



# Plum Lines

The quarterly newsletter of The Wodehouse Society

Vol. 15 No 4

Autumn 1994

## A NEWLY DISCOVERED VERSION OF *THE PRINCE AND BETTY*

By Frits Menschaar

As most Wodehouse readers know, there are two different book versions of *The Prince and Betty*.

The US book version, published in January of 1912, mixes Ruritanian romance with New York underworld adventure, the latter taken from *Psmith Journalist* which had been serialized in 1909/10 in *The Captain*, a UK magazine for schoolboys<sup>1</sup>.

The UK book version of *The Prince and Betty*, published 4 months later, is much shorter. It only gives the love story, entirely omitting the New York City episode, and transferring action from the US to the UK. Thus, the heroes Betty Silver and John Maude, both Americans in the US version, become English; John was at Cambridge rather than at Harvard; a Giants-Cubs baseball game becomes a (cricket) Test Match.

It always seemed logical to assume that the UK edition was a rewrite for the UK market of the earlier US version. However, some time ago I came across a copy of the New York *Ainslee's* magazine of January, 1912, containing the complete novel *The Prince and Betty* in the shorter UK version but with American protagonists as in the earlier US version.

The question whether the US or UK version came first thus becomes moot and makes way for the question how Wodehouse came to write three versions of the same story.

Thanks to TWS member Dr. Ronald Levine, there is a way to probe into this. Ronnie has a collection of Wodehouse letters, dating from 1909 through 1915, written to Leslie Havergall Bradshaw (to whom the novel *Psmith in the City* is dedicated), who at the time was working in New York City on the staff of *Success* magazine. We are greatly indebted to Ronnie for searching through these letters and getting me copies of those pertinent to the subject. Highlights are:

Letter of January 19, 1911:

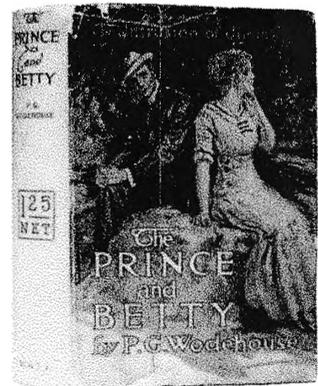
... By the way, I have started my new novel, which merges about 1/2 way into the plot (with variations) of *Psmith Journalist* (*Psmith* does not appear)<sup>2</sup>. It is going to be a corker, good love interest, rapid action from first chapter, length

about 100,000 words. Watt is bringing it out in the Fall. Will you be spying out the land for serial publication? How about *Success*? I know you would place it for me for nothing, but I hope you take 10%. I could get it done by the middle of February, I think, as the last half will come easily. The people you might sound (after *Success*) are Billy Taylor of the Associated Sundays . . . All the characters are Americans. The scene is laid for the first 7 chapters on an island in the Mediterranean, after that New York. The title is *A Prince at Large*? [sic]

[See copy of manuscript on page 3.]

Letter of February 10, 1911:

I underestimated the amount of work in this novel. I have had to rewrite one chapter 4 times! I am now getting into smooth water, but I should take at least another 3 weeks. Would you find out from Taylor what is the last day he could commit the MS? I can send over 20,000 words or more tomorrow week. That would give an idea of the thing. It is easily the best thing I have done so far. Knocks *Jimmy's* sideways. RSVP.



Dust wrapper of first edition. New York: W. J. Watt, 1912. Price \$1.25

In a March 24, 1911, letter he says he is sending another 6 chapters, which he did in three days, leaving only 4 chapters to go.

It seems that Bradshaw was unsuccessful in his early attempts at serial publication. All we know is that the complete novel appeared (whether Bradshaw was involved we don't know) in *Ainslee's* magazine in the same month that the book was finally published in the US.

Let us now take a look at where the *Ainslee's* magazine version differs from the UK book version. The changes generally aim at 'Americanizing' the story with one exception worth looking into.

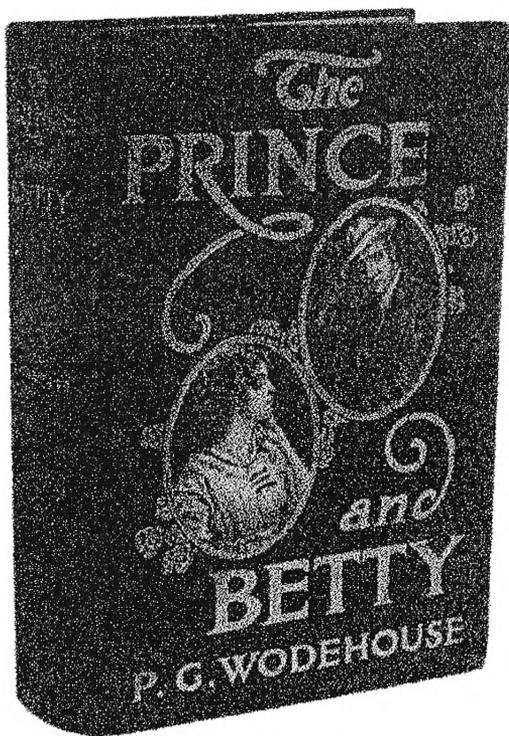
At the beginning of chapter 5 of the UK version, John Maude goes out to look for his friend Smith, a journalist, whom he does not find and who is never heard of again in the rest of the novel. Such a lapse in plot design we would not expect from Wodehouse (a meticulous plotter even in his early career). Comparison of the UK with the US book shows that the Smith reference in question is a left-

over from the US book (where it makes perfect sense since Smith becomes a major character later) which Wodehouse failed to tidy up. He picked up the oversight when working on the *Ainslee's* adaptation, changing the story line a little to get rid of Smith altogether. From this it is clear that the *Ainslee's* magazine text was adapted from the UK book rather than the other way around.

When the possibility of publishing in *Ainslee's* opened up, both UK and US book versions must already have been complete. At that time, when publication of the US book was imminent, the option of a magazine *serial* was no longer a practical proposition; the magazine had to carry the complete story. The shorter UK version (changed to feature American characters) was therefore the logical choice for the magazine, also being different from the US book published in the same month.

Why was the Smith reference in the UK novel, published 4 months later, not cleaned up? The answer must be that the manuscript had already been sent to England for typesetting, making such a relatively important change too complicated.

In summary, we can conclude that Wodehouse started out with the American longer version. The original title *A Prince at Large* was soon changed to *The Prince and Betty*. He then wrote the abbreviated UK version, adapting it from the US text. The *Ainslee's* version, although it was published simultaneously with the first (US) book version, was written last, adapted back from the UK version to the American market.



Cover of first edition, 1912

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<sup>1</sup>This early *Psmith Journalist* serial, not published in book form until 1915, was a continuation of previously serialized adventures of Mike and Psmith in the same magazine, also subsequently published as books. The 1910 book *Psmith in the City* appeared in *The Captain* in 1908/09 under the title *The New Fold*. The 1909 book *Mike* appeared in *The Captain* as two serials: the first in 1907 entitled 'Jackson Junior,' starring just Mike; the second, in which Psmith enters, in 1908 as 'The Lost Lambs.'

<sup>2</sup>Wodehouse ended up making only the variations needed to blend the two plots, and retained Psmith as Smith.

<sup>3</sup>*The Intrusion of Jimmy*, published in 1911.

This nice piece of detective work by Frits, untangling an eighty-two-year-old obscurity, confirms once again that Wodehouse, despite the fluffiness of his stories, was as serious about producing and marketing his work as the most earnest deep thinker or penny-a-liner.

Jan 19. 1911

Constit. Club  
L.S.

Dear Bradshaw.

By the way, I have started my new novel, which merges about  $\frac{1}{2}$  way into the plot (with variations)

"Smith, Journalist" (Smith doesn't appear). It's going to be a corker - good love interest - rapid action from first chapter - length about 100,000 words. Watt is bringing it out in the Fall. Will you be spying out the land meanwhile for serial publication. How about "Success"? I know you would place it for me for

nothing, but I hope you will take 10%. I would set it done by the middle, February, I think, as the last half will come easy. The people you might send <sup>(after. might)</sup> are B. H. Taylor, & the Associated Sunday; Stone, & the Metropolitan; and the Casus; & any others you can think of. All the characters are Americans. The scene is laid for the first 7 chapters ~~all~~ on an island in the Mediterranean, after that in New York. The title is "A Prince at Large?"

P.G.W.

Part of January 19, 1911 letter from PGW to L. H. Bradshaw, quoted on page 1. Courtesy of Dr. Ronald Levine.

The heading may indicate that the letter was written from the Constitutional Club, London, where Wodehouse was a member.

## A FEW QUICK ONES

Barb Larkin has discovered an astounding instance of early breadroll-throwing in the King James version of the Book of Zecharia, Chapter 5, Verse 1: 'Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll.' Who could have guessed that Zecharia was an early member of the Drones?

The *Oxford English Dictionary* spoils the fun by pointing out that the principal meaning of 'roll' has been, from the thirteenth century, 'A piece of paper, parchment, or the like . . . which is rolled up . . .' The name was not applied to the missiles used in the Drones Club until centuries later. Shucks.

Tony Ring reports that Keith Waterhouse, a columnist in the English *Daily Mail*, recently commented on holiday reading materials: 'Some writers, like Somerset Maugham and Conan Doyle and of course P G Wodehouse, were just made for holiday reading, and if weekend breaks hadn't been invented it would have been necessary for Parliament to pass a Bank Holiday Act to accommodate their output. Maugham's short stories, for me, are the south of France, Sherlock Holmes is the Lake District, and PGW is just about any hotel balcony you can name.'

Peter Cannon passes along a notice about the recently published and splendid *Oxford Sherlock Holmes*, whose General Editor is Owen Dudley Edwards, TWS. The writer of the notice comments that 'the notes [are] perceptive without being stuffy (if a trifle obsessed with comparisons between Holmes and Watson and Jeeves and Wooster) . . .' What does the man expect? Professor Edwards isn't obsessed—just balanced in his admiration for two great writers!

Anne Bianchi's name must be added to the Honor Roll of those who solved the difficult Plumacrostic 2 in the Summer 1994 *Plum Lines*. She received her copy late and responded quickly.

Marilyn MacGregor, our official newt-sleuth, presents alarming evidence that Gussie Fink-Nottle's interest in the little beasts was justified: They've got us outnumbered and outweighed, and some of them don't sound at all nice. A recent issue of *Nature Conservancy* magazine points out that in much of the Appalachian Mountains 'their total weight, or "biomass," is greater than that of all birds and mammals combined,' and that 'one can encounter [in Appalachia] in relative proximity the 1.5-inch pygmy salamander, ably concealed by a tiny leaf, as well as the hellbender, a bulky, stream-dwelling giant approaching a

yard in length.' *Hellbender?* Send in the Marines!

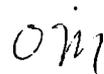
David McDonough's account of our 1991 San Francisco convention has been passed along by Marilyn MacGregor, and a nice piece of work it is. The account appeared in *Diversion* magazine for May 1994 and contains, in addition to much fruity material for the general reader, such sound observations as 'Wodehouse was the best user of the English language since Dickens. He is one of the few writers you can feel perfectly safe recommending to all your friends. His works are tailor-made for the reader who wishes to simply relax without going numb. He will also make you laugh out loud at least once per page.'

David discusses the Great P. G. Wodehouse Quiz which was distributed to everyone in attendance, and closes the article thus:

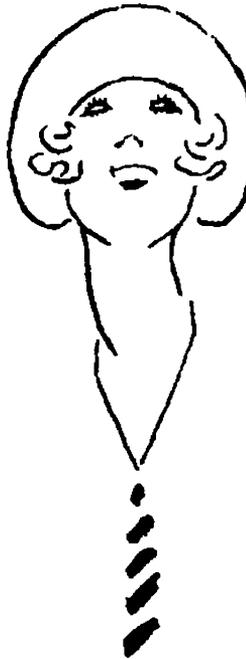
By the way (I blush to announce), I won the quiz. Tony Ring came in second, and I still think it was he who, as I descended the platform carrying my prize (a handsome metal sculpture of Jeeves walking the dog MacIntosh), threw a crusty roll at me and nearly dislodged my monocle. I'll get him in Boston at the next convention. I know where he keeps his hot-water bottle.

Peter Cannon found a recent *New York Times* item about two fraternity brothers from Rutgers University who 'stole the hat off the head of a doorman at the Trump Towers apartment complex on Fifth Avenue. The men then raced through downtown.' Law-abiding cove though I am, it pains me to tell you that they were tracked down, arrested, and charged.

Claude and Eustace would have handled the affair so much better, scattering eclat and elan by handfuls as they escaped.



The Oldest Member



# TWS CONVENTION '95



## Listen my children and you shall hear Of the modern ride of Paul Revere Who to your hamlet comes to mention The Boston-95 convention

Thus began the preregistration flyer sent in November to TWSers and PGW-Netters regarding next year's gathering of the Wodehouse faithful at the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston. That mailing was chock full of valuable information regarding the convention (including hotel guidelines) so if you didn't receive your copy, let us know!

Your hosts, the NEWTS, have been having a high old time planning this event, such that Boston may never be the same again after October 22. A very full program has been planned, with extra activities for those who plan to arrive early or stay on after the convention. We absolutely guarantee a fun time for all but the most confirmed curmudgeons! Herewith some highlights to tempt you:

- **Thursday, October 19**, a tour of Boston By Night, led by NEWT John Fahey (our Galahad Threepwood of the *Nineteen Nineties*). Wear down some shoe leather while you learn about some of Boston's well-known and lesser-known landmarks. Surprises in store!
- **Friday, October 20**. *In the morning*, an excursion to points west of Boston: Lexington Green ('here once the embattled farmers stood/ And heard the shot fired round the world'), Concord, site of the Orchard House (Louisa May Alcott's home), Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, and the Old Manse (Nathaniel Hawthorne's home) by the Old North Bridge. Magnificent panoramas of New England's famous autumn foliage. A prize will be offered to the first person to spot Paul Revere's horse.
  - 12:00 noon Sign-in for conventioners begins.
  - 2:00 p.m. Official program begins. Speakers Friday and Saturday will include Anne Cotton, Daniel Garrison, Charles Gould, Jan Kaufman, David Landman, Neil Midkiff, Norman Murphy, and Tony Ring—a line-up that will surely result in a Standing Room Only situation!
  - 6:00 p.m. Evening reception will include a kazoo chorus and who knows what else? Dinner on your own.
- **Saturday, October 21**. 9:00 a.m. (*probably*) The day's more intellectual activities begin.
  - 3:30 p.m. (*more or less*) Games and such.
  - 6:30 p.m. Cocktails and socializing.
  - 7:30 p.m. Buffet dinner, preceded, followed, or hopelessly entangled with skits, songs, a fancy dress contest, and other solemn rituals. When all is said and done, the expression "fun and games" may take on new meaning to the survivors.
- **Sunday, October 22**. *Who knows when?* Brunch and farewells for many of us. Those who wish can meander down to the Charles River to view the Head of the Charles Regatta, conveniently scheduled for the same weekend as our convention and giving us an excellent opportunity to practice our helmet pinching skills.

Have we tickled your fancy yet? Then waste no time in making your **hotel reservation** now and sending in your **registration form** (which can be found with this *Plum Lines*) for the next action-packed TWS convention! For further information, or to obtain a copy of the recent preregistration mailing, call or write to Elin Woodger at 135 Elm Street, Everett MA 02149. Phone: 617-389-7244.

Additional note to those who want to register at the Copley Plaza Hotel: The first 800 number listed on our November flyer is a defunct number. Use instead: 800-822-4200 or 617-267-5300.

CITY LIT

THEATER COMPANY

*A Lighthearted Caper*



by P.G. Wodehouse

Adapted by Mark Richard

Directed by Mark Hardiman

at the Chicago Cultural Center - 77 East Randolph

Thursdays-Saturdays at 7PM, Saturdays and Sundays at 3PM

Tickets \$15-\$18. Discounts for students, seniors and groups

Call 312/913-9446 for reservations and information.

*Indulge yourself with our charming  
English tea and matinee package.*

**November 21-January 14**

The City Lit Theater Company of Chicago has done it again! The 'Lit' in the name stands for 'Literature,' and that's just what they present—slabs of the good stuff, on stage. Last spring they presented *Right Ho, Jeeves*, a critical and popular success, and I'm very pleased to see them follow it with one of Plum's best stories. I'll have to miss it, but if you're within hollering distance of Chicago, get yourself a ticket and go! The number, if you can't read it from the above notice, is (312) 913-9446.

# ROBERT G. PLUNKETT

(1919-1993)

Bob Plunkett was an ardent Wodehouse collector and member of TWS. He collected, as you will read below, 'every Wodehouse title,' not an easy thing to do even if cost is ignored. Bob died last year and Charles Gould has prepared a special catalog offering his collection. Charles's foreword to that catalog follows.

By Charles E. Gould, Jr.

One winter evening a few months before his death in May of 1993, Bob Plunkett telephoned with a request. He began the conversation by reciting a poem by Vachel Lindsay, some of which he had forgotten. He said that the poem had often been a source of comfort or strength when he needed either, and his request was that I find a copy and send it to him. I said I could do that, though it was not a poem I knew; and ultimately I did do that, and I am glad. It was only after we'd chatted about the poem and P.G. Wodehouse for a bit that Bob told me he had brain cancer, joking mildly that perhaps it had some effect on his brain and that that's why he couldn't recall all of the poem. I remembered Wodehouse's joking about it when they thought he had a brain tumor; and I thought, what characterizes these men is nothing so bleak as stoicism. What characterizes them is a mixture of wit, good will, optimism and strength of mind and heart. That was the last time I spoke with Bob, but his mixture remains with me as a model and inspiration.

This collection represents that mixture too, I think. Every Wodehouse title is represented, usually in a First Edition, but the several stop-gaps are optimistic fillers only. Some of the books are in poor condition, waiting optimistically to be up-graded; but that is not true of the rarer ones, which are the acquisitions of a serious and strong-minded collector. Bob was a cagey buyer. Many of the books in his collection came from me, but many more did not, and perhaps I may say here that none of these books belong to me now, and that has been an aid in punctiliously describing their faults. In many instances, I think I have erred in the negative direction; but I don't want any buyer disappointed, so I have been bold about the inevitable flaws in this remarkable collection, boasting only occasionally. I suspect that Bob would approve, and that he sold lumber the same way. Once I mailed to Bob a letter that

my cat had chewed as it lay here on the table awaiting an envelope. His reply, ten days later, dismayed me for hours: 'I never thought I'd receive a catty letter from you,' he wrote, and I'd forgotten about the cat, and I pored over the carbon wondering what on earth I'd said wrong. When he explained, on the telephone, I felt fine. He was a witty man. When a once famous, now forgotten scoundrel dealer in England soaked Bob for several hundred pounds for books not received, Bob the optimist ordered a few more, enclosing payment, because the scoundrel had been in poor health. Optimism. Good Will. And when it became clear that the scoundrel was a scoundrel, known actually by name to me and Barry Phelps and the police, Bob took a deep breath and his loss philosophically. Strength of mind and heart. I met Bob only twice, once when he and Nancy, his wife, came here, and once at the Wodehouse Society Convention in New York. I am the better for having met him, the lesser because I cannot meet him again,

To Nancy Plunkett, Bob's wife, and to Anne Plunkett, his daughter, Proprietor of Boswells Books, Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, I am deeply grateful for placing these books in my hands, some of which are, indeed, old friends; and I am especially grateful to Anne Plunkett for the labor and inspiration which have made possible this tribute to her father, in whose life '...the elements So mix'd...that Nature might stand up/And say to all the world, "This was a man!"' As the Shakespeare chappie said.

## CHAPTER ONE

By Daniel Cohen

Chapter One, the Philadelphia area chapter of The Wodehouse Society, held its first annual picnic on September 18 in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. All the members and a couple of new recruits showed up, and a goodish bit of bread was thrown about.

Our next meeting will be held on Sunday afternoon, November 6, at the Dickens Inn in Philadelphia. any Wodehouse society member or interested friend in the Philadelphia is invited, indeed is urged to attend.

This is just one of a series of items Daniel has sent about meetings of the Philadelphia chapter. More on Chapter One next time!

# PARODY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PASSENJARE

## (AND I MEAN IT TO STING)

A book review by Charles E. Gould, Jr.

Thirty years ago this Christmas when, a student at Bowdoin College, I had been reading Wodehouse for only a year and only Wodehouse for six months, I wrote a term paper for Louis Coxé's Shakespeare course which I entitled, 'Romeo and Juliet in A Wodehouse of Fate.' Professor Coxé was not primarily a Shakespearean: he was a prize-winning poet, biographer of E.A. Robinson, famous for his dramatization of *Billy Budd*; and his Shakespeare course was, on his own lips, not very scholarly. That is partly why he gave me an A+ on the paper, with the comment 'I don't know why.' He knew why: I'd written a pastiche, not of Wodehouse nor of Shakespeare but of the kind of term paper—or maybe even scholarly article—that bored him. I don't say it was a good paper—his grade says that—but one feature of pastiche as a genre is that unless you want to dismiss the whole genre you can't find much fault with its individual representatives. Doing so is like, as somebody said of criticizing Wodehouse, 'taking a spade to a soufflé'.

Peter Cannon's *Scream for Jeeves*—a collection of his H.P.G. Wodecraft stories—is, as the cover tells us, a parody, but the same rule applies; indeed, Mr. Cannon's work is so adept, his ear so well-tuned and his brevity so the soul of wit that I prefer to regard it as pastiche. It does not seem to me to ridicule anything, not even itself, and the presence of ridicule is of course what essentially distinguishes parody from pastiche. Moreover, Mr. Cannon is evidently a scholarly man, a 'bookish cove': in the Appendix to this

volume, 'The Adventure of the Three Anglo-American Authors,' he treats P.G. Wodehouse, H.P. Lovecraft and A. Conan Doyle with a lot of insight and a surprising lot of information in a mere twenty pages which, though admirably placed here, would fill a mere of their own—and that not a misty or stagnant one. The illustrations by J.C. Eckhardt, too, strike just the right note, seeming almost to have been culled from the pulps in which these three stories—'Cats, Rats and Bertie Wooster,' 'Something Foetid' and 'The Rummy Affair of Young Charlie' might well have originally appeared. The first is a retelling of Lovecraft's 'The Rats in the Walls,' a story which Mr. Cannon tells me was rejected by editor Robert Davis of the Munsey group of magazines because it was 'too horrible'—the same Bob Davis who gave Wodehouse several plots including, according to David Jansen, 'The Coming of Bill.' The second is a retelling of 'Cool Air,' while the third is derived from episodes in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* and 'The Music of Erich Zann.' Mr. Cannon remarks that he expects more Lovecraftians to be turned on to Wodehouse than *vice versa*; but one effect of reading these tales has certainly been to make me feel out of the loop—the Cthulh-loop—and to make me want to hunt down a copy of Mr. Cannon's *H.P. Lovecraft*, volume 349 in the Twayne U.S. Author Series. To those circling in the other direction, I suggest Richard J. Voorhees's *P.G. Wodehouse*, volume 44 in the Twayne English Author Series—tough to find on the market, but academic libraries will have them both.

Naturally, any writer with a strongly-marked style verges on self-parody from time to time. Wodehouse does, especially in the last two Jeeves novels; and I have an idea that he conceived of the Mulliner stories as a vent for that inevitable urge, or verge—not a bad idea, whether it was actually his or only mine. Trusting my literary instinct and, what is more reliable, the testimony of a colleague here at Kent School, a classicist learned in Lovecraft's craft and lore, I assume Lovecraft does, too. So the trick of the parodist must be to overdo it just to the extent that his genre demands, without overdoing the overdoing. This nicety Mr. Cannon has achieved to... well, a nicety.

'Thank you, Jeeves.' It beats me where Jeeves



picks up this stuff, but the man is forever improving his mind by reading books of the highest brow.

This is very, very skillful. How do you know Wodehouse didn't write it? My theory: 'Books of the highest brow' is overdone, a minute too long on the grill, a shade too clever. It takes a conventional metonymy (high-brow = big forehead = intellectual) and reapplies it with wilful literalness to books, in a genitive of description which now becomes (ironically through that wilful literalness) a metaphor, at the same time inventing a superlative form of 'high-brow,' thus implying a comparative form, and finally sweeping the bromidic metaphorical metonymical adjective 'high-brow' into the dust-bin. It's too clever for words, and my theory just blew up: Wodehouse could have written that, if only he'd thought of it.

Mr. Cannon's charm is, I think, chiefly that he has such a good ear: he's mixing Wodehousean dialogue with Lovecraftian situation and mood. About the latter I am not up to par, but one more example may reaffirm the former. Throughout the Cannon canon, as throughout the Wodehouse, Jeeves coughs 'that cough of his,' not the cough of the smoker or the diseased but of the discreet. In Wodehouse it's the cough of a sheep clearing its throat on a distant hillside. You've laughed at that; now think about it. In Cannon, it's the cough of a sheep clearing its throat in the spray from an Alpine waterfall, or of a sheep with a haggis caught in its throat. If you know what haggis is, that's awfully funny. If Wodehouse is your standard, it's too funny. (If you don't know what haggis is, and if Lovecraft is your standard, probably it's not funny; but few things are, so not to worry.)

Here Peter Cannon is doing with image what I was saying a few minutes ago he does with diction: overdoing *The Master*, but not overdoing the overdoing. He reverses the process: reading Wodehouse, we laugh and think later; reading Cannon we think and laugh immediately. That's parody at work. The original Wodehousean image of a sheep clearing its throat is impossible to beat, easy—I suppose, if you're a son of toil on a sheep ranch—to mock. But to parody that image—to surpass it while keeping a straight face with your tongue in your cheek—is not easy at all. I know: I've tried and succeeded, and had a lot of earnest letters explaining to me that I'd failed.

Peter Cannon has the face to succeed, evoking the smile that wins—albeit I have not seen his face nor he mine. His splendid book makes a good read, and I shall pass many more happy hours after this one nosing out his allusions, metrical echoes of Poe and thematic echoes of Melville, deft twists on Wodehouse I've forgotten and deft twists on Lovecraft I'm now eager to learn.

Professor Cox: Mr. Cannon gets an A+. And I hope now we all know why.

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**Scream for Jeeves; a Parody**, by Peter Cannon. Trade paperback, \$7.50; hardcover \$20.00. Order from Necronomicon Press, P. O. Box 1304, West Warwick, Rhode Island 02893.

## SOMETHING NEW

The late Edward Duke's superlative recording of two Wodehouse short stories ('Jeeves Takes Charge' and 'Bertie Changes His Mind') was described in the last issue of *Plum Lines*. There we told you that the tape was available from Barnes and Noble, 26 Fifth Ave., New York 10011, phone (201) 767-7079.

Another source of the tape is Audio Editions, which also offers other PGW stories by another reader. Their address: P O Box 6930, Auburn CA 95604, phone 800-231-4261.

A third source of the Duke tape is B & B Audio, 1240 West Arthur Avenue, Chicago IL 60626 (no phone given). Unabridged, length one hour, ISBN 1-882071-20-4. They also offer another Duke audio tape entitled *Jeeves Comes to America*, including 'The Chump Cyril' and 'Jeeves and the Hard-boiled Egg.' Same price, same length, ISBN 1-882071-42-5.

Finally, a Duke tape with slightly different content is available from Pickwick International in England—sorry, I have no address. The stories are 'Jeeves Takes Charge' and 'Jeeves and the Old School Chum.'

I mention all these sources because I don't want you to miss Edward Duke's superb readings. I don't expect to hear their equal.

Note: In addition to his regular catalog, Charles Gould has prepared a special catalog for the 'remarkable collection' of Bob Plunkett, TWS, who died last year. See the article entitled 'Robert G. Plunkett' elsewhere in this issue.

# PLUMMYCROSSWORD

By Maria C. Kane

Maria has produced our first crossword. Not a purely Wodehouse puzzle, but with Wodehouse elements. 'The words,' writes Maria, 'are all from *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. Believe me, I tried very hard to use fairly well-known words, but sometimes it just wasn't possible, and I had to resort to concoctions like 19 Down, or 30 Down—you have no idea how happy I was to find that one!' It's a good puzzle: easy clues to get you started, harder clues to challenge.

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57						58	59				60	61		
62						63					64			
65						66					67			

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## ACROSS

1. Toaster action
6. NICKNAME
10. Moby Dick's pursuer
14. Watchmaker's equipment
15. Facility
16. A feeling (good or bad), slang
17. Up to
18. MIDDLE NAME
20. N. European airline
21. Gluttons
23. Organic compound
24. 'Peter, Paul, and —'
25. '— —, not again!' (2 wds.)
27. Flower cluster
30. Toward the mouth
31. Barrier
34. Always
35. Hint
36. Wedding vow (2 wds.)
37. BOOK (4 wds.)
41. Forage plant
42. Actor Lloyd —
43. Modicum
44. Half a fly
45. Penitent
46. Lessens
48. Tool
49. With 53 Across 'in — — hills'

50. Follower of Zeno
53. See 49 Across
54. Whilhom
57. LAST NAME
60. Island in S. E. Malay Archipelago
62. 'And pretty maids all in — —' (2 wds.)
63. Mollusk
64. Piffing
65. Partners of neithers
66. Wax
67. WIFE'S NAME

## DOWN

1. Advantage
2. A Chaplin
3. Places
4. New agency (abbr.)
5. FIRST NAME
6. A Lee
7. Gibbons
8. Employment
9. Persons
10. Dispatch boat
11. Sword handle

12. '— was I ere...'
13. Alc or lager
19. Buyer
22. Miner's find
24. A Griffin
25. A Hunter
26. Pilgrimage
27. Rent again
28. Affirms
29. '— and desist!'
30. Blue heavenly body
31. Piece of turf
32. An Astaire
33. Biblical prophet
35. Tamarisk
38. Improve
39. Promissory notes
40. Dutch export
46. Exclamation of triumph
47. The 'T' in 37 Across
48. Opinions
49. Topic
50. Lohengrin's bird
51. Corrida VIP
52. Scent
53. Despot
54. Oriental nurse
55. — *with the Wind*
56. City on the Oka River
58. Questionnaire Info (abbr.)
59. Dim. suffix
61. Part of IRS



Cuthbert Banks 'playing his ball where it lay' at a meeting of the Wood Hills Literary Society in 'The Clicking of Cuthbert.' Drawn by Bernard Canavan for the concordance *Wodehouse in the Clubhouse*. (See Autumn 1994 *Plum Lines*.)

# Some Holiday Gift Ideas for Drones and Junior Lipsticks

By John Lelenberg

Silver Cow Creamer (Georgian, not Modern Dutch) Hard-to-find item for that uncle of yours.

Subscription to *Milady's Doudoir* The latest Mayfair gossip and fashion tips

Plaster cast of the Infant Samuel at Prayer (breakable recommended in case lots)

Mr. Jeeves's Morning-after Tonic (patent pending) Proof against even the Gremlin Doogie Mangover.

Manuscript chapter of Galahad Threepwood's *Reminiscences* in which your loved one's name appears

First edition, autographed, of Whipple's *On the Care of the Pig* (with 57,300 calorie per day diet)

Gentlemen's Furnishings White mess jacket as worn in Cannes, with scarlet cummerbund

Ladies' Furnishings Lingerie by Eulalie Soeurs Men's heliotrope pajamas

Toys for the Modern Young Man The Giant Squirt, The Luminous Rabbit

Toys for the Modern Young Woman Knitting Needle (one), with long wooden handle

New Year's Eve champagne and dinner at the Mottled Oyster, plus bail

finally, provide for your second son's independent future with 1000 shares of Silver River Ordinaries

# ECCENTRICITY RAMPANT NEWTS

**J**onathan Lewin sent me the following poem recently:

Across the pale parabola of Joy  
They met, and there they sat, one girl, one  
boy.  
Eternal love he swore would never swerve  
When she began to doubt the joyful curve.  
We'll pass by night, said she, just like two  
ships.  
The curve of which you speak is an ellipse.

Jonathan added: 'As you can see, I suddenly realized what Psmith was reading that day in the train.'

When I read the poem I was just as baffled as you, dear reader, are at this moment. What Psmith was reading in the train was, of course, the poetry of Ralston McTodd, the man he was impersonating in *Leave It to Psmith*. The one line he read over and over, and couldn't get past, was 'Across the pale parabola of Joy.' So far it's easy. But what about that last line—the ellipse? I asked Jonathan for an explanation. Here's his answer:

I have to confess I engaged in a bit of inside humor here. It's not really fair to expect the rank and file of even as illustrious a group as the Wodehouse Society to get it. I hang my head in shame but I have to admit I am a professor of mathematics. Now a parabola is a particular kind of mathematical curve that belongs to a variety of curves that we call quadratic curves. Every quadratic curve has what we call *eccentricity*. When the eccentricity is exactly one the curve is a parabola. When the curve is less than one but still positive, the curve is an ellipse. When the eccentricity is zero the curve is a circle. When the eccentricity is greater than one the curve is called an hyperbola.

So the girl in my version of McTodd's poem [above] was complaining that the relationship wasn't eccentric enough. OK, that's pretty corny, but I swear to you that's what I had in mind. One of my fellow mathematicians who is also an avid Wodehouse reader laughed heartily, but I guess we are sort of in a minority group.



I agree.

**S**usan Cohen is fascinated by the presence of newts in Wodehouse stories. In Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day* she came across a curious reference to the little critters. The butler Stevens is speaking of attributes his father (also a butler) lacked:

But those same absent attributes, I would argue, are every time those of a superficial and decorative order, attributes that are attractive, no doubt, as icing on the cake, but are not pertaining to what is really essential. I refer to such things as good accent and command of language, general knowledge on wide-ranging topics such as falconing and newt-mating—attributes none of which my father could have boasted.

*Newt-mating?* Is that a matter of general knowledge? Does *anybody* mate newts? Have we been overlooking something here—are there newt-breeders, newt-pedigrees, and newt-judgings?

Susan wonders if it's a tongue-in-cheek reference to Wodehouse, and plans to ask Ishiguro about it. She has asked me to inquire if anyone knows where Plum picked up the newt theme. Frits Menschaar suggested a possible source in the last *Plum Lines*: a Thurber story about newts in the 1919 *Vanity Fair*. Does anyone have another suggestion?



**William Norman** found this drawing in a 1974 newspaper review of *The Golf Omnibus*. Could this be the Oldest Member laying one dead a foot from the pin, just before retirement? Whether that fearsome weapon is a mashie, niblick, or baffle, I cannot say.

# MORE 'ANYTHING GOES'

2nd Refrain  
(P. G. Wodehouse)

In the last *Plum Lines* Barbara Hellering and Bill Horn reported the surprising news that Wodehouse, not Cole Porter, wrote some of the lyrics of the hit song 'You're the Top' for the London production of *Anything Goes* in 1935. The article drew a response from **Bob Montgomery**, Trustee of the Cole Porter Musical and Literary Property Trust and a TWS member. Bob sent some details of what occurred:

Wodehouse was the author in charge of the London production which followed the New York production. His role was to eliminate the uniquely American references in the book and to make the revisions necessary for an English audience. I have in the files of the Porter Trusts a copy of the revisions which Wodehouse made in the lyrics of the songs 'Anything Goes' and 'You're the Top,' all of which were done with Porter's enthusiastic approval. I particularly like the second refrain of 'Anything Goes' which is pure Wodehouse.

Here are some of the original lyrics of Cole Porter and some of the 'Englished' lyrics of Wodehouse for the song 'Anything Goes,' provided by Bob Montgomery from the Cole Porter Trust.

## Anything Goes

1st Refrain  
(Cole Porter)

In olden days, a glimpse of Stocking  
Was looked on as something shocking  
But now, Lord knows,  
Anything goes.  
Good authors too  
Who once knew better words  
Now only use four letter words  
Writing prose  
Anything goes.  
If driving fast cars you like  
If low bars you like  
If bare limbs you like  
If Mae West you like  
If old hymns you like  
Or me, undressed you like  
Why nobody will oppose  
When ev'ry night, the set that's smart is in-  
Dulging in nudist parties in  
Studios,  
Anything goes.

When maiden Aunts can freely chuckle  
At tales much too near the knuckle  
The facts disclose  
Anything goes  
When in the House our Legislators  
Are calling each other, 'Traitors'  
And 'So and So's'  
Anything goes  
The world's in a state today  
Like Billingsgate today  
We are each for free speech today  
Nothing's blue today or taboo Today  
Or meets with Scandalized 'Oh's'  
But while we hope for days more sunny  
The Government gets our money  
'Cause Neville knows  
Anything goes.

4th Refrain  
(P. G. Wodehouse)

The dogs chase fleas  
The bees chase honey  
And we all are chasing money  
And when it shows  
Anything goes  
The Duke who owns a moated castle  
Takes lodgers and makes a parcel  
Because he knows  
Anything goes  
It's grab and smash today  
We want cash today  
Get rich quick today  
That's the trick today  
And the Great today  
Don't hesitate today  
But keep right on their toes  
And lend their names, if paid to do it  
To anyone's soap or suet  
Or baby clo's  
Anything goes.

Musical comedy is the Irish stew of drama.  
Anything may added to it, with the certainty that it will improve the general effect.

'Bill the Bloodhound,' *The Man with Two Left Feet*, 1917

# NEW MEMBERS



The first page of a recent newsletter of the Washington D. C. chapter is reproduced here, slightly less than life size. I'll be printing newsletters from other chapters now and then, to help us keep in touch. I should tell you that a clever quote in the blank space just below the masthead could not be reproduced here.

 **CAPITAL! CAPITAL!**   
THE WASHINGTON D.C. CHAPTER OF THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY

### WHAT HO! WHAT HO!

On October 2nd, a Sunday morning dotted with fashionably English rain, a dozen of the faithful toddled into Mrs. Simpson's to browse and sluice over the next installment in the Blandings Castle saga, *Summer Lightning*. The intellectual part of the programme was conducted by John Phipps, whose late appearance came as a relief to the Oldest Member who had sacrificed the reading assignment to the Gods of Moving. (Only that weekend he was moving from one apartment to another in the Kennedy-Warren up the street -- and it was with incredible self-restraint that he refrained from organizing a CAPITAL! CAPITAL! bucket-brigade to transfer the remaining several thousand books from his old domicile to the new.)

In *Summer Lightning*, John (Barmy Fotheringay-) Phipps noted the premiere of that prince of Pelicans, Galahad Threepwood, younger brother to Lord Emsworth. A brace of star-crossed lovers are embroiled against the nidding attempts of Percy Pilbeam and The Efficient Baxter, hirelings of Lady Constance Keeble, to thwart the course of true love. Not helpful is the fact that the young swains are the sort to bounce tennis balls off the Empress of Blandings, and squander their birthrights for a mess of nightclub pottage. Baxter has given up tossing flower pots into windows, switching instead to hurling himself out of windows. Instead of gargoyles, Pilbeams decorate the waterspouts. From a philological point of view, the expression "mad as a coot" makes its appearance in *Summer Lightning*, to the bemusement of Clarence and the dismay of t. e. Baxter.

Circulating during the session were Norman Murphy's *In Search of Blandings* and his editing of Gally Threepwood's long-suppressed reminiscences. Teddie Ostrow was congratulated on her new membership in the Wodehouse Society, along with her pen-pal Stephen Fry. She noted that the address given for Mr. Fry, lately Jeeves on the British TV series, is correct only in a certain metaphysical sense, and that the proper address consists of sending items to friends who consequently bung them onto his doorstep while passing by at high speed. There was much anticipation of the next Wodehouse Society convention, in Boston, now only about a year away, including the blizzard of breadroll-throwing at the Saturday night banquet.

**NEXT TIME WE SHALL GIVE MRS. SIMPSON'S RESTAURANT A REST FROM US, TO GATHER IN THE OLDEST MEMBER'S NEW CHAMBERS ONE EVENING IN LATE NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER, AND WATCH -- AFTER IMBIBING A FEW BADLY NEEDED STRENGTHENING COCKTAILS -- THE ASTONISHINGLY WRONG THANK YOU JEEVES OF 1936, STARRING DAVID NIJEN AS BEATIE WOOSTER AND ARTHUR TREACHER AS JEEVES. WATCH THIS SPACE FOR FURTHER DETAILS.**

# THE IMITABLE JEEVES

A book review by Peter Cannon

Searchers after Wodehousiana have strange, far-ranging tastes. For some are the thrills of collecting silver cow creamers, for others the joys of chasing after newts. They follow in the footsteps of Colonel Murphy in quest of Blandings, and toss rolls at one another at their biennial gatherings. The Dulwich Library and the Little Church Around the Corner are their shrines, and they linger over the listings in the back pages of Charles Gould's catalogs. But the true epicure of Plum esoterica, for whom imitation is not ipso facto an act of blasphemy, esteems most of all Wodehouse-influenced fiction: for there reverence and affection for the master may combine with a close study of his style and method to form the perfection of the pastiche.

The latest acolyte to pay homage in such fashion is Elisa DeCarlo, author of two fantasy novels, *The Devil You Say* (1993) and *Strong Spirits* (1994), featuring Aubrey Arbuthnot, psychic detective, and his gentleman's gentleman, Hornchurch, who is also psychically gifted. In *The Devil You Say*, a mysterious client hires Aubrey to bid at Sothebys for a rare magical tome. Later, a pal promises to pay him a fee of five hundred pounds to pose as valet to Hornchurch, while his man pretends to be a lord. (In contrast to Bertie, Aubrey has to work for a living.) At a house party in the country, Satanists change a young lady into a Ming vase and steal her. Aubrey and Hornchurch must thwart the Satanists before they can do even worse mischief.

Bertie-like, Aubrey gets 'sozzled' at his club, the Junior Amentia. He uses words like 'dashed' and 'chappie' and tells Hornchurch 'you stand alone.' Unlike Bertie, he is short in stature and attractive females spark the anatomy to do more than merely goggle. In other words, DeCarlo plays her own variations on the Jeeves and Wooster theme, not attempting to mimic the Wodehouse manner in every line. Occasionally she nods. When Aubrey says, 'He came barging into the flat like someone out of a Hart Crane story,' one wonders whether the character or his creator is confused. Is he (or she) perhaps thinking of Bret Harte? More importantly, if a person is turned into a vase it is only fair to be informed how and when that character reverted to human form. These are quibbles, however, in a light and unpretentious entertainment. *Strong Spirits*, a prequel that recounts how Arbuthnot and Hornchurch came to join forces, is far more assured in its plot development, building to an entirely satisfying resolution.

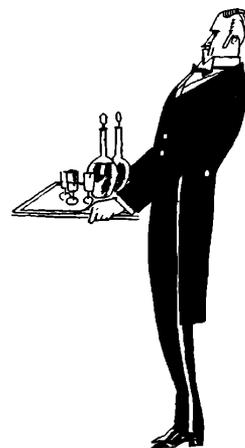
Both titles are part of the AvoNova paperback line, and are most likely to be found in the science fiction section of your neighborhood bookstore. A third Arbuthnot and Hornchurch adventure is in the works.

# PGW ON BBC

William Hardwick and Florence Cunningham report that Wodehouse writings have once more been heard on BBC Radio in the United Kingdom:

For ten evenings in the spring, the 'Book at Bedtime' was Crawford Logan reading an abridged version of *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*. Each reading lasted about fifteen minutes. At about the same time, there were three half-hour programs entitled 'The Wodehouse Letters,' in which some of his letters to William Townend and Guy Bolton were read with explanatory footnotes. In the week commencing 30th May the composer of the week was Jerome Kern, with five one hour programs playing his work. The first of these was about his association with PGW, concentrating on *Sitting Pretty* and playing about six songs from that show.

In late August, a new dramatisation of *Uncle Dynamite* was presented in six parts. The dramatisation was done by Richard Osborne. Three cheers for Richard!



# P G WODEHOUSE AT DULWICH

By Dr. Jan Piggott

**Alex Hemming**, an Old Alleynian himself, forwards this article to us in a recent issue of a newsletter, *Friends of Dulwich College*. The introductory note is brief: In this, the year of the 375th Anniversary of the Foundation we begin an occasional series on eminent OA's.

The author, Dr. Jan Piggott, teaches English and cares for rare books at Dulwich College. For ten years he was Head of English.

Boys who do not do very well at English at the College should not lose heart: English reports for Wodehouse and for Michael Ondaatje, who won the Booker [literature] prize the year before last, were disparaging: for Wodehouse, who was made Hon. D. Litt. by Oxford, 'English essay — not very strong'; 'he asks absurd questions. He writes foolish rhymes in other boys' books'. In a letter to his great school-friend, Bill Townend, Wodehouse wrote, 'I often wonder if you and I were exceptionally fortunate in our school days. To me the years between 1896 and 1900 seem so like heaven that I feel that everything since has been an anti-climax. Was the average man really unhappy at school? Or was Dulwich in our time an exceptionally good school?'

In the school stories of Wodehouse the Dulwich boys are eager and cheerful, with their dislike of 'rot', 'putting on side' and their robust attitude to fair punishment, which they refer to as 'getting beans'. These enthusiastic and eupeptic boys, who play tunes from musical comedies on the banjo, and use expressions like 'rather!', 'ripping', 'Right ho!', 'By Jove!' and 'stout fellow', with their world of the 'Pav', cooking sausages over open fires in their studies, boxing and prefect's caps, and prep in Great Hall followed by prayers, may sound impossibly unreal, but in their context Wodehouse makes them convincing.

The schools are all variants of the College: here is the Great Hall (with a dome in place of the Lantern) in *Mike*: 'It was a vast room, stretching from side to side of the middle block, and its ceiling soared up into a distant dome. At one end was a dais and an organ, and at intervals down the room stood long tables. The panels were covered with the names of Wrykynians who had won scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge, and of Old Wrykynians who had taken firsts in Mods or Greats, or achieved any other recognised success, such as a place on the Indian Civil Service list. A silent testimony, these panels, to the work the school had done in the world'. Although E A Wodehouse appears twice on these boards,

his famous younger brother is absent. One tends to think of the professional classes of Wodehouse's day as living in secure prosperity, but Wodehouse (farmed out to stay with formidable aunts in the holidays) had a father who worked in the Hong Kong Civil Service, and his salary was paid in the Indian Rupee; the Rupee fell, and there was no money, nor grant from the state, to support him at Oxford. Thus Wodehouse went into a bank, and began at the same time to sell stories to magazines, such as *The Captain*. His precious manuscript book in the Dulwich Archives records his first payments for these stories.

A brilliant parody of a banal and inept schoolboy poem about the College appears in his story 'The Prize Poem':

Imposing pile, reared up 'midst pleasant grounds,

The scene of many a battle, lost or won,  
At cricket or at football; whose red walls  
Full many a sun has kiss'd 'ere day is done.

This is typical of Wodehouse's gently satirical intelligence in that it manages also to point up the absurdity of Charles Barry's palazzo buildings reduced to a backcloth for rugby football, and at the same time the portentousness of the ar-



Dulwich College main building, by Charles Barry, Junior, 1866-1870  
(Drawing by Pauline Blanc)

chitecture that takes itself perhaps rather too seriously for its South London surroundings.

Wodehouse describes himself as 'born of poor but honest parents who sent me to school at an early age in order that I might acquire a grasp of the Greek and Latin languages, now obsolete'. The Classical VI [form], we learn from the stories, wrote two Latin and two Greek compositions a week, and reckoned they could translate Livy and Vergil at sight. Sport of course takes precedence in the stories, and the hero's enemy in *Mike* is an intellectual prefect with a pair of pince-nez (a very bad sign) who takes his academic study more seriously than cricket. Wodehouse tells us that at the boys' concerts the performers were applauded by the other boys for their sporting rather than their musical accomplishment. The main theme of the stories is the code of public school honour which appears as the real determinant in the boys' education—in contrast to the ineffectual school rules and staff. The worst insult in the stories is when one boy tells another that he is 'not fit to be at a public school'; Wodehouse also relishes telling us that a boy who cheated in an examination on Euripides became a swindler in later life. Along with the philistine heartiness of the sporting and public school codes, the wrecked studies of the unpopular boys, the form rooms flooded and the master's dog painted red for a rag, goes a tribal theme. In *The Pothunters* and *The Gold Bat* the story concerns the retrieval of a stolen numinous tribal trophy, symbolising honour, a cup or a gold bat an inch long. Success at sport naturally recovers honour—thus in *The White Feather* Sheen, a boy who is outlawed by his House for funking joining in a bit of a row down in the town with the village lads, is restored to the tribe by his winning the Lightweight boxing event at Aldershot. The sporting tribal theme involves hostility to outsiders: the prefects in the good house are said to be 'all good sorts, without that liberal admixture of weeds, worms and outsiders which marked the list of prefects in most of the other houses'. At the end of *Mike at Wrykyn* the hero's school-friend relishes his exploits with an Old Wykehamist in Argentina taking pot shots at the native gauchos; in a copy of *The Alleynian*, however, just before Wodehouse left the College, I found an article about some Old Alleynians murdered by Argentinians. The College has recently been presented with the cricket scoring book recording the nine wickets taken by Wodehouse playing (significantly) for the Classical VI against the Modern Side.

## THOUGHTS ON A RECENT WOOING'

Donald Daniel and William Hardwick spotted an early Wodehouse poem quoted in a letter-to-the-editor by one Jamie Elston in the English *Daily Telegraph* of May 28, 1994. The letter was occasioned by a recent complaint to the Press Complaints Commission by Prince Edward, who objected to the photographs of him kissing his girlfriend which appeared in five British tabloids. The pictures were taken while he was on private property, thus invading his privacy. 'The Commission agreed with him,' says William, 'which proves that nothing is new,' as shown by the poem that follows.

Plum's 1906 poem, 'Thoughts on a Recent Wooing,' was prompted by the engagement of Queen Victoria's granddaughter Princess Victoria-Eugenie to King Alphonso XIII of Spain. It runs as follows:

I used to think I'd like to be  
A person of position,  
A person, say, of Royalty,  
Or some such high condition.  
But now I hold the mortal whose  
Ambition takes this shape errs.  
I'll tell you why I've changed my views—  
I read the morning papers.

As I complacently reflect,  
I've very seldom seen a  
Dense, interested crowd collect  
When I'm with Angelina.  
And, if it does, it is not we  
Who entertain the gapers.  
Some accident they've thronged to see  
(Next day it's in the papers).

But when a royal couple woo,  
It can't be done in private:  
For thousands rally round to view  
If they can but contrive it.  
With cameras behind the trees  
Reporters cut their capers.  
He gives her hand a tender squeeze—  
Next day it's in the papers.

The complete poem appears in Wodehouse's *The Parrot and Other Poems*, Hutchinson, London, 1988.

There came from without the hoof-beats of a galloping relative, and Aunt Dahlia whizzed in.  
*The Code of the Woosters*, 1938.

# AN EARLY CONCORDANCE

By John Forbes

'This piece I did for the *New York Times* Sunday Books of August 8, 1948, just surfaced,' writes John. 'I'm still not happy about Lady Millicent Threepwood. I've listed her as a niece. Could she have been a second daughter? Anyway, she was not one of Lord Emsworth's numerous sisters. In which connection, when I wrote the thing Ladies Florence and Diana had not yet been created.'

This is surely one of the earliest studies of Wodehouse's writings. The McIlvaine bibliography lists only a half dozen or so brief earlier pieces that might be so called. The earliest listed is Dorothy Parker's in *Vanity Fair*, 1918.

When P. G. Wodehouse emerged from the doghouse with still another addition to the saga of Blandings Castle, that stately home of England, it was predicted that unborn generations of scholars would mine the master's works for doctoral dissertations and learned treatises. Let us, then, give these researches a gentle shove by attempting to disentangle the family relationships of the Threepwoods of Blandings.

The Head of the Family is Clarence Threepwood, ninth Earl of Emsworth, a widower. "Fluffy-minded" is the term most frequently applied to this vague and genial peer.

The Heir-Apparent is Clarence's elder son, George Threepwood, Lord Bosham. George, like his father, is not an intellectual giant.

Bosham has issue by his wife, Cicely—James, the elder, and George, the younger, a demon with the air-rifle.

Clarence has a daughter, the Lady Mildred, who appears early in the series as the wife of Colonel Horace Mant of the Scots Guards and is never heard from again.

The Hon. Frederick Threepwood, Lord Emsworth's younger-son-and-cross-to-bear, pops up again and again at Blandings Castle. Freddie lives in the dream world of the cinema. Eventually, however, life takes on New Meaning with his marriage to Miss Niagara Donaldson, daughter of the American dog-biscuit tycoon.

So far so good. Now comes a difficulty. Who is the chatelaine of Blandings? One of Clarence's numerous sisters—but which one? Is it Lady Ann Warblington? But she appears only once in this role and then vanishes. Thereafter the dominant figure at the old home-stead is Lady Constance Keeble. Her mission in life is to keep her many nieces and nephews from marrying

beneath their station. It invariably turns out, however, that her machinations have been in vain and True Love prevails.

From here on in, with one startling exception, the Threepwoods are sisters of the ninth Earl and their rebellious offspring. The exception is that agile and impish bachelor, bon vivant, and retired roué, the Hon. Galahad Threepwood, Clarence's younger brother, whose reminiscences of a convivial youth threaten to rock the peerage to its foundations.

We have mislaid another male Threepwood somewhere because in *Fish Preferred* an Emsworth niece, Lady Millicent Threepwood, becomes involved with an attractive and ineligible young man named Hugo Carmody. Nor is it clear why she, alone of the nieces, should have a title. Who was her father? Presumably some forgotten brother of Clarence's.

Clarence's sister Jane is deceased. We do not learn her married name but we find her daughter, Angela, on the verge of a misalliance (happily consummated) with one James B. Belford.

Another sister, Lady Charlotte, is introduced as younger than both Clarence and Constance. Her daughter, Jane, "the third prettiest girl in Shropshire," contracts the usual unsuitable union with a George Abercrombie.

As a variant on the routine, one of Clarence's sisters has a son instead of a daughter, whose affections lead him into the lower social brackets. Lady Julia Fish (née Threepwood), relict of the late Major General Sir Miles "Fishy" Fish of the Brigade of Guards (who once rode a bicycle down Piccadilly in sky blue underwear in the year '97), is younger than Charlotte. Her plump, pink son, Ronald Overbury Fish, becomes enamored of Miss Sue Brown, a charming young lady of the chorus.

The three remaining Threepwood sisters are late-comers and they contribute to our growing suspicion that the family tree is recklessly sprouting and P.G.W. adding new sisters and nieces with wild abandon.

Georgiana (Threepwood), Lady Alcester, of Upper Brook Street, London, has a daughter, Gertrude, and the latter's romance with the Rev. Rupert "Beefers" Bingham, impecunious rector of Much Matchingham, Salops., is pursued to the customary happy ending.

Lady Dora (Threepwood) Garland, widow of the late Sir Everard Garland, K. C. B., has a daughter, Prudence. William "Blister" Lister is the fortunate young man to brave the family's displeasure and ride it out to a triumphant conclusion. In the same volume, *Full Moon*, Veronica Wedge, daughter of Colonel Egbert and Lady Hermione (Threepwood) Wedge, has a tempestuous affair of the heart with the (for once) highly eligible Tilton Plimsoll, who almost gets away.

Here we have undertaken but a first approximation to the initial step in the analysis of this involved chronicle of the British upper classes. Scholars, carry on!



So carefully did John do his work that even the exhaustive computer-aided tabulation of Dan Garrison, years later in *Who's Who in Wodehouse*, can produce only the smallest corrections: In *Something New* Lord Bosham is mentioned as having three, not two, sons; and *Fish Preferred* reveals that Lady Millicent was indeed Lord Emsworth's niece, as John believed, and her father was named Lancelot.

Dan's book also gives a little more detail on the Mysterious Affair of the Chatelaine of Blandings. As John notes, Lady Ann Warblington was the first recorded holder of the title in *Something New*, 1915, succeeded by Lady Constance Keeble. She ruled as chatelaine from *Leave It to Psmith*, 1923, to 'Sticky Wicket at Blandings,' 1966, a remarkable tenure of 44 years, interrupted only by Lady Hermione Wedge in *Full Moon*, 1947, and *The Brinksmanship of Galahad Threepwood*, 1965. The two later sisters mentioned by John, Ladies Florence and Diana, bobbed to the surface at the very end, in *Sunset at Blandings*, 1977.

Any man under thirty years of age who tells you he is not afraid of an English butler lies.

'The Good Angel,' *The Man Upstairs*, 1914

## BUTTLING TODAY

Daniel Cohen and Jan Kaufman found an article on butdling past and present in the January 23, 1994 *New York Times*. Excerpts follow.

From P. G. Wodehouse's Jeeves to Stevens, the self-effacing narrator of *The Remains of the Day*, the butler has been a fixture of English upper-class mythology. Mannered, loyal and discreet, the good butler is also unflappable to a fault, a trait perhaps best underscored by a man who once worked for Lord Dunsany, the Irish poet. After a group of hooligans ransacked rooms and set fires inside Dunsany Castle early this century, he intercepted the fleeing invader at the front door and politely inquired: 'And who shall I say called?'

But life and times have changed for Britain's serving classes. There are far fewer butlers: estimates run to the hundreds instead of the 18,000-plus in the years before World War II.

Moreover, the modern butler these days is less the faithful servant than the professional household manager and organizer, says Ivor Spencer, the founder of the Ivor Spencer International School for Butler Administrators/Personal Assistants ('Trained British Style'). Students still learn how to iron the creases out of the morning newspaper and lay out an employers' clothes. But Mr. Spencer says there is no reason they should end up dispirited and lonely, like Stevens, after a life devoted selflessly to the service of their employer.

'Being a butler is not an act of selfless loyalty,' he says. 'It is a profession and a business.'

In return for working a dawn-to-evening schedule, he said, a butler today will earn a starting wage of \$35,000, including private medical care, food and accommodations, and use of his employers' car. Salaries for more experienced butlers range up to \$65,000, Mr. Spencer said.

In London, agencies providing help to domestic clients say that butlers and well-schooled servants are in great demand, although the employers these days tend to be business people and foreigners—new money rather than old.

Even Mr. Spencer says he believes that some people with money hire English butlers these days because they are, quite simply, a status symbol. 'I had a client in Oklahoma who called me one day and asked if it was all right if he had his new butler answer the phone by saying, 'This is the so-and-so residence, the under-butler speaking,' said Mr. Spencer. 'I told him I thought it was perfectly fine, but I thought he only had one butler. He said, yes, that was true.'



Daniel did what he could in a letter to the editor to correct the common impression that Jeeves was a butler:

In our world, where we make our own tea and press our own pants (if they get pressed at all), the distinction between butler and 'gentleman's personal gentleman' (as Jeeves described himself) may not mean much. But in the world of P. G. Wodehouse, where the decision to wear purple socks shook the foundations of civilization, it meant a great deal.

Another respondent wrote that newspapers were ironed, not to remove the creases, but to dry the ink.

# 'PLUMMING' SHERLOCK HOLMES

By Marilyn MacGregor

Marilyn presented this talk at a dinner of The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes at the Sherlockian festivities of January 1994 in New York City. It was first published in *The Serpentine Muse*, Spring 1994, and has also appeared in *The Detective's Notebook*, No. 10, Guy Fawkes Day, 1994.

P. G. Wodehouse was a fan of Arthur Conan Doyle from his schooldays. As a schoolboy, 'Plum' made special trips to the station for *The Strand Magazine* to get the earliest possible look at continuations of the latest Doyle serials.<sup>1</sup> The lasting influence of the Holmes stories on him is shown by his references to Sherlock Holmes through the seventy-three years, no, not of his lifetime, seventy-three years as a full-time, published writer—1902 to 1975.<sup>2</sup>

So far, my own 'Plumming' has turned up 112 Sherlockian references in 59 short stories and novels, written between 1909 and 1975. You'll be happy to know I shan't cite them all here.

My predecessors in this endeavor include Richard Lancelyn Green<sup>3</sup>, who found the earliest known 1902 reference, Linda Jeffery<sup>4</sup>, W.S. Bristowe<sup>5</sup>, and Andrew Malec<sup>6</sup>. The last

three were published in Sherlockian journals, and I'll not repeat their quotes. Also, omitting 'Elementary,' 'My dear Watson,' and jeweled snuffboxes, I'll give you some with 'Plum's' own twist.

The rollickingly comic lyrics of 'Back To His Native Strand,' rejoicing in Holmes's return from Reichenbach, appeared in the May 27, 1903 *Punch*. Here's the beginning:

Oh, Sherlock Holmes lay hidden more than half a dozen years.  
He left his loving London in a whirl of doubts and fears.

For we thought a wicked party  
Of the name of Moriarty

Had dispatched him (in a manner fit to freeze one).

They grappled on a cliff-top, on a ledge six inches wide:

We deemed his chances flimsy when he vanished o'er the side.

But the very latest news is

That he merely got some bruises.

If there is a man who's hard to kill, why he's one.

In the complex, carefully crafted Wodehouse plots, in order to advance the cause of true love or to reunite a pair of sundered hearts, somebody usually has to let the brain out a notch and get the grey matter surging about pretty freely. Sometimes, to avoid disaster, somebody must steal something, impersonate someone else or show up in false whiskers. Situations of this sort offer fine opportunities for Sherlockian references.

From 1909<sup>7</sup>: '... his sympathy for Doctor Watson increased with every minute, and he began to feel a certain resentment against Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It was all very well for Sir Arthur to be so shrewd and infallible ... but he knew perfectly well who had done the thing before he started!'

The schoolboy Pillingshot, in the uncollected 1910 story 'Pillingshot, Detective,'<sup>8</sup> admits to upperclassman Scott that he doesn't have a magnifying glass. Scott says, '... better buck up and get one ... Do you think Sherlock

Holmes ever moved a step without his? ... Did you find any footprints or tobacco-ash?'

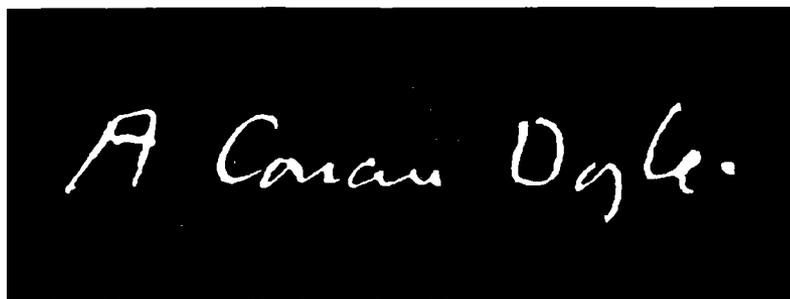
In 1925<sup>9</sup>, a character is 'looking as Sherlock Holmes might have looked

had he discovered Doctor Watson stealing his watch.'

In 1933<sup>10</sup>, we have: 'Suppose Sherlock Holmes ...sweated himself ...to recover the Naval Plans ...then the Admiralty authorities...observed casually, 'Oh, I say, you know those Naval Plans, old man? ...We've just gone and snatched them ourselves.' Pretty sick the poor old human bloodhound would have felt, no doubt.'

In 1934<sup>11</sup>: '...you didn't find Sherlock Holmes refusing to see clients just because he had been out late the night before at Doctor Watson's birthday party.'

Elizabeth Bottsworth, in 'The Amazing Hat Mystery,' 1936<sup>12</sup>, remembers '...at the age of five I dropped a pot of jam...on to my Uncle Alexander when he came to visit us in a



deerstalker cap with earflaps, as worn by Sherlock Holmes.<sup>7</sup>

In 1949<sup>8</sup>, a situation is said to be: ‘...rather like the big scene in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The baying and the patter of feet grew louder, and suddenly out of the darkness...’ The difference is that what appears this time is an affectionate shaggy dog of mixed parentage...who ‘looked like Boris Karloff made up for something.’

In 1952<sup>9</sup>, Lord Emsworth, who dislikes his neighbor Sir Gregory Parsloe, has ‘feelings similar to, though less cordial than, those of Sherlock Holmes toward Professor Moriarty.’

The ‘Adventuress’ spirit turns up in 1963<sup>10</sup> in: ‘Show me a delicately nurtured female, and I will show you a ruthless Napoleon of Crime...’

Back to 1933—in the story ‘The Smile That Wins,’<sup>11</sup> is the first appearance of ‘Plum’s’ own best detective, Adrian Mulliner, who, we are told, looked like Sherlock Holmes. He did not act like Holmes but it was Mulliner’s success in the ‘Smile’ case which led him to begin to think like Holmes. He thought and he thought, and by 1959 the results of all that thinking were published in the story ‘From A Detective’s Notebook.’<sup>12</sup>

Applying the Sherlockian method—that of ‘when you have eliminated the impossible ...’—Adrian Mulliner unmasked the man we know as Sherlock Holmes. Mulliner deduced that Holmes supported himself not on his detecting proceeds, which by his own admission were practically nil in terms of ready money, but on the ill-gotten income of his alter ego, Professor Moriarty. Holmes *was* Professor Moriarty. Remember, all *we* know of Moriarty is what Watson told us. And, as Adrian Mulliner pointed out: ‘Watson never saw Moriarty. All he knew about him was what Holmes told him on the evening of April 24th, 1891.’ The result of this deep thinking, of which I’ve given only the nub, is that besides being known as the world’s finest consulting detective, Sherlock Holmes now bears the even more accurate title, The Fiend of Baker Street.

I’ll add parenthetically that ‘From A Detective’s Notebook’ is the foundation story for the double scion, the Clients of Adrian Mulliner. Clients are a Sherlockian Scion of The Wodehouse Society and a Wodehousian Scion of The Baker Street Irregulars. As ‘young Freddie ffinch-ffinch’ I have the singular honor of being one of the co-founders. You may possibly conclude that that explains a lot.

*Sunset at Blandings*, sixteen skeleton chapters of a projected twenty-two, was published posthumously in 1977. Richard Usbourne, who annotated it, tells us the pages, typed and numbered, were in the hospital with Wodehouse when he died.<sup>13</sup> They contain the last Sherlockian reference ‘Plum’ is known to have made.

Here’s the context: in previous books we learned of Galahad Threepwood’s sister Constance, a woman of more than exceptionally strong character, one capable of drastic action. In her youth she had used an airgun to shoot her governess, Miss Mapleton, in the bustle. These days she had often been in residence at Blandings Castle, where she made her presence felt. Galahad, grateful that she is not there now to put a spanner in his scheme, says of her: ‘Connie could detect rannygazoo by a sort of sixth sense...but she was a woman in a thousand. Sherlock Holmes could have taken her correspondence course.’<sup>14</sup> With that commendation, what else could Lady Constance Keeble be but an Adventuress?

Finally, in the hope of spreading sweetness and light, which is my constant aim in life<sup>15</sup>, I close with a ‘Plummy’ expression which I believe has not hitherto been recognized as Sherlockian although it echoes, Wodehousianly, a part of the title of a famous case: Pip-pip, pip, pip, pip.

- 1 Barry Phelps, *P.G. Wodehouse, Man and Myth*, 1992, p. 56.
- 2 David A. Jasen, *P.G. Wodehouse, A Portrait of a Master*, rev. ed. 1981, p. 27.
- 3 Cited in Andrew Malec’s ‘Early Wodehouse Doyleana and Sherlockiana,’ *Baker Street Miscellanea*, No. 27, Autumn 1981, p. 2.
- 4 Linda Jeffrey, ‘The Rummy Affair of P.G. Wodehouse and Sherlock Holmes,’ *The Baker Street Journal* N.S., 24, No. 4 (December 1974), pp. 200-203.
- 5 W.S. Bristowe, ‘The Influence of Holmes on Wodehouse,’ *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, 12, No. 3/4 (Summer 1976), pp. 109-110.
- 6 A. Malec, ‘Early Wodehouse Doyleana and Sherlockiana,’ *Baker Street Miscellanea*, No. 27, Autumn 1981, pp. 1-7, 33.
- 7 *Mike and Psmith*, 1909, Ch. 19.
- 8 David A. Jasen, ed., *The Uncollected Wodehouse*, 1976, p. 109.
- 9 *Sam the Sudden*, 1925, Ch. 23.
- 10 *Heavy Weather*, 1933, Ch. 11.
- 11 *Right Ho, Jeeves*, 1934, Ch. 5.
- 12 *Young Men in Spats*, 1936.
- 13 *The Mating Season*, 1949, Ch. 24.
- 14 *Pigs Have Wings*, 1952, Ch. 1.
- 15 *Stiff Upper Lip*, Jeeves, 1963, Ch. 9.
- 16 *Mulliner Nights*, 1933.
- 17 *Punch*, May 20, 1959, p. 677.
- 18 *Sunset at Blandings*, 1977, Richard Usborne Appendix ‘Work In Progress.’
- 19 *Sunset at Blandings*, 1977, Ch. 8.
- 20 *Uncle Dynamite*, 1948, Ch. 1.

by Pete Barnsley

May I ask if anyone has ever pointed out (somebody must have) a possible source of Jeeves's 'tissue-restorer?' I refer to Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*, near the end of Chapter 17, in which Mark Tapley provides what he calls a 'sherry cobbler' for his weary and despondent young master, the younger Martin Chuzzlewit: '... he produced a very large tumbler, piled up to the brim with little blocks of clear transparent ice, through which one or two thin slices of lemon and a golden liquid of delicious appearance, appeared from the still depths below, to the loving eye of the spectator.'

And the effect on young Chuzzlewit? '... he cast up his eyes once in ecstasy. He paused no more until the goblet was drained to the last drop.' Just how Bertie Wooster might have reacted.

If the above is well known to more learned Wodehousians and I am merely revealing my own ignorance, please forget I mentioned it and burn the evidence.

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## Contents

---

A newly discovered version of <i>The Prince and Betty</i>	1	Something new Plummy crossword	9 10	The imitable Jeeves PGW on BBC	17 17
A few quick ones	4	Some holiday gift ideas	12	P G Wodehouse at Dulwich	18
TWS Convention '95	5	Eccentricity rampant	13	'Thoughts on a Recent Wooing'	19
<i>The Code of the Woosters</i> (a play)	6	News	13	An early concordance	20
Robert G. Plunkett	7	More 'Anything Goes'	14	Buttling today	21
Chapter One	7	New members	15	'Plumming' Sherlock Holmes	22
Parody in the presence of the passenjare	8	Capital! Capital!	16	PGW archeology Want ad	24 24

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