms her when she tries to defend herself. When comprehension finally dawns, he plunges a cellar full of desperadoes into darkness and escapes with the heroine. He holds their pursuers off with a medieval knight's shield. Jeeves comes to the rescue, knocking several villains out with his bare fist, then subduing the rest with a shield and club. "Thank you, Jeeves!"

The entire thing is idiotic, but the worst is the way in which Jeeves' persona is buried under an avalanche of inanities. Treacher's Jeeves fusses, complains, shouts, bays like a beagle. He insults Willie Best's musical ability, imitates a military marching band for him, then conducts Willie Best's one-man saxophone band. He falls through a fruit-cellar trapdoor and knocks himself cold, but actually that comes as a blessed relief to viewers who love Wodehouse. Treacher reportedly based his portrayal of Jeeves upon his Uncle George. Too bad he didn't base it upon Jeeves.

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Bob Elliott called to say that the movie will be shown on the American Movie Classics cable channel on Tuesday, March 30, at 10:00 A.M. Eastern Standard Time. Don't say you haven't been warned!

Livingston Rodgers, John Hoppe, and I have searched in video stores and catalogs for the video tape of this movie, without result. John has also looked unsuccessfully for the sequel, *Step Lively, Jeeves*, (without Niven), and says "I've got my video supplier rummaging around for them."

# Something new

by Doug  
Stow

**J**immy Heineman has published a facsimile edition of *The Swoop*. The only other edition of the book, except the impossible-to-get first edition, is the nearly impossible-to-get 1970s reprint. Barry Phelps says in his biography of Wodehouse that this may be Plum's most serious book. The facsimile is a paperback just as the original was, and comes with a slipcase.

**B**arry Phelps's *Wooster of Yaxley and Wodehouse of Kimberley*, whose publisher's announcement appeared in the preceding issue of *Plum Lines*, is available from Nigel Williams for £75.

**W**illiam Hardwick has sent me a listing of a number of novels and short stories on audio tape, available from British sources:

*Carry on, Jeeves* and *Code of the Woosters*  
Chivers Press Publishers  
Windsor Bridge Road  
Bath, Avon BA2 3AY

"Jeeves and the Yuletide Spirit," "The Clicking of Cuthbert," "Lord Emsworth and the Girlfriend," "Anselm Gets His Chance," "Ukridge's Accident Syndicate," and "Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo"

Conifer Ltd.  
Horton Road  
West Drayton, Middlesex UB2 8JL

*Something Fresh*  
Oasis Audio Books  
55 St. Thomas Street  
Oxford OX1 4JY

*Summer Lightning* and *Golf Omnibus*  
BBC Radio Collection  
P. O. Box 900  
Slough SL1 4JY

William notes that the BBC radio recently broadcast six Ukridge short stories: "The Accident Syndicate," "The Debut of Battling Bilson," "The Long Arm of Looney Coote," "Ukridge's Dog College," "The Return of Battling Bilson," and "Ukridge Rounds a Nasty Corner." "To my knowledge," he says, "it is the first time Ukridge has been on the radio." No word yet on whether audio tapes will be available.

William notes that Frances Donaldson's 1982 biography, *P. G. Wodehouse*, has been reissued, this time by Allison and Busby in Britain, at £11.99.

**C**harles Bishop called recently and reminded me of audio tapes produced by a fellow in Nevada City, California—James Donald Walters, I believe—but I've mislaid the list of tapes. If anyone is interested, drop me a card and I'll send you the list and address. I will have found it by then, I hope.

Catalogs received (addresses above):  
Nigel Williams  
Frits Menschaar



# Plumacroscopic

by Maria Kane

Write the answers to the clues on the numbered dashes. Then copy the letters to the corresponding squares in the diagram. Black squares separate words. Work back and forth between clues and diagram in which, reading from left to right and top to bottom, a quotation will appear. The initials of the clue answers, reading down, spell the name of the chapter from which the quotation is taken.

Clues:

A. Stiffy is his mistress

50 114 38 16 57 119 74 142  
24 59 132

B. Favorite lord of PGW fans

88 96 112 71 69 80 159 41

C. Galahad's memoirs are this

6 100 31 117

D. A preux chevalier wouldn't do this to his fiancée (no hyphen)

153 46 128 12 73 141 40

E. Many a Drone depends on a rich uncle for this

92 120 134 84 22 2

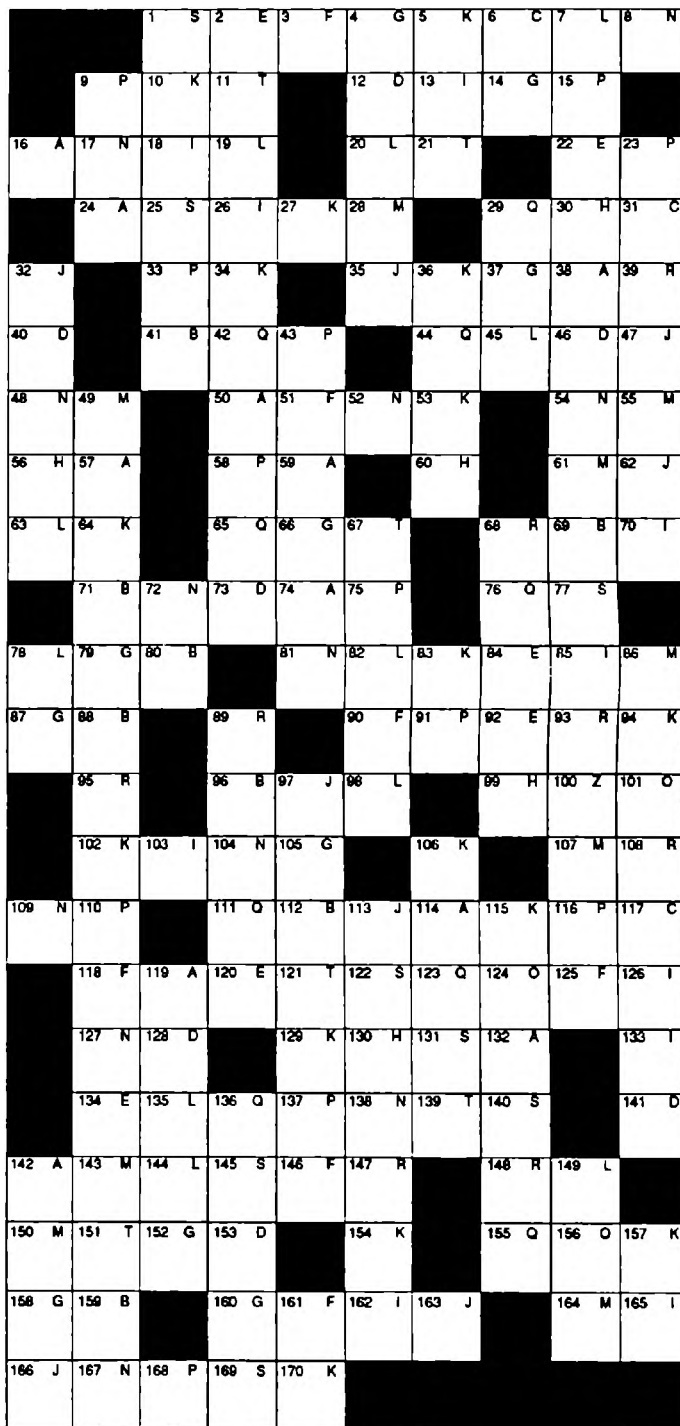
F. Claude's twin brother

51 146 3 90 161 118 125

G. Dance invented by Bombito's wife (see Q.)

160 152 79 37 105 87 158

4 66 14



H. . . la vista,  
Spanish  
equiv. of  
Tinkery-  
tonk

130 30 99 56 60

I. Publisher of  
"Milady's  
Boudoir"  
(2 words)

133 85 70 26 126 13 103 162 165 18

J. Referring to a  
certain bent,  
sometimes  
displayed by  
Jeeves

166 97 113 32 62 35 47 163

K. The Newt Nut  
(full name, no  
hyphen)

157 5 83 129 154 170 34 106 53 94 10 36 27

102 115 64

L. How Baxter  
goes about his  
business

82 78 149 20 7 144 135 63 19 45 98

M. Buttlng  
alias of a  
loony-  
doctor

61 150 28 86 143 164 55 49 107

N. 1933 novel  
(2 words)

17 167 104 109 48 54 52 138 127 72 8 81

O. Parlourmaid  
at Mallow  
Hall

156 124 101

P. Blandings  
Castle,  
Brinkley  
Court, etc.  
(2 words)

43 15 9 137 75 116 23 91 33 58 110 168

Q. Bloodthirsty  
royalist from  
Paranoya

155 42 136 44 65 111 123 29 76

R. Bertie rarely  
suffers from  
this affliction

89 93 39 148 147 68 95 108

S. Minna . . . . ,  
film actress of  
the 1950s

140 131 1 145 122 25 77 169

T. Popular  
(mainly Brit)  
euphemism

11 67 21 151 139 121

# Bonus questions:

1. Can you name the speaker of the quotation?
2. Do you know the title of the book in which the chapter appears? (Hint: It's the last chapter of the book.)

"Ever since my childhood," writes Maria, "I have been an avid constructor of various puzzle types. Recently I had the idea of making up a puzzle based on a Wodehouse quotation. I decided to create an acrostic, this being the type of puzzle that I consider the cream of the puzzle crop. I have included some very easy definitions to get people started on the way to a solution. I'd like to mention that I could never have done the acrostic without D. H. Garrison's *Who's Who in Wodehouse*, (revised edition)."

The Oldest Member will award a prize (of negligible value, maybe, but warmly proffered) to the first TWS member who solves this acrostic correctly. Answers to the bonus questions don't count in determining the prize winner. If I receive two or more correct solutions, the prize goes to the one with the earliest postmark. In case of a tie I'll draw straws. The winner will be immortalized by the appearance of his, her, or its name in large vulgar type in *Plum Lines*. Send your solutions to me: Ed Ratcliffe, 538 San Lorenzo Ave., Felton CA 95018

"I am Lord Tilbury," said His Lordship, looking like a man unveiling a statue of himself.

# Sonny Boy

**K**en Fink (Nottle) has unearthed a treasure: the sheet music of "Sonny Boy," the song sung by James Bramfylde Tregennis Shipton-Bellinger, fifth Earl of Brangbolton in his bath in "The Smile that Wins." On that occasion, you recall, the piece of soap held between his hands disappeared and set in motion the train of events set forth so memorably in the latter part of the story.

"As I suspected," [Adrian Mulliner] said, with satisfaction. "Precisely as I had supposed. I wonder if you are aware, Lord Brangbolton, that in the singing of that particular song the muscles unconsciously contract as you come to the final 'boy?' Thus—I still have you, sonny boy.' You observe? It would be impossible for anyone, rendering the number with the proper gusto, not to force his hands together at this point, assuming that they are in anything like close juxtaposition. And if there were any slippery object between them, such as a piece of soap, it would inevitably shoot sharply upwards and fall"—he scanned the room keenly—"outside the bath on the mat. As, indeed," he concluded, picking up the missing object and restoring it to its proprietor, "it did."

After our Saturday evening banquet at the New York convention in 1991, a number of the better sort gathered round a piano in the hotel lobby and did what for lack of a better word must be called singing, accompanied by Marc Levine, who did what he could to alleviate the situation. One of the songs was "Sonny Boy," whose rendition was slightly hampered by the fact that hardly anyone knew any of the words.

If a similar musical event occurs at our San Francisco convention this summer—and I hope it does—Ken's discovery means that one song, at least, will sound better than it did in New York. Here are the lyrics:

Climb upon my knee, Sonny boy;  
You are only three, Sonny boy.  
You've no way of knowing

There's no way of showing  
What you mean to me, Sonny boy.

Refrain 1:

When there are gray skies  
I don't mind the gray skies,  
You make them blue, Sonny boy.  
Friends may forsake me,  
Let them all forsake me,  
You'll pull me through, Sonny boy.  
You're sent from Heaven  
And I know your worth;  
You've made a heaven  
For me right here on earth!

Refrain 2:

When I'm old and gray, dear,  
Promise you won't stray, dear,  
I love you so, Sonny boy.

You're my dearest prize, Sonny boy;  
Sent out from the skies, Sonny boy;  
Let me hold you nearer  
One thing makes you dearer:  
You've your mother's eyes, Sonny boy.

Refrain 1: (as above)

Refrain 2:

And then the angels grew lonely,  
Took you 'cause they're lonely,  
Now I'm lonely too, Sonny boy.



# THE CLIENTS OF ADRIAN MULLINER

A SHERLOCKIAN SCION OF THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY  
A WODEHOUSEAN SCION OF THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS

**WHAT HO, HOLMES!**

**ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WOOSTER.**

THE CLIENTS OF ADRIAN MULLINER WAS FOUNDED in the autumn of 1992 as a Janus-like chapter of two literary societies: as a Sherlockian chapter of The Wodehouse Society, founded in 1980 to honor P. G. Wodehouse, and as a Wodehousean scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars, founded in 1934 to celebrate Sherlock Holmes. Its founders are three ardent Wodehouseans who are equally ardent Sherlockians: Jon Lellenberg of Washington, D.C., "Rodger Prescott of evil memory" in the BSI, Susan Jewell of Evanston, Illinois, a member of The Scotland Yarders on the North Shore, and Marilyn MacGregor of Davis, California, of The Scowrers and Molly Maguires of San Francisco. As founders of The Clients, they adopted investitures from the names of Adrian Mulliner's reluctant listeners in the story "From a Detective's Notebook." Since Jon works in the Pentagon, he became "Old General Malpus." Susan, a lawyer, became "Driscoll the Q.C." And Marilyn, youngest of all at heart, became "Young Freddie ffinch-ffinch."

WODEHOUSEANS WILL RECOGNIZE ADRIAN MULLINER as the detective member of his innumerable clan, and "From a Detective's Notebook" as Plum's sharpest expression of devotion to A. Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. Sherlockians familiar with the story appreciate the fact that Adrian Mulliner uses deductive reasoning in the finest tradition of their Higher Criticism to demonstrate that Professor Moriarty was merely the alter ego of Sherlock Holmes, better known as The Fiend of Baker Street. Knowledgeable Sherlockians are aware that P. G. Wodehouse was a great admirer of Sherlock Holmes, and of Conan Doyle personally, and Wodehouseans who not only see but observe have long noted the many Sherlockian allusions found throughout the works of Wodehouse. And as Richard Osborne sagaciously remarked in "Three Good Books and a Query" (in *After Hours with P. G. Wodehouse*), the exegetical approach taken by Sherlockians toward what they call the Sacred Writings, ever since Ronald Knox's 1912 Oxford paper "Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes," is perfectly applicable to the worlds of Bertie Wooster, Lord Emsworth, Mr. Mulliner, and other brainchildren of Plum's.

THE CLIENTS LACK SERIOUS PURPOSE, and its founders denounce Organization as the work of Rupert Baxter. Instead, The Clients will introduce Wodelockians and Sherhouseans to each other, promote mutual enjoyment of the two great Canons, and restore the jolly old tissues together every so often. Since Clients eventually will be scattered across the globe, the best time to gather will be during Wodehouse Society conventions every two years. To defray the costs of a mailing list and several mailings each year, *dues of \$7.50 will be assessed for a two-year period, beginning and payable now for 1993-94*.

OUR FIRST GATHERING (what Adrian Mulliner might call a Senior Bloodstain - the name of his detectives' club in London) will be over cocktails during the next Wodehouse Society convention, in San Francisco July 30 - August 1, 1993. *Clients will gather with interested Scowrers and Molly Maguires at the S. Holmes Esq. atop the Union Square Holiday Inn (around the corner from the convention hotel, the Sir Francis Drake) from 4:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. on Saturday, July 31st.* Drinks will be available at the bar, and there will be some clean, bright entertainments of a Wodelockian/Sherhousean nature.

# "Jeeves and Wooster"

by Kate  
Tyndall

Daniel Cohen supplied this interview with Stephen Fry (Jeeves) and Hugh Laurie (Bertie), stars of the "Jeeves and Wooster" television series. It's from the *Washington Post*. As most American members know by now, the second "J and W" series was shown on American television beginning in December 1992. For most of the last six months I have been in a small Texas town so remote that all the televisions were hand cranked, like Model T Fords, and the series wasn't even a rumor.

High Clere Castle, England—  
One is wayward, one is winsome. Laid end to end, they comprise 12 feet, 6 1/2 inches of comedic versatility.

Stephen Fry, the wayward one, and Hugh Laurie, the winsome one, are affably sharing their Marlboros and time with a stranger on the set of Granada Television's "Jeeves and Wooster" series, based on the books of P. G. Wodehouse.

The two are speaking in a trailer parked on the grounds behind this grand old country home less than two hours from London and just meters from the lunch crowd queuing at the Granada canteen.

Fry instructs the visitor: "You be the quarterback and we'll catch the ball." Then he leaps into high interview mode. "Now Hugh likes Cheerios with semi-skimmed milk and I like boiled oats with non-skimmed milk." Alarmed by a look of non-comprehension, he hastens to elaborate. "Boiled oats, porridge. It's a Scots, um, thing. Scots grow up on the stuff." He warms to the subject. "It's very, very nutritious. Very good for the colon. I like porridge." End of lesson.

"Stephen was a difficult child," Laurie says, considering his colleague. "Intelligent, precocious, wayward."

"Wayward, mmmmm, an excellent word," Fry rumbles, nodding his head approvingly. He offers a couple of reasons for his waywardness: "Religion. Genes."

As a novelist, Fry's first book, *"Liar,"* published in 1991, was a British bestseller; as a comedy writer, he collaborated with Laurie on a winning sketch series called "A Bit of

Fry and Laurie"; as a playwright, his first play, *"Latin, or Tobacco and Boys,"* won the Fringe Award at Edinburgh, and as a fledgling screenwriter, he has a two-picture deal at Paramount. [Not, let us hope, in the Ohio State Penitentiary.]

Hard on Fry's heels, Laurie is also writing a novel, but under an assumed name.

When the pair were first offered the parts of Jeeves and Wooster, Laurie says, "Actually, we nearly turned it down." He thought for a moment. "We sort of did turn it down, because we thought it was an impossible thing to achieve. Among a certain class of British life, it's a, a sacred . . .

"Hmm, a sacred text," Fry finishes.

Laurie continues: "Yes, and if you muck it up, you really are in *such* trouble."

"But then I read the scripts straight through at one sitting, which I don't normally do, since scripts are generally such dull things to read, and I just laughed. There was some really great stuff and so I rang up Stephen and said, 'Wait, don't, don't say no yet.'"

Fry picks up the narrative: "Part of the reason we thought we could say no is that the books are written by Bertie, as it were, in the first person. And he describes Jeeves, for instance, as, y'know, his feet don't touch the floor, he shimmers into rooms, he oozes out of rooms. He seems to flicker and then he isn't there. He coughs and it's like a sheep clearing its throat of a blade of grass on a distant hillside or something."

Fry laughs. "I've got real feet. I'm very physical."

An assistant director, poking her head in the door, sings out, "Jeeves, five to ten minutes, on the set."

"I've got to go and slip into my togs," Fry says and oozes, Jeeves-like, into a room at the back of the trailer. Donning Jeeves' working black in less time than it takes to shuck half a dozen oysters, Fry reappears, the corduroys and workshirt in a puddle on the floor.

Glancing at the transformed Fry, a trace of pathos in his voice, Laurie says: "He gets to stay in the same clothes. I have to change clothes about eight times a day. The boiled shirt I had on this morning could have stopped a .38 [caliber bullet]. It really could."



# Kindred spirits

**T**hose of you who have been fortunate enough to attend one of the TWS conventions know what a pleasure it is to get together with other members and talk about the Master and his writings. There is something special about meeting with kindred spirits.

Thanks to Pauline Blanc (Founding Mother of our chapter, if I may so denominate her), those of us here in the San Francisco Bay Area have had the pleasure of meeting with fellow Wodehousians for many years. Several years ago we decided to align ourselves with one of the Wodehouse sagas. We chose the Blandings Castle saga, and several of us have identified ourselves with one or another of the characters from that saga.

Until recently we have been the only chapter with open membership, but things have really picked up since the New York convention. Chapters have already started in New England, Washington, D. C., Minneapolis, and St. Louis.

Len Lawson  
President, TWS

## Pdrones

By Eric  
Otten

The St. Louis society had its first meeting on November 17, 1992 at the Sherlock Holmes Room of the Cheshire Inn. The meeting was most congenial and wine and wit and dinner rolls filled the air. The better element of the club also tossed cards into a hat supplied by Philip Shreffler, BSI. His wife Karen Johnson is an ASH and I am also a BSI, an interesting if not an unexpected crossover. By acclamation my suggestion for the club's name, Pdrones, was approved (the P is silent as in Pshrimp, Pneumonia, etc.). I was the only one foolish enough to volunteer to be club president and I accepted the one year term. We will meet approximately six times a year.

We have about 30 members to date. Our numbers are small, but resolved, as strong as chilled steel.

## Newts in Nantucket

by David  
Landman

It was a dark and stormy night when a shadowy group assembled at the Hyannis ferry pier and boarded a rusting packet bound for the fabled island of Nantucket. The crew, a furtive lot of human flotsam dredged from the margarita-soaked booths of every fern bar between Chatham and P-town,

went sullenly about their tasks as the ship pitched and yawed in the turbulent seas. Halfway over, when spirits were going down for the third time in the bilge, there miraculously shot through the fog the golden luster of a bottle of excellent Scotch exhibited by one John Kareores. Paper cups were procured, and the rest of the voyage insofar as anyone can remember seems to have been devoted to sea chanties and jolly hornpiping. Disembarking, we knew this was going to be a good thing.

Eighteen intrepid voyagers had foregathered for the fourth meeting of the New England Wodehousians; the business at hand (besides disposition of the eight bottles of classic wines in Sean Harmon's suitcase) was the selection of a club name. Host and hostess Bob and Grace Noyes met us at the dock and conducted us up the box-wood alley to the national monument they call home where we were to spend the next two nights at our deliberations. The 1724 Josiah Coffin house is the sort of gem outlanders pay admission to view from behind velvet ropes. We were graciously given free run of the premises, and for two days shook its wide floor boards, pegged beams, walk-in fireplaces, antique furniture, China trade chests, and Revolutionary War artifacts with mirth.

The following is a brief account of the meeting.

1. An official club name was adopted by acclamation—NEWTS, an acronym of New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society.  
2.. Dinner was served during which the second item of business—eight bottles of French wine—was efficiently dispatched. If bread was thrown, it escaped the notice of your correspondent since something the size and texture of a sourdough loaf struck him in the eye early in the proceedings effectively blinding him for at least a quarter of an hour. Sight was regained in time to witness tryouts for the NEWT spoons-on-nose-and-ears balancing team.

After dinner, intellectual NEWTS settled into bridge and Boggle, while outdoorsy NEWTS strolled along the midnight beach where they were treated to a brilliant display of shooting stars. "God's bread rolls," someone remarked.

The meeting was adjourned next day after scones and a round of croquet. But not before a swarm of NEWTS achieved the fastest solution of the *New York Times* crossword puzzle on record. Done in ink, every definition premier coup, only one erasure when "moored" turned out to be "lowed."

Returned to the mainland, the Harmon suitcase noticeably lighter as were the spirits of all. Unanimous applause was voted NEWTS president Maria Sensale for organizing the meeting.

## Plums Chums

The Minnesota chapter of TWS is now in existence. Twenty one of us TWS members and friends gathered at a historic art deco office in the historic Foshay Tower for an evening of wine, cheese, dessert, and conversation. My collection of twenty eight books by, about, and bibliographies of, Wodehouse was on display along with a list of dealers out of Plum Lines.

Our official actions were:

1. Adopted the chapter name of Plums Chums (the second favorite was Northwodes).
2. Expressed a three to one approval of the latest "Jeeves and Wooster" series vs. a five to one preference for the previous

series.

3. Heard a passage from a sermon by our candidate in the Great Sermon Handicap.

## The care of the pig

Jim Earl sent an account of the current British pig scene from the *English Times* of February 13, 1993. Excerpts follow.

When P. G. Wodehouse's Lord Emmsworth finds life with his sister, Lady Constance, too trying he seeks solace in the company of his prize-winning Berkshire, the Empress of Blandings. Happily munching in her roomy sty, this aristocratic porker is utterly adored; and, in turn, she calms his lordship's frayed nerves.

The scene is not completely fictitious, either: the Berkshire pig exists, but only by a porcine bristle, according to the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. Since it was formed in 1973, the RBST has championed many rare breeds of farm animal but, of all the species, the pedigree pigs cause most concern.

Most of these breeds are creations of the last 200 years. "Virtually all were created from a mix of the native white pig and Chinese imports introduced at the end of the 18th century, so none has a long lineage," says Lawrence Alderson, director of the RBST.

Of the pedigree Berkshires registered with the RBST, there are 69 boars and 348 sows in Britain today. Only 121 people keep them.

For Lord Runcie, former Archbishop of Canterbury, the Berkshire, with its short nose, black skin and neat white feet, nose, and tail tippets, is a particular delight. "They are splendid and their skin shines. The tiny piglets are like advertisements for polish," he says.

Lord Runcie feels that the Berkshire is an intelligent, sensitive pig. He recounts a story from Cobbett's *Rural Rides*: "A Berkshire sow was seen on a windy night scuffling up leaves around her piglets. She then trotted up on a mound and sniffed. Realising the wind had changed direction, she trotted down and scuffled the leaves up around the other side of her brood: it is touching."

by Bill Horn



## WASHINGTON D.C.'S CHAPTER OF THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY

"He stated specifically that the thought of living in Washington gave him the - what was the expression he used? 'The pip?' 'The pip. Precisely.' - *Indiscretions of Archie*

Local Wodehouse Society members have met twice now to create a Washington chapter, for the occasional spot of browsing, sluicing, and breadroll-throwing together. When we held High Tea on December 6th, Wade Hinkle's suggestion for the chapter's name was adopted, no other being able to represent Washington so uniquely. Jon Lellenberg, bearing a White House Wonder (as worn by Calvin Coolidge) and a deck of cards, claimed that flipping cards into hats was a recognized Drones Club athletic competition, but a challenge to identify a canonical mention of the sport reduced him to a second-rank Power. (BUT NOW HE PROVIDES THIS QUOTATION FROM CHAPTER 3 OF PGW'S *RIGHT HO, JEEVES*: 'I SENT THIS ONE OFF ON MY WAY TO THE DRONES, WHERE I SPENT A RESTFUL AFTERNOON THROWING CARDS INTO A TOP-HAT WITH SOME OF THE BETTER ELEMENT.' AND HE ADDS: 'HAH!', AND MEANS IT TO STING.) Episode 1 of the BBC's *What Ho, Jeeves* made all present look forward to Episode 2 next time. Fritz Sonnenschmidt's reminiscences of "Cooking for the English" depicted Anatole up against a race whose ideas of cuisine were limited to Roasts, Grills, and Boils. A tribute to PGW by the poet Auden, read by Carla Gladstone, provoked heated debate about whether Bertie Wooster was a half-wit or not. (And if so, since he had plenty of oof, a Mayfair flat, a Widgeon Seven, and Jeeves to keep him out of trouble, so what?) Attempts by various parties to vocalize a convincing Policeman's "Ho!" produced no winners.

Our next gathering will be called after the holidays. In the meantime, the efficient Baxter insists on pointing out that the time has come to put these mailings on a financially sound basis, as it were. Those who wish to continue receiving the chapter's notices and reports are therefore asked to fill out and mail back the form below, along with a cheque for a trifling \$350 for calendar year 1993.

**WHAT HO! HERE ARE THE PARTICULARS, AS IT WERE, AND THE OOF!**

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Wodehousean interests \_\_\_\_\_

Related Interests \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions for meetings/activities \_\_\_\_\_

Anything else you'd like to mention \_\_\_\_\_

# Man and Myth revisited

by John  
Parks

The first Wodehouse biography in ten years deserves more than the one review that appeared in the previous issue of *Plum Lines*. Here's another view of the book by our own John Parks.

**M**y absorbing interest in all things Wodehousian has long been a subject of affectionate, amused tolerance by my wife and two sons. I think they take the view "What the hell—it can't do him any lasting harm and keeps him out of mischief." In spite of my repeated efforts not one of them has read a single line of his immortal prose—unappreciative Philistines I call them, which only increases their amusement.

Recently, however, my younger son Glenn has taken to checking out any second hand bookshops that cross his path for PGW first editions that I may like to add to my modest collection—there is definitely the right stuff in the boy!

Whilst on a business trip to England in September he purchased from Hatchards of Piccadilly no less than a copy of *P. G. Wodehouse: Man and Myth* by Barry Phelps as a Father's Day gift for me.

What a terrific read this book is! It is, in my opinion, the best and most comprehensively researched biography of Plum so far published.

I thought I knew all there was to know about Plum and his lifetime of non-stop creative work, but Barry's book surprised me with quite a few facts that were new to me.

The chapter concerning Ethel was very detailed, and I was surprised to learn that Plum was her third husband, not her second. In every other book I've read on Plum, Ethel is always referred to before her marriage to Wodehouse as Mrs. Rowley, a young widow, but it appears Ethel married a John Wayman in London seven months after the death of Rowley in Mysore, India, in June, 1910 and was again widowed barely two years later.

Ethel's matrimonial fortunes certainly give credence to the old saying "third time lucky" as she and Plum shared sixty one

idyllically well suited years together.

While I cannot stress too strongly my enjoyment of Barry's book and my earnest recommendation that all TWS members place their order at their favorite bookshop without delay, I must point out—being a fully paid up member of the Cavillers Club as well as one of Australia's leading carpers—a glaring error which occurs not once, but twice, in this otherwise excellent tome.

Barry has branded himself forever a member of that sub-stratum of society which, let's be charitable, is more to be pitied than censured: that of the non golfer.

He makes mention on page 145, and compounds the offence on page 231, of a golfer playing "his usual fifty six holes a day."

The mystery of those two extra holes has caused me to lie staring hot-eyed into the darkness, night after night.

However, ever so slightly faulty mathematics aside, congratulations to Barry Phelps on a magnificent book which will I am quite sure achieve the success it so richly deserves.

"Don't blame me, Pongo," said Lord Ickenham, "if Lady Constance takes her lorgnette to you. God bless my soul, though, you can't compare the lorgnettes of today with the ones I used to know as a boy. I remember walking one day in Grosvenor Square with my aunt Brenda and her pug dog Jaberwocky, and a policeman came up and said the latter ought to be wearing a muzzle. My aunt made no verbal reply. She merely whipped her lorgnette from its holster and looked at the man, who gave one choking gasp and fell back against the railing, without a mark on him but with an awful look of horror in his staring eyes, as if he had seen some dreadful sight. A doctor was sent for, and they managed to bring him round, but he was never the same again. He had to leave the Force, and eventually drifted into the grocery business. And that is how Sir Thomas Lipton got his start."

*Uncle Fred in the Springtime, 1939*

# San Francisco convention '93 details

by Charles  
Bishop

Details, we have details for the upcoming Wodehouse Society Convention, July 30, 31 and August 1, 1993. Due to untiring efforts by many people, this will be one of the best Wodehouse Conventions ever. A good time will be had by all, and it would be a shame if you were not among those present. There will be revels, speakers, contests, browsing and sluicing, trips, the company of like and kindred spirits, people in character and costume, songs: a veritable panoply of fun and good times. 'Twould be a shame if you were not among the revelers. To find out more, continue on, Dear Reader.

## *Schedule*

At press time, the schedule for the convention is

Thursday evening	Brewery tour
Friday evening	Reception and cocktails
Saturday day	Speakers and skits
Saturday afternoon	Contests
Saturday evening	Dinner, speakers, skits, costumes, awards
Saturday night	Songs around the piano
Sunday morning	Brunch
Sunday afternoon	Cricket and croquet

Also available if enough people are interested is a Dashiell Hammett tour of S. F. locales. It could be scheduled for Thur, Fri or Monday afternoon. There is also a tour of local Brew Pubs where they brew their own beer on site. This could be scheduled for Thursday or Monday evening.

**Brewery Tour** On Thursday evening, for those souls who are already in the city, there will be a tour of of some local pubs that brew their own local beers and ales. Members will travel together, but will be responsible for their own expenses. When you sign up details will be mailed to you later.

**Reception and Cocktails** On Friday evening there will be a cocktail reception at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel. Members will gather, imbibe spirits and participate in genial, light-hearted conversation with friends and acquaintances, old and new. The reception is scheduled from 7 to 10 p.m., but may run

over if we so desire. The reception is a cash bar with members responsible for their own drinks. Dinner can be found in several restaurants in the area or in the hotel dining rooms before or after the Reception.

**Saturday Day: Speakers and Skits** Beginning Saturday morning and lasting until the afternoon, the rafters will ring with the laughter of Wodehousians as speaker after speaker tickles our individual and collective funnybones. Those who have been fortunate enough to have attended previous Conventions will remember the enjoyment that was to be had from attending. Indeed, it is rumoured that there are still echoes of laughter left behind in the hotels of past conventions. The lineup of speakers promises to be "most diverting". There will be a lunch break and a short business meeting after lunch. There is a large selection of restaurants within walking distance of the hotel as well as in the hotel.

**Saturday Afternoon: Contests** After the break from the jocularly of the day's activities there will be several contests to allow the members to test their mettle. At press time the contests include:

**Darts** A most British contest; a sine qua non, in fact. The rules at this stage of planning are somewhat nebulous but rest assured we will have some.

**Egg and spoon race** Quite simple really. You merely have to carry an prime example of hen fruit through the course without it spilling from your utensil.

**Brazil nut/Topper shoot** Ah, memories of Lord Ickenham at the Drones Club: the keen eye, the steady hand, the patience of the pukka sahib as his quarry draws near, the quick release and then, finally the sharp sound as the missile connects with its target. Can you do as well? Your answer in the affirmative can be proved by signing up. You may bring your own catapult but should you have a custom made carrying case, the rules committee will look at you with a fishy eye.

**Cards in the Top Hat** Surely you can do this, its absurdly easy don't you know. Whomever manages to get the most cards into the old topper cops the prize.

Again, the rules at present have not jelled as much as we would like, but we promise to have a full set by Convention Time.

#### **Saturday Evening: Speakers and Skits**

Before and after a sumptuous repast (don't forget to sign up for it—else you cannot be admitted, for all your tears), the level of revels increases exponentially. There will be speeches to match or exceed those of the daytime, skits that bring to life PGW's characters, and awards for the contest winners. After dinner we gather around a piano and raise our voices in song, singing those to be found in the canon: Every Nice Girl Loves a Sailor, Pale Hands I Loved Beside the Shalimar, Danny Boy, and tiddley um pum, something which I forget.

**Sunday Morning-Brunch** On the morning of our last day together, we meet for brunch. Members will purchase their own food, the approximate cost is \$10, as we gather to prolong the festivities.

#### **Sunday Afternoon-Cricket and Croquet**

The MCC (Marin Cricket Club) is having a match across the Golden Gate Bridge in Marin County. We are invited to watch the match and have tea on the lawn. There will be members available to discuss the rules and finer points of the game. After the cricket match, there may be time for a game or two of croquet. There is a charge of \$15 to cover the cost of transportation to and from the hotel.

#### **Pre-convention contests**

There are also contests to be entered before arriving at the convention:

**PGW Style writing** Write a paragraph of prose in the style of the master and submit it for judging. Entries will be judged on how closely they resemble the master's writing. The contest is open only to those members attending the convention.

**Baby Blobbs** Submit a photograph of a relative, under the age of 2 years who closely resembles baby Blobbs.

**Fat Uncles** Submit a photograph of an uncle, of large stature. The uncle must be a family member.

All decisions made by the judges are final.

#### **Speakers**

Due to the valiant efforts of Jan Kaufman and Marilyn MacGregor, there is an impressive list of speakers ready to give their all on Saturday day and evening. There will be

much merriment and it wouldn't surprise me if there were members rolling in the aisles, tears of laughter in their eyes.

#### **Books**

Len Lawson has tables available for the sale of Wodehouse books and miscellanea. Contact him for details.

#### **Costumes**

If you would like to dress in costume for the Saturday evening (at the very least) festivities there are several local sources for costumes. A request for a list from Charles Bishop will bring a list of same forthwith.

#### **Hotels**

The convention will be held at the Sir Francis Drake hotel in San Francisco. This is a lovely hotel, with an elegance that befits our organization and members.

The convention will be held in rooms that could have been taken from the finest of country houses in England and shipped across the Atlantic, around the horn and up the Pacific coast to San Francisco and installed in the hotel. Outside the front door there is indeed a gatekeeper who could, with no considerable stretch of the imagination, be described as a "uniformed exquisite who looked like an ex-King of Ruritania." This sounds the perfect photo opportunity. The only deficiency that we can see is that, alas, there is no swimming bath, with or without rings above it.

**M**embers are responsible for making individual hotel reservations.



We have rates of \$102 for a single and \$113 for a double (including the 11% hotel tax) at the Sir Francis Drake. While we cannot guarantee that we can reserve the Blue Room for you (or even the Red or Green Room) the accommodations are up to par. You should mention The Wodehouse Society and ask for a "standard" room. The reservation number for the hotel is 800-227 5480.

There are also smaller, less expensive hotels within walking distance of the Sir Francis Drake. The rates vary from \$60 to \$120 and are generally indicative of the quality or rooms and surroundings. A list follows.

# HOTELS—LODGING ONLY \*published price: A discount may be available

<b>Hotel</b>	<b>Twin Bed \$</b>	<b>Queen Bed \$</b>	<b>Extra Person \$</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Amsterdam Hotel 749 Taylor (Sutter-Bush) 415 673 3277	75	69	8	
Hotel Sheehan 620 Sutter (Mason-Taylor) 415 775 6500	89	65/1	10	Room 14 x 18, indoor pool, tea room, breakfast incl.
Hotel Beresford Arms 701 Post(at Jones) 415 637 2600				
Hotel Beresford 635 Sutter (Mason-Taylor) 415 673 9900	85	75/1 85/2	89/3 99/4	White Horse Pub attached. Bath remodeled
Petite Auberge 863 Bush (Taylor-Mason) 415 928 6000		105 135 155	15	Elegant, remodeled
Cartright Hotel 524 Sutter(Powell-Mason) 415 421 2865	99 109	99 109	10	Small bathroom, restaurant  Contact Amor
Californian Hotel Taylor and O'Farrell 415 885 2500		94 (1 or 2)	10	Jim Earl will be staying here. Queen bed \$79 if available.
Handlery Hotel 351 Geary (Powell-Mason) 415 781 7800		92 (1 or 2) 120 (1 or 2)	10	Contact Saobhan
Chancellor Hotel 433 Powell Street 800 428 4748	97*	114*	165* suite	Bath remodeled. Across the street from the Sir Francis Drake. Suite: 2 rooms/each with bathrm
Orchard Hotel 562 Sutter St. 94102 800 433 4434	99-130*	99-130*	195*	Some rms with air cond; you need to ask
Golden Gate Hotel 775 Bush St. (Powell/Mason) 800 835 1118	79-89* 55-65*	79-89* 55-65*		With private bath With shared bath Quaint. Breakfast incl.

All of the hotels are old – 40 to 80 years. Most hotel rooms were similar: they were mostly 12' x 15', with a TV, though sizes varied; a full bath attached. They were all clean, painted within the last few years. If the bathrooms have been remodeled within the last few years, it is noted above.

None of the prices quoted include the city hotel tax – at present 11%.

# Convention '93 speakers

by Marilyn  
MacGregor  
(correspon-  
dence)  
and  
Jan Kaufman  
(her turn  
comes later)

**A**muse, instruct, and entertain! is the aim of the Convention Speakers Committee, and a glittering cast has been assembled to provide the stuff to give the troops. Reading from left to right, in alphabetical order, lucky convention attendees may hear:

**Norman "Emsworth" Donaldson** of San Diego. Details of his special presentation are being kept under wraps by the committee. They assure us, however, that those who hear his piece are likely to respond, "Lord love a duck, this boy's got what it takes."

**Helen Murphy**, who has made a special study of school prizes and the sort of people who got them. Helen has been steeped in Wodehouse practically since the cradle as the daughter of Col. N. T. P. Murphy, author of *In Search of Blandings*.

**Barry Phelps** is author of the provocative new biography *P. G. Wodehouse, Man and Myth* and the even newer limited edition *Wooster of Yaxley & Wodehouse of Kimberley*. Barry will share his investigation into the remarkable parallels of the two noble houses in the latter book, including new facts his research has brought to light.

**Tony Ring**, collector extraordinaire, discoverer of unpublished stories, will give us an illustrated account of how a collection may begin, be focussed, and grow—despite limitations of space and funds—and how it may be housed usefully and beautifully.

**Kristin Thompson** is author of the recently published and perceptive *Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes*. She is also the archivist for the Wodehouse Estate's P. G. Wodehouse Archive. In an anecdotal talk, Kristin will divulge how she wrote her book and what she does as archivist.

Not (yet) booked is anyone giving an extraordinarily gifted rendition of a bull-terrier chasing a cat up a tree. Aspiring performers may apply to the committee for audition.

**B**arry Phelps suggests that we will have an enriched experience at the convention if we bone up ahead of time on the books he lists below. (Len Lawson or Tony Ring would bid high for a copy of any one of them.)

Carmen Flores  
*Diary*  
Stultitia Bodwin  
*Offal*  
Blair Eggleston  
*Worm i' the Root*  
Wilmot Royce (Mrs. Cordelia Blair Blakeney)  
*Sewers of the Soul*  
*The Stench of Life*  
Leila York (Bessie Binns)  
*For True Love Only*  
*Sweet Jennie Dean*  
Sir Pelham Wodehouse  
*Wodehouse on the Niblick*  
*Boy: Page Mr. Comstock*  
*Came the Dawn*  
Adela Cream  
*Blackness at Night*  
Leila J. Pinckney  
*The Love Which Prevails*  
*Heather O' the Hills*  
George Masterman (The Dowager Lady Wickham)  
*Fetters of Fate*  
Rosie M. Banks (Mrs. Richard "Bingo" Little)  
*Meroyne Keene, Clubman*  
*The Woman Who Braved All*  
(Lady) Florence Craye  
*Spindrift*  
Gwendoline Moon (Mrs. Oliver Sipperley)  
*Autumn Leaves*  
*'Twas on an English June*  
Bertram Wooster  
*What the Well Dressed Man Is Wearing*  
James Rodman  
*The Secret Nine*  
Pelham Grenville  
*That Viennese Stuff*  
J. Plum  
*Cruelty to Millionaires*  
C. P. West  
*The Making of Musical Comedies*

