



# Plum Lines

VOL. 13 No 4

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY SUMMER 1993

## San Francisco convention '93!

by Charles  
Bishop

The TWS Convention to be held in San Francisco in July, '93 is shaping up to be one of the best and this is saying something, since each prior convention was great fun. A good time will be had by all and you will miss out on a good thing if you are not among those present. There will be revels, speakers, contests, browsing and sluicing, trips and tours, 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.

### SCHEDULE IN BRIEF

The convention dates are July 29 (Thursday) through August 1(Sunday). The schedule for the convention is:

Thursday evening	Brewery tour
Friday Evening	Reception, contests, songs
Saturday Day	Speakers and skits
Saturday afternoon	Contests
Saturday evening	Dinner, speakers, skits, costumes, award
Sunday morning	Brunch
Sunday afternoon	Cricket and croquet

A Dashiell Hammett tour of S.F. locales

is available on Friday afternoon if there is sufficient interest.

### THURSDAY

**Brewery Tour** On Thursday evening from 7 p.m. onwards, for those souls who have an interest in the healing powers of brews, there will be a tour of local Brew Pubs where they brew their own beers or ales. Members will travel together, but will be responsible for their own expenses.

### FRIDAY

**Reception and Cocktails** at 7:00 Friday evening 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. Mustard Pott may appear. The reception is a cash bar with members responsible for their own drinks.

Dinner can be found in the hotel dining room or in several restaurants in the area before or after the reception.

### Contests

During the reception members can test

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their mettle with several contests in an adjoining room:

**Darts** A most British contest. A test of keen hand and eye coordination.

**Egg and Spoon Race** Quite simple really. You merely carry a prime example of hen fruit through the course without it spilling from your utensil, and come in first.

**Brazil Nut/Topper** 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, 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. Brazil nuts will be provided.

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

## SATURDAY

**Morning and Afternoon: Speakers and Skits** See Marilyn MacGregor's "Saturday revels" article on page 3 for details.

A lunch break will be followed by a short business meeting. There is a hotel dining room and many restaurants are within walking distance.

**Evening: Banquet, Speakers, Skits, and Costume Contest** Before and after a sumptuous repast (don't forget to sign up for it—else you cannot be admitted) the revels increase exponentially, with speeches to match or exceed those of the day, skits to bring to life PGW's characters, and awards for the contest winners. Come to the banquet dressed in costume and you may win a prize.

## SUNDAY

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

**Sunday Afternoon: Cricket and Croquet** The MCC (Marin Cricket Club) is having a match and we are invited to watch the match and have tea on the lawn. Members will be available to discuss the rules and

finer points of the game. Afterwards there may be time for a game or two of croquet. A \$15 charge will cover transportation to and from the hotel.

## COSTUMES

If you would like to dress in costume for the contest Saturday evening, or for the entire convention, several local sources can provide costumes. Contact Charles Bishop for details.

## BOOK TABLES

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

## PRE-CONVENTION CONTESTS

These contests are open to all members of TWS; you do not have to attend the convention to enter. Prizes will be mailed to the winners who do not attend.

**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.

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

**Fat Uncles** Submit a photograph of an uncle of large stature.

## 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 rooms could have been taken from the finest country houses in England. The only deficiency is that, alas, there is no swimming bath, with or without rings above it. 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 like the perfect photo opportunity.



Ex-King Otto of Ruritania, reigned 1900-1905

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, the accommodations are above par. You should mention the Wodehouse Society and ask for a "standard" room when you make your reservations. 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 (be sure to ask if the 11% hotel tax is included) and are generally indicative of the quality of the rooms and surroundings. Hotels and their rates are listed on page 5.

**Members are responsible for making their own hotel reservations.**

**Register now if you haven't already done so. See the registration form on the last page of Plum Lines.**

# What ho! Saturday revels!

by Marilyn MacGregor

**C**luster round, hang on every word and guffaw until your eyes bubble! The convention program has such goodies in it that pretty silly is what you'll look if you miss it. To get to the *res* without delay, here are the details about our Saturday speakers and a few other matters:

After Charles Bishop's welcome, we will hear JEREMY THOMPSON, who has a sort of woolly-headed duckiness about him and aims always to spread sweetness and light. Jeremy will start the formal program off with an illustrated little blob of sunshine called "Straws in the Wind, Straws in the Hair, and the Short Straw."

BARRY PHELPS, whose books so far include *P. G. Wodehouse: Man and Myth* and *Wooster of Yaxley & Wodehouse of Kimberley: Parallel Peerages*, has delved even more deeply into those two noble houses to present "The Two Authors Compared."

A short break is scheduled here for sluicing of coffee or tea.

The NEWTS skits will be presented by members of that lively group the New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society. Do they hug? Do they form a newt ball? Be there to see.

KRISTIN THOMPSON has written *Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes* [reviewed in this *Plum Lines*] and is Archivist for the Wodehouse Estate's P. G. Wodehouse Archive. She'll give us an anecdotal account of Writing about Wodehouse and let us in on the arcanery of Archivery.

A genuine DULWICH SCHOOLBOY will read his prize-winning essay on our favorite author.

All break for lunch to sail into the proteins and carbohydrates at browsing establishments of choice.

LEN LAWSON, eminent PRESIDENT of THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY, will conduct a mercifully brief business meeting in a manner guaranteed to grip. The meeting will include an election of officers and a discussion of honorary memberships.

TONY RING, collector extraordinaire, will with illustrations and sound effects provide helpful hints on beginning, focusing, building, and displaying a collection for the financially challenged collector. He hopes also to tell us of a recently authorized project for republishing some obscure early Wodehouse.

CAPITAL! CAPITAL! Chapter will break out of the Washington Beltway to provide a skit, if skit is the word I want, warranted to be bright, clean entertainment for us all.

Another sluice-break intervenes to allow us light liquid refreshment and an opportunity to wipe the tears of laughter temporarily from our eyes.

HELEN MURPHY (she's a highly respected London police officer—will she bring a genuine policeman's helmet, genuinely snatched from the head of a living member of the force?) will take us through the jolly and chaotic world of School Prizes and the People Who Won Them, illustrating as she goes.

Preceding the Saturday cocktails will be CONTESTS and GAMES, your chance to shine at the nearest approximation of activities at a School Treat or a Village Mothers Annual outing without having to travel all the way to Maiden Eggesford.

More or less simultaneously, the CLIENTS OF ADRIAN MULLINER will meet at the S. Holmes, Esq. bar on the 30th floor of the Holiday Inn, Union Square, to tickle the tonsils with a potation or two in honor of two favorite authors and to indulge in a good old bit of entertainment as well.

BILL HORN proposes a meeting, at the same time, to organize a Wodehouse-Jane Austen-Henry James group at his club, the Metropolitan, near the convention hotel. He promises Madeira for the Janeites and claret for the HJs. What shall we call ourselves?

BLANDINGS CASTLE Chapter, not to be outdone by more recently formed groups, will present its version of the word "skit," purported to be a feast of reason and flow of soul.

If by now you're feeling like a zoo lion who has heard the dinner-gong go and is hoping the keeper won't forget him in the general distribution, be reassured that if you've sent in your reservation you'll be served and not have to grab at your dinner like a seal going after a slice of fish.

LEN LAWSON'S Saturday act of kindness, the presentation of awards, is sure to be popular, especially with those who receive them. Because it's his *this* Saturday's a. of k., not last, there'll be no loud explosions or Wee Nookes going up in flames.

Our star turn with dessert (no, he's not going to sing "Sonny Boy") is NORMAN "EM-SWORTH" DONALDSON. The Speakers Committee refuses to divulge details in advance on this presentation. It guarantees a response of "Lord love a duck, this boy's got what it takes."

You haven't lost out entirely on "Sonny Boy," at least the opportunity for group singing of it (words and pianist supplied), although the schedule is a bit unsolidified at this writing. You will also, at some point, have the unparalleled opportunity to hear BILL HORN of Plum's Chums from the far NorthWodes sing "The Wedding Song" and possibly a poem or two with piano accompaniment from *Songs of Squalor*.

**Register now** if you haven't already done so. See the registration form on the last page of *Plum Lines*.

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

Hotel	Twin Bed \$	Queen Bed \$	Extra Person \$	Comments
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%.

# Lewis Carrol's Cheshire Cat and—guess who?

by Norman  
Murphy

While one does not take much account of rival literary societies, one can accept their existence—in an offhand, condescending way, of course.

So the following account in the [English] *Daily Telegraph* of 7 July 1992 seemed worth noting. Charlotte and I found ourselves in the area recently and went to confirm the phenomenon.

## Riddle of the Cheshire Cat Solved by Colin Wright

The inspiration for Lewis Carroll's enigmatic Cheshire Cat probably came to him when, as an 11-year-old boy, he knelt for prayers in a small North-East village church.

Devotees of the 19th-century author of *Alice in Wonderland* claim to have discovered the role model for the strange feline of which only the grin remained when its body had disappeared.

Mr. Joel Birenbaum, from Chicago, a member of the international Lewis Carroll Society, solved the riddle as he knelt at the altar of the 10th-century St Peter's Church in Croft, near Darlington, Co Durham, where the author worshipped.

Crudely carved in stone relief on a wall panel, he spied a small smiling cat which, as he moved downwards, began to vanish from view. All he could see when kneeling properly as the strange grin on the creature's face. The American, among the 35 society members visiting the church for the first time, was in no doubt as to the importance of the find.

Fellow enthusiasts agreed, taking it in turns to kneel at the spot to share in the excitement. Debate about the discovery lasted long after they left the building where Carroll's father, the Rev Charles Dodgson, was rector for 24 years until his death in 1868.

"From the front it looks just like a cat," said Mr Birenbaum yesterday. "But if you go down on your knees and you look up, you can see only the grin and not the cat." Carroll was just 11 when his father moved from Cheshire to the parish of Croft. The shy mathematician,

who was himself later ordained a deacon, penned his strange creation in 1865.

Mr Edward Wakeling, Society secretary, said yesterday that the Cat's true identity had probably not been discovered before because no one was looking for it.

He felt that inspiration for the grinning creature probably came to Carroll during worship at the altar. "As you slowly kneel, the stone cat's face disappears and all you can see is the broad grin that stretches almost from ear to ear."

The cat's head is certainly there, it does have a grin, and because the head protrudes from the wall, the grin is indeed all you see as you kneel down.

But the famous cat has another interest. It acts as a support for a carved figure of a man wearing rough clothes, a common figure in English folk-lore and mythology—the wild man of the woods. It is to be seen on the coat of arms of the Earl of Kimberley, head of the Wodehouse family. What is the correct name for this strange, savage figure? It is a Wode-wose, or Wode'ose, from which Plum took his name.

The earliest quote in the *Oxford English Dictionary* for the late Old English "wodwose" is dated "ante 1100," roughly contemporary with the 10th-century St Peter's Church. Norman may have found one of the earliest representations of a wodewose. Who but Norman could have recognized it?

The task of composing a sermon which should practically make sense and yet not be above the heads of his rustic flock was always one that caused Augustine Mulliner to concentrate tensely. Soon he was lost in his labour and oblivious to everything but the problem of how to find a word of one syllable that meant Supralapsarianism.

"Gala Night," *Mulliner Nights*, 1933

## A few quick ones

**P**eter Morris, TWS member and contributor of several recent articles *Plum Lines*, became the first World Scrabble Champion at a London tournament in February of 1992. Peter is currently doing his doctoral thesis on "The English gentleman as depicted in the works of Trollope and P. G. Wodehouse," and we expect profound revelations in due course.

**J**on Lellenberg, hoping to avoid the muscular wrath of Bulldog Drummond, asks me to correct an error of mine in the last issue. Jon did *not* say that Bulldog Drummond was a silly ass; he *did* say that Bertie Wooster was portrayed as Bulldog Drummond as a silly ass—quite a different thing. My apologies to Jon and (more particularly) to Bulldog.

**J**an Kaufman and Peter Morris send an obituary notice about C. Northcote Parkinson, the British historian and writer whose fiction included the 1979 "biography" entitled *Jeeves: a Gentleman's Personal Gentleman*. He was best known for his Parkinson's Law: "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." He also gave us our modern meaning of the word ploy: "an action calculated to frustrate an opponent or gain an advantage indirectly or deviously," according to the *American Heritage Dictionary*.

**C**harles Rembar expounded his ingenious Jeeves Theory in a mock-serious article on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times* recently: Bertie was Jeeves's illegitimate son, so in need of help that Jeeves dedicated his life to providing it, and was thus willing to be a manservant. Elizabeth Rosenberg promptly responded, pointing out, just as seriously, a reference by Bertie to his "gov'nor", to his mother, and to aunts on his father's side.

**C**harles Gould writes in response to the R. V. Smethurst article in the last issue: "Able to pick nits as well as the next man, I may point out that there is something wrong with the portrait of R. V. Smethurst: no English schoolboy of his vintage would have had his hands in his pockets. Indeed, for the same reason, his knickerbockers wouldn't have *had* pockets."

**D**avid McDonough discovered a tenuous thread linking P. G. Wodehouse and another humorist: "On page 5 of *Cleese Encounter* by Nathan Margolis, John Cleese is quoted as saying, 'My father traveled the world selling marine insurance and living in exotic places like Calcutta, Bombay and Hong Kong. Dad pretended to be a bit grand. He had been in India during the Twenties and shared a house with P. G. Wodehouse's brother.'"

Plum's elder brother Armine spent almost all his adult life in India, as a professor of English at several colleges. He became president of the Theosophical College at Benares and was for a time tutor to Krishnamurti.

**P**eter Morris has found that the obscure three-act comedy *If I Were You* (discovered by Frits Menschaar and discussed in the last *Plum Lines*) was mentioned in the 1971 *Contemporary Authors* bibliography. And Frits says David Jasen also has a copy of the book.

**T**homas Gifford came across a 1949 paperback copy of *The Best of Wodehouse* recently and found in its introduction a remark by Scott Meredith about the "Jeeves series" of movies with Arthur Treacher, David Niven, and Madeline Carroll. McIlvaine lists only two Jeeves movies and none with exactly that cast. Does anybody know about this "series"?

**F**lorence Cunningham found a reprint of a Wodehouse article from the 1919 *Vanity Fair*, appearing recently in the *Wall Street Journal*. One quote: "The only difference I could see between the U. S. G. and the ordinary practitioner in black mask was that the latter occasionally left his victim carfare."

**O**ur San Francisco chapter is putting on a Wodehouse skit at the convention and one of the characters is Galahad Threepwood. The part requires an actor polished, urbane, worldly, witty, wise, and deft—a shoo-in for me. Imagine my chagrin when I was asked to play Lord Emsworth.

OM

The Oldest Member

# An early PGW biographical sketch

**F**rits Menschaar discovered this very early sketch. He comments as follows:

This bio of Plum appears at the end of a 1911 novel, *The Lighted Match*, by Charles Neville Buck, published by W. J. Watt, Plum's American publisher at the time. It appears in a small section at the end, entitled "Two Popular Authors." To wit: Buck and Plum.

There is no mention of it in the McIlvaine or any other bibliography. *The Lighted Match* looks like bilge (although not quite in the Rosie M. Banks class), the reason why its plummy bio, buried in the back, was not 'discovered' before.

It is interesting that Wodehouse was called "the logical successor to O. Henry."

This must be one of the earliest Wodehouse pen-portraits. The earliest known is apparently the one by Bradshaw in the March 1910 issue of *The Captain*. It is partly quoted in the Barry Phelps biography and also mentions the O. Henry connection.

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PELHAM GRANVILLE [sic] WODEHOUSE

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

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

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

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

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

Three years ago P. G. Wodehouse came to New York. He liked the American field and wanted to see whether his humor would strike the American fancy. It struck. Mr. Wodehouse had tried his wings here only a few months when magazine editors were bidding for his manuscripts. His short stories have appeared generally in the magazines, and while one often finds the delightful touch of pathos, there is always an abundance of laughter. In *Cosmopolitan*, *Collier's Weekly*, *Ainslee's*, and many other publications these stories appear as often as Mr. Wodehouse will contribute.

His novel, *The Intrusion of Jimmy*, last year was a decided success. In it Mr. Wodehouse demonstrated his ability to hold his sprinting speed over a Marathon distance. The book, after giving the flattering returns of a large sale, found its second production on the stage. In its dramatized version with the title, *A Gentleman of Leisure*, it has had its tryout on the road and has proven a success.



With Douglas Fairbanks in the leading role, it will be one of next Fall's elaborate productions on Broadway.

In personality Mr. Wodehouse is quite as interesting as one might gather from his writings. Physically a man of splendid proportions and mentally a fountain of spirited humor, he is, nevertheless, modest to the point usually termed "retiring," and is well known only after long acquaintance-ship. He is fond of all sports, and on reaching America became truly the native in his enthusiasm for baseball. Mr. Wodehouse says that one epoch of his literary career dates from his purchase of an automobile in 1907. The purchase was an investment of considerable gravity to a young man just commencing to command an entree. The automobile lasted some two weeks and came to a violent end against a telephone pole. Mr. Wodehouse thought out the major problems of life sitting on the turf near the pole from a more or less lacerated point of view. He decided, among other things, that his *forte* was rather writing about motors than riding about in motors.

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

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No author's name is given. The sketch was preceded by a full-page studio photograph of PGW.

*The Intrusion of Jimmy* is described by implication as his first book. It was in fact his thirteenth. But his eleven books of school stories had been published only in England and his first adult book, *Love among the Chickens*, published in America in 1909, had apparently been forgotten by 1911. The McIlvaine bibliography shows that when this notice was written Plum had published about eighteen short stories and the serialized *Love Among the Chickens* in American magazines.

## Press cuttings wanted

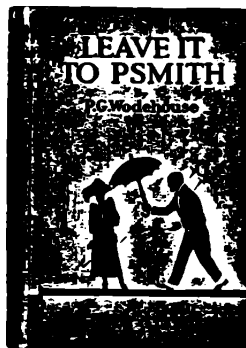
by Tony Ring

Tony is one of our leading collectors of Wodehouse material. He has devoted a large room to his collection and here he is asking for our help to expand it in a new direction.

I am trying to build up my Wodehouse collection into something more than just books and magazines—I would like to think it could evolve into a research source in due course. To this end, I would like to build a collection of press cuttings—both contemporary and historic—and wonder whether an appeal to TWS members to send me copies of all articles which they see in their daily papers about, quoting, or referring to PGW, however trivial the reference appears to be, would be feasible.

Many writers use PGW or his characters in a way which assumes that the reader needs no further explanation. In time, I am sure a worthy study of this aspect of his work could be produced, but so great is the breadth of the media that I would expect that many—indeed probably most—such references would be lost.

I would obviously be happy to reimburse postage or other costs. Although the entire page on which the reference is made would be ideal, it might also be expensive, and a clipping would be fine if accompanied by the relevant date and full name of the publication.



# In the Wodehouse

by Charles  
E. Gould,  
Jr.

Now that Hallowe'en is over and my tenth annual October Wodehouse catalogue is in the mail, I've been reflecting, rather to my surprise, that of my forty-eight Hallowe'ens I spent ten wrapping Wodehouse books for shipment to destinations over half the globe; and, like Nathaniel Hawthorne in "The Custom House," Introductory to *The Scarlet Letter*, I'm feeling some slight but remarkable autobiographical impulse, at least to the extent that, as he writes, "Borne on such queer vehicle of fame, a knowledge of my existence, so far as a name conveys it," has been carried where it had never been before. My first catalogue, with 111 items, was really nothing more than a typed and photocopied list, as is my most recent with 394, both of them produced on the same old blue IBM Selectric II typewriter. Seated beside me, the colleague who shares my office, or whose I share at Kent School, likens me to the "old stone savage armed" in Frost's poem as I hunt and peck and chisel out of the platen what John Updike has called "dark marks on paper which become handsomely (or, in my case, at least legibly) reproducible many times over." Unlike Mr. Updike, I'm not creating anything; I'm merely recording what I have here and what I know or think or observe about it: but actually I do, I admit, regard the production of my catalogue as a creative act; and that, I imagine, is why I have been so stubborn about retaining the physical features of it: the typewriter (which I regard as P. G. Wodehouse regarded the old Monarch machine which, Barry Phelps says in the new Wodehouse biography, "became extremely temperamental and led a pampered life . . . No stranger was allowed to touch it and it went everywhere with him . . . Porters were never allowed to carry it . . . A minor tragedy took place in December 1935 when it was given the last rites and laid to rest"); and the paper, on which I like to see words appearing in black rather than in the ephemeral green of laboratories and space centers. I keep track of my stock by lining it up on shelves, and I catalogue it by looking at it.

Sure, I lose track of it by misplacing it, and I retype and cut and paste when I have miscatalogued it; and each year I accommodate sales and acquisitions by the simple process of starting all over again with Item 1 on Page 1. I've enjoyed the process for a decade, intensely personal as in its odd way it is, justifying margins by counting spaces and feeling guilty for the silliest typo, and also creative as it is to the extent that every few seconds some old words and old figures appear on paper in brand-new order. But I may not enjoy it much longer. As the exasperated editor of this copy has already noticed, the old machine has slipped a cog and is not spacing properly; and, as the odd detractor has noted-and all my detractors are decidedly odd-one of the most creative features of my catalogues is my pricing. I note, for example, that exactly ten years ago I was offering a U. S. First Edition of *Love Among the Chickens*, Publisher's Advance Copy, at \$425.00, while this year I am offering another one, in slightly better condition, at a mere \$450.00. In that first catalogue I offered a rough U. S. First of *The Intrusion of Jimmy* at \$210.00, while now I am offering a fine one at \$375.00. Those samples suggest that not much has changed; but in the Wodehouse world, as perhaps in others that I know not of, the Law of Supply and Demand has an odd corollary: increased demand increases prices, and increased prices increase supply (as people rummage about the old manse), and increasing supply keeps prices roughly stable . . . excepting, of course, the titles and, especially, dust wrappers of which the supply originally was comparatively slim. Oddly, even ironically, some Wodehouse books which a decade ago seemed unique (the First U. S. *Bill the Conqueror* in dust wrapper, for example) are now comparatively available, at roughly the old price, while others (such as the U.K. First of *Uneasy Money or Something Fresh*) are now really scarce and astronomically pricey . . . and have been, for ten years. The corollary that I invented above does not always obtain, and I'm not sure that a computer would show why.

Still, a computer next Hallowe'en might see me less frazzled, less ghostly, done with kicking and screaming and counting

and cutting and pasting—unghouled, as it were—embracing the technology of my own generation. But I'll still be picking up the books one by one, noticing new charms, old defects, and the amazing prices I apparently paid. If I—if we—stop doing that, we're out of business or, more important, out of the joy of the business. Faster than I, you have already thought that the physical presence of the books is enough physicality: what they contain belongs to their readers, and cataloguing them might well be the work of a machine. A New Englander, born and brought up and to whatever extent educated in Maine, I feel reservations. Some years ago a dealer in my native state offered me a "signed Wodehouse" at, he said modestly, the price of \$3.00. Suppressing, with the skill which in this trade we learn after a while, let's say a week or ten days, any show of eagerness, I allowed as how (as we say in Maine) I might be able to offer a little more than that if the book were in reasonable condition. "Well," he said, as I handed him \$3.00 a few minutes later, "I never said it was signed by Wodehouse." Ain't these Down-Easters a stitch? More recently I acquired from another Maine bookseller—and typing this reminds me that I haven't paid him for it, nor have I been paid for it by the customer who presumably continues to examine it by the light of the full moon or the iridescent gills of a great fish—a first edition of a Wodehouse book signed in pencil "Hemingway" on the front free endpaper. Now, if *Mozart* is the antonym of *Rachmaninoff* and if *Lion* is the antonym of *Mouse*, is it possible that *Hemingway* once bought and marked for his own a book by Wodehouse? If not, then, as some 18th-century wit remarked in doubt of Homer's authenticity, it was somebody else with the same name.

More recently, I have been mulcted (a word you have not recently seen unless in a Wodehouse book, and a word which my colleague's dictionary disc will surprise me by knowing while my colleague himself won't) to the ancient tune of several thousand dollars by a dealer in Dorset, England, calling himself Mr. M. J. Page. Mr. Page did everything just right, up to a point: he offered, through my agent in New York, two

rare Wodehouse first editions, and he received and acknowledged payment for them, and promised to send the books, last July. Where Mr. Page fell down, in my opinion, is in not actually shipping the books, and in not replying to letters or telegraph messages after he received payment: my New York agent has not received any books, and he has not been able to make further contact with Mr. Page. I say nothing personal against Mr. Page who, unlike me, may be dandling upon his knee offspring, who, grown to man's or woman's estate, may eventually cry out, "Tell us, Dad, again, about the time you mulcted the Great American Wodehouse Specialist and his New York Agent out of enough to feed us on beans and toast for a year." I say instead, like a cousin of mine, "We all have our faults," and perhaps deep down we all wish we shared the apparent faults of Mr. Page.

Setting Mr. Page aside, since we can't be bothered to try to put him in Dartmoor Prison, my ten years' publication of this catalogue has made me many friends, most of whom I have not met and some of whom have died, among them Lyle Harris Kendall of Limestone Hills Bookshop in Texas; Walter S. White of Chevy Chase; Robert Chris of Cecil Court, London; and, encouraging me to produce a catalogue, in his last years, Robert Butler Davies French, of Trinity College Dublin, who was by then saturated in Wodehouse and wanted to swop annotations on Mark Twain, and Dickens as of course we did. Customers, on the same hand, fall into categories, into types which I'm sure my superiors in this lonesome trade have put into their computers: the wildly acquisitive, the sentimentally acquisitive, the embracingly acquisitive: in short, in Shakespeare's phrase, the lunatic, the lover and the poet, all seeking to acquire books by P. G. Wodehouse. My superiors in the trade have done well if they have identified me as any of the above, while I myself have been unable to do so. However, envious and admiring, I plan to muddle through until further notice, touching each book and each buyer as well as I can, recalling again words of Nathaniel Hawthorne (Bowdoin College 1825, the Class also of my great-grandfather and of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow whose younger

brother Samuel, author of hymn lyrics, was expelled from the College for bearing gin in a barrel clearly marked "water"):

*No longer seeking nor caring that my name  
should be blazoned abroad on title pages, I smiled  
to think that it now had another kind of vogue.*

And now, gazing upon shelf after  
shelf of Jenkins first editions, I can only echo  
the song in *Oliver*: Who will buy my beautiful  
oranges?

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## Electronic mail and PGW

by Len Lawson

Every day such people as Aunt Dahlia (Elin Woodger), Eve Halliday (Maria Sensale) and Ashe Marson (Christopher Riff) are on the net describing their activities, dispensing information about PGW, asking questions, musing on his writings, and much more. Those three recently told us about the NEWTS pilgrimage to PGW's house in Remsenburg. Our net is international, with members in several countries.

If you have a computer and a modem, or a workstation connected to Internet, you can join this group of PGW fans who are in contact daily. How can I do this, you ask? Well, if you currently have e-mail service that can find its way to the worldwide network Internet you are well on your way. Most universities, some larger libraries, many government agencies, commercial businesses—virtually every place with a large computer facility and a network—are tied into Internet. CompuServe and many other services such as MCI mail have access through their e-mail.

If you don't have e-mail you can join by subscribing to a local service that provides connections. Some of our members use these

services. There is a monthly fee for their use, but local phone numbers in most areas avoid long distance charges. On Internet you have access to many other e-mail listservers and the usenet news groups, providing forums for people with like interests, and the news group alt.fan.wodehouse. Good articles about Internet are in *MacUser* (April 1993) and *PC Magazine* (February 23, 1993). I will try to respond to your questions.

Uncle Fred  
aka Len Lawson

## *A Man of Means*

A "new" Wodehouse paperback

Frits Menschaar sends word of a new, paperback edition of *A Man Of Means*, by P. G. Wodehouse and C. H. Bovrill, Porpoise Books, 1993. This issue is made from the same plates as the 1991 limited (first) edition, now out of print.

The story was originally published as a six-part serial in the *Strand Magazine* in 1914 and in the *Pictorial Review* in 1916, but was never published in book form until John Fletcher of Porpoise Books brought it out in 1991.

Publication date of this paperback edition is July 30, 1993, to coincide with the San Francisco convention. Frits is taking advance orders at \$7 a copy. John Fletcher will bring the advance-order copies to the convention from England; they can be picked up at the convention or will be mailed by Frits in August. Frits says that Oliver Bovrill, grandson of C. H., will be coming to the convention with John Fletcher and will sign copies of the book.

# Hidden names

by Shirley  
Lawson

Shirley offers this Wodehouse word puzzle for our enjoyment. The hidden words can be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forward, or backward. Here are the clues:

1. Bertie's manservant
2. Valet fired for stealing Bertie's silk socks
3. Owner of the Empress of Blandings, Lord \_\_\_\_\_
4. Bertie's friend, Bingo \_\_\_\_\_
5. Bingo's wife, Rosie M. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Bowery orphan who becomes U. S. lightweight boxing champion
7. Narrator of the golf stories
8. Bertie's two ranking aunts
9. Jane Packer's beau (last name only) before her marriage to William Bates
10. London gentlemen's club
11. He drinks hot Scotch and lemon
12. Home of number 3 above
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Prosser
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Fiddleworth
15. Uncle Fred's nephew

Answers appear on page 25.

B	A	N	K	S	Z	X	A	E	C	S	G	T	O	S
S	G	N	I	D	N	A	L	B	F	E	B	I	G	P
H	M	G	L	Z	R	Y	Q	O	T	V	T	S	N	I
A	T	E	H	T	R	O	W	S	M	E	D	P	O	L
D	U	Q	A	H	J	R	L	E	R	E	E	E	P	I
R	L	J	D	D	O	T	F	K	E	J	L	L	F	R
O	G	O	S	S	O	T	T	R	N	D	T	V	J	E
N	T	L	A	N	Y	W	E	S	I	L	T	I	K	B
E	K	I	D	H	A	T	E	G	L	A	I	N	O	M
S	B	T	B	Y	T	B	R	S	L	N	L	D	L	E
Y	A	O	R	S	D	A	O	V	U	I	C	S	D	M
E	K	L	A	R	H	I	G	O	M	G	P	F	E	L
O	T	E	D	A	I	L	H	A	D	E	K	T	S	V
O	O	F	Y	A	B	R	H	A	D	R	A	L	T	Q

# Wodehouse and the Song of Songs

by Delicia  
Seay Cary  
and Peter  
Morris

—the most  
trite and  
hackneyed  
lyrics they  
could  
imagine

All Wodehouse lovers are aware of the frequency with which Wodehouse made use of allusions, both to literary and popular sources. These allusions are almost invariably ones that Wodehouse could expect his contemporary readers to recognize, and it is sad that the passing of time sometimes gives them the appearance of obscurity. A perfect example of this is the song "Sonny Boy," which was reprinted in the last issue of *Plum Lines* and which figures in at least three Wodehouse stories. Today's reader may fail to grasp the significance of Wodehouse's repeated choice of this song. As we will show, however, Wodehouse had a very specific reason for choosing "Sonny Boy" and a familiarity with the song's history helps us to appreciate the irony of these stories.

In his biography *Jolson: The Legend Comes to Life* (New York: Oxford, 1988) Herbert G. Goldman calls the account of "Sonny Boy's" creation "one of the most oft-told stories in show business." Indication of this oft-told status is given by the fact that David Jasen in *Tin Pan Alley* and biographers Goldman and Michael Freedland offer versions of the story which diverge on some details, while a third biographer, Robert Oberfirst, gives a significantly different account. In any case, there can be no doubt that Wodehouse would have been familiar with this story and could have expected many of his readers to share this knowledge.

The basics of that story are as follows. In 1928, while in Hollywood making *The Singing Fool*, the follow-up to *The Jazz Singer*, Al Jolson found himself in urgent need of a keynote song. He telephoned his regular songwriting team of Ray Henderson, B. G. "Buddy" DeSylva and Lew Brown in Atlantic City to request a song his character could sing to his dying three-year-old son. The renowned trio responded with what they thought would be a splendid practical joke, by writing a song which combined all of the most trite and hackneyed lyrics they could imagine. Jolson, however, realized that the song was exactly what he needed and sang it three times in the movie, with great success. The movie set box office records not eclipsed until *Gone With the Wind* ten years later, while

the song broke records for sales both as a disc and as sheet music. As Goldman asserts, the song conceived as a send-up of mawkishly sentimental song lyrics made Jolson "the biggest star in the world" (167). Years later, Jolson continued to be besieged with demands to sing "Sonny Boy," including one from Mrs. Douglas MacArthur, who received a private rendition.

Wodehouse makes reference to "Sonny Boy" in at least three stories published between 1929 and 1939 — "Jeeves and the Song of Songs" (1929), "The Smile that Wins" (1931) and "Sonny Boy" (1939). In all three cases it is clear that one use Wodehouse makes of the song is to gently ridicule its vapid lyrics and the equally shallow listeners who had failed to see the joke intended on them and made the song so phenomenally successful. The implicit irony of this situation makes a perfect setting for Wodehouse's gentle mode of satire, which so frequently is used to expose the excesses of sentimentality. And, indeed, all three of these stories revolve around a hackneyed plot behind which, with a knowledge of the song's history, we can see Wodehouse's genial amusement at the excesses to which human nature is prone.

"Jeeves and the Song of Songs" is the story in which "Sonny Boy" figures most directly and most extensively. In it, Jeeves concocts an elaborate scheme to extricate Tuppy Glossop from his engagement to the overbearing opera student Cora Bellinger. Tuppy, as part of his effort to convince Cora that he is serious-minded, has agreed to sing "Sonny Boy" at the "Lads' Club for the local toughs." Bertie typically is pursuing an "unswerving policy" of singing "Sonny Boy" while in the bathtub, but considers the song one "only to be attempted by a few elect in the privacy of the bathroom." Jeeves nonetheless manages to persuade Bertie to perform the song himself. According to the scheme, Bertie's performance will immediately precede Tuppy's, thereby ensuring a hostile reception. But Jeeves applies a further turn of the screw by seeing to it that two earlier performers offer renditions of "Sonny Boy" and also manipulating things so that both Bertie and Tuppy believe that they are the first

*"only to be attempted by a few elect in the privacy of the bathroom"*

to sing the song. The reception they receive from the audience is predictable; the "blood-orange merchants and their young" express hostility while Bertie is singing and then pelt Tuppy with rotten fruits and vegetables. The plan seems to have gone awry when it is then revealed that Cora Bellinger has been delayed and has not witnessed Tuppy's humiliation. But Jeeves salvages things by greeting her upon her arrival by telling her that Tuppy has especially requested that she sing "Sonny Boy." "The Bellinger" marches on stage with a doll in hand to sing to and the inevitable debacle assures the end of Tuppy's engagement. A familiarity with the history of the song serves to underline the story's main point: the futility of pretending to be other than oneself. Additionally, the song "Sonny Boy" itself is subtly included in the irony. By aligning it with the characters who are either excessively silly or excessively serious, and by getting it chased off the stage, Wodehouse gains a measure of revenge against the song for the frustration he must have felt at seeing it enjoy far more success than his own much more skilled lyrics.

In "The Smile that Wins," as noted in the last issue, "Sonny Boy" is the song which Lord Brangbolton is singing in the bath, and from whose melodic structure Adrian Mulliner is able to deduce the location of his missing bar of soap. The parallels between this story and "Jeeves and the Song of Songs" are instructive. Like Bertie, Lord Brangbolton is singing the song in his bathtub. And the plot again ends up subjecting the song to the kind of scrutiny which it cannot possibly withstand. Whereas Bertie had referred to "that bit about the Angels being lonely, where you need every ounce of concentration in order to make a spectacular finish," in this story Adrian Mulliner deduces that at a particular line "the muscles unconsciously contract" in a way that would cause a bar of soap to fly off in a predictable trajectory. The inherent silliness of the characters is thus underlined by the song they choose to take so seriously. Additionally, the sentimental main story-line of the father interfering with his daughter's choice of husband is reinforced by the inclusion of this song with its bizarre history.

While these first two stories include the song as part of the ironizing of sentimental-

ity, in the story "Sonny Boy" the use is at greater remove. This time the song itself is never mentioned, but instead the whole story functions as an ironic commentary on the sentimental lyrics of Jolson's best-known song. The singer croons, "There's no way of showing / What you mean to me, Sonny boy," but the father in Wodehouse's story demonstrates that his son means only a source of income to him. Bingo Little, the one Drone who is roped into marriage and fatherhood, has got himself in a scrape by losing ten pounds betting on a horse race. He's delighted to receive that very amount in the mail from his wife, but is immediately disappointed to discover that the money is intended to open a bank account for their infant son, Algernon Aubrey. But he soon finds what he thinks is a golden opportunity to increase the sum. Unlike the father in the story who sings, "You're my dearest prize, Sonny boy . . . You've your mother's eyes, Sonny boy," Bingo believes his son to be the ugliest child alive and make a bet with his bookie to that effect. To no-one's surprise Bingo loses the bet, as it turns out that every father in the story believes his own son to be the ugliest. His next money-making scheme also involves young Algernon. In contrast to the singer's plea, "Let me hold you nearer," Bingo decides that the best way to profit from his son is to abandon him with his wealthy godfather, Oofy Prosser. His hope is that, as in one of his wife's sentimental stories, the godfather will bestow his riches upon the baby. The plan works, but for reasons which again deflate the sentimental expectation. Oofy gets the scare of his life waking up and seeing young Algernon's face, and is forcefully confronted with the reason why he should not be getting married at the very time when he is most in need of such a reminder. He gratefully gives Bingo fifty pounds, thereby making Algernon "dear" in a completely different sense from the one suggested in the song!

As all three of these stories show, Wodehouse makes skillful use of the history of "Sonny Boy" to add another dimension to his ironic presentation of excessive sentimentality. While we can understand the stories without a familiarity with this background, being aware of it helps us to gain a greater appreciation of the multi-layered nature of Plum's art.

# Of bimbos and himbos

*"bimboesque  
or bimbotic  
would do  
just as  
well"*

**W**illiam Hardwick reports an amusing eruption of bimboism in Britain. Details are given in this item from the *English Daily Telegraph* of February 22, 1993:

A new word, "bimbonic," enters the language. This adjective, most suitable to fluffy blondes of few years and fewer brains, made its debut on Terry Wogan's *Friday Night* show. The author was Cleo Rocos, a minor actress. Discussing her less tasteful roles, Miss Rocos mentioned her "bimbonic shape." Used by P. G. Wodehouse, the word came back into vogue in the 1980s apropos Mandy Smith and sundry page three girls. Derivatives followed: bimlette for teenagers, and himbo, the male equivalent. "Bimbonic is logical," says John Sykes, an editor at Oxford University Press, "although bimboesque or bimbotic would do just as well."

The story inspired the following response. (Note: Wodehouse and Raymond Chandler were near-contemporary students at Dulwich College.)

## Old Alleynian small talk?

SIR:—Peterborough refers to P. G. Wodehouse's use of the word bimbo, but not that by Raymond Chandler.

Among the smokes, shines, binges and others not necessarily undesirable on the means streets of Chandler's big hard-boiled city are bimbos of both sexes.

In *The Long Good-Bye* there is "Big Willy Magoon, a vice squad bimbo. He thinks he's tough" and also "some lacquered chippie . . . seems like the bim was one of his sleepy time gals."

Earlier in the Bay City short story which was cannabilised (in Chandler's own description) to provide material for *The Lady in the Lake* as well as *The Long Good-Bye*, "a blonde bim called Adrian" meets an untimely end.

Bimbo, I suppose, is a diminutive of Italian

origin, with connotations of the organ-grinder's monkey, but it is a pleasant fancy that the near contemporaries Wodehouse and Chandler may have learnt the word at Dulwich little short of a century ago.

DAVID LANGLANDS  
Hinton Ampner, Hants

Norman Murphy's reply was prompt:

## Gift of the gat

SIR:—It was their time in America, not Dulwich, that gave Wodehouse and Chandler the word "bimbo." But it was their Classical education at Dulwich that enabled them to use it to such effect. Chandler always maintained this enabled him to recognize true vernacular speech. J. B. Priestley praised Wodehouse's mastery of American slang when he said: "Meet a New York crook of Mr. Wodehouse's invention, and you find that he talks not as such crooks actually do talk, but as they would like to."

T. P. MURPHY  
Gosforth, Cumbria

6 botm cntr

The *American Heritage Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary* agree that the word is from the Italian *bimbo*, baby, and the *OED* supports Norman Murphy, calling it "slang (orig. U.S.)." Earliest quote is from the *American Magazine*, 1919, no author given, with Wodehouse quoted in 1924 and 1947.



# Across the pale parabola

by Peter  
Morris

This *New Statesman* assignment, set in June of 1973, posed a question which surely has fretted many readers of *Leave It to Psmith*: what is the rest of the poem which begins "Across the pale parabola of Joy"? This is of course the first line from a poem by Ralston McTodd, but the succeeding lines remain a matter of conjecture due to Psmith's realization that "any prolonged study of [McTodd's poetry] was likely to spoil his little holiday." Contestants were asked to rectify the omission.

The judging of this contest left something to be desired, since the arbiters complained that too few entries had achieved "a particularly Wodehousian flavour." But of course a poem by the sullen, dishevelled author of *Songs of Squalor* should be no more expected to sound Wodehousian than would a sample of the prose of Florence Craye or Rosie M. Banks. As a result, although the winning entries are an imaginative lot, they are not necessarily ones that the "Singer of Saskatoon" would have been likely to write. It is especially interesting to note the widely divergent ideas of the poem's subject matter.

"But your  
parabola is  
just inept,  
you'll have  
to try  
again"

Across the pale parabola of joy,  
I've sent you sailing. God, what style!  
What grace!

Your upward arc, ascending to the sky,  
Will wipe the smile off their fast bowler's  
face.

That's six if ever six there was! I told  
Our captain I'm a hitter. 'Just you wait,'  
I said, 'and put me in at tenth. I'll save  
The day. I'll set you right. I'll seal their fate.'  
And so I have. No, fool, why should I run?  
Don't jump about and wave your bat and  
shout —

I tell you, it's a six. At least . . . Oh, hell.  
All right—a sportsman *knows* when he is out.  
(by Alison Prince)

[Note: a six in cricket is equivalent to a grand slam in baseball.]

Across the pale parabola of joy . . .  
Thus might Pythagoras have serenaded,  
And with gay geometric trope, persuaded  
Some Grecian girl (or preferably, boy)  
To roam far from the madding *hoi polloi*,  
Along some pleasant vale or pathway  
shaded,  
Where he could sport with her-him quite  
unaided,  
With no one near to trouble or annoy.  
Or should I feel some tincture of remorse,  
Imputing that was his idea of fun?  
Perhaps he would consistently refuse  
Any but intellectual intercourse,  
And talk of nothing else but what he'd done  
About the square on the hypotenuse?  
(by Stanley J. Sharpless)

Across the pale parabola of Joy  
The maths professor scored a thick red line:  
'No, no, my dear, you really can't deploy  
Co-ordinates of x in that design.  
Hyperbolas, perhaps, one could accept,  
Catenaries might even fit the bill,  
But your parabola is just inept,  
You'll have to try again, you really will.'  
Poor Joy, despondent, crept back to her  
room  
And until supper time shed many a tear,  
But then her boy friend, Joe, dispelled her  
gloom,  
By whispering words of comfort in her ear:  
There, there, old girl, don't get into a tizz,  
Your curves are far more interesting than  
his.'

(by George van Schaick)

Across the pale parabola of joy  
Inclines the rectilinear graph of hope:  
Hedonic calculus. Lovers employ  
A triangle (eternal)—lust its slope  
And grief its pointed summit. Parallel,  
The lines of effort and achievement bear,  
Never to meet—or only joined in Hell.  
Despair's a circle; boredom is a square;  
A pointed pentagram, anxiety.  
The rhombus gets that way through life's  
hard knocks,  
Squashed by defeat, frustration, entropy.  
Each feeling has its form or frame or box:  
A soul-geometry, not taught in schools,  
But Euclid, oh, what are the bloody rules?  
(by Jack Black)

# Gally, Sally, and Dahlia

## A tour of Bertie Wooster's London

by Elin  
Woodger

### *The Background:*

Thanks to the miracles of modern technology, not to mention the efforts of Len Lawson and Maria Sensale, a number of Wodehouse enthusiasts have become "connected" to each other through the electronic mail network known as PGW-Net. I have belonged to that small but growing band for a year now, and have reaped enormous benefits: a Plum-filled education, a great many laughs, and some wonderful new friends.

Perhaps the greatest benefit occurred when Toni Rudersdorf—known to PGW-Netters as Sally—generously invited me (Aunt Dahlia on the net) to accompany her on a jaunt to England. No fool I, the reservations were made the next day, and the passport was in hand the day after that. Then Sally sent me a message that had me doing cartwheels in the office: Colonel Norman Murphy had offered to lead us about London on his famous One Man's Tour.

The fixture was set for our last day in England. Until then we comported ourselves with the dignity and aplomb commensurate with our status as TWSers—which is to say that we had a topping good time mucking about London and the English countryside: a pilgrimage to Guildford, where we visited Mr. Wodehouse's birthplace; a delightful dinner with TWS compatriot Tony Ring; and a most pleasant day in the archives of the P. G. Wodehouse Library at Dulwich College, where we perused Plum's correspondence with Guy Bolton and Peter Schwed.

The absolute topper of the week was Colonel Murphy's tour, and it is on this event that I herewith report.

### *The Tour:*

My first impression of Colonel Murphy was that here was a true British gent—dapper is definitely the word. He was attired

in a manner one so rarely sees these days: bowler hat set smartly on his head, the tie just so, raincoat buttoned up, umbrella over the arm, the pipe either lit or in the act of being lit. Only the monocle was missing, and he had worn that when he played Galahad Threepwood at the New York convention.

Gally, in fact, is the best way to describe Norman Murphy—but add a touch of Jeeves, for the breadth of Colonel Murphy's knowledge boggles the mind. When I tell you that he began by telling me things I had never heard about the man for whom the city of Everett, Massachusetts, was named—and I live there!—that should give you some idea of the range of his fish-fed brain.

Like Gally, Colonel Murphy has detailed and witty stories about nearly everything and everybody. He also shares Gally's talent for getting people to open up to him at once, for everyone we encountered on our tour seemed eager to tell him things. One can see how he has acquired such a fund of knowledge!

*—causing a stampede of  
some irate Liberals whose  
views regarding women in  
the club room may only be  
seen as conservative!*

This is a fascinating man with much to share, and he shares it in a rapid, staccato fashion—a machine-gun delivery. Having failed to bring my English-English dictionary with me, it took me some time to fully understand Colonel Murphy, and my reactions consisted mainly of emulating the village idiot. The chin is still sore from dragging on the ground in slack-jawed wonder at all Colonel Murphy knows about EVERYTHING. I had taken along a pocket tape recorder to catch Norman in action, but I was so enthralled by his stories that he was halfway through a tale before it occurred to me to pull the thing out and turn it on—resulting in a tape full of nothing but punch lines and raucous laughter.

For six hours we cut a wide swath through Mayfair to the Strand. Colonel Murphy's energy, like Gally's, seemed

—why the tower of St James's Church is made of plastic

limitless. He charged onwards, his two disciples trotting at his heels in a desperate attempt to keep up, only to tumble into him when he abruptly stopped to point with his umbrella or pipe and regale us with yet another story.

Ours was a tour of Bertie Wooster's London, using as its *point d'appui* that excellent Murphy tome, *In Search of Blandings*. This stunningly well-researched book took him a little over 20 years to complete. His research continues, for we saw much that he had not included in the book or that he has discovered since publication. Bertie Wooster's flat, which had eluded him for some time, he finally tracked down to a house on Berkeley Street. He took us to the very spot. We saw Aunt Dahlia's London digs, near the pub which he believes is the basis for the Junior Ganymede Club. (Martha Grimes fans, take note: it is the "I Am The Only Running Footman," at one time an exclusive gathering place for butlers, valets, and such ilk.)

With special delight Colonel Murphy told us about his discovery of the very house in Norfolk where Bertie and Mrs. Bingo stopped for help on their way home from the racetrack in "Jeeves and the Old School Chum." Everything about the place—the loneliness of the road, the location near a racetrack, the solitude of the house—matched Wodehouse's descriptions to a T, and he was rather impressed with himself, as well he should be!

So many places: Wodehouse residences; the "Jeeves of Belgravia" dry-cleaning establishment; the sites of the Bath Club and Bucks Club, inspirations for the Drones Club; the hat shop (where Colonel Murphy has his bowlers made) which was the model for Bodmin's; a unique tailor's shop which makes clothing for royal and state occasions in 18th and 19th century court styles.

So many stories: how the Burlington Arcade came to be built, why the tower of St. James's Church is made of plastic, how a weather vane at the Admiralty building saved England more than once, and so on and on. We learned more about the architectural history of London than most Londoners learn in a lifetime. Colonel Murphy is ac-

tively engaged in historical preservation, and many are the buildings still standing thanks to his efforts.

But, alas, there have been some failures, too. It had been many months since he was last in London, and several times he said, "Now, what I want to show you next is just around this corner—" only to draw up in disgust at a construction project. "Oh, the bastards!" he would mutter. "They've done it again!"

At day's end, we met Colonel Murphy's wife Charlotte and daughter Helen—first for drinks at the Sherlock Holmes pub, then on to a fascinating, somewhat dingy place with low ceilings and dirt walls, resembling an old bomb shelter, and finally to Colonel Murphy's club for dinner: the National Liberal Club, near the site of Wodehouse's own "Senior Conservative Club." The National Liberal was grandiose, impressive, and stodgy: a certain clubroom was reserved exclusively for men. This did not deter Colonel Murphy from shooting us into the room for a quick look-see—causing a stampede of some slightly irate Liberals whose views regarding women in the club room may only be seen as conservative!



Despite our throbbing feet, the day was over too soon. A happy event had brought Colonel Murphy to London when Toni and I were visiting: the birth of his first grandchild. We will always bless this little girl for her excellent timing, and bless Norman Murphy for giving us memories to treasure for a lifetime. Thank you, Gally— Sally and Dahlia salute you!

# Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes; or Le Mot Juste

A Fresh Look at the Masterpieces of P. G. Wodehouse

Reviewed  
by Ann  
Whipple

In a review in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Richard Boston writes of the novels of Georges Simenon that they are "so pellucid that they don't call for explanation." I would never want to confound the works of P. G. Wodehouse with those of Simenon, but I always assumed that something like this principle applied to Wodehouse. With Kristin Thompson's tremendous book under my belt, I see now that I was to a great extent in error in this unconsidered view. Ms. Thompson—who surely rejoices in her position of Wodehouse archivist—brings a wealth of learning and humanity to her study of the Jeeves and Wooster stories and novels. (One is astonished and impressed to learn that her first dip into *tout ce qu'il y a du chic* in fiction was in 1982, when her husband presented her with *The Code of the Woosters*. It is to her credit that she has not looked back and has, one must assume, worked like billy-o ever since to produce this prodigious tome.)

As a former graduate student in literature, I found the stomach knotting up a bit at Thompson's introduction of Russian Formalist criticism as basic to her "fresh look" at my comfortable favorite's work. It took me back a little too forcibly, I thought, to those fraught student days; I prepared to compare myself, in toad-beneath-the-harrow-ness, with Bertie Wooster trying to get through *Types of Ethical Theory*. A sample of what our enthusiastic author wants us to accept as basic to Wodehousian truth: "The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known .... Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important." All perfectly true, no doubt .... If one has the equivalent of a Scripture Knowledge Prize, of course, all that learning is naturally going to come to the fore sometimes.

The first hurdle past, however, I found that the old brain limbered up a bit, and I

quite enjoyed the unwonted mental exercise. Reading Thompson's work is not in the least like reading a Jeeves novel; as it must, it declines a good deal from *that* ideal, but what doesn't? The pleasant flip-side is that she quotes liberally and enthusiastically and pointedly from the stories and novels, picking out what is unquestionably among the funniest and most telling material. Thus one has the pleasure of being reminded of hilarious episodes while being shown them, often, in a bright new context. Thompson's grasp is astonishing; she has truly got inside the books and the characters and deals with Bertie and Jeeves and their world and their relationship as if they were on her own level of reality. Than which, in a critical study, no one could ask more.

Thompson's scholarship is far from jejune, and her well-researched insights can add immeasurably to the delight a Wodehouse fan takes in his writings. For example, most readers have sensed something of Wodehouse's novel and extravagant use of clichés but few of us have been tempted to analyze or track down any unknowns. Thompson searches out several arcane phrases with illuminating results, as when she leads us from Bertie's "I reeled and might have fallen" to a vivid scene in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and to an appropriate source for the name of one of the tougher eggs whom Bertie encounters in his career.

Thompson's study naturally enhances our understanding and appreciation of Jeeves and Bertie as fictional beings. She deals with the parallels between Wodehouse's work and that of Conan Doyle and others in both the detective and romance traditions, putting his achievement into literary history as both derivative and influential. (She missed the source for Aunt Dahlia's French chef Anatole, however, as detailed in a recent issue of *Plum Lines*.) In her analysis of the partnership between Jeeves and Bertie, which she likens

to a marriage, and their individual development as the stories progress, she gives, I think, even the most astute reader some new standpoint from which to view characters whom generations of readers have adopted as alter egos and models of deportment and touchstones of civility. Better than that, however, she makes us see again what many of us have simply and happily felt and admired, and been selfishly thankful for: the astonishing intelligence and superlative craftsmanship of P. G. Wodehouse. Through Thompson's disciplined study we marvel anew at the artistry that created and elaborated, in such polished but lively language and imagery, the world of the Drones Club and Brinkley Manor and all the gilded geography inhabited and inspirited by the incomparable pair, Bertram Wilberforce Wooster and Reginald Jeeves, his man.

As if all this were not enough, Thompson adds two impressive appendices, one a table of the magazine and book publications for the Jeeves and Bertie stories, and the other a most intelligent treatment of the chancy subject of chronology. Never mind. It is a charming and enlightening book and one well worth reading and possessing.

*Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes*, published by James H. Heineman, Inc, Book Publishers, 475 Park Avenue, New York NY 10022, 1992. ISBN 0-87008-139-X, 390 pages, \$24.95. Distributed by Bookworld Services, Inc., 1933 Whitfield Loop, Sarasota FL 34243, telephone (800) 444 2524.

On paper, Blair Eggleston was bold, cold, and ruthless. Like so many of our younger novelists, his whole tone was that of a disillusioned, sardonic philanthropist who had drunk the cup of illicit love to its dregs but was always ready to fill up again and have another. . .

Deprived of his fountain-pen, however, Blair was rather timid with women. He had never actually found himself alone in an incense-scented studio with a scantily-clad princess reclining on a tiger skin, but in such a situation he would most certainly have taken a seat as near to the door as possible and talked about the weather.

*Hot Water*, 1932

## "To my daughter Leonora . . ."

By Charles McCorquodale

Plum's best known dedication, beginning with the words above, appeared in the 1926 novel *The Heart of a Goof* and has been quoted many times since. Here Charles McCorquodale lets us in on its origin.

The Master's most famous dedication is often mentioned in *Plum Lines* so let us get the origin right. I quote from "To the Critics, These Pearls: P. G. Wodehouse Dedications" by Barry Phelps. This article appeared in the April 1983 issue of the *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*.

"To my daughter Leonora without whose never-failing sympathy and encouragement this book would have been finished in half the time."

However, the scarce Alston Rivers edition of *A Gentlemen of Leisure* (1910) reveals that this dedication originally went, sixteen years earlier, to Herbert Westbrook. . . . The Herbert Jenkins re-issue of *A Gentlemen of Leisure* in 1921 is dedicated to Douglas Fairbanks Senior. Maybe this adds significance to the dedication, in 1924, of Westbrook's book *The Booby Prize*:

"To P. G. Wodehouse I dedicate this volume at the risk of impairing our ancient friendship."

The McIlvaine bibliography shows that the text of the dedication to Herbert Westbrook differs slightly from the later version:

To Herbert Westbrook, without whose never-failing advice, help, and encouragement this book would have been finished in half the time.

A possible explanation of the dedication to Fairbanks is found in the bibliography's note that Fairbanks played "Jimmy" in the 1911 stage production of the novel.

# Copyright caution

I recently received the following letter from A P Watt Ltd, Literary Agents, of London. The letter is self-explanatory. For reasons of privacy I have omitted names.

20 April 1993

Dear Mr Ratcliffe

P G Wodehouse

Norman Murphy has suggested that you would be the best person to write to on this matter.

A Mr — recently presented a radio programme [about P. G. Wodehouse] which was broadcast by the BBC. Mr — tells me that he initially called Penguin Books, who publish many of Plum's works in paperback in the UK, and asked who he should contact for permission to quote. That person referred him not to us, as they should have done, but to what he called "a Wodehouse society in California". Someone from that organisation—which I assume is yours?—told him there would be no problem and he could go ahead.

The broadcast which was made by Mr — in good faith was in fact a severe breach of copyright. We have been able to sort it all out after the event, but I would hate anyone else to be given misleading information. Naturally I've written to Penguin, too!

Forgive me if this is nothing to do with you, or if Mr — simply misunderstood what he was told, but could I put in a big plea for you to refer any such enqui-

ries back to us? Might it be possible to mention something along these lines in *Plum Lines*, since I know that has a wide circulation among Wodehouse fans who might be tempted to reproduce Plum's works not realising the copyright implications?

With thanks and best wishes

Yours sincerely

(signed)  
Linda Shaughnessy

Ukridge lives! Only that buoyant entrepreneur could have taken such a big, broad, flexible view, sweeping his arm round dramatically, overturning a plaster cast of the Infant Samuel at Prayer, and urging expansively, "Go right ahead, old horse!"

It *must* have been Ukridge. Surely no member of our society—keenly intelligent and worldly wise as we all are—would have given such "permission" in ordinary circumstances. I can only guess there was a misunderstanding somewhere. Let us strive earnestly to avoid such ranygazoo in the future.



# Something new

by Doug  
Stoow

Pauline Blanc reports that the Lee Davis book, *Wodehouse, Bolton and Kern*, will be issued by Jimmy Heineman later this year. Lee Davis's father was Bolton's and Kern's physician, and Lee used to caddy for them as a teenager.

Jon Lellenberg and William Hardwick report that on March 28 BBC radio ran a program entitled "What Ho, Wodehouse," described in the *Radio Times* as "a literary and musical excursion into the world, wit, and wisdom of one of English literatures most private, unassuming, and yet perpetually popular authors—P. G. Wodehouse"

Mr. Hardwick sent a photocopy of an article on the Blandings saga from the March 1993 *Book and Magazine Collector*. The magazine mentions the little-known 1992 Penguin paperback, *Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best*, containing nine short stories, for £5.99.

Another of his goodies was a small BBC radio catalog listing all their spoken word tapes. P. G. Wodehouse is included, as well as a number of lesser, no-count authors. The tapes, and possibly the catalog, can be ordered from Pinnacle Records, Electron House, Cray Avenue, St. Mary Cray, Orpington, Kent BR3 3PN, England, telephone (0689) 870622.

Correction: I mistakenly reported in the last issue of *Plum Lines* that the recently published facsimile of *The Swoop* came with a slipcase. It does not. Sorry.

Sotheran's of London is a previously unlisted source of Wodehouse books. In response to an inquiry they replied: "We do indeed regularly have a stock of P. G. Wodehouse, usually first editions in either cloth and dust wrappers or newly bound in half morocco. We would be pleased to receive want lists. The most interesting item we have at the moment is a *William Tell Told Again*, first edition fifth issue in decorative cloth, £198." Henry Sotheran Limited, 2 Sackville Street, Picadilly, London W1X 2DP.

## Catalogs received:

Limestone Hills Book Shop  
Box 1125, Glen Rose TX 76043

Nigel Williams Books  
7 Waldeck Grove, West Norwood  
London SE27 0BE, England

A Common Reader  
141 Tompkins Avenue  
Pleasantville NY 10570

Let me know if you see anything by or about  
P. G. Wodehouse.

Information and new memberships  
Marilyn MacGregor

Dues payments and address changes  
Tom Wainwright

Contributions to *Plum Lines*  
Ed Ratcliffe, OM

Dues are \$15 per year.

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Wodehouse Estate.

# Wodehouse and the great Russians: the saga continues

by Norman  
Murphy

As many members of the society will know, it is my firm belief that most of Wodehouse's fiction is based on fact. And, where he did invent fiction, then Fate soon turned his fiction into fact.

Who can forget Bradbury Fisher's pride in the trousers worn by Ouimet when he beat Vardon and Ray, and his delight when he bought J. H. Taylor's shirt-stud? Far-fetched? Not at all. Last month a golf club dated 1749 went on sale and bids came in from all over the world. Last week I read of an auction in America where someone paid a thousand dollars for a toothpick which some baseball player was chewing when he hit the home run that won the game that won the pennant.

At the Wodehouse convention in New York, Charles Gould gave a masterly dissertation on Wodehouse and the Great Russians. He drew the analogy that the great ironic passages of Wodehouse had their origins in the gloom and misery of Dostoyevsky and the rest of the boys who swapped tales over the old samovar.

As Charles said, Vladimir Brusiloff said it all in "The Clicking of Cuthbert:"

"No novelists anywhere any good except me. P. G. Wodehouse and Tolstoi not bad. Not good, but not bad. . ."

While it is not certain that Wodehouse ever read Tolstoy, we know that Tolstoy DID read Wodehouse. (Apparently he bought *The Captain* boy's magazine to teach his children English.)

But, I am delighted to announce, life has caught up with fiction and Vladimir Brusiloff once more.

The *Daily Telegraph* of 31 July 1992 has the following entry:

A Russian artist, Leonid Efross, is turning heads around the royal courts of Europe—on a mission from the Kremlin. Palette in hand, the exotic-looking Efross has been palace-hopping around London since March. The Queen, the Queen Mother, the Princess

Royal, and Princess Michael of Kent are among those who have posed for his daubs.

After sittings, the frock-coated Efross shuffles off on the Tube to his modest digs in Cockfosters. He will eventually make enamel miniatures of the Royal Family, to be housed in the Kremlin Armoury Museum.

The sort of Russian who chooses Dostoyevsky for his breakfast reading, Efross likens his work to that of an alchemist.

"When I make an enamel, it is through a combination of work, will, and fire," he explains.

A bibliophile, he is collecting English books to take with him to Holland in September, when he will call in on Queen Beatrix. "I've found a very good English author," he tells me, tweaking his beard like the worst sort of Aunt Agatha. "His name is P. G. Wodehouse."





# Wodehouse at war

by Donald  
Daniel

I have read Iain Sproat's *Wodehouse at War* with much interest. I had hoped that it would contain details of the Wodehouse's life between Plum's release from internment to the departure for Paris in 1943 (?). Although I have read everything I can about Plum's life there has been infuriatingly little concerning this particular period, about which I am very interested. This arises because it seems they stayed with various members of the German aristocracy, to some of whom I am related. I would like to see if through family links I could discover just how they lived during the war.

# Anthony Trollope honored

Helen Murphy sends word that more than 110 years after his death a memorial stone to Anthony Trollope was unveiled by Prime Minister Major in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey on Thursday, March 25, 1993. He was described at the ceremony as "the most English of English authors" and a writer who "consistently and characteristically underrated himself and his achievement."

A speaker noted that, in contrast to the 110 years that have passed since Trollope's death, Trollope lobbied forcefully upon the death of Thackeray in 1863 to have him commemorated in Poets' Corner, and succeeded within six months.

The inscription on the memorial concludes with the closing words from Trollope's autobiography: "Now I stretch out my hand and bid adieu to all who have cared to read any among the many words I have written."

## Answers to Hidden Names puzzle, page 13.

1. Reginald Jeeves
2. Meadows
3. Emsworth
4. Little
5. Banks
6. Kid Brady
7. Oldest Member
8. Agatha and Dahlia
9. Spelvin
10. Drones
11. Mulliner
12. Blandings
13. Oofy
14. Boko
15. Pongo

B	A	N	K	S	Z	X	A	E	C	S	G	T	O	S
S	G	N	I	D	N	A	L	B	F	E	B	I	G	P
H	M	G	L	Z	R	Y	Q	O	T	V	T	S	N	I
A	T	E	H	T	R	O	W	S	M	E	D	P	O	L
D	U	Q	A	H	J	R	L	E	R	E	E	P	I	
R	L	J	D	O	T	F	K	E	J	L	L	F	R	
O	G	O	S	S	O	T	T	R	N	D	T	V	J	E
N	T	L	A	N	Y	W	E	S	I	L	T	I	K	B
E	K	I	D	H	A	T	E	G	L	A	I	N	O	M
S	B	T	B	Y	T	B	R	S	L	N	L	D	L	E
Y	A	O	R	S	D	A	O	V	U	I	C	S	D	M
E	K	L	A	R	H	I	G	O	M	G	P	F	E	L
O	T	E	D	A	I	L	H	A	D	E	K	T	S	V
Q	O	E	Y	A	B	R	H	A	D	R	A	L	T	Q

# The Liar

Reviewed  
by Amanda  
Dewees

Ecstatic reviews on the cover of *The Liar* compare author Stephen Fry—known to us as the latest television incarnation of Jeeves—to everyone from Wodehouse to “post-punk E. F. Benson.” Wodehousians probably won’t find more than an occasional echo of the Master’s style, however; I myself found *The Liar* closer to a cross between Douglas Adams’ Dirk Gently mysteries and *My Own Private Idaho*. Fry does have a felicitous wit and an excellent prose voice, but I feel compelled to warn Wodehousians thinking of dipping into *The Liar* that he does not employ Plum’s gentlemanly reticence regarding the earthier side of life; romantics may be happier passing over *The Liar* for a rereading of *Mike and Psmith*.

Certainly the public-school boyhood Fry describes is in direct contradiction to the idyllic comradeship of Plum’s school stories (the difference, perhaps, between the Belle Epoque and the seventies). Still, *The Liar* is at its best by far when exploring the school and college years of its hero. Had Fry pursued further the story of his hero’s troubled passion for another schoolboy and its continuing impact on both their lives, the novel would have been consistently powerful; instead, it falls apart by turning to convoluted pseudo-political intrigue. The story also suffers from the incessant leaps backward and forward through time and the aggravatingly mysterious interpolations that only come to make sense at the end.

Fry has picked up on a fascinating theme, the heart of the lie and the liar, and his plays on this idea make the novel original; in more than one stunning twist, we discover that some of the most effective sequences of the hero’s life are invented by him on the spur of the moment for his listener. Also, *The Liar* is literally laugh-out-loud funny (I have alienated my roommate proving it) and anyone who remembers college lit will appreciate the irreverent takes on academia. (One of the choicest parts of the story focuses on the discovery of a spurious pornographic manuscript by Dickens.) If

Fry’s newest work, *Paperweight*, retains the wit and insight of *The Liar* but improves in structure and plot, it will be a remarkable work indeed. *The Liar*, even with its uneven qualities, certainly proves that Fry can be as deft an author as he is an actor.

## “Carry on, Flashman”

by Peter Cannon

On the face of it Harry Flashman, the swash buckling soldier (and bully and braggart) who serves his Queen in nearly every significant (and not so significant) military campaign of the Victorian Era, would seem to have little in common with Bertie Wooster. However, after reading the ninth and latest Flashman “packet,” *Flashman and the Mountain of Light* (Knopf, 1991), I have come to the conclusion that here is a chap who could be considered a kind of spiritual cousin to Wodehouse’s amiable chump.

For those Wodehousians unfamiliar with the character, a brief introduction is in order. Flashman, the school bully expelled from Rugby in Thomas Hughes’ *Tom Brown’s School Days*, made his modern debut in George MacDonald Fraser’s *Flashman* (1969), Flashy’s first-person account of his part in the disastrous First Afghan War. In subsequent adventures, “edited” by Fraser and published in no particular chronological order, he barely survives the Charge of the Light Brigade, the Indian Mutiny, Custer’s Last Stand, and a host of other military debacles, not to mention assorted political intrigues, on several continents. As this list suggests, Flashman, unlike Bertie, is firmly chained to history. He consorts with real personages, from a young Otto von Bismarck to Abraham Lincoln. Moreover, in marked contrast to B. Wooster, he enjoys a robust sex life. More often than not, in fact, it is the pursuit of some wench that lands him in the soup. (Wodehousians who blush easily will be relieved to learn that while he may gas a

good deal about "rogering" and "bulling," Flashy keeps it pretty clean.) A selfconfessed coward, he can be as candid as Bertie about his own considerable limitations—which is a large part of his charm.

Another aspect of his appeal is his use of language. Flashman employs a colorful period vernacular, and here it is that he reveals his closest kinship to Bertram, as this representative passage shows: "I hadn't been given the precious gift of life to cast it away in back alleys, brawling on the behalf of fat rajas and randy widows, and I was going like a startled fawn and rejoicing in my youth when I saw a glare of torchlight ahead of me, and realised with horror that round the next corner running feet were approaching. Serve you right, poltroon, says you, for leaving pals in the lurch, now you'll get your cocoa—but we practised absconders don't give up so easy." [p. 167] Like the Jeeves saga, the Flashman books contain plenty of lively action, with our anti-hero up against it time and again.

Flashman also tends to quote and misquote standard English authors. At one point he admits: "You mayn't credit it, but I was recalling a line by some poet or other—Elizabethan, I think—who must have witnessed a similar performance, for he wrote of 'her brave vibrations each way free.'" In his editor's note to this utterance Fraser comments: "Flashman has caught the spirit but slightly misquoted the letter of Robert Herrick's 'Upon Julia's Clothes'..." Fraser gives the correct verses, then adds, "The Flashman Papers abound in erratic literary allusions—the present volume contains echoes of Donne, Shakespeare, Macauley, Coleridge, Voltaire, Dickens, Scott, Congreve, Byron, Pope, Lewis Carroll, Norse mythology, and obscure corners of the Old Testament—but it would be rash to conclude that Flashman had any close acquaintance with the authors; more probably the allusions were picked up second hand from conversations and casual reading. For the rest, we may judge that Flashman's frequent references to *Punch*, Pierce Egan's *Tom and Jerry*, and sensational fiction like *Varney the Vampire* more fairly reflect his literary taste..." [p. 353]. Shades of Bertie Wooster, with a head full of schoolboy

learning but a heart inclined to popular thrillers, what?

An episode in *Robinson Crusoe* evidently impressed both men. During a crisis in his affairs in *Thank You, Jeeves*, Bertie says: "Wasn't it Robinson Crusoe or someone who, when things were working out a bit messily for him, used to draw up a sort of Credit and Debit account, in order to see exactly where he stood and ascertain whether he was behind or ahead of the game at that particular moment? I know it was someone, and I had always thought it rather a sound idea." At a crucial juncture in *Mountain of Light*, Flashman resorts to the same wheeze: "If you've read Robinson Crusoe you may recall a passage where he weighs up his plight on the desert island like a book-keeper, evil on one side, good on t'other. Dispiriting stuff, mainly, in which he croaks about solitude, but concludes that things might be worse, and God will see him through, with luck. Optimism run mad, if you ask me, but then I've never been shipwrecked, much, and philosophy in the face of tribulation ain't my line." [p. 105] Both supply a double-column list of pros and cons.

Since Flashman lived to a ripe old age, dying in 1915, I hope he may yet reveal a familiarity with the literature of our own century, especially a certain Dulwich College graduate's school stories, which would be sure to provoke commentary no less tartly observant than that heaped on *Tom Brown's School Days*. Or at the very least may the old reprobate claim to have dandled an infant Bertie Wooster on his knee.

Though he scorned and loathed her, he was annoyed to discover that he loved her still. He would have liked to bounce a brick on Prudence Whittaker's head, and yet, at the same time, he would have liked—rather better, as a matter of fact—to cover her face with burning kisses. The whole situation was very complex.

*Summer Moonshine, 1938*

# UK book and audio tape sources

by Tony  
Ring

Tony has painstakingly compiled this very useful list of sources of new Wodehouse books and audio tapes in the UK.

## BOOKS

### Penguin Books

Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England  
40 W 23rd St, New York NY 10010, USA

Adventures of Sally  
Bachelors Anonymous  
Big Money  
Blandings Castle  
Cocktail Time  
Company for Henry  
Damsel in Distress  
Do Butlers Burgle Banks?  
Doctor Sally  
Eggs, Beans and Crumpets  
French Leave  
Full Moon  
Galahad at Blandings  
A Gentleman of Leisure  
The Girl in Blue  
The Gold Bat (and The Head of Kay's and  
The White Feather)  
Heavy Weather  
Hot Water  
If I Were You  
Indiscretions of Archie  
Laughing Gas  
Leave It to Psmith  
Life at Blandings  
The Little Nugget  
Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best  
Lord Emsworth and Others  
Luck of the Bodkins  
The Man Upstairs  
The Man with Two Left Feet  
Mike and Psmith  
Mike at Wrykyn  
Money for Nothing  
Money in the Bank  
Pearls, Girls and Monty Bodkin  
A Pelican at Blandings  
Piccadilly Jim  
Pigs Have Wings  
The Pothunters and Other Stories

Psmith in the City  
Psmith, Journalist  
Quick Service  
Sam the Sudden  
Service with a Smile  
The Small Bachelor  
Something Fresh  
Spring Fever  
Summer Lightning  
Summer Moonshine  
Sunset at Blandings  
Ukridge  
Uncle Dynamite  
Uncle Fred in the Springtime  
Uncle Fred Omnibus  
Uneasy Money  
Vintage Wodehouse  
Wodehouse on Wodehouse  
Young Men in Spats

Also: Yours, Plum (edited by Donaldson)

### Forthcoming:

Imperial Blandings (Full Moon,  
Pigs Have Wings, and Service  
with a Smile)  
The World of Psmith (Psmith in the  
City, Psmith, Journalist, and  
Leave It to Psmith.)

### Century Hutchinson

Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road  
London SW1V 2ZA

(This list has been compiled unofficially; the company did not respond to a request for details.)

### Hutchinson:

Aunts Omnibus  
Drones Omnibus  
Golf Omnibus  
Clergy Omnibus  
Jeeves Omnibuses:  
1 Thank You, Jeeves; Code  
of the Woosters; Inimitable  
Jeeves  
2 Right Ho, Jeeves; Joy in the  
Morning; Carry On, Jeeves

- 3 The Mating Season; Ring  
For Jeeves; Very Good,  
Jeeves  
4 Jeeves and the Feudal  
Spirit; Stiff Upper Lip,  
Jeeves

**Vantage:**

Aunts Aren't Gentlemen  
Carry on, Jeeves  
Clicking of Cuthbert  
Code of the Woosters  
The Inimitable Jeeves  
Jeeves in the Offing  
Jeeves Takes Charge (short stories  
from various collections)  
Joy in the Morning  
The Mating Season  
Meet Mr Mulliner  
Mr Mulliner Speaking  
Mulliner Nights  
Nothing Serious  
The Old Reliable  
Right Ho, Jeeves  
Something Fishy  
Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves  
Very Good, Jeeves

**Pimlico:**

The Weekend Wodehouse

## AUDIOCASSETTES

### Chivers Audio

Windsor Bridge Road  
Bath, Avon BA2 3AX  
(In North America, Chivers North America,  
1 Lafayette Road, Box 1450,  
Hampton NH 0382? )

All stories unabridged.

Prices: 8 cassettes	£31.95 + VAT	US \$64.95
6 "	26.95 + VAT	49.95
4 "	22.95 + VAT	35.95

Carry On, Jeeves 8 cassettes  
The Code of the Woosters 6  
Full Moon 6  
Jeeves in the Offing 6  
The Inimitable Jeeves 6  
Joy in the Morning 8  
The Mating Season 8  
Much Obligated, Jeeves 4  
Right Ho, Jeeves 6

Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves 6  
Aunts Aren't Gentlemen 4

### Random House Audio

20 Vauxhall Bridge Road  
London SW1V 2SA  
(Orders to Grantham Books Services Ltd  
Isaac Newton Way  
Alma Park Industrial Estate  
Grantham, Lincs NG31 9SD)

All are £7.99 + packing.

All are abridged novels (2 cassettes) or  
short stories

Heavy Weather  
Leave It to Psmith  
Lord Emsworth and Others  
Uncle Fred in the Springtime  
Pigs Have Wings  
Blandings Castle

### Talking Tape Company

Unit 11, Shaftesbury Industrial Centre  
The Runnings, Cheltenham, Glos GL51 9NH  
(In North America, from BFS Ltd,  
350 Newkirk Road North, Richmond Hill,  
Ontario, Canada)

All are £7.25 + £2.50 air mail or £1 surface.  
Full readings of short stories.

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

### BBC Radio Collection

Video Plus direct  
PO Box 190, Peterborough PE2 6UW

No recommended retail price.  
Twin cassette abridged books.

Galahad at Blandings  
Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit  
Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves  
The Golf Omnibus

# "Jeeves and Wooster"

Charles Bishop contributes this review from the English *Daily Telegraph*.

**"P**ip pip! Jeeves and Wooster are back for a fourth and, sadly, final series. They seem too young to be going into mothballs but perhaps they are wise to be bowing out now. How many other shows have gone on long after their charms have begun to stale?

Hugh Laurie's Wooster is as pronounced an ass as ever made a dog's breakfast of a banana skin, and the perfect foil for Stephen Fry's gravely ironical Jeeves. But the real star of the show is its script-writer, Clive Exton. His adaptations go from strength to strength, and last night's episode was a gem.

You would not know it from Exton's finely honed script, but the problems facing a Wodehouse adapter are formidable: the Jeeves novels are too long for one-hour episodes, while the short stories are not long enough; drastic surgery is needed for television. Exton wields his scalpel ruthlessly, taking a bit from here and a bit from there;

but even the purist [not *this* purist! OM] would have to acknowledge the Wodehousian artistry with which he takes four separate strands and weaves them together into a perfectly shaped whole.

My main sadness is that the present series is set entirely in the States. Wodehouse, of course, spent half his life there and was fascinated by the contrast between British amateurism and American commercialism; he was also involved more extensively than is now remembered in Broadway musicals. But Bertie's natural milieu will always be the English country house. Without suits of armor to bump into and lackeys with silver salvers padding about, he seems like a fish out of water.

**T**ony Ring comments on the series from deep in the heart of England:

"The two stars are particularly popular with teenagers. This has led to a surge of interest in Wodehouse, with his books being bought by teenagers who do not often enter bookshops at all. So, if interest is being transferred to a new generation, a lot can be forgiven the producers and writers for the alterations they made."



# Cut by the county

Among the perils of life in the English countryside none was more dreaded by Wodehouse characters than being "cut by the county." Bertie Wooster mentioned it several times, ranking it right up there with the fate that is worse than death. Lord Ickenham, a different sort altogether, welcomed the prospect in *Uncle Dynamite*: "My wife tries to drag me to routs and revels from time to time, but I toss my curls at her and refuse to stir. I often think the ideal life would be to have plenty of tobacco and be cut by the county." (Sounds like Plum, doesn't it?)

Who was, or were, the county? Dictionaries mumble vaguely about "county gentry." David Cannadine's splendid *Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (Yale, 1990) quotes, approvingly, a list of just who belonged in this special company:

In his elegiac memoirs, *The Passing Years* [1924], Lord Willoughby de Broke set out in elaborate and affectionate detail the hierarchy that had held 'undisputed and comfortable sway' in the county community during the halcyon days of his youth. In descending order of importance and familiarity, it consisted of the Lord-Lieutenant, the Master of Foxhounds, the agricultural landlords, the Bishop, the chairman of quarter sessions, the Colonel of Yeomanry, the MPs, the Dean, the Archdeacons, the Justices of the Peace, the lesser clergy, and finally the larger farmers. Although Willoughby was referring to Warwickshire, this description would have held good—with appropriate modifications for Scotland and Ireland—for most parts of the British Isles in the mid-Victorian period. The county was a recognizable and autonomous unit—historically, geographically, politically, socially, and even sentimentally. And the only people who really mattered were the landowners, their relatives and their close professional associates.

By the early 1920s, when he penned these mellow reflections, it seemed to him that 'the county' as he had known, loved, and understood it no longer existed either 'geographically' or 'spiritually'. It was not talked of 'in the same tone of calm and reverent assurance that we heard when we were young', and for many people was little more than the name attached to a cricket team.

That earlier time was of course the time of P. G. Wodehouse's childhood and youth, when he lived with a series of aunts in the

country and visited his retired father and mother in a Shropshire village. His aunts and parents, while not part of the county, were related to it socially and by blood, and it is clear from his comments in later life that the shy Wodehouse had painful memories of at least some of his social encounters with that elite group.

Jan Kaufman kindly lent me Cannadine's book and is very unlikely to get it back.

94 left

## Want ad

### Offered

The following prices include 2-day priority postage.

1. *He Rather Enjoyed It*, Burt reprint, 1927. VG in VG DJ with same artwork as very scarce first edition. \$95
2. *Mr Mulliner Speaking*, Burt reprint, 1930. VG+ in VG+ with same front cover artwork as first edition. \$95
3. *Louder and Funnier*, Faber & Faber, 1932. First edition. Near fine (silver lettering on spine somewhat faded). This book was never published in US. \$125
4. *The Man With Two Left Feet*, Burt, 1933. NF copy of 2nd issue of 1st American edition (no "first edition" statement). \$35
5. *Blandings Castle*, Doubleday, 1935. First American edition. VG in chipped DJ, which may be from later issue (as ad on the back does not match first described in McIlvaine). \$55
6. *Summer Moonshine*, Doubleday, 1938. Fine copy of 3rd printing (green covers) in near fine DJ identical to first except for ads on back flap and cover. \$35

# Wodehouse and the *New Statesman* revisited

by Peter  
Morris

When I wrote on this subject in the last issue, I was under the impression that Wodehouse had carefully concealed any knowledge he might have had of the existence of the left-leaning periodical. This turns out not to have been the case. In *Frozen Assets* (1964; aka *Biffen's Millions*), the protagonist Jerry Shoesmith has "let fall" information which leads Kay Christopher to think of him as an egghead "at heart." As she puts it, "he told me he had contributed to the *New Statesman* and the *Thursday Review*, and you can't do that unless your head's fairly egggy."

The mention did not escape the notice of Brigid Brophy, then a regular reviewer for the *New Statesman* and a distinguished novelist in her own right, who gave the following review in the August 14, 1964 issue:

*Frozen Assets* is set in Paris ('Spring-time on the boulevards and so forth, but everyone talks French there. Sheer affectation, it's always seemed to me') and London. The only thing that is frozen in Mr Wodehouse's new novel is the racy period vocabulary on the lips of his heroes: they still call the anti-heroes 'pills.' His own assets are still his expertise in constructing magician's-cabinet plots, through whose farcical doors his young men vanish and appear, having won or lost blondes and legacies, and his impeccable, exact (never 'the opposite' but always 'the other sex') and steely prose in which the facetiousness ('pique was rife, as was dudgeon') blooms with the deliberate beauty of euphuisms. P. G. Wodehouse is the Alfred Hitchcock of literature, with both a mass following and the devotion of literary cineastes. Like Hitchcock, he has not a trace in him of the naïf or accidental artist. He intends every word of it, with the virtuosity of a self-caricaturist, when he mixes his periods and gets his modern idioms just wrong: a pin-up in this one is described as wearing 'step-ins or a bikini bathing-suit'. Moreover, like Hitchcock, Mr Wodehouse carries a gentle but insistent torch for culture. This time, not only does he name a restaurant

'Previtali's'; his hero, though 'one of the boys, all right', has 'contributed to the *New Statesman*.'

## Jane Austen and the Empress of Blandings

by Eugene McDonald

These are the links in the chain that connects Jane Austen to the Earl of Emsworth's pigs.

The first is her letter of Sunday, 25 November, 1798, to her sister Cassandra:

My father is glad to hear so good an account of Edward's pigs, and desires he may be told, as encouragement for his taste for them, that Lord Bolton is particularly curious in his pigs, has had pigstyes of a most elegant construction built for them, and visits them every morning as soon as he rises. (*Letters*, 13, pp 36-37)

Second, in *Uncle Dynamite* the Earl of Ickenham has tried to palm himself off as Brabazon-Plank. This ploy is seen through, and he wonders if he can escape being found out by saying that it wasn't "Brabazon-Plank" he said, but "Knatchbull-Hugessen."

Finally, Jane Austen's favorite niece, Fanny Knight, in 1820 married Sir Edward Knatchbull. Her eldest son published the first collection of Jane Austen's letters in 1884. His name: Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen, first Lord Brabourne.

I rest my case.

Eugene found evidence that these two authors are linked by more than pigs. A 1989 Reuters news story from Beirut, describing the life of Allan Ramsay, the British ambassador in that war-ravaged city, concludes as follows:

When he is confined to the embassy [by the shelling], Ramsay turns to Jane Austen's novels and on really bad days, he says, P. G. Wodehouse is recommended for taking one's mind off Lebanon's agony.



# NEWTs in Remsenburg

## "a language of frivolity"

by Jay Weiss

Mrs. Alexandra Seibert was for many years a friend and neighbor of Plum and Ethel Wodehouse at their last home in Remsenburg, Long Island. She still lives on Basket Neck Lane, and during our New York convention she guided a busload of us on a tour of the former Wodehouse residence, followed by a visit to the graves, and then a well-stocked tea. We have happy memories of that special day. Now she has done it again, as described in her recent letter to me:

Dear Ed,

You will be interested to know that yesterday I entertained the "Newts," short for New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society!

The weather cooperated beautifully so I was able to take them to the Wodehouse home for a stroll around the gardens, and then up to the graves for picture taking. Afterwards I served them tea and cake at my home.

I had asked the Wodehouse housekeeper (of their time) to meet us all at home, which she did, and answered as many of their questions as she had time for because she is still working as housekeeper to another family down the lane.

It was a very pleasant afternoon and I for one felt P.G. wasn't far away because we had so many laughing attacks!

Greetings and all good wishes,

(signed) Alexandra Seibert

I could not wish to be better remembered than as someone who made people laugh.

Plum and Ethel Wodehouse are still important in Mrs. Seibert's life, as she indicates in this remark in a recent letter:

"It so happens that a very nice family has its garden back up against the Wodehouse's property where Plummy's gardener grew lots of succulent raspberries. A friendship has sprung up with his wife. I like to think the generous and cheerful spirit of Plum and Ethel is influencing her in some way. It would seem so."

In my ramblings through second-hand book stores I've come across some Wodehousiana that you may be unacquainted with. I've learned that Evelyn Waugh was by no means the only writer who referred to Wodehouse as The Master. Laurence Durrell was another. When his friend Richard Aldington told him that his book, *Esprit de Corps*, was "better than Wodehouse," Durrell wrote back, as we learn in *Literary Lifelines*, as follows:

"Master, Master . . . I know these [stories] have good contrivance but they aren't really creations in the manner of my beloved P. G. And writing them you wouldn't believe how hard it is to avoid Wodehouseisms. The brute has invented an entire language of frivolity around *dished/diddled/foozled* and so forth. I have to cut out at least three plagiarisms in every story . . . Try one and see."

For Stewart Alsop, Wodehouse was a kind of medicine. When the writer and columnist learned in 1971 that he might die soon from an acute form of leukemia he fought back with courage and grace. His brothers tried to help him. In *Stay of Execution* Alsop writes:

My brother John sent me *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* by P. G. Wodehouse and my brother Joe sent me the *Duke's Children* by Anthony Trollope. Wodehouse and Trollope are old favorites and I'd read both books before. But both Wodehouse and Trollope are marvelously rereadable, and Uncle Fred and the Duke of Omnium got me through the first few evenings. . . .

Women are divided broadly into two classes—those who, when jilted, merely drop a silent tear and those who take a riblick from their bag and chase the faithless swain across country with it. It was to this latter section that Agnes Flack belonged. Attila the Hun might have broken off his engagement to her, but nobody except Attila the Hun, and he only on one of his best mornings. "Scratch Man," *A Few Quick Ones*, 1959

# The Empress at home

by Norman  
Murphy

In answer to her master's call of "Pig-hooo-eeey," the Empress of Blandings has trotted from her sty, eager for the feast of reason and flow of soul.

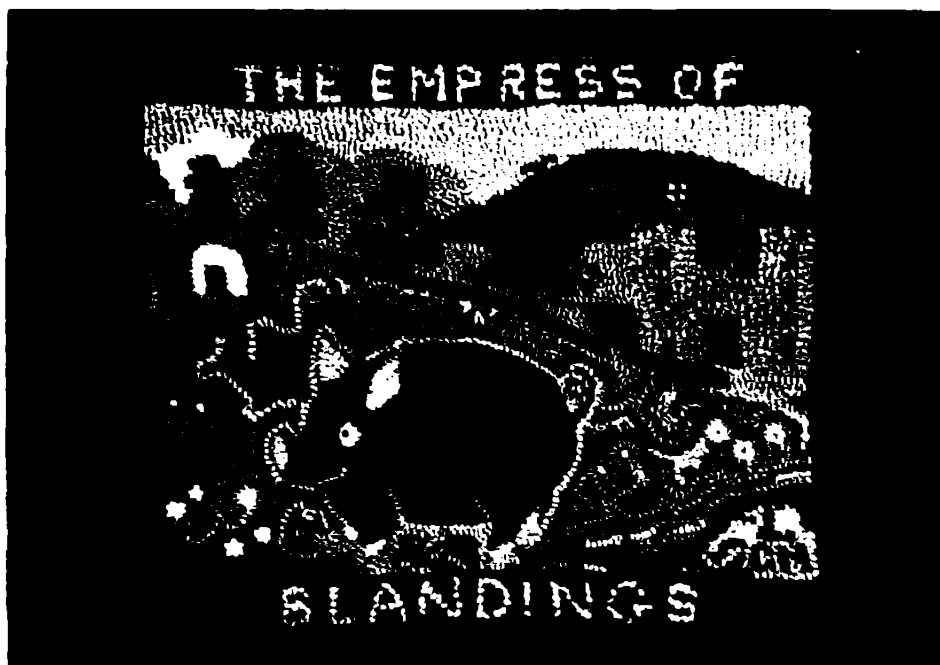
The domicile sacred to Shropshire's porcine pride is "a little meadow, dappled with buttercups and daisies, round two side of which there flowed in a silver semicircle the stream that fed the lake."

The shadow of Sir Gregory Parsloe has not yet fallen over this idyll, forcing Lord Emsworth to realise that a pig, assaulted here by baronets, could cry for help unheard.

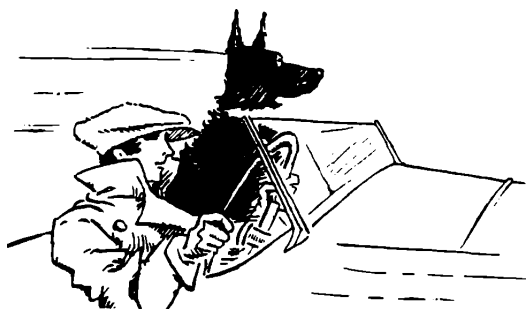
In the background, the flag of St George flying over the battlements marks Spring at Blandings Castle. The gravel drive stops at the entrance to the famous yew walk. Nearby stands the ancient cedar tree from whose branches swings the hammock dedicated to the use of the Hon. Galahad Threepwood.

This hooky mat, depicting Shropshire's most illustrious Stately Home, was designed and executed by my wife Charlotte.

Norman adds elsewhere that "Charlotte decided that what I needed for my birthday was a hooky mat of the Empress. It is made of rags and old clothing—the eye of love can discern a favourite jersey and bits of some Army trousers in there somewhere. It took her a long time to get the Empress's smile right but, on the rug, she beams out at you."



# New members



# Plumacrostic solution

**M**aria Kane's Plumacrostic, in the last issue of *Plum Lines*, brought more response than any other item I've ever printed. I expected that one or two responses might drift in during the three months between that issue and this one, and the extra week or so required for delivery of mail to Europe and more distance places just wouldn't matter in the contest. I received nineteen solutions, sixteen of them in one day. The contest may actually have deterred some members at a distance, who (more aware than I of how much interest there is in such puzzles) knew they didn't have a chance of winning and did not respond.

All the solutions were correct and nearly all respondents answered the bonus questions correctly. In view of the mail delay to distant places the dates of response cannot determine a winner. Nevertheless (it's the Code of the Ratcliffes), I promised a prize to the earliest postmark, and that postmark, dated March 16, belongs to Peter Morris of Lansing, Michigan. Peter chose as his prize the early issues of *Plum Lines*, edited by Bill Blood.

In the future, chastened by this experience, I will offer no more prizes for promptness. I shall simply print the names of all who submit correct answers and follow your future careers with considerable interest.

Several contestants included interesting comments:

Susan Cohen: "The larger and more vulgar the type [with the winner's name] the better."

John Fletcher, recent publisher of the obscure *Man of Means*: "It was an especially nice thought that two of the quotations [about Bombito's wife and 'a bloodthirsty royalist from Paranoia'] were from *A Man of Means*."

Peter Morris: "The puzzle was fun to do, but I'd have liked it to be harder." Harder than Bombito and Paranoia? What a man!

Sandy Morrison: "I thoroughly enjoyed doing this puzzle and hope to see more of them in future issues. A tip of the hat to Maria Kane for coming up with this one."

Peter Schwed: "Got my *Plum Lines* today at noon, and am posting this some 30 minutes later."

Jack Stewart pointed out that Clue A had twelve blanks but only eleven letters. This, he says, "was a low, snaky blow of the sort that only a villain such as Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe would perpetrate." I must speak sharply to my typesetter. The wretched fellow has made several such blunders lately.

Adrienne Smith: "Please tell Maria Kane that I enjoyed her puzzle very much!"

Judy Stroup: "Great fun. Let's have more of this sort of thing. . . I don't claim to be an expert, but this took a bit over an hour this afternoon with time out to call out two separate sets of spelling words to two separate children and to break up a fight or two between those children." What a woman!—the usual term is mother.

Kim Wilson: "I want to acknowledge and celebrate Maria Kane's exceptional effort which all of us genuinely appreciate. It is appropriate that Jeeves is the focus of this work—puzzle construction requires many of his attributes."

Here in strictly alphabetical order are the names of everyone who sent in a solution:

Susan Cohen	Sandy Morrison
Molly Crowdis	Paul Pickerill
Karen Ford	Tony Ring
John Hanna	Peter Schwed
Kim Kleinman	Adrienne Smith
Mary MacDonald	Jack Stewart
Marilyn MacGregor	Fred Strawbridge
Shamin Mohamed	Judy Stroup
<b>Peter Morris</b>	Jay Weiss
(Note large vulgar type.)	Kim Wilson

Thanks to all of you, and thanks especially to Maria Kane.

**Solution of the Plumacrostic:** "Resource and Tact"—that is my motto. Tact, of course, has always been with me a *sine qua non*; while as for resource, I think I may say that I have usually contrived to show a certain modicum of what I might call *finesse*.

Jeeves is the speaker, at the beginning of the last chapter of *Carry On, Jeeves*.



# 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 by William Blood to honor P. G. Wodehouse, and as a Wodehousean scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars, founded in 1934 by Christopher Morley 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 Scowrrers 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 Usborne 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 will be scattered around 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 are assessed for 1993-94 at \$7.50 for North American members, \$10.00 U.S. for overseas members, payable now.*

**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 Scowrrers 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 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 31st.* Drinks will be available from the bar, and there will be some clean, bright entertainments of a Wodelockian/Sherhousean nature.



# THE CLIENTS OF ADRIAN MULLINER



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

WHAT HO! HERE IS MY OOF! SIGN ME UP FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS, AS IT WERE!



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ OFFICE PHONE \_\_\_\_\_



## WODEHOUSE SOCIETY MEMBERS

MEMBER OF A SOCIETY CHAPTER? \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICULAR WODEHOUSE INTERESTS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NORMALLY I DO / DO NOT ATTEND SOCIETY CONVENTIONS.



## BAKER STREET IRREGULARS

INVESTITURED IRREGULAR? \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER OF A BSI SCION SOCIETY? \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICULAR SHERLOCKIAN INTERESTS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NORMALLY I DO / DO NOT ATTEND THE ANNUAL BSI WEEKEND IN NEW YORK.



I WILL / WILL NOT ATTEND THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY CONVENTION IN SAN FRANCISCO.



I WILL / WILL NOT ATTEND THE CLIENTS' FIRST SENIOR BLOODSTAIN AT THAT TIME.



# TWS Convention—San Francisco, July '93



Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday—July 29, 30, 31, and August 1

## Please sign me/us up for the following events:

Name	Conv.	Dinner	Cricket/ Croquet	Tour	Darts	Egg& Spoon	Catapult	Cards/ top hat
① _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
② _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
③ _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
④ _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Subtotals</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>				

I have enclosed a check for this total amount due \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Convention

\$45 per person if received before 1 July, 1993; \$55 thereafter.

### Cocktail Party

Friday evening, 7 to 10 p.m. Cash bar. Number of people expected to attend from your party: \_\_\_\_\_

### Dinner

\$45 per person. Saturday evening. Includes speakers and/or skit.

Please check one entree for each person registered above:

*5 Spice Chicken*      *London Broil*

①	_____	_____
②	_____	_____
③	_____	_____
④	_____	_____

### Cricket/croquet

\$15 per person. Sunday afternoon. Refunds given if the minimum number for the trip is not reached.

### Hammett tour

\$10 per person. Friday afternoon.

Refunds given if the minimum number for the trip is not reached.

### Games & contests

(Shown in shaded area.) To be held Friday evening and/or Saturday afternoon. Prizes will be awarded.

### Other activities

There is no overhead charge for these events, but we need to know how many will attend.

Sunday Brunch (approx \$10 to 15; about 9 to 11 a.m.)      Number of people \_\_\_\_\_

Brew Pub tour      Number of people \_\_\_\_\_

### Your address

Address \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

### Hotel reservations

You are responsible for your individual hotel reservations. Contact the Sir Francis Drake early, as we have a limited number of rooms and early reservations are recommended: 800-227-5480.