

Picturing Jeeves

BY JOHN GRAHAM

TWS members who attended the recent Dearborn convention were treated to an absolutely topping presentation by John Graham. While we can't reproduce all 68 of John's slides here, we've adapted his speech to let him share some of the goods with you in written form. If you'd like to see all the illustrations, you may contact your editor (contact info on p. 24).

LET'S BEGIN with a quiz. I'm sure everyone can name the characters pictured to the upper right and I suspect most of you also know the name of the artist. Yes, it was Sidney Paget, who illustrated 38 Sherlock Holmes stories for the *Strand Magazine*. And



Sidney Paget's work



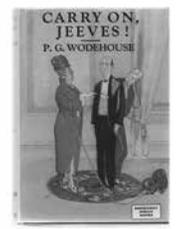
Drawn by E. H. Shepard

how about the artist behind the familiar folks to the left? He is, of course, E. H. Shepard, whose drawings have become synonymous with Milne's characters. Now, for the edition of *The Inimitable Jeeves* that you see to the right, who were the artists? *The Inimitable Jeeves* (or *Jeeves* as the book was titled in the U.S.) is arguably Wodehouse's most famous; it is the one the New York Public Library selected for its "Books of the 20th Century" exhibit. But, I repeat, who were the artists? Or, consider the early jackets from *Carry On, Jeeves*—the artwork is better, but I suspect you don't know who drew them either.



But that's okay, because neither do I. My point is simply this: unlike Sherlock Holmes or Winnie the Pooh, Bertie and Jeeves have never been closely tied to the work of any illustrator.

Over the years, hundreds of artists have drawn Plum's characters for magazines, books, dust jackets, paperbacks, audiobook covers, posters, advertising, comic books, and even Japanese mangas. Perhaps the reason we don't easily associate Wodehouse with the work of a single artist, or even a handful of them, is because Plum wrote so much and published it in so many places. In his heyday, he was able to keep dozens of artists busy on both sides of the Atlantic. No one emerged as the definitive Wodehouse illustrator. Nevertheless, along the way, a number of good artists produced drawings inspired by Wodehouse that are worth revisiting. In this article, my primary focus will be on the many artists who, over the decades, pictured the world of Bertie and Jeeves.



Who knows?

By my count, of Wodehouse's nearly 100 books, 14 U.K. and 15 U.S. titles were originally published with accompanying illustrations. In the U.K., these were mostly the school stories, but in America, many pre-1920 Wodehouse titles had book illustrations (including *Love Among the Chickens*, *The Intrusion of Jimmy*, *The Prince*

and Betty, *The Little Nugget*, *Something New*, *Uneasy Money*, and *Piccadilly Jim*). In 1932, Doubleday Doran published *Hot Water* with a colorful dust wrapper and seven simple line drawings by Rea Irvin, who had created the iconic man-about-town Eustace Tilley for the *New Yorker* magazine. There were only two Jeeves books with illustrations. Paul Galdone, a Hungarian immigrant best known for illustrating children's books, drew *Joy in the Morning*, and Hal McIntosh, a Scottish-Canadian artist, did *The Mating Season*.

With books, the most obvious place to find artwork is the dust jacket. It is clear from his letters that Wodehouse did not hold a particularly high opinion of the jackets issued by his main British publisher, Herbert Jenkins. Writing to his friend Bill Townend in 1945, Plum says: "It is nice to feel that the Jenkins people want me . . . it is only their jackets that jar one, and I suppose you are apt to get a pretty foul jacket from any popular publisher. I sometimes wish I were one of those dignified birds whose books came out in grey wrappers with the title and author's name on them and nothing else.



Not Plum's favorite

God may have forgiven Herbert Jenkins Ltd. for the jacket of *Meet Mr. Mulliner*, but I never shall." I don't know why Wodehouse singled out Mr. Mulliner for particular disdain, but

it is true that Herbert Jenkins rarely employed first-rate talents, although one well-known British artist, W. Heath Robinson, produced the jacket for *If I Were You*. If it looks like there are a lot of spray bottles and tonics in this barber shop, it might help you to know that Heath Robinson was the Rube Goldberg of the U.K., famous for drawing pictures of unnecessarily complicated machinery.



W. Heath Robinson

The only dust jacket we know that Wodehouse particularly liked was the one Faber and Faber produced for *Louder and Funnier*. The artwork is by Rex Whistler, who was both a muralist and book illustrator. His dust jackets were famous for their old-fashioned style and ornate baroque borders.



Plum preferred

Up until the Second World War, it is probably fair to say that more readers got their Wodehouse from magazines than anywhere else, since just about everything he wrote appeared there first. McIlvaine's bibliography records 153 different magazines with Wodehouse stories, and the 2001 *Addendum* has added many more titles to the list; as a result, the total number of illustrators who drew a Wodehouse story is impossible to guess. The *Strand* magazine alone employed 27 different artists to illustrate the over 200 stories he published there. By the way, although Sidney Paget never illustrated a Wodehouse story, E. H. Shepard did. Shepard drew five of Plum's stories for the *Strand*, including "The Rough Stuff."

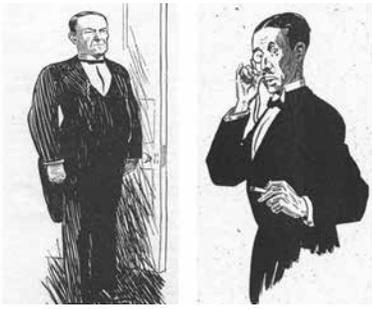
As you know, the earliest Jeeves stories appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in the U.S. If we count 1915's "Extricating Young Gussie" as part of the official canon, then the first artist to illustrate a Jeeves story was Martin Justice. Justice sketched Bertie (Mannering-Phipps) and his Aunt Agatha, but did not draw Jeeves—which is hardly surprising since Jeeves barely enters the story. The credit for the first picture of Jeeves and of Bertie Wooster goes to Tony Sarg, who illustrated both "Leave It to Jeeves" and "The Aunt and the Sluggard" for the *Post* in 1916. Sarg's Bertie is quite old and rather pudgy; his Jeeves is tall, thin and dignified. Of course, one has to remember that at this early stage, Sarg had little by way of character description to build on; Bertie tells



Tony Sarg's pudgy Bertie

us that "Jeeves is a tallish man, with one of those dark, shrewd faces," but he says little about himself, other than admitting: "I'm a bit short on brain myself; the old bean would appear to have been constructed more for ornament than for use, don't you know?"

Tony Sarg was born in Guatemala in 1882 to German parents. He eventually moved to London and then on to New York City, where he did graphic design for advertisers and magazine publishers. Said to be fascinated by marionettes, he designed some of the first balloon puppets for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. He never illustrated any more Jeeves stories after 1916, but he did draw some of Plum's golf stories for *McClure's*



Alfred Leete's *Jeeves and Bertie*

magazine in the 1920s.

In the U.K., the first six Jeeves stories appeared in the *Strand* between January 1916 and August 1918. All

six were illustrated by Alfred Leete. Above you can see Leete's very first drawing of Jeeves and an early look at Bertie. Leete always pictures Jeeves with a military bearing and prominent forehead. This later characteristic probably stems from a line in "Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest." On hearing that Lady Malvern's son Wilmot has landed in prison, Bertie tells us: "A chappie has to be a lot broader about the forehead than I am to handle a jolt like this." Needless to say, Jeeves could handle the jolt and has the forehead to prove it. Leete's Bertie is that he is not chubby, but he is still too old for my taste. Leete illustrated only six Jeeves stories, but he drew 21 Wodehouse stories in all, including two Reggie Peppers and *The Man of Means*. Leete is notable for another reason: although the work is uncredited, I think it is pretty clear he drew the dust jacket art for the first Jeeves book, *My Man Jeeves*, in 1919. He probably also did the covers for several later reprints.

At the *Strand*, Alfred Leete illustrated stories for 36 different authors. In 1914, he drew a cover for the magazine *London Opinion* featuring Lord Kitchener, which became the iconic World War I British recruiting poster "Your Country Needs You." Leete died in 1933, but his last Wodehouse book cover did not appear until much later. In the 1990s, Penguin borrowed the upper lefthand corner of a poster Leete had done for the London Underground in the 1920s for their paperback reprint of *The Code of the Woosters*. As such, I think we can credit Leete with having the longest career of any Wodehouse illustrator.

Back in the U.S., the *Post* switched illustrators for their next three Jeeves stories. The new artist was



Henry Raleigh depicts the prize-giving scene from *Right Ho, Jeeves*.

Henry Raleigh, who for many years had depicted fashionable society for Maxwell House coffee ads. Raleigh gives us a much younger Bertie; his Jeeves shows the proper feudal spirit, but I

notice something else. In "Jeeves and the Hard-Boiled Egg," Bertie's pal Bicky, staring at Jeeves in awe, asks: "Have you ever noticed his head, Bertie old man? It sort of sticks out at the back." This is a line Raleigh really took to heart, or should I say to head. In December 1933, Henry Raleigh would return to the *Post* to illustrate *Right Ho, Jeeves*. The drawings he produced for this six-part serial are to my mind some of the best we have, including one of Gussie emerging from under Bertie's bed (used on the cover of *Who's Who in Wodehouse*). And below left, of course, is the prize-giving scene.

In December 1921, the *Strand* began a new series of 11 short stories that in book form would become *The Inimitable Jeeves*. In the U.S., these stories were published not in the *Post* but in *Cosmopolitan*. Both the *Strand* and *Cosmopolitan* chose new artists, and to my mind, neither chose all that wisely. Let's begin with *Cosmopolitan*. The artist was Thornton Drake Skidmore, or T. D. Skidmore as he signed his work. One critic said Skidmore "excelled at scenes of well-heeled, fashionably dressed couples rendered in a flattened graphic style and featuring bold contours." In the early 1920s, *Cosmopolitan* used Skidmore to illustrate 31 Wodehouse short stories, from Archie to Jeeves to Ukridge. His assignments included some of Plum's all-time best, including "The Great Sermon Handicap" and "Ukridge's Accident Syndicate." His artwork is technically competent, but to my mind his drawings lack humor.



One of T. D. Skidmore's sober attempts

There is one interesting story about Skidmore. As far as I can tell, Wodehouse rarely took an interest in his illustrators and often had no idea who they were or what they were drawing. But after *Cosmopolitan* published "Ukridge's Dog College," Plum wrote to Bill Townend: "I had to rush that story in the most horrible way . . . and had to write about 20,000 words before I got it set. And then . . . I found that the artist [Skidmore] had illustrated a scene which was not in the final version, and I had to add a new one by telephone." I think this is the illustration in question: Ukridge, one cat, and a pack of Pekes. In the book version of the story, Ukridge rather bizarrely says he is dragging a dead cat; happily, in the *Cosmopolitan* version the cat



Skidmore's somewhat livelier version of Ukridge's Peko training



A. Wallis Mills
in the Strand

is very much alive, and leading the way. Thank you, T. D. Skidmore!

In the U.K., the *Strand* had selected A. Wallis Mills to illustrate the new Jeeves stories. He would stay with the *Strand* for a total of 34 Wodehouse stories, including a run of 14 Jeeves stories. Mills holds the record for having drawn the most

Jeeves short stories of any artist. The best that can be said for his drawings is that they show humor, unlike those of Skidmore. He was not averse to having Jeeves show emotion, as above where Jeeves reacts with disdain to Bertie's new cummerbund. As you might expect,



Arthur William Brown gets rummy.

Bertie also shows strong emotion on occasion. Overall, Mills's take on both Bertie and Jeeves is credible; what disappoints is that his drawings are often so small in size and scope. For whatever reason, the *Strand* never seemed to give Mills much space or attention.

After a nearly four-year hiatus from the *Post*, Wodehouse returned there in 1923 with *Leave It to Psmith*, illustrated by May Wilson Preston, the only female artist of note to draw Wodehouse. Preston had studied art with James Whistler in Paris. Her appearances in the *Post* and elsewhere were extensive; although she never drew a Jeeves story, her Wodehouse credits include the magazine illustrations and dust jacket art for five novels.

With Plum's return to the *Post*, his next three Jeeves stories appeared there in the mid-1920s. Each story was drawn by a different illustrator. Arthur William Brown, who had illustrated the Kid Brady boxing stories for *Pearson's Magazine* 20 years earlier, drew "The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy"; his Bertie is among the most handsome. H. J. Mowat did "Clustering Round Young



H. J. Mowat's Bertie



George Wright's
young Bertie

Bingo"; his Bertie seems a bit of a dandy. And George Wright drew "Without the Option"; his Bertie is young and gay.

Back in the U.K., the art editor of the *Strand* was starting to give most new Wodehouse assignments to two artists, Reginald Cleaver or Charles Crombie. Cleaver got the Ukridge and Blandings



Charles Crombie's
monocled Bertie

Castle stories; Crombie got the Mulliner tales as well as the 11 stories that make up *Very Good, Jeeves*. Crombie ranks high on the list of Wodehouse illustrators in terms of his ability to capture his characters with good nature and whimsy. That said, I find his Bertie too old, his Jeeves too common. But the *Strand* clearly liked his work; in all, he illustrated 41 Wodehouse stories, from "The Good Angel" in 1910 to *Big Money* in 1931. Today, Crombie is probably best remembered for a series of humorous postcards he produced in the early part of the century called *The Rules of Golf*. Like most other illustrators, he pictured Bertie with a monocle—indeed, a very prominent one.

In America, the 11 stories destined for *Very Good, Jeeves* were split between two magazines—Wallace Morgan illustrated three for *Liberty*; James Montgomery Flagg drew eight for *Cosmopolitan*. Without doubt, Morgan and Flagg are the best-known and most successful American artists to have illustrated Wodehouse. They had different temperaments and artistic styles, but the two share a similar history in terms of Wodehouse publishing. Each drew his first Wodehouse magazine story in 1910, and each would go on to illustrate a single Jeeves novel. For Flagg, it was *Thank You, Jeeves*; for Morgan, *The Code of the Woosters*. Doubleday Doran used Morgan's artwork on two of their dust jackets; they used Flagg's on five.

Let's look first at Wallace Morgan. Morgan began his prolific career as an illustrator for several New York newspapers, covering the Spanish-American war. His medium was charcoal or pen and ink, and he learned to draw quickly and from memory instead of using photographs or live models. In the early part of the century, he traveled around the U.S. documenting American life for *Collier's* magazine. For many years, he drew the Men's Shop ads for Saks Fifth Avenue. He cofounded the Society of Illustrators, still headquartered in New York City on East 63rd Street. Over a 38-year career, he probably illustrated more Wodehouse stories

and was in more magazines than any other artist, from “The Matrimonial Sweepstakes” in the February 1910 issue of *Cosmopolitan* to *Full Moon* in *Liberty* in November 1947.

As a Wodehouse illustrator, Morgan was less interested in producing detailed character sketches than he was in picturing the overall scene. Often with just a few strokes, he could capture the absurdity or good nature of the situation. One of my favorites is from *The Code of the Woosters*: note Jeeves’s stiff upper lip and Bertie’s insouciance as Aunt Dahlia lets heave the Infant Samuel at Prayer.



Wallace Morgan portrays the demise of the Infant Samuel.

James Montgomery Flagg’s first Wodehouse assignment was “The Man Upstairs,” which appeared in the March 1910 issue of *Cosmopolitan*. His last appearance there was “Trouble Down at Tudsleigh” in May 1939. Over the years, his work also appeared in *Liberty* and *Redbook*, for which he drew “Uncle Fred Flits By” in 1935. It might be said that Flagg was born to draw Wodehouse. After all, he was born in upstate New York in the town called Pelham Manor. He was raised in New York City and lived with gusto. He epitomized the concept of the handsome, bohemian artist, surrounded by beautiful models and Hollywood actors. He turned out many posters for World War I, including the iconic “I Want You” Uncle Sam poster, said to be a self-portrait. Remember Alfred Leete? It is remarkable that the two most famous war-recruiting posters of all time were done by Wodehouse illustrators.

Unlike Morgan, Flagg was less interested in recreating entire scenes than he was in giving us close-up snapshots of individual characters. His Jeeves is often pictured with a wry smile; as with Uncle Sam, Flagg’s Jeeves is probably a self-portrait. Like Charles Dana Gibson before him, Flagg excelled at drawing glamorous women. I don’t think Flagg was ever really comfortable when drawing Bertie. Early artists like Tony Sarg and Alfred Leete might be excused for drawing an older Bertie, as



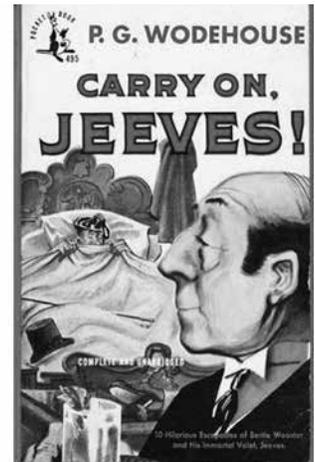
James Montgomery Flagg and his aging Bertie

they had little character description to go on, but by the late 1920s, it had become pretty clear that Bertie was tall, thin, and in his mid- to late 20s.

After 1930, Wodehouse started writing novels, but the *Strand* would publish only one of these—*Thank You, Jeeves*. The illustrator was Gilbert Wilkinson, the last important *Strand* artist to draw Wodehouse. Wilkinson also illustrated more than 30 other stories, including a number of Drones Club and Mulliner Hollywood tales. In his opening picture from *Thank You, Jeeves*, he shows Bertie with orange-red hair. I find it hard to believe Jeeves would work for an employer with red hair, after having advised Bertie in “Jeeves and the Yuletide Spirit” that “red hair is dangerous.” Even after the *Strand* ceased publication in the 1940s, Wilkinson remained a visible presence, for many years drawing a daily newspaper cartoon called “What a Life.”

After World War II, fiction readers turned increasingly from magazines to paperbacks, and this was certainly true of Wodehouse readers. Paperbacks had become popular in the 1930s, largely through the efforts of Penguin. In the early days, Penguin covers had no illustrations, but American paperbacks did. It is likely that more readers have seen this picture of Jeeves (below, left) than any other.

The artist was Isadore N. Steinberg, a Jewish immigrant born in Odessa, Russia. According to Plum’s own account, there were 24 printings of this Pocket Books edition, selling 1.75 million copies. Steinberg’s



Jeeves as depicted by Isadore N. Steinberg and Louis Glanzman vision is Jeeves the omniscient or omnipotent; for Louis Glanzman, the artist of the 1948 paperback of *Carry On, Jeeves*, it is Jeeves the avuncular. By the way, I am pleased to tell you that Lou Glanzman is still alive and well and living in New Jersey. Ten years ago he drew the poster for the Philadelphia Wodehouse convention.

This year’s convention poster was based on the dust jacket design for *Much Obligated, Jeeves*, which

cartoonist, architectural historian, and stage designer Osbert Lancaster drew in honor of Plum's 90th birthday in 1971. Lancaster illustrated eight Wodehouse dust jackets in all, as well as the cover for C. Northgate Parkinson's rather silly biography of Jeeves.

Eventually Penguin did bring artwork to their front covers. In the 1950s, their artist of choice was Geoffrey Salter; in the 1960s and '70s, when I finally got around to reading Wodehouse, it was Ionicus, whose real name was Joshua Armitage. Salter's style was simple but humorous; Ionicus's was colorful and more elaborate, but his covers get mixed reviews from Wodehousians. It is generally agreed that the best thing he did was the first-edition dust jacket for *Sunset at Blandings*.

Since Plum's death, publishers have continued to keep his books in print, which has created opportunities for new artists. My candidate for the worst recent Wodehouse cover goes to a print-on-demand paperback of *Love Among the Chickens*, apparently set in the Himalayas. One of the better contemporary artists is Paul Cox, who has been drawing for the Folio Society.

Much as I welcome new artists to Wodehouse, I do wish that someone would reprint *The World of Jeeves* in an illustrated edition, using the original drawings from the *Strand*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Liberty*. Sherlock Holmes stories are routinely reissued this



LOVE AMONG THE CHICKENS : A STORY OF THE HAPS AND MISHAPS ON AN ENGLISH CHICKEN FARM
P.G. 1881-1978 WODDEHOUSE

Himalayan chickens?

way; there is no reason why Bertie and Jeeves deserve anything less. These illustrations help connect us to the past, but they offer another benefit as well. If, like me, you tend to confuse "Jeeves and the Song of Songs" with "Sonny Boy" or mix up "The Artistic Career of Corky" with "Jeeves and the Spot of Art," then I think you will find that a few well-placed illustrations can help jog the memory banks. A picture may not be worth a thousand words, particularly when the words are Wodehouse's, but if the picture is faithful to the text and amusing—like the best of Henry Raleigh or Wallace Morgan—then it can add to the reader's enjoyment. Until somebody finally does publish an illustrated Wodehouse, there is no reason why you can't get started on your own. Thanks to the internet and to eBay, it is easy these days to collect Wodehouse magazine appearances. Be careful though: once you get started, it's hard to stop.

Estate Authorizes Transcription of *Money* Received for Literary Work

BY JOHN DAWSON



EARLY LAST YEAR, I sought and received permission from Sir Edward Cazalet to have the Wodehouse Archive at Dulwich send me scans of Wodehouse's notebook in which he recorded his literary earnings. Others have been permitted to view and copy portions of the 108-page journal, but according to the Dulwich archivist, this is the first time the estate has authorized the release of the entire notebook for study.

The journal consists of Wodehouse's handwritten notations of his sales from February 1900 to February 1908, and lists titles, publications, and price received, in addition to noting his *Globe* salary every week and payments he received for his earliest theatre work. The notebook has yielded a number of insights into Wodehouse's early London years and enabled my writing partner, Terry Mordue, and me to identify and locate several previously unfound Wodehouse pieces and to correct and supplement a number of McIlvaine entries. There are also a number of extraneous comments that have provided us much joy and head-scratching!

The first part of our work is an exact transcription of the notebook. That part is essentially finished and formatted, and it presents a more complete view of Wodehouse's London years than we have seen before.

The main focus of the project is to annotate over 700 entries, consisting of Wodehouse's earliest articles, poems, stories, and books, as well as the personalities he writes about and the publications for which he wrote. Without this notebook, many of Wodehouse's early pieces would have been lost forever, as many pieces were published without a byline or were published in long-forgotten, unindexed periodicals and newspapers. Only the survival of this 111-year-old document has enabled bibliographers, biographers, and collectors to know of his earliest non-book work.

We hope to enhance Wodehouse scholarship by researching and writing about every entry in the journal. It will be up to the estate to govern what we can release to the public, but I expect that Sir Edward will be receptive to our plan to make our research available to members of the U.K. and U.S. societies. We hope to have a finished product in 2012.

The Remsenburg Historical Marker Ceremony

BY KEN CLEVENGER

ARE YOU GOING to New York for the historical marker dedication on April 22, 2012?

At press time there were few seats left on the group bus, so if you want to ride to Remsenburg with other members of The Wodehouse Society then please contact Ken Clevenger to inquire about availability and payment. We will likely run out of seats on the bus, so please make your request promptly.

The dedication of the historical marker at the Remsenburg Community Church is going to be a big event. As you know, the cemetery at the chapel is where P. G. and Ethel Wodehouse are buried. The final details of the bus trip were not yet ready at the *Plum Lines* press deadline, but we will leave midtown Manhattan around 9:30 A.M. on April 22 and get to Remsenburg in time for the ceremony. There will be a reception with refreshments after the dedication. We plan to take a short bus tour of the local Wodehouse-related sites in Remsenburg, and we will return to the city in time for dinner. Tony Ring has graciously agreed to act as MC for the bus riders' Wodehouse-related entertainment. You should not count on getting back before 7 P.M., so a Sunday show might be a risky venture. You may bring a take-out lunch or snack on the bus, but no alcoholic beverages, please.

Sitting Pretty is playing off-Broadway that weekend, and Broadway is also sporting a very popular production of *Anything Goes*. To top it off, *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (another variation on the Gershwin *Crazy For You* theme) is opening at the Imperial Theater on the April 24. Hence, the latter show will be in previews prior to the day of the Remsenburg ceremony. The Broadway Special (the New York City chapter of TWS) is having a dinner get-together that will attract a crowd on Saturday night before *Sitting Pretty*. There may be more going on besides, if you will be loitering about the city before or after the dedication.



A Few Quick Ones

Where not otherwise noted, these Quick Ones are provided by John Baesch and Evelyn Herzog.

Lucy Merrill discovered the following, on Ken Follett's Master Class Web site: "There are many writers who write complicated, rather elaborate sentences which are actually a lot of fun. They might be comedy writers—P. G. Wodehouse, for example, does this all the time. With Wodehouse, what you are enjoying is the daft but entertaining way in which he phrases things. . . . At another end of the spectrum, with Dickens, what you are enjoying is the richness of his writing and the way his sentences can go on and on."

In an article about hangovers ("The Wrath of Grapes," *Country Life*, December 29, 2010) Charles Campion described Jeeves's pick-me-up as a member of the "concoctions" school of hangover eradication: "[Jeeves] would ply young Wooster with a glassful of raw egg and Worcestershire sauce." Of course, Plummies know that there were other secret ingredients.

Before Christopher Hitchens's recent passing, Nicholas Shakespeare reviewed the provocative journalist's latest work, *Arguably*, in the September 17 *Daily Telegraph*. In the review, Shakespeare mentioned Psmith's slogan for those who would dare intimidate him ("*Cosy Moments* cannot be muzzled"), and then quoted Hitchens: "That motto has been inscribed on the wall above my keyboard for years."

Alice Thompson wrote in the September 21 *Times* (London) that "Now Scots Have Turned into Rays of Sunshine." Her argument was that Scotland has had better news on the unemployment front than the rest of Great Britain and that last year's summer riots did not touch Scotland.

Lucy Merrill found this in the June 2011 issue of *The Word Detective*: "Use of the adjective 'sweet' in the sense of 'beloved, dear, treasured' dates back to Old English, but it wasn't until the late 18th century that 'sweetie' first appeared as a noun meaning 'beloved person' as well as a form of affectionate address ('Hi, sweetie, I'm home!'). And it wasn't until 1928 that someone (in this case the immortal P. G. Wodehouse) got around to documenting the inevitable combination of 'sweet as pie' and 'sweetie' into 'sweetie-pie' ("Hello, sweetie-pie," said Miss Molloy, *Money for Nothing*)."

Translating P. G. Wodehouse

BY TAMAKI MORIMURA

I TRANSLATE the works of P. G. Wodehouse into Japanese. I call myself a fortunate translator because I believe I have been very lucky. I have done 17 Wodehouse books so far and two of them later appeared in mangas, which are Japanese cartoon books.

Translating Wodehouse is fun. If you are a singer, you probably enjoy singing Mozart. If you are a translator, you definitely enjoy translating Wodehouse. When you sing Mozart, you may be constantly surprised by sophisticated phrasings, impromptu wit, solid construction, and clever twists, all along with incredibly lovely melodies. The joy of translating Wodehouse is something akin to that. One can become lost in the joy of translating Wodehouse.

But it is not like simply having fun singing karaoke with one's patient family and friends. Instead, when you sing for a paying audience, you have a responsibility to your audience, to the composer, to your agent, and to the record company. Similarly, I have this comic-writing Mozart as my responsibility, and it is I who must make him intelligible to Japanese readers. If I get it wrong, then I might destroy him literarily. If my poor translation means the books do not sell well, I am depriving Japanese readers of the opportunity to enjoy Wodehouse.

Speaking of lost opportunity, we Japanese were deprived of Wodehouse for nearly 50 years. He had been practically forgotten for half a century after World War II. Before the war, Wodehouse used to be popular in Japan, and about ten of his books had been translated. But after the war, he was forgotten, probably because the magazines that carried his stories and the publishers who published his books went out of business. There were several attempts to reintroduce Wodehouse after the war, but none of them really succeeded.

Some people said that the British sense of humour was untranslatable into Japanese and that Japanese readers would never be able to appreciate Wodehouse in the truest sense. Gussie Fink-Nottle in *Right Ho, Jeeves* called such an attitude defeatist. I confess that I used to have such an attitude myself. Even when I began translating Wodehouse, I could not escape this view completely, wondering if Japanese readers would really appreciate Wodehouse's inimitable prose, and

wondering if I could convey the wonderful humor of his ideas and jokes to them.

Luckily, I kept translating the "untranslatable" Wodehouse books while thoroughly enjoying them. And it has turned out that many other Japanese readers also love Wodehouse. That is why I call myself a very fortunate translator, and why I now know that the defeatist view is wrong. Still, translating Wodehouse into Japanese has challenges worth mentioning.

Hilaire Belloc once wrote that "the end of writing is the production in the reader's mind of a certain image and a certain emotion. And the means towards that end are the use of words in any particular language;

and the complete use of that medium is the choosing of the right words and the putting of them into the right order." Belloc believed that Wodehouse did this better than anyone else and called him the best English writer alive at that time.

When you know you are translating the best English writer, one persistent question is: Am I doing justice to the Master? Am I choosing the right Japanese words and putting them in the right order? I hope that I am. It is a challenge, and I know I am trying to attain an unattainable goal. What I can honestly say is that I am doing my best.

As for conveying the sense of Wodehouse, I am more optimistic. Of course, there are so many things that need

to be explained to Japanese readers. But I firmly believe that there exists a universal sense of what is funny and that laughs can be shared, regardless of time, language, and nationality. And P. G. Wodehouse's works possess a quality that enables us all to laugh heartily.

To provide explanations, I decided to include notes in the text, telling readers that this is an excerpt from the poet Tennyson's "Mariana" and that is a reference to *King Lear*, Act 1, Scene 2. I must explain to them what a deaf adder is and who Aubrey Smith and Marie Lloyd were. So mine is something of a fully annotated version, and though there is the risk of interrupting the Wodehousean flow, and though there might be other ways of providing supplementary information, I think my approach is working reasonably well.

There are problems common to translation in any language, and then there are problems that are specifically inherent in Japanese translation. As an



The manga Please, Jeeves

example, I would like to point out what I call the “I” problem. In English, there is the first-person “I,” and this “I” is something unmistakable, unshakable, definite—always “I.” But in Japanese, “I” does change. I (I mean “I”) just looked at a Japanese thesaurus and found “I” (I mean “I’s”) can be put in 33 different ways, and I personally can think of more. With more than 30 ways of identifying oneself, “I” can be something that represents one’s personality and identity, or shows what one is, or where one lives, which school one went to, one’s way of life, and so on. I might seem to be overstating the roles of “I,” but, in Japanese, I have to treat “I’s” this way, and I have to decide which “I” a certain character should use as an integral part of narrating the story and describing the characters. This may be immaterial in English, but it is very important in Japanese when one remembers that, with one exception, the many superb Wooster and Jeeves stories are narrated in the first person by Bertie Wooster.

That is enough about “I,” and I shall forbear from commenting about “you,” which my Japanese thesaurus lists in 20 different ways.

Finally, I should mention the matter of translating Wodehouse into a completely different medium: mangas (Japanese cartoon books). Many Wodehouse stories and novels have been made into movies, plays, and TV and radio shows, but rarely into cartoons. I should emphasize that Japanese mangas and animated cartoons are renowned for their artistry and not considered to be a form of entertainment just for children. There are a great many cartoon series for adults, and I am delighted to tell you that the “Jeeves Manga” is one of the very best. It is drawn by an extremely talented young artist, Ms. Bun Katsuta, and, if you see one, you will probably want to learn Japanese to appreciate the full meaning of what she has drawn. You will be astonished at the precision of her drawings and impressed by her obvious desire to depict the world of Wodehouse accurately.

Acting as a background adviser in creating a Wodehouse manga is a very interesting experience. I would not call it a collaborative effort because I do not suggest what Ms. Bun should do; rather, I want her to create and develop her own world of Jeeves and Wooster, so I just answer her questions. When I first started doing this, I became aware of how little I knew about the mundane details of the Wodehouse world of the 1920s–30s. One of Ms. Bun’s first questions was what an old “tenner” looked like, and I spent some time finding an image of an old ten-pound note. We travelled to London together to show her actual English stately homes, old shops, and country inns. We visited the original of Wodehouse’s Drones Club (still in existence)

and we studied the minutiae of Bertie Wooster’s London, including townhouses, Victorian shop fronts, 1920s architecture, lampposts, and postboxes.

We are very fortunate, too, to have the secret weapon of knowledgeable English friends, especially Norman Murphy, who is a renowned Wodehouse scholar, social historian, and architecture enthusiast, and his wife, Elin. They very kindly took on the task of showing us the background of Jeeves and Wooster, pointing out features of English buildings and life seemingly unchanged since Wodehouse’s time.

I do not want to sound complacent, but I cannot help thinking that I am extraordinarily fortunate. Bertie Wooster once said: “These things cannot be mere coincidence. They must be meant. What I’m driving at is that Providence seems to look after the chumps of this world; and, personally, I’m all for it.” I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Wooster and thank Wodehousean Providence for allowing me to follow the example of Uncle Fred as I continue to strive to spread sweetness and light in the faraway island of Japan.

Note: This article was originally published in ALSO: The Journal of the Alliance of Literary Societies, Vol. 5 (2011).



Tamaki Morimura translates “buttercup” for Marilyn MacGregor and Norman Murphy at the St. Paul convention.

(Photo by Barbara Combs)

“Very well, Aunt Dahlia,” I said with dignity, “if you don’t want to be in on the ground floor, that is your affair. And, anyway, no matter how much you may behave like the deaf adder of Scripture, which, as you are doubtless aware, the more one piped, the more it danced, or words to that effect, I shall carry on as planned.”

Right Ho, Jeeves (1934)

My First Time

BY KAREN SHOTTING

MY DESCRIPTION of my first Wodehouse novel cannot be told without sharing some family background and explanation of my darling father's rule of the Shotting household.

I will quickly dispose of the preliminaries: I, like many others, was first introduced to the world of Wodehouse through the BBC's *Jeeves and Wooster* series. It only took one episode, and I knew this was a good thing that needed pushing along.

Shortly after viewing that first episode, I ankleed off to California's South Coast Plaza to check out the "W" section of Rizzoli Bookstore's Fiction and Literature department. There I was confronted with an embarrassment of riches: a veritable sea of orange spines (the old Ionicus-cover Penguin editions of the Master's works) and a wealth of assorted variations on the Wodehouse theme. Rizzoli did not stint in its effort to bring the best literary offerings to its Southern California habitués. But how was I to choose the proper starting place? I knew I wanted a Jeeves book, but which one?

This is where we veer off into the Shotting family chronicles. I come from a family of six children. My father (with the full concurrence of my mother) decided that democracy was an interesting experiment for a large governmental unit such as the United States, but that a similar methodology did not fit in the microcosm of the Shotting household—at least not if one wanted peace in our time. So he instituted a regime that the lowest foot soldier will recognize: he gave orders, and we obeyed. Majority rule was unheard of, and voting was anathema. Like many absolute rulers before him, Dad also conferred upon himself an appropriately august title. He referred to himself as, and issued regulations and ukases under, the authority of The One, The Only, The Inimitable. (I wish you could hear him say it; I can't really do it justice in print.)

This regime was largely successful. However, there was occasionally dissension (and, to be absolutely frank, even outright insubordination) in the ranks. Questionings of the lord and master's authority, wisdom, or knowledge were easily disposed of—things were done his way, and he knew best, because he was The One, the Only, the Inimitable.

OK, I think you can probably see where this is going. Let us return to Rizzoli's and the "W" section of Fiction and Literature. Which Jeeves book did I choose? There could only be one choice: My first Wodehouse book

was, of course, *The Inimitable Jeeves*. I started there and never looked back: I cruised my way through the Jeeves stories, moved on to Blandings, Uncle Fred, Psmith, and Ukridge, and thereafter read any Wodehouse I could get my hands on. At some point, I introduced my father to Wodehouse, and it gave me great pleasure to listen as he chortled over Bertie's sagas and Ukridge's schemes for amassing great wealth. His fondness for Wodehouse also led to his assuming another nickname: he enjoyed leaving messages asking me to call my "aged relative."

On a more serious note, I am sorry to say that The One, The Only, The Inimitable is no longer with us. On visits to him during his last month in the hospital, I brought with me *Wodehouse Is the Best Medicine*, but even the best medicine is not always successful, and The One, The Only, The Inimitable went to join the creator of *The Inimitable Jeeves* on February 21, 2010.

Most fellows, no doubt, are all for having their valets confine their activities to creasing trousers and what not without trying to run the home; but it's different with Jeeves. Right from the first day he came to me, I have looked on him as a sort of guide, philosopher, and friend.

"Jeeves Exerts the Old Cerebellum"
The Inimitable Jeeves (1923)

TWS Travels with Karen: Hippogriffs and Lotuses

KAREN SHOTTING, esteemed vice president of our merry society of Wodehouseans, notes that she always seems to find something that reminds her of Wodehouse when traveling. From Lotusland in Montecito, California, Karen offers us the following photos. The first is a hippogriff (see *Jeeves in the Morning*), which decorated one of the fountains. The second is a lotus blossom. The character in *The Luck of the Bodkins* who took this as her stage name is near and dear to Karen's heart because she (Karen, not Lottie) won a prize at TWS's Divine Providence convention for her Lottie Blossom costume.



Something Fresh (a brief epilogue)

BY CHESTER TUTHILL

THOSE WHO HAVE READ *Something Fresh* may have missed the fact that it ends rather abruptly with a number of questions left unanswered. This was unusual for P. G. Wodehouse, who was noted for leaving no stone unturned. “Precisely what questions were left open?” you ask while thinking that all had been well that ended well.

Well, what about the Efficient Baxter, whose suspicious mind had correctly foreseen the theft of the scarab? He hasn’t even faced his employer to tell him that the scarab is missing. And what about Joan, who is now a servant without a mistress? Where does she come off? And what about Brother Jones, holed up in a beastly hotel in Market Blandings with his scheme of enriching himself, waiting for the treasure trove Ashe was supposed to deliver? Is he waiting in vain? And what about Aline, who has, of a sudden, made a decision to fly off to Hong Kong with the valiant George Emerson? Furthermore, what will Lord Emsworth’s reaction be when he learns from Baxter of the theft of his ill-begotten scarab? And how does Peters explain the fact that he is now in possession of it? In other words, “Where do we go from here?” All very vexing questions without a doubt. But let us see what might have happened after all.

We know that Aline went off to the Far East with her beloved. Aline has now embarked on a journey of several days to a foreign land as the wife of a cop. Doesn’t sound all that exciting for the worldly daughter of a millionaire who has already been to Hong Kong. Her problem will be having second thoughts of one who lives in the never-never land of “should I” or “shouldn’t I?” Not about Freddy—that is all history—but about leaving her father and the comfort and suffering of living in his shadow, and of her reliance on him as well as his reliance on her.

Aline will always be one who doubts her ability to cope with life. But George Emerson is strong, and if he doesn’t soon tire of Aline’s indecisiveness and decide that maybe he’s made a mistake himself, things will turn out for the best for them. You can bet that Mr. Peters will keep an eye on things and, if they start to unravel, will eventually bring George into the firm as a subordinate with a title, with very little or no responsibility and a munificent salary.

We do know that Ashe is going to take care of Mr. Peters’s spiritual and emotional needs. So his future is assured, and eventually, we presume, Joan’s. But

for the moment, how does Joan explain her presence now that her mistress has flown the coop? She will, of course, go to Mr. Peters (or, rather, Ashe will) and explain her presence to the millionaire as Ashe’s accomplice. He, already having received a cable from his daughter explaining Joan’s situation, will take her on as his personal secretary—she’s done that sort of work before—and all will end well with her. She, Ashe, and Peters will be on the next boat to America.

But back to the story. Let us assume that Baxter, in due course, went to his employer and poured out the story of his now absent scarab. Let us imagine that the story continues thus:

Baxter told it all in excruciating detail. He explained how he had gone without sleep and spent many nights on the prowl in trying to protect his employer’s interests; how he was sure that Marson was the crook; how the latter had made good the theft. Emsworth half-heartedly listened to this tale of woe and then said, “Yes, yes, I know all about it. My son Freddie told me he is a detective and Mr. Peters has confirmed it. This Marson, posing as his valet, is in reality a detective that Peters himself had hired to protect the scarab, having learned of the possibility of its theft by a man named Jones. It seems that at this very moment Marson is on his way to Jones with the scarab. Scotland Yard has been on the trail of this man for many years and, if the plan unfolds the way it was explained to me, they will apprehend Jones with the scarab and put him away for many years.”

Baxter’s face fell. He was so sure of himself, but who could doubt this tale? “You will get the scarab back, then?” asked Baxter. “Peters assures me that eventually, when the case is closed, the scarab will be returned to my museum,” said Lord Emsworth. Baxter stared at him incredulously.

Mr. Peters, of course, had no intention of ever returning his precious scarab to the open-house atmosphere of Lord Emsworth’s museum. Henceforth it would be held under lock and key at the Peters residence in Westchester, New York. If Emsworth ever got anything back, it would be a worthless replica of a scarab of Cheops of the Fourth Dynasty. Bless his soul.

The Last Puzzle

BY NORMAN MURPHY

Norman Murphy gave us all our next assignment at the Dearborn convention during his speech. It seems only fair that we'll all go forth and try to solve this latest puzzle. To call it the "last puzzle" may seem unlikely, given Norman's perpetual curiosity and high energy. For now, we'll take him at his word that it's the last—until the next.

AS MANY KNOW, I have been looking for sources of Wodehouse stories for some 40 years—the places he used and the people who gave him an idea for a character. That began when I read a letter in which he said he always tried to use a real building, a real house, whenever he could. It saved time and effort. After that, the places were easy; all I had to do was to find them. But I knew they were there. The people he used for his characters were a bit trickier, but we know now that Stanley Ukridge was based on Herbert Westbrook; that Wodehouse's Aunt Mary Deane was definitely the original of Bertie's Aunt Agatha; that the Countess of Ilchester helped to create Aunt Dahlia; that George Grossmith Jr., the dude actor, played a large part in developing Bertie Wooster; and that the Earl of Dartmouth, who lived near Wodehouse in Shropshire, was a keen pig breeder of exactly the right age.

But I have been unable to solve the last puzzle: What happened to Jeeves? Or, rather, what happened to the man Wodehouse used to develop Jeeves, in the same way he used George Grossmith to develop Bertie Wooster?

Now, we know Wodehouse named Jeeves after the cricketer Percy Jeeves, whom he saw playing at Cheltenham in 1913. And if you have read *Bring On the Girls*, you will remember that when Guy Bolton went to visit Wodehouse in Onslow Square, London, he was greeted by a butler, and Wodehouse explained this wasn't swank. Since he was writing about a valet named Jeeves, he said, "I study this bird and make copious notes."

Wodehouse said to Bolton, "He's omniscient. And, what is more, as Abe Erlanger would say, he knows everything." He then called on the butler, Eugene Robinson, to tell Guy Bolton about a certain sort of spider and the habit of the females of eating their mates once they had fulfilled their task of perpetuating the species. Robinson concluded with the words: "When this function has been fulfilled, the lady has him for dinner." And Wodehouse interjected, "Nothing formal, I suppose? Just a black tie?"

Now, as you know, *Bring On the Girls* cannot be relied upon for accuracy—rather the reverse. Wodehouse cheerfully falsified entire sequences of events, and was not just happy but anxious to do so in order to avoid the tedium of most theatrical reminiscences. In a letter to Guy Bolton, he wrote in capital letters that "WE MUST BE FUNNY." I have to tell you it was Fred Thompson, not Wodehouse, who threw letters out of the window, relying on someone else to post them. And it was Arthur Hopkins, not Wodehouse, who played golf with Ziegfeld in the dark and won a thousand dollars. [See Wodehouse's June 24, 1954, letter to Denis Mackail.]

The Wodehouses lived at Onslow Square from April 1922 to October 1924 and then moved to 23 Gilbert Street. In January 1926, they were in The Manor, Davies Street, a small service flat. And by December 1926, Wodehouse was writing from 17 Norfolk Street, now Dunraven Street, where there is a memorial plaque to him unveiled by the Queen Mother in 1998.

Until 1939, Kelly's Directories listed the residents of every house in the country, but they did not tell you names of the servants. For that, you need the Electoral Roll, which told me that in Onslow Square in 1922–24, the only staff were a husband-and-wife team, Henry and Charlotte Sarel. At 23 Gilbert Street, there were no staff listed, while at 17 Norfolk Street in 1927, Arthur Green was the only male servant. In 1929, the only male servant was Cecil Pavey; in 1930, it was William Anns, who was followed by Herbert Tanner in 1932. Note that there was no Robinson listed anywhere.

But one thing in that quote from *Bring On the Girls* was correct. Jeeves first appeared in print in 1915, but it was not until 1931 that Wodehouse finished the first full-length Jeeves novel, *Thank You, Jeeves*. And in 1928 and 1929, he had written to Bill Townend about his problems working out the plot. So perhaps he did reckon his first full-length Jeeves book required some research.

But there was still no record of Robinson anywhere, and I came to the conclusion that he was just another piece of fiction in *Bring On the Girls*. Until . . .

In May 2000, I had lunch with 97-year-old John Millar. He knew the Wodehouses back in the 1920s, had been very keen on Leonora, and would have proposed to her if he had had the money. And he told me of a dinner party at Norfolk Street in 1928 or 1929. (I checked, by the way, that he had only read a couple of Wodehouse books. He had never heard of *Bring On the Girls*.)

At dinner that night, 83 years ago, there was Wodehouse, Ethel, Guy Bolton, Leonora, and Millar. He told me how charming Guy Bolton was, how kind Wodehouse was, and then I asked him who served

the meal. He said that two maids were supervised by the butler, who was named Robinson, and he said that Wodehouse, anxious to show off Robinson's intellect, had challenged Bolton to ask him a question. Bolton had asked about a certain sort of spider, and Robinson had replied exactly as Wodehouse described. John Millar said that when he finished by saying that "after the nuptials had been completed, the lady has the male spider for dinner," Wodehouse added, "Nothing formal, you know. Just black tie." And Millar remembered how they had all laughed. He described Robinson as "medium height, in his late 50s, dark greyish hair. A very superior and obviously experienced man."

So we know he existed, we know roughly how old he was, but—what happened to Robinson? His name does not appear in the Voters List for 17 Norfolk Street in 1928 or for any year. Did he stay for just a short time? If so, why? Did Wodehouse get rid of him? If so, why? What happened?

Now, I hesitate to raise this point, but it has to be said.

In *The World of P. G. Wodehouse* by Herbert Warren Wind, Wind says P. G. recalled the large staff they employed at Norfolk Street. I quote: "The butler had previously worked for a man of eminence, but Wodehouse found he liked the chauffeur better. This showed good judgement on his part, for the butler turned out to be *a member of an underground gang*, and was sent to prison when he and his pals were caught attempting to hold up a shooting gallery." [Italics mine]

!!

So—was Robinson, an important source for Jeeves, a criminal? Is THAT why his name never appears?

A tedious trawl through the records of London criminal cases from 1926 to 1930 turned up no mention of Arthur Green, Cecil Pavey, William Anns, or Eugene Robinson. So I started dredging through the national register of deaths from 1928 onward. And, do you know what? Our Eugene Robinson doesn't appear there, either. Several Eugene Robinsons do, but none of the right age. So, was he, like Jeeves, immortal?

Or was he a criminal who changed his name when he came out of prison? Was Eugene Robinson his real name anyway? It is all very mysterious, but I take an optimistic line, and *this is where I need your help*.

In 1999, when I first met Gary and Linda Adam-Hall, I found they came from Nebraska, the same state as Fred Patzel, the legendary hog caller of "Pig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey!" So I promptly asked/persuaded/bullied them to go and find Fred Patzel's family for me. Well, why not? After all, Nebraska is only 77 thousand square miles—and they succeeded brilliantly. On the same occasion,

I pointed out to David Landman that it should be a simple task to look through the archives of the Boston Public Library for newspaper articles on hog calling in 1926. And he came up with two lengthy newspaper paragraphs that Wodehouse quoted, word for word, in "Pig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey!"

Well, it is my belief that Eugene Robinson came to America and became a butler over here. And I reckon he died over here, so *all I am asking you to do is to find the death notice of a Eugene Robinson, domestic servant, born about 1870 and died some time after 1929*. I am perfectly serious. A straightforward task, when you think of it; nothing to it really, but, nevertheless, I have a whole ten-dollar bill for the person who finds the right Robinson, *and* you get a Wodehouse Walk thrown in. What more could you want? And, convention or no convention, I have to remind you we are not put in this world for pleasure alone.

[Horace] and his boys specialized in forays against the country houses of the rich, and in all such enterprises it is half the battle to have a representative of the firm on the premises. It was Horace's practice to obtain the post of butler at these establishments in order to pave the way for Ferdie and the others, and he seldom found it a thing difficult to do, for his was an appearance and deportment so butlerine that few house-holders, seeing him, ever hesitated to welcome him in, stopping short only of laying down the red carpet.

Do Butlers Burgle Banks? (1968)

The Real Girl in the Blue Dress

WE MISIDENTIFIED the Girl in the Blue Dress in the Winter 2011 *Plum Lines* (the Dearborn convention issue). In Karen Shottling's article about the tour of The Henry Ford Museum and other historical spots (pp. 1-2), her Girl in Blue allusion referred to Carey Tynan, who, as Karen says, "was so kind as to provide chauffeur services to a number of us." It seems Carey had just taken that name as her nom de Plum on PGWnet when Karen was finishing the article. Your editor's mistake was an understandable one, he pleads, since Deb Bellew was The Girl in Blue at the Providence Convention (with a fabulous blue hat). In fact, it's quite likely that this editor has seen Deb Bellew adorned in blue more recently than that. Nevertheless, Carey was the official GITBD in this specific case, and now all is again at balance in the Plummy universe!

Chapters Corner



WHAT IS YOUR chapter up to these days? We welcome you to use this column to tell the Wodehouse world about your chapter's activities. Chapter representatives, please send all info to the editor, Gary Hall (see back page). If you're not a member of a local chapter but would like to attend a meeting or become a member, please get in touch with the contact person listed.

Anglers' Rest

(Seattle and vicinity)
Contact: Susan Collicott
Phone:
E-mail:



Birmingham Banjolele Band

(Birmingham, Alabama, and vicinity)
Contact: Caralyn Campbell
Phone:
E-mail:



THE BIRMINGHAM BANJOLELE BAND gathered recently for some excellent browsing and sluicing, sparkling conversation, and a bracing program on book inscriptions by His Excellency, TWS President Ken Clevenger. The event took place at the Clevengers' Knoxville home.

The tippie of the day was the Zizzbaum, originally concocted by the intrepid coves of the Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corporation. After a pre-event Zizzbaum tasting by a few willing guinea pigs, Ken slightly adjusted the California libation's recipe to suit the southern palate. More than one attendee expressed gratitude for Ken's serving the cocktail prior to speaking at any length.

The group next plans to gather on March 24 for a Wodehouse musicale, where ivories and laryngeal regions will be tickled in, it is hoped, a pleasing manner.

Blandings Castle Chapter

(Greater San Francisco Bay area)
Contact:
Phone:
E-mail:



The Broadway Special

(New York City and vicinity)
Contact: Amy Plofker

Phone:
E-mail:

Capital! Capital!

(Washington, D.C., and vicinity)
Contact: Jeff Peterson
Phone:
E-mail:



ON DECEMBER 4, 2011, Capital! Capital! members gathered in a downtown D.C. restaurant for dinner and an evening of Wodehouse camaraderie. The speaker for that evening was CapCap's longtime friend Ken Clevenger, TWS's president. Ken favored attendees with a presentation on P. G. Wodehouse and Winston Churchill, and highlighted the similarities and differences of the two. Both Plum and Churchill, for example, were academically undistinguished as schoolboys, but both developed an absolute command of the English language. Both were prolific writers. The content of their books was, of course, widely different. Also, Churchill was outgoing and a gifted conversationalist, whereas Plum was more comfortable in the solitary company of his typewriter. Churchill was indifferent to Plum, except for the time of Plum's broadcast unpleasantness of 1941. Nevertheless, both were towering public figures of their era.

To keep Ken honest in his scholarship, the evening's guests included several members of the Washington, D.C., chapter of the English Speaking Union (www.esu.org), including the chapter director and author Mark Olshaker. The "twin pillars" of the ESU are William Shakespeare and Winston Churchill, thus making a natural connection between Capital! Capital! and the ESU that evening.

If you must know, CapCap and Clevenger have a mutually advantageous symbiotic relationship. CapCap gets an event speaker and Ken, for his part, gets to beta test, so to speak, his latest Wodehouse-related research and writing. Ken can receive applause and accolades or be on the receiving end of overripe fruit and vegetables thrown from the back benches. So far Ken has a pretty good batting average with minimal tomatoes, and he remains a favorite of CapCap and TWS.

There were 37 happy and convivial attendees at the dinner and meeting.

Capital! Capital! will gather again on Sunday, March 11, at the same, now usual, location with dinner

and a presentation by John Baesch on Wodehouse and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The ESU will will again join us. Other TWS chapters might want to consider linking up with ESU chapters in their areas since topics may be of mutual interest.

Chapter One

(Greater Philadelphia area)

Contact: Herb Moskowitz

Phone:

E-mail:



ABOUT A DOZEN Chaps convened at the Dark Horse Tavern on a very sunny but very cold winter day. We had one special guest: Janet Nickerson (Nobby Hopwood) brought hubby Arthur Malestein, who took the nom de Plum Uncle Harry.

Commencing with a discussion of things literary, theatrical, and cinema-related, we settled down to a fine repast, followed by what we hope passed for a business meeting.

Bob (Oily Carlisle) Rains brought us up to speed on plans for the April 22 dedication of the marker at Plum's gravesite in Remsenburg. Bob related that we surpassed our expected goal of funds raised. Bob and Andrea will travel to Remsenburg on March 3 to meet with the Remsenburg Community Church's staff to discuss the exact marker location. Tony Ring will entertain us as MC on the bus ride out from Manhattan. Although both *Anything Goes* and *Sitting Pretty* are playing in New York City that weekend, *Sitting Pretty* is (lamentably) sold out! Bob was given three rousing cheers by the Chaps for his yeoman efforts at bringing off the marker's erection and dedication.

Karen Ruef read us some Wodehouse excerpts from Michael Dirda's just-published *On Conan Doyle: Or, The Whole Art of Storytelling*.

Then Larry Dugan (Alpine Joe) led a spirited discussion of "Bill the Bloodhound," the lead-off story in British editions of *The Man with Two Left Feet*. The discussion segued into one on coincidences, both in Plum's works and in our daily lives.

Our next meeting will be held on March 25, at the Dark Horse Tavern in Philadelphia.

The Chicago Accident Syndicate

(Chicago and thereabouts)

Contact: Daniel & Tina Garrison

Phone:

E-mail:



The Clients of Adrian Mulliner

(For enthusiasts of both PGW and Sherlock Holmes)

Contact:

Phone:



The Drone Rangers

(Houston and vicinity)

Contact: Carey Tynan

Phone:

E-mail:



The Flying Pigs

(Cincinnati area and elsewhere)

Contact: Susan Brokaw

Phone:

E-mail:



Friends of the Fifth Earl of Ickenham

(Buffalo, New York, and vicinity)

Contact: Laura Loehr

Phone:

E-mail:



The Mottled Oyster Club / Jellied Eels

(San Antonio and South Texas)

Contact: Lynette Poss

Phone:

E-mail:



The New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS)

(Boston and New England)

Contact: David Landman

Phone:

E-mail:



IT BEGINS TO grow serious and, unless certain parties mend their ways ASAP, non-collapsible steps will be taken. To those who have followed in this column the series of mishaps that have dogged NEWT meetings from smoke inhalation to the buckling of a staircase, the above warning cannot have come too soon.

The latest affront was a stove fire as our hosts Ellen Donovan and Bob Norberg were warming comestibles for the Yuletide gathering at their condo clubhouse in Dedham. Fortunately, the meatballs (Swedish and Italian), lasagna, and apple pie emerged unscathed. A vast bowl of chilled shrimp, courtesy of John Kareores, was never in danger, but who knows what recrimination would have ensued had those plump pink pearls gone up in a sheet of flame. Incidentally, once the flames

had been extinguished, a head count disclosed that no NEWT had been incinerated.

Fans were activated, and once the smoke had cleared, the NEWTS conducted their annual Christmas grab bag to the vibrant delight of all. The highlight of the meeting was to have been videos of the Wogan BBC tribute to Plum and highlights of the Detroit convention. Alas, neither would play on the clubhouse screen, but the NEWTS maintained a stiff upper lip—quite a feat for a member of the family Salamandridae—but not so stiff that they could not devour every dish set before them. And so, through smoke and flame the NEWTS carried on. But let it be known: *We won't take it anymore!*

The Northwodes

(St. Paul, Minneapolis, and vicinity)

Contact: Kristine Fowler

Phone:

E-mail:



The Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corporation

(Los Angeles and vicinity)

Contact: Karen Shotting

Phone:

E-mail:



THE PERFECTO-ZIZZBAUM Motion Picture Corporation's annual holiday tea at The Pacific Dining Car was a festive binge featuring a guest appearance by noted author Brian Taves, who brought with him his wealth of Wodehouse/Hollywood knowledge and a copy of his latest book, *Thomas Ince: Hollywood's Independent Pioneer*. There was plenty of browsing, sluicing, and holiday cheer, as well as general agreement that April June, the villainess of our December reading, *Laughing Gas*, may be one of the most unlikeable characters in the Wodehouse canon.

Our January reading was *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, but we took our usual verbal detours into related subjects, including ideas for the optimal method of introducing teens and preteens to the delights of the Master. We also discussed ways and means for conducting inquiries into the rival merits of different recipes for the Green Swizzle. Every Plummy should be familiar with the Green Swizzle recipe in Norman Murphy's *A Wodehouse Handbook*, which the Jamaican High Commission confirms as the concoction that saved Bertie Wooster's life at Wembley. Another recipe (with a pedigree from The Bridgetown Club in Barbados) can be found in an online article by Darcy O'Neill. Mr. O'Neill's article includes an excerpt from a 1910 *New*

York Times article, which claims that, if a volume about the West Indies' beverages were to be written, after one had disposed of the Jamaican drinks "most of the rest of the volume would be devoted to Swizzles . . . [and] in this portion of the book, the most important chapter would be devoted to the Green Swizzle" (<http://www.artofdrink.com/archive/research/green-swizzle>). There has been much discussion of these recipes on PGWnet, and PZMPCo (whose Cocktail Committee created the "Zizzbaum") has agreed to take on the challenge of comparing the merits of various recipes for the Green Swizzle and report its findings.

Our February meeting may include research in this area, so we have decided that our readings will concentrate on everyone's favorite bibulous cat, Webster ("The Story of Webster" and "Cats Will Be Cats"). Members are also asked to bring their favorite alcohol-related quotes. Our readings for March and April are *Psmith in the City* and *Tales of St. Austin's*, respectively.

We meet the second Sunday of each month at 12:30 P.M. Generally you will find us at Book Alley, 1252 East Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, California, details online at <http://www.bookalley.com/shop/bookalley/index.html>. We may meet at an alternative location in February (for research purposes), so please contact Karen Shotting or join our Yahoo! Group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PZMPCo/> for more information.

The Pickering Motor Company

(Detroit and vicinity)

Contact: Elliott Milstein

Phone:

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The Portland Greater Wodehouse Society (PGWs)

(Portland, Oregon and vicinity)

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The Right Honorable Knights of Sir Philip Sidney

(Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2011, was a great day for all Knights because they attended the sixth International P. G. Wodehouse Society Memorial Dinner 2011 (IPGWSMD 2011) in Leiden, The Netherlands. The dinner was preceded by a walking excursion

through the thousand-year-old town of Leiden. We visited remarkable sites such as the birthplace of famous Dutch painter Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (aka Rembrandt) and the buildings of the more than 400-year-old University of Leiden.

The dinner itself was in Brasserie De Poort (=Tower) in the Zijlpoort, one of the town's remaining medieval towers. One imagined that one was dining in an old dungeon. But Master of Ceremonies Tony Roodnat had let Anatole into the brasserie to prepare the *Menu à la porte étroite (Les Entrées, La Grande Bouffe et Les Desserts)*. It was a great idea because the meals were delicious. Several members of the Dutch Society cheered us up when they sang lyrics from the musical *By Jeeves*, recited a homegrown sonnet (à la Shakespeare), delivered speeches about the history of the Dutch Wodehouse Society, and sang "Sonny Boy." The latter was performed by the president and the available former presidents of the society. All Knights agreed that it was a splendid day and evening.

Back to normalcy: the next meeting of the Hon. Knights will be on Saturday, February 18, at 1:00 P.M. in Mulliner's Wijnlokaal, Lijnbaansgracht 266-267, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The theme of the meeting will be *De Avonturen van Ukridge (The Adventures of Ukridge)*. The reason for the joyful event is that a Dutch commercial publishing company is publishing a Wodehouse book in a new Dutch translation. The last time a regular Dutch publishing house published a Wodehouse translation was in 1984! So we are very happy. Eight Ukridge stories, which have been never translated before, will be in *De Avonturen van Ukridge*. The publisher himself and the translator, our friend Leonard Beuger, will present the book. In the schedule of events will be a great Ukridge Quiz. Wiesje Foppen will read her favorite Wodehouse excerpt, and the traditional annual cock-and-bull-contest is absolutely also on the program.



Marjanne Otten, Agnes van der Vegt, Jacques van Gent, Elena Kirillova, and Peter Nieuwenhuizen (photo by Jelle Otten)

The Size 14 Hat Club
(Halifax, Nova Scotia)
Contact: Jill Robinson
E-mail:



"I remember Jill, when she was twelve, turning the garden hose on me and knocking about seventy-five per cent off the market value of my best Sunday suit. That sort of thing forms a bond, you know, and I've always felt that she was a corker."

Jill the Reckless (1920)

A Few Bonus Quick Ones

Jonathan Yardley interviewed Patricia Meyer Spacks, the Edgar Shannon professor of English emerita at the University of Virginia, in a November 20 article in the *Washington Post*. Professor Spacks waxed on many topics; most relevant to us is that she spoke of how enduring Wodehouse is for her: "Everything that I recently read by Wodehouse remained absolutely and completely the same as I remembered. . . . The prose of the stories offered familiar delights. The plots remained cavalier, unlikely, fun."

In the July 24 *Sunday Times* (London), there was mention of the Chap Olympiad, "a celebration of British eccentricity organized annually by *The Chap* magazine." Some of the events included were "butler baiting, sauntering, being carried by servants while smoking a pipe, jousting with umbrellas while riding a bicycle, and a contest in which gentlemen try to make ladies swoon 'by any means possible.'"

In the July 3 *Sunday Telegraph*, there was an article called "A Short Sermon," wherein the writer described how churches are taking a stand against "prattling prelates," realizing that long sermons might be the reason some avoid church. Referencing "The Great Sermon Handicap" (of course), the columnist stated that Wodehouse knew "the traditional point of a sermon is as much to stupefy . . . as to enlighten," and concluded that a little boredom can be good for the soul.

The October 8 *New York Post* reported on the breakup of "Queen of The Metropolitan Opera" Mercedes Bass and billionaire Sid Bass. According to columnist Emily Smith, "the Bass romance blossomed when Mercedes was married to Ambassador Francis Kellogg and . . . famously got Sid's attention by throwing a bread roll at him at a 1986 lunch in East Hampton." (Apparently that wasn't enough to seal the deal until death do them part.)

Jeeves, the Model of Servant Leadership

BY TOM SMITH

Major Tom Smith, U.S. Army, Ret.—better known to us as Major “Plug” Basham—entertained us at the Dearborn convention with this well-researched speech.

BEFORE DELVING into my topic, I must warn you that if you have read my book *Basham on Wodehouse*, available at Amazon.com, much of this material will be familiar. The presentation you are about to hear is based on an article that appears in that book. However, I have made many improvements for this presentation, so rather than sneaking out to the foyer to browse the collectibles or outside to have a smoke, you may want to stick around.

Let me begin my little talk by telling you that there are many theories of leadership. Having a Ph.D. in Leadership Studies from Gonzaga University (yes, Bing Crosby’s alma mater), I am familiar with one or two. The school of leadership we are concerned with today is called “Servant Leadership.” There are institutes of servant leadership. There are servant leadership programs on university campuses. Gonzaga University even sponsors a journal of servant leadership, and has the director of the Greenleaf Institute of Servant Leadership serving as adjunct faculty.

Servant leadership is not, we are told by scholars, a leadership theory, but more a philosophy of leadership. It is, according to Robert Greenleaf, who coined the phrase “servant leadership” in 1970, the desire to be of service to others through providing leadership. One problem I have with the whole servant leadership philosophy, however, is that, although Mr. Greenleaf’s ideas have inspired many other leadership thinkers and theorists to write articles and books on the subject, and that companies from Starbucks to Southwest Airlines have embraced servant leadership, no one does a very good job of defining what it actually is. But Mr. Greenleaf did provide the oft-quoted “One Best Test” of servant leadership:

Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?

You may have noticed that, even though Mr. Greenleaf calls this the “One Best Test,” there seem to



Tom Smith led the way in style at TWS’s 2011 Dearborn convention, where he also gave us the goods on servant leadership.

(Photo by Elin Woodger)

be at least three and maybe four tests, but I suppose calling these the “Three or Maybe Four Best Tests” or the “Three or Four Things Ya Gotta Do To Be a Leader” does not flow as fleetingly off the tongue. But that, dear friends, is a mere quibble.

It is also the custom, when discussing servant leadership, to explain how Mr. Greenleaf was inspired to create this philosophy and why he chose to call it “servant leadership.” All the scholars of servant leadership do it. Even Mr. Greenleaf himself does it. It’s de rigeur. It’s the done thing. And because I need to pad a rather short presentation, I’m going to do it, too. So here goes. For the benefit of those of you who are new to the topic and with apologies to those who are familiar with the concept, I’m going to explain it once again.

It seems that young Robert Greenleaf, a Quaker (and I have no idea why or if it’s important to mention that young Robert was a Quaker, but, again, it seems that all the scholars mention it), graduated from a small college in the Upper Midwest sometime around 1920 or so. It was someplace cold, like Minnesota. When I originally wrote this, I was too lazy to look up the exact details, but since then, I’ve had some time on my hands, so through the magic of the iPad, I found that Greenleaf graduated from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, in 1926.

It seems Jesse James visited Northfield, as well. But once again, I digress. Upon graduating, Greenleaf hired on with AT&T. He rose through the ranks in the personnel administration side of the company, becoming a senior manager in training, development, and education. Upon retiring after a long, successful, and probably boring career in 1964, he became a management consultant and member of various corporate boards of directors. One of the boards he served on was for an organization dealing with applied ethics. Even though he did not write his first published article until he was in his sixties and did not publish his first book until he was 73, he wrote prolifically about

management and leadership. In short, he became an expert on the management of large organizations.

During the 1960s, Greenleaf was doing consulting work for a university. He felt that, in order to better understand the students he encountered and was working with at the university, he should read what the students were reading. As he walked around campus, he noticed that the German author Herman Hesse seemed popular among the student body. So he picked up and read a copy of Hesse's *The Journey to the East* (or in its original German, *Die Morgenlandfahrt*), and out of the experience came servant leadership.

Now, I've read Hesse's story myself, but didn't seem to get much out of it. I found it dull, odd, and not very good. Perhaps it lost something in translation. So in fairness to Greenleaf's ideas, I'll let him explain the story in his own words:

In this story we see a band of men on a mythical journey, probably also Hesse's own journey. The central figure of the story is Leo, who accompanies the party as the *servant* who does their menial chores, but who also sustains them with his spirit and song.

If I may interrupt Mr. Greenleaf's narrative at this point, neither Mr. Greenleaf nor Herr Hesse tell us what song Leo sang to the young gentlemen in his charge. And while I don't exactly understand how this got into my text, it says, here, that I must now sing "Sonny Boy."

[*We must note that at this point the intrepid Tom Smith sang, in fine tenor voice, the first verse to "Sonny Boy."*]

Now we shall return to Mr. Greenleaf's description of Leo:

He is a person of extraordinary presence. All goes well until Leo disappears. Then the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without the servant Leo. The narrator, one of the party, after some years of wandering, finds Leo and is taken into the Order that sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo, whom he had known first as *servant*, was in fact the titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit, a great and noble *leader*.

While I believe that drugs may have been involved in Hesse's story (whether the drugs were taken by Hesse or his characters is unclear), Greenleaf, on the other hand, was inspired by this story. To him the story of Leo

"clearly says that *the great leader is seen as servant first* and that simple fact is the key to his greatness." From this, the reader of Wodehouse may already see where I am heading. But we will get to that in a moment.

The problem I've always had with Hesse's Leo as the example of servant leadership, though, is Greenleaf's own best test. The narrator in Hesse's story never seems to grow in the story. He does not become more capable, healthier, or wiser. He merely realizes that Leo was running the show the whole time, and that he, the narrator, was merely an incompetent schlub going along for the ride.

So I would like to offer a better exemplar of servant leadership. You guessed it: Wodehouse's own Jeeves. But before progressing too far, it's important to point out that the idea of servant as leader did not originate with Greenleaf, Hesse, or even Wodehouse. In her work on Wodehouse (*Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes or Le Mot Juste*), Kristin Thompson points out that characters like Hesse's Leo and Wodehouse's Jeeves are part of a long "literary tradition of clever servants, stretching back to the plays of Aristophanes (for example, Xanthias in *The Frogs*) and Plautus and extending through such figures as Sancho Panza and Sam Weller." Literature abounds with masters who would be lost without their servants. Modern culture takes that as a fairly common theme in movies and television shows as well. For instance, there is the servant played by Sir John Gielgud in the Dudley Moore film, *Arthur* (for our purposes, we will pretend that the movie has not been remade). Arthur, the inept, alcoholic, rich man is completely dependent on his servant to take care of him.

Then there is Rowan Atkinson's Blackadder, where Edmund Blackadder is the smarter and cunning valet to the dim Prince Regent, played by Hugh Laurie. As an aside, the Blackadder series also gives us the anti-Jeeves with Blackadder's own servant, Baldrick, who is not much smarter than a turnip.

More recently, we have Betty Suarez, the title character of the now defunct ABC television show *Ugly Betty*, who, as personal assistant to fashion magazine editor and pampered, womanizing, rich kid Daniel Meade, takes care of all of Daniel's needs, including teaching him humility and how to treat others with respect. One could also write an essay about why Betty is a better exemplar of servant leadership when watching Daniel Meade's evolution from pampered, rich playboy to a hardworking, sensitive nice guy, but we'll leave that to the Betty Suarez Society.

So, returning to the res. In Bertie Wooster's journey, Bertie first encounters Jeeves as a servant. Jeeves takes care of Bertie's personal needs, cooks his meals, and

mends his clothes. Jeeves lays out Bertie's clothes in the morning and puts him to bed at night. But Jeeves is also "a person of extraordinary presence." And like Leo, all goes well for Bertie until those occasions when Jeeves is not available. Then Bertram and his friends, who also rely on the amazing abilities of Jeeves, fall apart.

Much of the comic appeal of the Bertie and Jeeves stories, as Kristin Thompson points out, is the fact that the working-class Jeeves is so much smarter and capable than his "master," Bertie Wooster. While Hesse's book is not intended to be funny, we also find that Leo is much wiser and more capable than his masters. The Wooster and Jeeves stories revolve around one of two basic formulas: either Bertie or his friends are in trouble and turn to Jeeves for advice on how to get out of trouble, or Bertie attempts to solve his friends' problems himself, getting his friends stuck even deeper in the muck, so that they have to turn to Jeeves to pull them out. If this is the pattern, then, how is Jeeves any more a servant leader than Leo, who leaves his party of gentlemen stranded in some unknown wilderness?

In "Jeeves Takes Charge," where Bertie explains how he came to hire Jeeves, it becomes very clear that Jeeves runs the show and Bertie knows it. In fact, Bertie says, "I gave up trying to run my own affairs within a week of his coming to me." Jeeves begins his employment with Bertie by curing Bertie's hangover and, by the end of this first story, extricates Bertie from an engagement with a most unsuitable woman who wants Bertie to read Nietzsche. Is there a pattern developing about the unsuitability of German authors? But never mind. Bertie's friends and relatives also learn to rely on Jeeves and his ability to solve problems. In the second story in *Carry On, Jeeves*, "The Artistic Career of Corky," Jeeves's abilities are of such magnitude that Bertie says:

I felt like the proprietor of a performing dog on the vaudeville stage when the tyke has pulled off his trick without a hitch. I had betted on Jeeves all along, and I had known he wouldn't let me down. It beats me sometimes why a man with his genius is satisfied to hang around pressing my clothes and what not. If I had half Jeeves's brain I should have a stab at being Prime Minister or something.

Unlike the people Leo serves, the people Jeeves serves are aware of what he does for them. This is, perhaps, the first step in Bertie's growth and development and his attainment of wisdom. But even though Bertie is aware of his own incompetence when compared to Jeeves's abilities, eventually Bertie begins

to resent his valet's skills and the power Jeeves exercises over Bertie. As the Jeeves and Wooster stories progress, Wooster often rebels against Jeeves or attempts to show Jeeves, friends, and family that he, Wooster, can also solve problems and does not need to rely on Jeeves. Of course, this always leads to more instances where Jeeves needs to intervene. Eventually, Bertie becomes resigned to, and finally accepts and enjoys, the relationship he has with Jeeves. So we see that Bertie, while being served by Jeeves, grows wiser about his own abilities. Jeeves even inspires Bertie to serve others. Yes, Bertie usually bungles the task, but eventually he realizes that his best service is when he provides his friends with the services of Jeeves.

Some might argue that Wooster hasn't grown at all. I argue that his self-knowledge does represent growth. But if that isn't sufficient, recall that in the story *The Return of Jeeves* we learn that Bertie is off at a school for gentlemen where the gentlemen learn to take care of themselves. This is growth and understanding far exceeding that of Leo's masters.

So to me, at least, Wodehouse's Jeeves is a much better example of servant leadership than Hesse's Leo. One wonders, then, what would have become of Greenleaf's notion of servant leadership had he picked up a copy of *Carry On, Jeeves* instead of Hesse's *Journey to the East*. I suspect Greenleaf's writing would have benefited and perhaps some much needed humor might have been injected into it. But Greenleaf's one best test could still stand and, with the inimitable Jeeves as exemplar, we should all strive to be servant leaders.

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Sunset at Toszek

BY TIM RICHARDS

“If this is Upper Silesia,
what must Lower Silesia be like?”



Travel writer and PGW aficionado Tim Richards

SITTING IN a second-class seat on a slow train from the Polish city of Opole to the small town of Toszek, I'm reminded of P. G. Wodehouse's comment about the region where he was held prisoner by the German army from 1940 to 1941. It's true that the landscape of Silesia is flat and undramatic, quite unlike the mountainous terrain further south along the border with the Czech Republic.

As my train passes green fields along the quiet branch line linking Opole with the industrial city of Gliwice, I idly wonder if the low crops I'm seeing are sugar beets.

Then I step out at Toszek, the train trundles off, and I'm left on a low, crumbling platform next to an imposing station building. It is classic 19th-century German construction of dark red brick, and a little sinister in appearance, even on this warm day. Its boxy form has clearly seen better times, as it is now decorated with graffiti and appears to be completely shuttered, bar a small waiting room opening onto the platform. I find it strange to think that Plum might have come across this same platform in 1940.

For this Polish Toszek was once the German Tost, the location of the prisoner-of-war camp into which Wodehouse was placed after being captured at his home in France.

What has enabled me to be here is my job as a freelance travel writer. One of my regular assignments is to visit Poland for the publisher Lonely Planet, and to update guidebooks as they come due in the schedule. I've always wanted to make the pilgrimage to Plum's temporary wartime home. On this occasion



Outside the Toszek train station, "modernized" by spray painters

I've been specifically assigned Silesia, so Fate has kindly made it easy for me to take a sidetrip to Toszek (pronounced TOSH-ek, by the way).

But Fate, as we know, has a way of slipping up behind one with a bit of lead piping. Past the station building, I find myself on a quiet country road lined by trees, with no town in sight. Google Maps has been a bit vague about the location of the station in advance, and now that I'm on the ground, Hell's foundations are quivering a little. But my iPhone soon sorts me out—it's a left turn along ul Dworcowa (Station St) into town.



On the not-so-well-marked, but peaceful, path to Toszek

So I'm off, with no clear idea of how far I have to walk. It's a pleasant stroll, though, a paved footpath all the way on a gentle rise past more fields and the occasional farmhouse. It's still fairly early in the day and there's no one about, except for one young guy who passes me while clutching a bottle of ardent spirits (one imagines from the night before). He asks something in Polish that I don't catch, then realises I'm an English speaker and asks for "fire" for his cigarette. When I tell him I don't smoke, he raises his bottle in salute, bellows "Goodbye!" at me, laughs, and heads off toward the train station. A man, I suspect, who will soon be in need of one of Jeeves's morning-after specials.

After twenty minutes or so, the buildings thicken and the road deposits me at the edge of the Old Town. As in all old Polish towns, this is a collection of tightly intersecting streets which would once have been contained within a medieval wall, centered on the Rynek (market square). Here I find a town hall looking out over a pleasant, recently renovated, broad civic square with benches and shade trees.

So far, so good. But this is where my research runs out. In preparing for the trip, I made sporadic attempts to contact tourism authorities in Silesia to ask about the former asylum which became a prisoner-of-war camp in World War II. E-mails went around in circles, and I was told to "talk to someone at the castle." Which is my cue to use my favourite sentence in Polish, "Jak

dojść do zamku?” (“How do I get to the castle?”). This is a phrase we use very seldom in Australian English, so I award myself bonus points every time I take it for a spin in Polish. A lady in the square points me to the northwest, and soon I’m passing along a cobbled walkway above what must have once been a moat, through an impressively solid stone gateway into the keep of a former Gothic castle.

I say “former” because this structure has been through a lot in its history, as imparted by the sign in English outside its gate. In the ninth century, the town was founded by a mysterious duke whose life was allegedly saved by a dog called Toszek. In the 16th century, the wooden castle burned to the ground, then 200 years later the rebuilt stone edifice was the home of Baron Adolf von Eichendorff, who hosted the great German poet Wolfgang von Goethe in 1790. The castle was again ravaged by fire in 1811, a disaster from which it never recovered.

All very interesting, and the weathered interior with its lofty tower is still impressive, regardless of the noisy Polish kids on a school trip playing at its base with toy swords and crossbows. But it’s not getting me any closer to PGW, so I backtrack to the office situated inside the old guardhouse, and knock on the door. The resulting conversation with a friendly office worker in my limited Polish doesn’t get me very far—she doesn’t seem aware of an old asylum but points me to the Ratusz (Town Hall) as the best place to ask.

OK, back to the square and its grim, grey town hall. I stick my head through the door into the ground floor, hoping to spot a tourist information bureau. No such luck—just corridors leading off past closed doors. There’s a staircase in front of me, though, so I follow a couple of people up to the second floor, hoping I won’t be asked what the hell I’m doing here and told to leave before I find the information I’m after. Toszek’s not a big town, but one can’t just go randomly roaming the streets of Polish towns looking for former insane asylums, can one? Not if there’s any alternative.

At the top of the stairs, there’s a kasa, a cashier’s window at which locals might pay their council rates and parking fines. Worth a shot—I peer through the grille and ask the middle-aged lady in residence if she speaks English. Nope. *Nie ma problemu*, I’ll try Polish. However, what I don’t realize yet is that I’m not making much sense in asking for the *stary* (old) asylum, as that’s not the right term. What I should be asking for is the *szpital psychiatryczny* (psychiatric hospital). Once I hit upon this formula, one of the helpful women called forth by the cashier nods vigorously and writes down an address: ulica Gliwicka 5. According to my phone,

that’s just around the corner. We all smile, and then I’m back out on the streets.

What I’m startled to discover is that it’s not a former psychiatric hospital, as I’ve assumed. Gliwicka is in fact lined by several buildings of what seems like a mental health complex. Toszek is only a tiny town, so this must be serving the whole region.

The first few buildings are too modern to be Wodehouse’s prison. Luckily, I have the relevant photocopied pages from my copy of Robert McCrum’s masterful *Wodehouse: A Life* in my satchel, so I peek at it for a description. Sure enough, further on I find McCrum’s “brooding, dark red-brick building”; a massive, grimy structure with two jutting wings thrust to the edge of the pavement, and bars on its central windows. It was presumably from here that Wodehouse could “watch everyday life passing up and down the road outside.”



The psychiatric hospital, which served as a prison to PGW and others in WWII

It is a bit overwhelming to see this place. It has apparently changed little in its appearance over 70 years, still grim and intimidating.

Opposite the building is a small, neglected park with a half a dozen wooden benches dotted around and a tattered old shelter whose canopy is full of holes. Adding to its forbidding air are strange fence posts supporting a chain fence around its perimeter; they look very much like concrete gravestones.

As much as Plum made light of his situation in that “Boy’s Own” way of his, the gravity of his prison camp is starting to impress itself on me as I sit on a bench and stare at the hospital. After all, prisoners died within its walls that first bitter winter.

As if sensing my mood and wanting to enhance the experience, the weather has become colder as the day has progressed. It was warm and humid when

I arrived, but now the sky is grey and there's a chilly breeze blowing. It's easy to imagine how cold a Silesian winter can get once it spits on its hands and really gets down to it.

I cross the road and look through the gates, where I can see a plaque marking the use of the building as a prison by the feared Soviet NKVD secret police after the war. I consider asking someone if I can visit, but on reflection it seems that an unannounced foreigner trying to gain access to a mental institution in rural Poland might gain the attention of the hospital's keener talent scouts.

So I return to the bench to sit in the light drizzle, looking up at the windows and imagining Plum looking back at me. We are, after all, separated not by space but only by the trifling matter of seven decades. If I could somehow pierce the veil of time and shout up to him from the roadway, what would I say? "Don't do the broadcasts!" comes to mind. If he'd listen, it would save everyone a lot of heartache.

But Time the Great Healer doesn't work that way, so I plod back into town to make notes and have lunch at the Zlota Kaczka (Golden Duck), being drawn back into 21st-century Poland via a decent pizza and some excellent beer. Then it's back down the cracked footpath to the railway station, each footstep taking me further away from this point of intersection with the darkest days of Plum's life.

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You can find Tim Richards's weekly travel blog at www.aerohaveno.com. His 2009 novel *Mind the Gap* contains an epilogue with a brief appearance by P. G. Wodehouse in Berlin, and is available for Kindle and other e-readers.



Within the walls of Toszek castle

Jeeves and Wooster Plays in Your Home Town?

AMY PLOFKER reminds us that Mark Richard's five Jeeves and Wooster stage adaptations can be licensed by other theater companies. So your local or regional professional theater company could, upon urging from you and others, be inspired to present *Right Ho, Jeeves*; *The Code of the Woosters*; *Thank You, Jeeves*; *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*; or *Jeeves in the Morning*! Here's some Q (*bold italics*) & A with Mr. Richard:

I never managed to see one of these adaptations—do they really have that je ne sais quoi and ne plus ultra? It's not easy to adapt Wodehouse. Once I saw an excruciating community theater adaptation that still haunts my memory like the mixed-together contents of a picnic basket. All five were acclaimed by Chicago critics and public alike, drawing Plummies from many states and providing City Lit with the most successful string of hits in its history. The Chicago success led to equally popular productions at Stage West in Fort Worth. Two of the scripts were also produced for radio by L.A. Theatre Works, of which CDs are still available. One of these features the redoubtable Martin Jarvis.

Are they practical to produce? Cast sizes are eight to ten; running times tend to be a bit over two hours. Because they are really about the language and the characters more than anything else, they can be produced on a virtually bare stage. That's more or less how the first two were done. We increased budgets and theater size and the scope of our design ambitions as the years went by.

How would one bend a theater company to one's will without seeming presumptuous? Most regional theaters are interested in, and have channels for learning about, what subscribers/donors/volunteers think. So simply alerting them to the fact that the scripts exist (along with a passionate Wodehouse following), and that they have a successful professional production history and are not the product of the letter writer's unemployed brother-in-law, is really all that needs doing. Depending on the theater's size, the note would likely go to the literary manager, producing director, or artistic director.

"Licensing" sounds like an offputting amount of work for a small theater, surely? Any play that any theater presents has to be licensed in some way. The process is fairly simple and informal for these scripts. The artistic director of the Drones Repertory Theater would

contact me at mrbarolo@juno.com to ask to read the scripts. If he/she likes one, I would forward to the Wodehouse Estate's literary agents the relevant details (size of theater, length of run, ticket prices), and they would set a royalty (with the agents sticking like glue to much of it, the remaining pittance coming to me). A letter to that effect would be circulated and signed by all parties, and that would be that.

Why not publish these scripts so they would get wider use? Absolutely! That is one of my life's aims. Sadly (though the Estate's agents support such an endeavor), for reasons so complex and mysterious that I do not understand them myself, the agents, interested publishers, and I have not managed to reach an *entente cordiale*. So until then, we must pass *samizdat* copies hand-to-hand, theater-to-theater, through the brave Wodehouse underground.

The Chicago Accident Syndicate Announces Convention 2013

AS THOSE WHO were at the convention in Dearborn know, our next convention will be held on October 18–20, 2013, at the Union League Club in Chicago. Mark the date in your calendar now! Further details will be published in the next (Summer) issue of *Plum Lines*.

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We appreciate your articles, research, Quick Ones, My First Time tales, and other observations. Send them to Gary Hall via e-mail or snail mail at the addresses above. Deadlines are February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1. If you have something that might miss the deadline, let me know and we'll work something out!

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