

WOOSTER SAUCE



The Quarterly Journal of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

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A Fan For More Than Seventy Years

The Society mourns Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, its most loved and respected supporter.

Sir Edward Cazalet knew Her Majesty The Queen Mother for many years. He offers brief memories of her links with the Wodehouse family.

At the time of The Queen Mother's birth, Plum's parents lived at Stableford, Shropshire, close to her cousins, the Bowes-Lyon family, with three young children aged 12, 11 and 9. Plum was about ten years older than the girls. He and his parents got to know them well and they had great fun together. The Queen Mother was later jokingly to refer to these three girls as her 'naughty' cousins, and it was to them that Plum dedicated his first book, *The Pothunters*, in 1902. The Queen Mother was always delighted to refer to this dedication on any Wodehousean occasion.

When The Queen Mother was eleven, she made the first of many visits to stay at Fairlawne with her friend Thelma Cazalet.

Society Chairman Norman Murphy recalls the day in June 1988 when The Queen Mother unveiled the plaque at 17 Dunraven Street (see the Society's separate publication *We Remember You Well*):

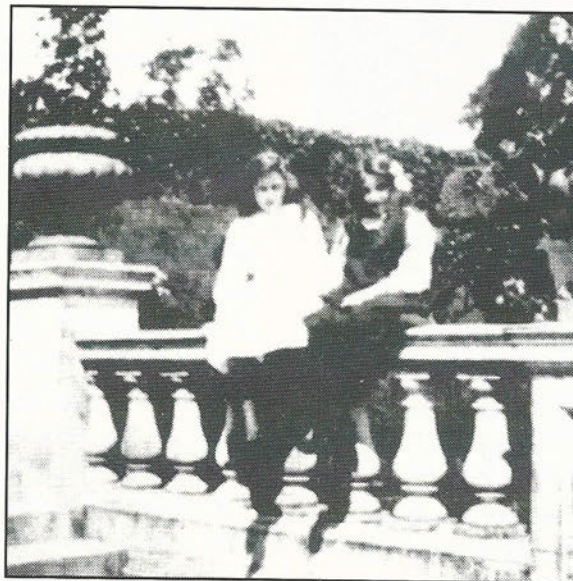
We all have highspots in our lives and this was one of mine. 'Among those present we noticed', as PGW often said, Kingsley Amis, the Cazalets, Benny Green, Jimmy Heineman, Frank Muir, Tom Sharpe, Patrick and Nancy Wodehouse, Woodrow Wyatt – and I managed to creep in under the wire.

My particular highlight? When The Queen Mother told me how much she enjoyed *In Search of Blandings* and hoped I didn't mind her quoting from it.

I said I didn't mind a bit!

This was to be a lifelong friendship. The photograph shows them on a balustrade at Fairlawne in 1911.

At this time, Thelma's brother Peter was aged four. Forty years later, still living at Fairlawne, he was to become Her Majesty's trainer of steeplechasers, maintaining a happy and successful association for more than twenty years. Her Majesty again visited Fairlawne regularly, frequently meeting theatrical figures such as Noel Coward, who were admirers of Plum. In 1932 the same Peter Cazalet was to establish yet another Wodehousean link when he married Leonora, my mother and Plum's beloved step-daughter, to whom he was devoted, and who so sadly died in 1944.



Member James Hogg has written *The Queen Mother Remembered: The Intimate Recollections Of Her Friends* for BBC Books. This contains more than 50 interviews with those who knew her,

including Sir Fitzroy Maclean, the prospective subject of *This Is Your Life*.

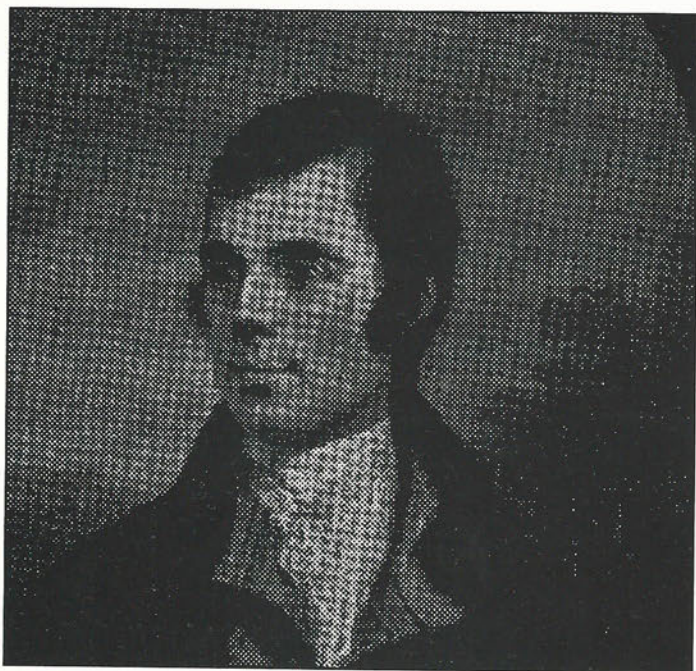
Sir Fitzroy had decided to stay in Scotland instead of coming south to record a decoy programme. The Queen Mother caused him to change his mind by summoning him to lunch at Clarence House. All present except Maclean were in the know, provoking 'even more hilarity than usual'.

Shared enthusiasm for Plum led Lord Charteris, Provost of Eton, to invite her to a performance of *Fig-Hoo-o-o-ey* with himself as Lord Emsworth.

Plum and Robert Burns: Masters of their Craft

by Joe Harkins

I am sure that, given the supreme quality of writing over the period of his illustrious career, all fans of Plum would safely say that he is a genius. Not only that, given the prodigious output of the man he could also be termed fecund. It would be safe to say then that Plum was a fecund genius.



Like all geniuses he drew strength and inspiration from others of his exalted class and one such inspiree (if that is the word I am looking for) was the Poet of Humanity, the Scottish Bard, Robert Burns. Although poor Robert lived less than half the life span of Plum he was not found wanting in the fecundity department. In the 20 years since the poet first 'committed the sin of rhyme' the Ayrshire Bard wrote over 270 little nuggets of beautiful poetry and composed over 300 songs, not to mention a voluminous epistolary output. Even Plum must have been impressed.

References to Burns can be found in many of the Master's work. Not only did Plum quote Burns directly, he adopted some of the Bard's best lines in his own inimitable way and used them to enrich the dialogue or the meaning of the scene of whichever character Plum had chosen to utter the words.

In *Heavy Weather*, Chapter 3, when Ronald Fish had announced his intention to marry Sue Brown, one of the Regal Theatre chorus girls, he received support from Beach and the Hon Galahad. Stiff opposition came from Lady Julia and Aunt Constance who both

believed that Ronnie was marrying beneath himself. As Plum wrote: 'Women are seldom without class prejudices, their views on the importance of Rank generally diverging from those of the poet Burns'.

He was of course referring to the lines in Burns' song *A Man's a Man for a' That*, which states 'the rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man's the gold for a' that'.

Bertie Wooster himself tried to quote Burns (*Much Obligated Jeeves*, Chapter 12) but, Bertie being Bertie, he attributed *Hamlet* to the canon of Burns works.

In *Jeeves In The Offing*, Chapter 15, Bertie has a cunning plan, to which Jeeves urges caution, quoting 'as the poet Burns says, the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley'. Bertie, disappointed at the Poet's lack of confidence in his cunning plan, calls Burns 'an ass'. He soon comes to realise the universal truth in the statement and is left with 'naught but grief and pain for promised joy', till Jeeves steps in, as usual.

In *Do Butlers Burgle Banks*, a much-chagrined Bertie asserts that Burns' well-known introduction to his poem *To A Mouse* which begins 'wee sleekit, cow'rin tim'rous beastie' could, in certain cases, be equally attributed to certain members of the human race.

In *Bill The Conqueror*, Sinclair Hammond is in such agitation of spirits that even his '*Poems Chiefly In The Scottish Dialect*, printed by John Wilson, Kilmarnock, 1786 - Uncut in the Original Blue Wrappers - mint condition - A RARE COLLECTORS ITEM' failed to soothe him. Plum is, of course, referring very accurately and knowledgeably, to the first edition of Burns' poems ever to go into print. A copy of that rare edition would be worth more than its weight in gold nowadays and would certainly soothe the spirits of any devoted Burns fan.

When Eve Halliday came to Blandings to catalogue the library (*Leave It To Psmith*) Psmith gave her the following reference: "Miss Halliday is a very old and valued friend of mine. We two have, so to speak, pulled the gowans fine", (gowans being daisies). This comes from that sublime song and international anthem of past remembrances and old friendships being celebrated - *Auld Lang Syne*.

we two have run about the braes
and pulled the gowans fine

News of the Wooster Family

'The Wooster Family' is a diverse group of Woosters interested in their genealogical background, with members throughout England and from as far afield as Australia and New Zealand. They have developed an enormous family tree, which they refer to as their *Wooster Source* and display at their annual gathering at the Bucks Family History Society Open Day.

Elaine Ring happened to be present at the Open Day last year and introduced herself to the representatives, enquiring whether any information had come to light as to Woosters who might have known, or been known to, P G Wodehouse. She learned that no Woosters are known to have been in the Shropshire or Gloucestershire areas between 1900 and 1920, and no members had offered serious suggestions as to why Wodehouse had chosen that name for his character.

What has been discovered, however, is that the name is one of long standing, having been traced back to around 1500. It is regarded as a Buckinghamshire name, according to *Dictionary of Surnames* (Collins,

1998) and it is believed to have originated with the men who were driving the cattle trails to London from Worcestershire in the 13th and 14th centuries.

The Wooster Family produces a twice-yearly newsletter for its members, and number 13, Winter 2001/02, mentioned the discussion at the Open Day. It invited any Wooster who might have an inkling of the reason why Wodehouse selected the name to contact the Editor, and reproduced the correspondence on the back page of the *McIlvaine Bibliography*. So far, alas, there have been no replies.

Most of the Wooster Family's membership of 35 are descended from a single family who lived in Buckinghamshire in the sixteenth century. David Brooke, Editor of their Newsletter, has invited any members of our Society who has Wooster information or Wooster relatives to contact him at

Plum and Robert Burns, continued

Plum's use of this line shows a deeper knowledge of Burns' work than is usually found in the general public.

It is not only in the quotes that Plum uses the works and life of Burns, but also in the themes of some of his characters and the situations in which they find themselves. In *Unpleasantness At Bludleigh Court*, Plum takes an anti-hunting, anti-blood-sports stance in his usual brilliant humorous style, with an edge of satire thrown in, and turns this sport on its head when the hunters become the hunted, giving them a taste of their own medicine. The catalyst to this story is a hunter who appears in the Anglers' Rest with a 'posy of dead rabbits'. Burns also shares such sympathies as evidenced in his *On Seeing A Wounded Hare* and both men promote the sanctity of life, human or otherwise.

All Wodehouseans tremble at the descriptions and antics of the imperious and cold-hearted prospective fathers-in-law which countless optimistic suitors come across in their pursuit of true love. In Burns' instance, the father of Jean Armour, his one and only true love and his future wife, was said to have fainted on being informed that his daughter was in the position of making him a grandfather in the near future. On recovering he is said to have fainted

again on being informed who the father of his future grandchild was!

Burns and Jean Armour had already gone through a civil marriage ceremony by declaring their marriage on paper, a ceremony which was legally valid in Scotland in those days, but James Armour would have none of it. On being shown the legal document he promptly cut out all mentions of Robert Burns' name and left it invalid. Jean was shipped off to stay with relatives in Paisley out of harm's way and a writ was served against Burns by James Armour.

As in Plum's work, this story had a happy ending. When Burns' star shone brightly after the publication of the above-mentioned *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, he was feted by the intellectuals and the literati of the Cultural centre of Europe, the Athens of the North, which was Edinburgh at that time. He was treated as a modern day 'superstar' would have been. On returning home to his little village of Mauchline in Ayrshire he was greeted with open arms by James Armour who insisted he marry his daughter. Plum could not have written it better!

Joe Harkins is a member of the National Executive of The Robert Burns World Federation Limited and President of The Alamo Burns Club in Paisley

Gazekas I Have Known

by Murray Hedgcock

Reading Mike for the umpteenth time, I mused on our hero's introduction by brother Bob to the Head of his House at Wrykyn:

Mike gathered that Gazeka and Firby-Smith were one and the same person.

Later, he inquired of one Wyatt: "Why is he called Gazeka?", to be told: "Don't you think he looks like one?"

Then – picking up J A Mangan's 1986 study, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, I found a picture of St.Catharine's Gazeka Club, Cambridge, 1908. This was a club for college worthies, mostly athletes. Hmm: this photo was taken within months of Mike's first appearance, in *The Captain* in 1907, suggesting it to be of Gazeka period.

Another browse, in the history of Richmond Cricket Club, on London's Surrey borders, found mention of a Third XI in the 1920s known as 'The Gazeekas' (sic) - the idea being that this mythical animal had no tail'. Which of course would be a great asset for a cricket eleven. So, what on earth was - or is - a gazeka (give or take the spelling)?

The trusty Internet (what would Plum have made of it?) is first port of call: "Do you mean Gazeta?" responded Mr Google, with that hint of hauteur that can make him disliked by the better element. He then inquired if I meant 'gazikas', offering various Greek families of that name. There was also - even more confusingly - a reference to Lithuanian humour in which the word 'gazikas' was quoted. Not, I feel, of Plummish relevance.

But in the finish, 13 references were turned up, most notably the website of The Virtual Institute of Cryptozoology. This drew my attention to:

The gazeka, 'pig-devil' of New Guinea.

A large unknown quadruped, called gazeka or devil pig by Papous [Papuan?] of New Guinea, is announced in the Eastern part of this large tropical island'. Testimony began in 1875 when zoologist Adolf Bernhard Meyer was told about 'a very large quadruped in New Guinea', of which sadly the natives could produce no actual evidence. In 1906, Charles A W Monckton recorded a New Guinea native seeing two of the creatures feeding.

It has approximately 5 feet of length, 3 feet 6 inches of top, has a tail like that of a horse and

cloven hooves black or with skin sinks with marks of a reason, a long muzzle, and cries with a long acute note.

Firby-Smith to the life! The Institute says there is no further trace such as footmarks, excrement, etc. More erratic reports are recorded up to the 1990s, while there are drawings and sculptures of a strange beast terrorising the natives. Again, no solid proof.

Next, the Internet proffered a 1921 study, *Modern Essays*, collected by Christopher Morley, including *Some Historians*, by Philip Guedalla. The extract below deals with the Russo-Japanese War:

Wao-Wao, January 31: The Rooskis came over the crest-line in a huddle of massed battalions, and Gazeka was after them like a rat after a terrier.

So - Gazeka was apparently a name, genuine or colloquial, of a Japanese military commander. Which seems to get us nowhere.

Keep going - and Google found the Newfoundland Dog Database, listing pedigree animals: 'Gazeka - Date of birth: 24/02/1906. Colour: Black.' Again it is in the Mike time-scale. But why call a dog 'Gazeka'?

Finally, the search engine Lycos produced a log of Edison-Bell two-minute moulded cylinder recordings made at the turn of the century, including one by George Groves of a number titled - *The Gazeka*. Promising - but further detail has been elusive. And the *OED* has nothing to say on the subject.

I feel that The Mystery of The Gazeka has yet to be satisfactorily explained. One for Robert McCrum's new biography, perchance? Or should I just ask Norman Murphy?

The Smile That Wins

Favourite Nifties - 19

He shuddered, and in addition to shuddering, uttered a sharp quack of anguish such as might have proceeded from some duck which, sauntering in a reverie beside the duck-pond, has inadvertently stubbed its toe on a broken soda-water bottle.

From Cocktail Time (1958)

(Suggested by Thea Crapper of Arncliffe)

Bertie Wooster and the Silly Ass Tradition

by Jonathan Cecil

Algy's Simply Awfully Good at Algebra
Beautiful Bountiful Bertie
My Beastly Eyeglass
Reckless Reggie of the Regent Palace
Really? Yass, Great Scott!

This is just a small selection of the comic song and monologue titles once associated with the stage Dude, Knut or Silly Ass – pronounced in the old fashioned and to us less refined manner as ‘Silly Ahh-ss’.

From Victorian times until well into the twentieth century this dim-witted upper class stereotype has been a popular English figure of fun. We find him on stage, in comic fiction and in cartoons, elegantly dressed, amiable, exquisitely mannered and exceptionally empty-headed. He frequently sports a monocle, carnation and spats and makes up in the nose department for whatever he lacks in the chin.

Although the Victorian Music Hall was a supremely working class art form, both as regards its exponents and its audience, ‘Toff’ characters were all the rage from the outset, often as objects of admiration. George Leybourne’s swell – ‘Champagne Charlie’, the idol of the barmaids – was what every male spectator would like to have been, given the wherewithal.

But audiences also loved to see their so-called ‘betters’ lampooned as ineffectual buffoons. The Toff as object of half-affectionate ridicule dates from centuries ago. Shakespeare’s Sir Andrew in *Twelfth Night* is only the most famous of many simple-minded, wealthy fops who graced the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Restoration stages. Andrew’s blank inability to grasp the simplest idea, his touching desire to be a witty man of fashion marks him out as an immortal creation amongst many flat caricatures.

Likewise, over 300 years later, P G Wodehouse took the stock comic aristocrat of Edwardian musical comedy and developed him into the enduring, infinitely endearing Bertie Wooster.

As early as 1903 Max Beerbohm as theatre critic was decrying the musical comedy dude character as stale and divorced from reality. Max did however make an exception for George Grossmith Junior, who brought ‘a quaint skill and humour’ to his roles. A typical Grossmith number went:

Everybody's awfully good to me, don't you now?
I'm just about as spoilt as I can be, don't you know?
One day I introduced my wife to a friend of mine called Brown
And he actually looked after her when I was out of town
It was so unselfish of him for he's married too, is Brown
Oh! Everybody's awfully good to me.

Wodehouse based his early silly ass characters on performers like the toothy, monocled Grossmith. One example was Reggie Pepper who was, in some reworked short stories, transmogrified into Bertie Wooster. Bertie himself began as a stereotype but soon became a unique creation. Having myself, as it were, entered the Wooster mind, recording twelve Chivers audio-books, I am not convinced of Bertie’s stupidity. He is certainly naïve and literal-minded – witness his mental reaction to soppy Madeline Bassett’s idea that the stars are God’s daisy chain: “Perfect rot, of course. They’re nothing of the sort.”

But his knowledge of Shakespeare, the *Bible* and *The Golden Treasury* – though erratic, with his quotations so often hilariously misapplied – would put almost all modern schoolchildren to shame. A near selfless character, his schemes to pull his friends ‘out of the mulligatawny’ are cack-handed but not without their own logic. They remind me of my own schoolboy efforts at mathematics. I thought I understood the principles of multiplication or division but still came up with the wrong answers; having no Jeeves standing by to supply the correct ones.

Crass stupidity is ultimately irritating rather than funny. Bertie’s mind is definitely superior to Bingo’s or Gussie’s – slow but never uninteresting: after all, he is Wodehouse’s spokesman. For me he is a sort of childlike upper class Everyman: a decent, well-meaning gentleman up against a world of aunts – menacing like Aunt Agatha, cheerfully manipulative like Aunt Dahlia – , incompetent ex-schoolfellows, bossy or soppy would-be fiancées, and fearsome magistrates and loony doctors. Without the heaven-sent presence of Jeeves what man could cope?

Many twentieth century actors maintained the silly ass tradition – mythical perhaps, but ever popular – notably the dashing chump Ralph Lynn and the earnestly dithering Claude Hulbert. This tradition continues with Harry Enfield’s ‘Nice-But-Dim’. Sadly, actors come and go, but happily Bertie Wooster, like Tennyson’s ‘Brook’ goes on forever.

© Jonathan Cecil

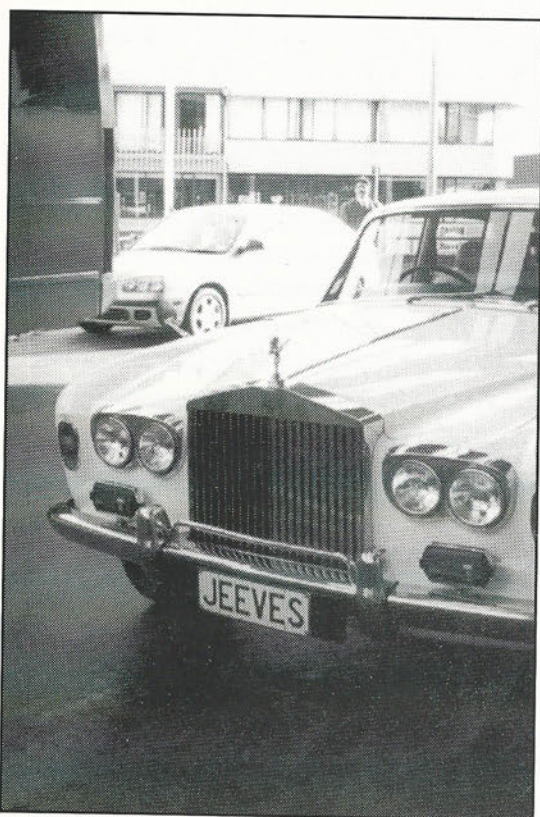
Jonathan has just completed a highly successful tour of Emma, playing the arch-hypochondriac Mr Woodhouse (no relation) in a stage version of Jane Austen's novel. He has recently recorded A Few Quick Ones for Chivers (see page 17) and is about to record Hot Water for the same firm. On July 6th, he and his wife Anna Sharkey present their PGW-Kern show Plum Sauce at the Ludlow Festival.

Venturing into the Antipodes

The Editor seeks members in New Zealand

The Society's membership is truly international, reaching to well over twenty countries all over the world. Unfortunately, although we have a dozen or so subscribers in Australia, we are not blessed with readers in New Zealand, and when the Editor visited that country in March with the MCC Supporters' Tour, he took one or two opportunities to promote the possibilities.

At a reception in Christchurch, a fellow-guest was Patron Henry Blofeld, pictured alongside, and in a reversal of normal procedure he was prevailed upon to present a cake to celebrate the birthday of a guest, Society member Elaine Ring. In his few concise words he managed to mention the Society, with three immediate results.



First Walter Hadlee, the doyen of New Zealand cricket and now in his eighties, recalled his meeting with S C (Billy) Griffith on the south coast during one of the New Zealand tours of the 1970s, when he had been told that Billy had named his son, Mike (born 1942) after

Mike Jackson, for Wodehouse was godfather to Mike Griffith.

Then Peter Sharp, who presents the New Zealand radio equivalent of our *Test Match Special* and is a member of the New Zealand Cricket Board, said that he would give details of the Society and its website on the air on the following day, which he duly did.

And finally William Taylor, owner of Royale Tours (VIP) Ltd, offered to take the Editor and his family to the ground for the fourth day of the test match in one of the Rolls Royces he uses in his luxury car hire business. So we were privileged to be chauffeured to the ground in a white Silver Shadow with, as the adjacent photograph shows, the registration plate JEEVES! (One of the others in his fleet

is a blue model with the registration BUNTER.) JEEVES is more often used for weddings than trips to cricket grounds, but it was very nice to see the passive advertisement for one of our favourite characters.

A Query from Michael Greener

In *Jeeves and the Impending Doom*, Jeeves remarks that Thomas, Aunt Agatha's son, had been reading *Treasure Island*, and had been much influenced by the character of Captain Flint. As I recall, Captain Flint was Long John Silver's parrot. Am I correct in thinking that the reference stems from the claim by the island's sole inhabitant Ben Gunn to have been marooned there by the original Captain Flint, who does not personally appear in the book?

Replies to the Editor, please.

A Letter from Gordon Smith

Boredom must have been a factor in the gradual decline and fall of Communism. Krushchev's secret speech to the Duma on Stalin's death lasted five hours, and it is almost physical pain to think about the awesome dreariness of even longer and unchanging speeches through the eighteen years of stagnation under Brezhnev. It is not surprising that there is a boom in readership of P G Wodehouse. Jeeves and Blandings Castle contrast sharply with the stifling boredom of political correctness.

Hog-Calling at the Savage Club

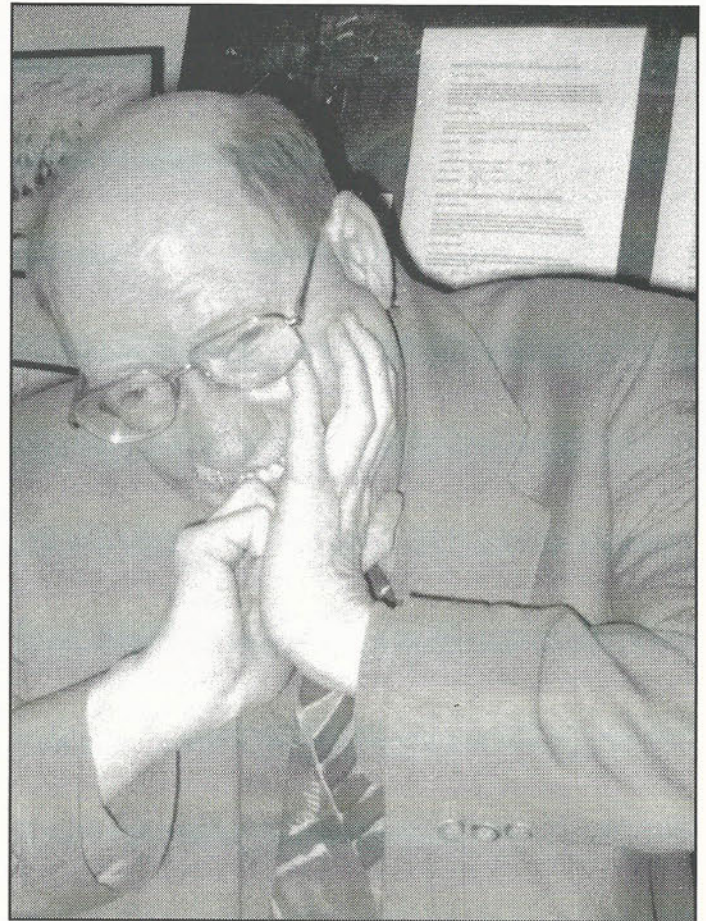
The Mid-West comes to Central London

The art of hog-calling is one which is native to the mid-west plains of North America, where voices are trained on the open prairie and gather richness and strength from competing with tornadoes. In Madison, Nebraska, where they still hold an annual tournament at their July *Days of Swine and Roses* event, a number of worthy competitors (or in many cases, it seems, not terribly worthy) try to emulate their great and famous predecessor Fred Patzel. But hog-calling at the Savage Club is a relatively rare treat.

At the Society meeting on February 19th, Norman Murphy provided thirty-five members with just such a treat in a short three-part presentation. First, he recalled how he sought to justify his conviction that in *Pig-Hoo-o-o-ey* the hog-calling champion Fred Patzel was in fact a real person. How he came across a newspaper cutting in Edward Cazalet's archive which showed this to be the case. How he persuaded Prof David Landman to haunt Boston Public Library until he found the correct report in the *New York Sun* (the one which was the source of James Belford's detailed description of the call, involving retarded half-notes and accidental grace-notes). And how his discussion of the point at an American Wodehouse convention led Gary and Linda Hall, from Lincoln, Nebraska, to undertake some field research around Madison, also Nebraska, where Fred Patzel's descendants still live.

Secondly he played some illustrative hog-calls which Gary and Linda had recorded during the *Days of Swine and Roses* competition. The audience felt that something was lacking, although one or two of the calls were distinctly more authoritative than the rest.

And the third part of the talk supplied what was lacking. Our own member, Alan Bird, has enjoyed a business career which took him to many unusual parts of the world, including the Falkland Islands.



Whilst there, he was taught how to call to pigs by an American who found time equally heavy on his hands. And Alan provided us with a marvellous illustration of how to talk to pigs in . . . their own language. A sound perhaps a little softer than some raucous hog-calls, but so distinctive with grunts, oinks and snuffles that if you shut your eyes you were convinced that there was a pig in the room.

You can be sure that there will be surprises at the Savage Club. The February meeting was one of the best examples yet.

Books Offered by David Holt

In the March issue of *Wooster Sauce*, member David Holt generously offered to sell his collection of PGW books to members. Over twenty members applied to purchase one or more, and the 24 books each had between 3 and 8 suitors. A ballot was held by two committee members in early May to ensure the fairest possible allocation. In a very sad but we understand not unexpected development, David died at the end of March. We wish his family well.

Videos Offered by John Baesch

In March, there was also an offer of UK-format PGW-related videos which were no longer of use to our American member John Baesch. As with the books, this proved to be very popular and a ballot had to be held for the five videos amongst the dozen or so applicants. The Society would like to express its appreciation to John for choosing to dispose of those videos in such an environmentally friendly fashion!

An Obsession With Cow Creamers

Michael Bird writes of silver creamers, both English and Dutch

It all started when we bought a Victorian chiffonier. The two shelves at the back were not high enough for most of our ornaments but a small pottery cow creamer which we had once bought at auction fitted perfectly. “Right”, said my wife, “we’ll collect a few more”. That’s how our collection began and it now numbers over 70.

Of course, being a Wodehouse nut, I had always known from *Code of the Woosters* that cow creamers existed, but apart from knowing that there were such things as *Modern Dutch* and *Eighteenth Century English*, I had no real knowledge of what they were, who made them and why. For most collectors there are books to help, but to the best of our knowledge there are no books on cow creamers.

Most of our enquiries have met with the suggestion that we write one! In our attempts to learn more we have trawled museums, auctions, antique fairs and shops, but most of the information we have gleaned has come from dealers specialising in antique silver and pottery. We did strike lucky at the Victoria and Albert Museum. A student on a Fine Arts Course, Anthony Hoyte, had written a thesis on cow creamers. We acknowledge his work in the writing of this article.

Tea, coffee and chocolate were introduced into England in the 17th Century, but only the well-to-do could afford them and the vessels in which the beverages were served underlined this fact. Sugar bowls, teaspoons, tongs and teapots reflecting the silver-smiths’ art were manufactured to adorn the tea tables of the rich, but there are no records of cream jugs at this period since tea and coffee were initially taken black. Milk started to be used in tea in the early 1720s and thus we see the addition of creamers to the tea service. Various designs of creamer followed but the most whimsical was that of a cow.

As a frequent guest at well-to-do houses Wodehouse would have been familiar with silver tea services. The cow which Bertie was sent to sneer at in *Code of the Woosters* was probably made by John Schuppe, whose work dates from 1753 to 1773 and Bertie’s description of it is very accurate. Little is known



A silver cow creamer by John Schuppe, 1764

about John Schuppe, but judging from his name he probably came from the Netherlands, which was also where the cow creamer design is believed to have originated.

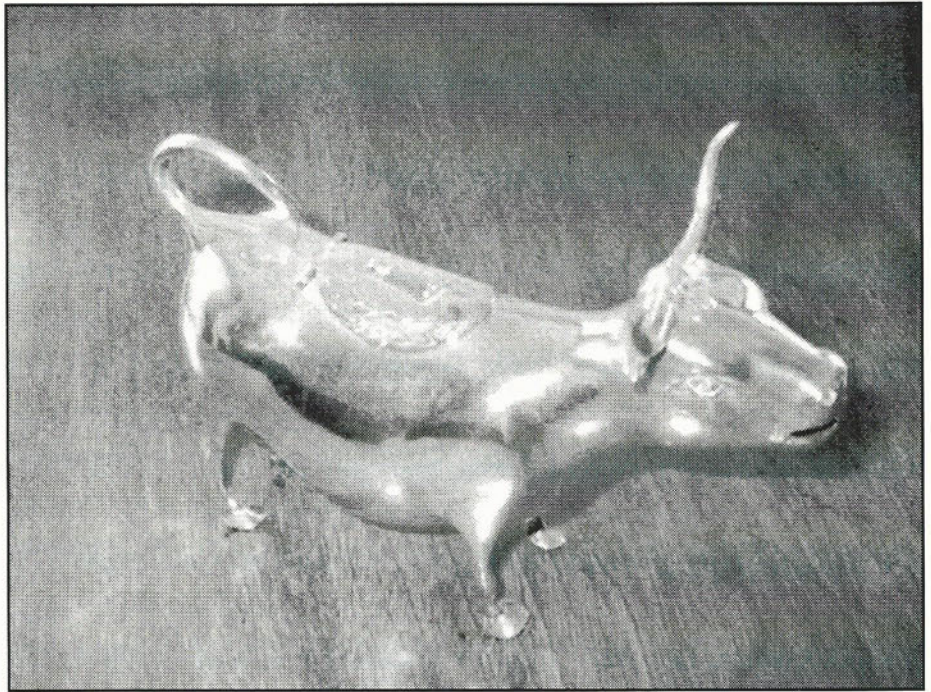
The animal has a hollow body to hold the milk or cream. The tail is bent round to act as a handle and the milk is poured through the mouth. The creamer is filled through a hole in the back which is covered with a hinged lid, frequently decorated with a large and out-of-scale fly. One of the eight silver cow creamers on display in the Victoria and Albert Museum even has a fly on the udders. Today we are much more hygiene conscious, but in the 18th Century it would seem quite natural for flies and cream to go together. Some creamers bear the coats of arms of aristocratic families

The silver cow jugs were made up of several pieces. The legs, horns, ears, tail and fly for the lid would all have been cast individually into sand moulds. The body and head of the cow were made in 2 halves by *raising*. A shallow form would be carved into a piece of hard wood to resemble half the cow’s body. A sheet of silver would then be sunk into it with a ball-shaped hammer, working inwards from the rim to avoid fracture. The raised components would then be individually soldered to the body and head using a silver alloy and the joins would be smoothed and filed clean. The lid was made separately by

chasing a very thin silver sheet over a former.

Cows were engraved all over to give the impression of hide or left plain apart from some engraving along the spine to conceal a soldered joint. A few were *gilded* by smoothing an amalgam of gold and mercury over the model using the fingers. Heating over a fire vaporised the mercury, leaving a thin film of pure gold. Gilding was mainly carried out by women who sadly did not live long.

In the latter part of the 19th Century similar silver cow creamers were made on the Continent, especially Holland and Germany, and imported extensively into this country, but these were of inferior quality. Hence Bertie's sneer at *Modern Dutch* in *The Code of the Woosters*.



An imported 'Modern Dutch' silver creamer, c1900

Our Schuppe cow creamer bears the hallmark for 1764. Our Modern Dutch ones bear import marks from about 1900, so they are now becoming antiques in their own right.

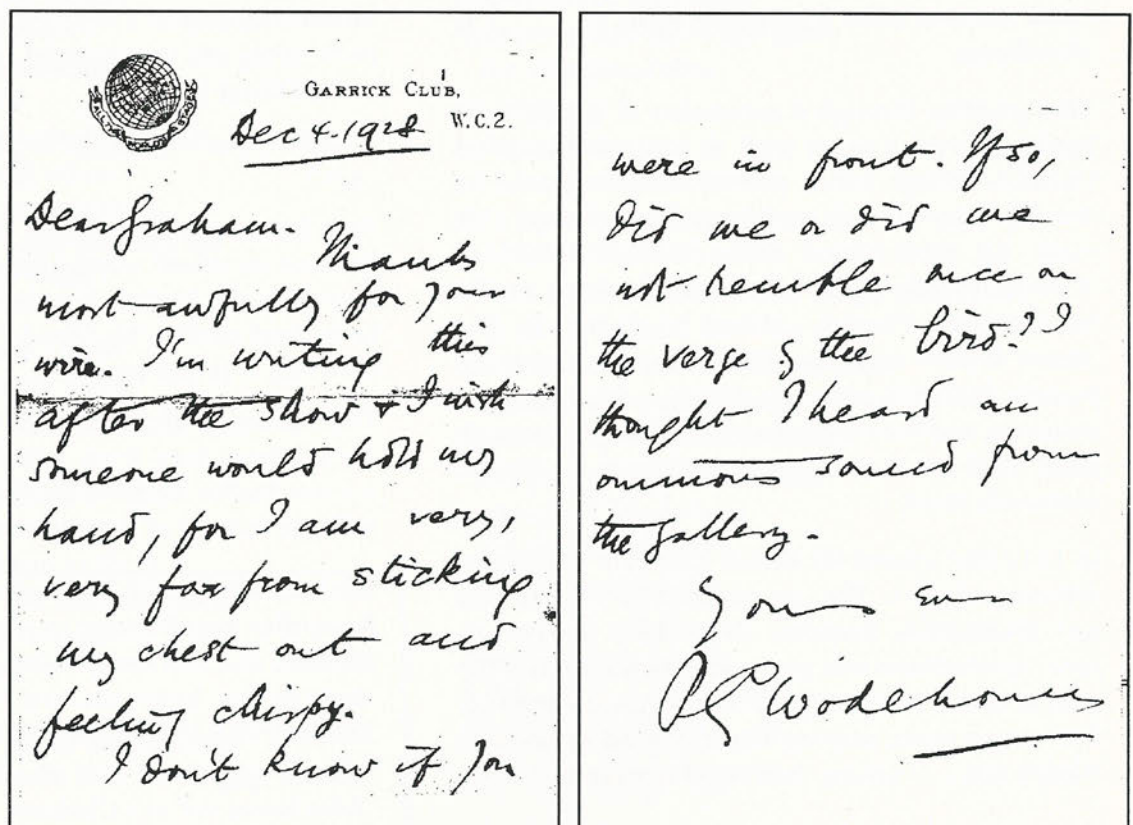
Because so few families could afford these silver cows, a few companies started to produce pottery cow jugs and these will be discussed in a second article, in September.

When the Bird Hovered in the Wings

James Hogg has discovered a worrying letter from PGW

James Hogg found this letter during researches into the career of lyricist and comic writer Harry Graham, in which PGW wrote of the reception accorded to the first night of *The Play's The Thing*.

The show had been a big hit in the US, but the casting of Gerald du Maurier in the first UK production proved to be a mistake, and it was never to repeat its earlier success, when the star was Holbrook Blinn.



Basil Foster, 1882-1959

Basil Foster was one of seven brothers generally believed to have been the inspiration for Mike Jackson and his brothers in Mike at Wrykyn and Mike and Psmith.

Basil Foster was the fourth son in a family of seven boys (all of whom played first-class cricket) and three girls. His father, Henry Foster, was one of those impeccable English clerics of upper middle-class education and scant middle-class means.

Like his brothers, Basil attended Malvern. By 1899 he was a regular in the school cricket and football XIs, always able to turn something on for the big occasion and he was inspired in the annual grudge match against Repton in 1899, making 43 runs as his side won by an innings. At rackets he was simply brilliant and with the future Hampshire cricketer William Evans he won the Public Schools Competition in 1899. The pair defended their title successfully in 1900 when they overwhelmed Rugby in the final.

In April 1902 Basil was at inside-right when the Old Malvernians played Bishop Auckland in the FA Amateur Cup Final and ran out surprise 5-1 winners. He played seven cricket matches as an amateur for Worcestershire between 1902 and 1911, normally (in a scene very reminiscent of the dénouement of Mike and Psmith) the result of frantic telegrams from his brothers, who often struggled to get up a side. In 1907 he made a dapper century in just 70 minutes for Actors v Authors at Lord's, playing flawlessly until he spooned an easy catch to A A Milne at cover point from the bowling of . . . P G Wodehouse.

After padding through a succession of menial jobs, Basil had tried a short spell as a junior master at Dulwich College which proved disastrous, and he decided to try his luck on the professional stage. He made his professional debut in April 1906 as Norman Popple in *Mr Popple of Ippleton* at the Marlborough Theatre. When he starred in *The Merry Widow* as Count Danilo he met the radio pioneer Marconi, who was almost a fixture in the audience, and they immediately took a shine to each other. Basil would spend many holidays on the *Electra*, Marconi's yacht, .

In 1910 Basil played the Earl of Quorn in *The Dollar Princess* at Daly's. The cast included an 18-year-old girl, Gwendoline Brogden, whom Basil married in June. Gwendoline was pretty and vivacious and the couple had a daughter, the future Lady Forwood. They set up home near the Finchley Road, where P G Wodehouse was among their regular visitors.

Between 1928 and 1933 Basil collaborated with Wodehouse and Ian Hay on productions at the Shaftesbury and acquired a business interest in the theatre. In September 1930 he took the title role in Wodehouse's *Leave it to Psmith* at the Shaftesbury. *The Stage* commented: 'Special appreciation was expressed of the suavity and aplomb displayed by Mr Foster as Psmith.'

In September 1937 he played Lord Peter Wimsey in an ill-received production of *Busman's Honeymoon* at the Comedy Theatre and two years later Basil stage-managed a repertory season at the Winter Gardens, New Brighton. This experience landed him a lucrative position as resident manager and director at the Richmond Theatre in 1940. He became front-of-house manager at the Salisbury Theatre in 1952, where he was a great success in the position, and stayed until 1958.

Basil's marriage to Gwendoline was not a lasting success, and in the mid 1940s he married Eileen Sleddon, an Anglo-Australian who ran the Galleyhill Nursing Home in Church Crookham, Hampshire. By the late 1950s he had become frail and in 1958 he received regular medical attention at the nursing home.

In September 1959 Basil was taken ill with heart failure and died at a hospital in Hillingdon. He had been loving and widely loved and an early subscriber to the Olivier dictum:

"Laddie, you've just got to go on, and do it, and act."

Basil Foster adored the good things of life: cricket; golf; conversation; waywardness; ease; but above all literature, the English language and the theatre. If he had not existed, his friend P G Wodehouse would have had to invent him.

This summary is based on a chapter of the book Great Characters from Cricket's Golden Age by Jeremy Malies (Robson Books, 2000) and appears with the consent of the publishers.

Murray Hedgcock has noted that Clarkson, the Edwardian beard-maker to whom Wodehouse often referred, was also a wig-maker. Daphne du Maurier wrote of her father, the first Peter Pan in 1904, in *The Peter Pan Chronicles* (1993):

Gerald was Hook: he was no dummy dressed from Simmons' in a Clarkson wig . . .

Why I Hate the Game of Cricket

(An Absolute Abhorrence stemming from a game of softball played between
History Faculty and Graduate Students in Rochester, NY, in May 1974

by Dean Miller

Exordium

I know that Plum would never agree,
He'd pull a lip, and cock an eye,
And possibly would make so free
As to politely sigh:
"The blood goes thin,
The race grows feeble
We'll never civilize
Those people!"
And of course that well may be.

'Tis not the terms, I do make cry
Although they make no sense.
I'll freely let the slips slip by
And ask no recompense.
Yea, pitch your pitches where you list
(‘Owzat, sir?’ ‘Leg before’)
Regard the crease with reverence
(The ‘googly,’ ‘bowled for four!’)
And bail your bails with confidence,
It makes no plea to me.

Explanatio

But let me lay out the reasons why
Yon ghastly cricket-pitch and I
Will never sound as one.
The reason is quite simple, for
In ancient times, say '74
A native game bekownst, begun,
It was a game of softball, where
A bat and ball were present there,
With scattered cloud, some pleasant sun . . .
And cold ones, two or three.

In this game, twice stood I forth
(Though third in batting order)
And when the pitcher threw the ball
I went to do it murder.
I smote the ball a mighty smite
And trailing fire it roared
(Midst friends' hi-jinks and jollity)
Straight off th' ash, and steaming soared
Toward the nearest Upstate polity!
Or so it seemed to be.

My audience clapped hands and squealed
With cries and cheers Aeolian,

But in its path there grimly stood
A bloody *short* Austrolian!
(A colleague, said to say)
Trained on the pitch, this Caliban
Reached up a horny-palmed right hand
In view of all
Did catch, and what's more hold, the ball.
(I'd myde 'is Aussie dye)
Yet Hold!

Revenge at bat came in a trice,
I socked that ball, I socked it *twice!*
Direct in his direction.
No blench, no flinch, of course no quail
He barely bothered to exhale
He caught that ball *in medias rem*,
And then he did it once again!
That Canberran infection.
Ripe for the gallow's-tree.

Lacrimae Rerum

He has returned to Canberra,
And on his trophy-wall,
Midst wallabies and boomerangs
There is a Yank softball.
A souvenir of my career
Scuppered and failed and gone.
For who could obey
Or even pay
Or grant tenure
Or e'en defer
To a bozo chastened and wan . . .
Too plain for all to see,
Whose two line-drives were caught and held,
By gloveless goon from Oz.
Trained on the pitch's loathely sport
Whose paw would give me pause.
My deanship vanished in a trice,
My provost's post ne'er was.
A president I'd never be,
Of any university
Or other institution:
Yes!
Condemned, becursed,
Misprised, malformed,
Maledicted Brit extrusion!
Pernicious Bane to me . . .

Come On Jeeves ~ to St Albans

Hilary Bruce reviews the recent production

It's not as if The Abbey Theatre, St Albans, is in the middle of nowhere. A crow, flying from the Savage Club, would be hard put to it to make the journey last much more than 25 miles. So it's difficult to know why the first we heard about this production of *Come On Jeeves* was from a correspondent in America.

I used to know the Abbey Theatre well. It is home to the Company of Ten, an amateur group that produces ten shows a season, and a very long time ago, I was an active member. Indeed before I ascended to the stellar post of Hon PR for The P G Wodehouse Society, I cut my honorary teeth, so to speak, as Chairman of the Publicity Committee for the Abbey Theatre.

Admittedly that was 25-odd years ago, so I am unquestionably absolved from any responsibility. Nonetheless I sensed irony thick in the air as our hastily-arranged party reflected on how nearly we missed the first production of *Come On Jeeves* for some 35 years.

Going back to the theatre for the first time after so long, it immediately struck me that nothing had changed. I was sternly corrected - there had been a host of changes. But a chat with Nick Strudwick before the show proved my point. For here was a man who had firmly announced that there were no circumstances under which he would work on any shows in 2002. Yet moments later, he found himself not only directing a sellout but also, I learned from the programme, involved with construction and set painting. Vindicated is, I think, the word I am searching for.

It's time to confess that, unlike the more learned Society members present, I didn't actually know what *Come On Jeeves* was going to be about. *Ring for Jeeves* is the answer, and to refresh the memory, that's the one where the impecunious Earl of Rowcester (Towcester in the play) moonlights as a bookie, Honest Patch Perkins. He is abetted by Jeeves, lent to him by Bertie who is on a self-sufficiency course against the possibility that the gutters might at any time start running with the blood of the bourgeoisie. Noel Coward's *There Are Bad Times Just Around the Corner* introduced us to the living room at Towcester Abbey, convincingly stone-built, dog-eared and resolutely damp.



Jeeves eavesdrops on a conversation between the Earl of Towcester, Rory, Monica and Captain Biggar

Clearly, some of the characters were an absolute gift to cast and play - assuming, of course, access to a pool of goodish actors, which the Company of Ten generally has. Others must have been much harder, with Jill Wyvern probably the toughest challenge. She is required to appear as an intelligent, successful veterinary surgeon capable of administering a bolus and whatnot with the best of them, whilst simultaneously behaving as the archetypal Wodehouse fiancée, alternating between adoration, suspicion, brittleness and fawning. Claire Mullins bravely attempted this near-impossible combination and succeeded reasonably well. I must in all honesty add that she looked simply wonderful in jodhpurs, and I was consumed with envy.

At the slowish start, I wasn't entirely convinced by Will Franklin's Earl of Towcester, but as the production speeded up and we saw Bill with increasing frequency raking his hands through his hair at yet another baffling turn of events, I found I had grown to like him. The dim Lord Carmoyle, now an earnest employee of Harridge's and clad in a truly memorable pair of trousers, had some excellent and entertaining exchanges with his wife Monica. Peter Jeffrys and Suzie Major made them a believable couple, despite the chasm that divided their characters' IQs.

Great White Hunter Captain Biggar was adorable - on the one hand a reckless gambler desperate for cash, on the other, all that was preux and proper.

Swedish Exercises

Geoff Hales takes his one-man show to Stockholm

I pronged a startled kipper.

“Sir?” said Jeeves.

“This letter, Jeeves. Do we know a Mr Sahlin?”

“Oh, yes. Dashed genial cove, what? Well, he wants me to go to Sweden to speak at his club.”

“Very good, sir. Which suit will you wear, sir?”

And so it was that jolly old Sven picked me up at the airport, Jeeves having stayed behind for the first day of the shrimping season at Herne Bay, and ere long we were tootling along in the old two-seater for a swift one before dinner.

“About this speech of yours,” said old Sven, after two or three had trickled over the tonsils.

Well, I must confess that this speech had been bothering me a goodish bit. Those of you who know my stuff will appreciate that I’m not so much of a lad for the old unaccustomed-as-I-am-on-this-auspicious-occasion routine. The thought of the time I had addressed that girls’ school still makes me shudder from base to apex. But, I told myself, I had

eaten this man’s salt, or at least his wife’s cloudberry jam, and so I had to go through with the frightful ordeal.

“Lead me to it,” I said.

It was, if not a wham or socko, at least not a flopperoo. I bumbled a bit of butlers, Broadway and my place in world literature and that sort of rot, and when I sat down the forty or so bozos present put their hands together in a manner calculated to gratify the artiste that lurks in the Wooster bosom.

I returned to the flat decidedly chipper.

“I trust you had an enjoyable weekend, sir?”

“Top-notch, Jeeves! Absolutely top-notch! Hospitality superb, browsing and sluicing first-rate.”

“I am pleased to hear it sir. Would there be anything further?”

“Yes, Jeeves, send a wire. To Sahlin, Akersberg, Sweden. Cloudberry jam excellent stop ditto lingonberry stop anticipate early return stop.”

“Very good, sir.”

Come On, Jeeves, continued

Ardent? You betcher. But he remembered his Code, and we all loved him for it.

In as blatant a case of miscasting in life as you’re likely to see, George Edkins buys land for a building firm. This is a travesty, for the man was born to buttle. This is the only Wodehouse story in which Jeeves actually is the butler the popular press always credits him with being, but whether butler or gents personal gent, George Edkins was a terrific Jeeves. Stately, proper, resourceful - “each bucket is equipped with a cloth so that the raindrops fall inaudibly” - watching Edkins open the Abbey’s double doors for the umpteenth time our Chairman remarked “He’s got the elbows right”, and indeed he had. These were Jeeves’s elbows and this was, for me, the quintessential Jeeves.

Of course for Wodehouseans, the real star will always be the script. As Bill demands aspirin “and don’t slam the lid” and Mrs Spottsworth’s pendant disappears down her front into “the Midland Bank” we are safely and happily in Wodehouse territory.

But what, meanwhile, of Bertie? Alas, he has been expelled from his self-sufficiency course.

He smuggled an old lady in to darn his socks.

Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit

During May, The Dorrington Players of Church Stretton celebrated their 80th anniversary with a production of *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*, adapted and produced by PGW Society member Andrew Chapman, who also played Bertie Wooster.

The short run was very well received, all the actors being credited with sterling performances, from the octogenarian David Roberts as Uncle Tom, via the imposingly tall Adrian Bayling, whose Jeeves radiated a perfect balance of authority and modesty, to the rather younger Elizabeth Leader, who effortlessly played Daphne Dolores Morehead, the good-looking novelist who stole the heart of Stilton Cheesewright, simultaneously releasing him from the grip of Florence Craye, and Bertie from fear of Stilton. One cannot mention everybody in a short review, but Kathryn Lewis gave a convincing performance as the dizzy, fickle, young aristocratic Florence, who switched her affections at a whim.

It was gratifying to see teenagers in the audience obviously relishing the experience. Dorrington Players have been working with local schools to make young people aware of the attractions of live theatre, and hope to recruit young talent, sorely needed to increase the range of works the company can stage.

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Claudia Rocks

Handicapped by being born into a barbarian German family, I was to live to be 35 until I would make my first P G Wodehouse experience. The educational value of my younger days' literature was topped by that of Asterix and Obelix, the two Gauls, but outside that, there was a great void. I remember feeling continually discontented with what one might call my universe. My father often encouraged me to help him wash the family pride and joy, the car (a Volkswagen Beetle), on Sundays (a religious act for him), but somehow I didn't find it as fulfilling as he did.

Millennia of years later, I got it into my head that a little more education might bring just that trifle more light into my life, and I started going back to school. I made the acquaintance of the suicidal Hermann Hesse, a number of other self-explorers, the all-humanity-exploring Goethe and . . . Well, - have you ever tried German literature? It's depressing, isn't it? Personally, I believe that ever since Walther von der Vogelweide (a 12th century poet) it has been greatly lacking in something . . . I turned the corner into a different department, ran into Shakespeare and gradually began to cheer up. But when I had to leave that pleasant place again, I felt like Pooh the Bear cut off from his honey supplies once more. Again the world seemed bleak, full of bureaucracy, business behaviour, banalities, and what have you.

Christmas neared (the extensive reading season), and I knew that a glance over to the pile of educational books on my desk would send me back into depression. I grabbed the catalogue of the English Book Club and spotted a pretty picture of a P G Wodehouse omnibus in it. Something instantly told me that that was it. However, despite this instant knowledge, and all those preceding attempts at improving myself, I still felt like the little ignorant girl who hoped for enlightenment from the druid Miraculix when I looked at the name of the author. Only a major question mark appeared in the thought balloon above my head. The ring of the name struck me as standing for someone really big, someone that it must be a disgrace not to know. But who I could not say . . .

A much clearer bell rang out in my head at the title of the omnibus *Very Good, Jeeves; Right Ho, Jeeves; Thank You, Jeeves!*. Well, I don't know whether English people have always right-hoed and what-hoed each other or if they were inspired by P G Wodehouse in doing so, but it was exclamations like

that that first rang out familiar with me. Back in bleak Berlin now (maybe I add here that inside this earlier mentioned millennia I spent two years in Cambridge, and, honestly, my heart has been in England ever since), I often think of dear old Cambridge, where my first housemate frequently used to say something at the end of a conversation to people that, incomprehensible to me at the time, sounded like a "Righh-tee-hoh!".

There also were other friends and acquaintances who I remember recurrently exclaiming curious "tiddleypoohs", "tinkertytonks" or "tattahs". And there were friends with their oh so lovable peculiarities. There was friend John, who had named his children after trees (Rowan and Ashley) and never omitted to greet the magpies in the morning when he gave me a lift into town. He loved plays on words and would beam with pride whenever he had successfully cracked a pun. Pleased as Punch he would be when he had planted a smart word in the right place, and many a word I have learnt from him that I later rediscovered in P G Wodehouse. Mervyn and Brigitte would often contribute a story about the word's origin or come up with a related anecdote. It was particularly their humour and their pride in their language which induced me to look at the world in a different way, start to feel a bit more humble and appreciate trivial detail with the amazement and awe due to them. So, while reminiscing thus during my first PGW experience, I fell in love with Jeeves and Wooster in no time at all.

Ten years ago, I might have turned up my nose at Bertie and his butler and called the two snobs (and any German friend of mine still does whenever I brief one of them about the characters in the PGW plots). But today, back in unjolly Germany, where I realise every day more what the vanishing of values can cause in all these poor blighters here, I look with hope to your small island (have a large map of it on the wall) and joyously read about the ways of the Woosters. Jeeves's advice has become a household importance to me. When he quotes Tennyson I go and get myself Tennyson. Not having become the 'educated gal' yet that I wanted to be, I have nonetheless found happiness. And for that I owe gratitude to my friends in Cambridge and to Sir Pelham! *The Small Bachelor*, *Bill the Conqueror* and related heroes now decorate my desk, and *A Gentlemen of Leisure* is waiting on the couch. So, it's cheerioh from Berlin, with love from Claudia.

A Sauce of Misquotation

by Nigel Rees

Here are some more of PGW's numerous quotations and allusions that have been successfully traced to their sources - together with some that haven't yet.

I fear no foe in shining armour
Though his lance be bright and keen

Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, Ch 16

Based on T W H Crosland (1865-1924), *To the King's Bulldog* from *Outlook Odes* (1902): 'He fears no foe in shining armour . . .'

"We are lost," the captain shouted

Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves, Ch 6

From the *Ballad of the Tempest* by James T. Fields (1817-81), the American publisher, editor and poet:
As thus we sat in Darkness,

Each one busy with his prayers,
"We are lost!" the Captain shouted,
As we staggered down the stairs.'

The rush of life along his keel

Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves Ch 8

H W Longfellow, *The Building of the Ship* (1849).

What is called the quiet evenfall

Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves Ch 13

The phrase 'at the quiet evenfall' comes from Tennyson, *Maud*, Pt 2, IV, xi (1855).

Gone like the dew from the petal of a rose

Psmith in the City Ch 26

Nothing traced so far.

Half god, half prattling mischievous child

Carry On Jeeves, 'Clustering Round Young Bingo'

'Third-generation Wodehousean' G B. Chamberlain comments: "This ficti-quote from the ultimately unpublished *How I Keep the Love of My Husband-Baby* by that egregious dealeress in romantic sludge, Rosie M. Banks, is presumably Wodehouse's own hint at how his subcreation would have written.' But surely it must be alluding to something?

" 'Every time a fairy sheds a tear a wee bit star is born in the Milky Way' . . . It didn't seem to me to check up with her statement that the stars were God's daisy chain." *Right Ho, Jeeves*, Ch 10

"Who ever thought the stars were God's daisy chain and that every time a fairy hiccoughs a wee baby is born." *The Mating Season* Ch 4

"She holds the view that the stars are God's daisy chain, that rabbits are gnomes in attendance on the Fairy Queen, and that every time a fairy blows its

wee nose a baby is born, which as we know is not the case." *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* Ch 2

The general opinion is that Wodehouse is here poking fun at J M Barrie's tosh about fairies in *Peter Pan* (first performed in 1904 but frequently revised thereafter, and not printed until 1928), in particular Peter's speech in Act 1, Scene 1:

"You see, Wendy, when the first baby laughed for the first time, the laugh broke into a thousand pieces and they all went skipping about, and that was the beginning of the fairies. And now when every new baby is born its first laugh becomes a fairy."

But PGW was generally a bit more precise in his allusions, so perhaps we are missing the real original here?

Lurked the bitter awakening, stuffed eelskin in hand,
waiting to sock me in the occiput

The Mating Season Ch 3

An image that is quite frequent in PGW, so this may not be a direct quotation or allusion. Compare: 'Unseen in the background, Fate was quietly slipping the lead into the boxing-glove' - *Very Good, Jeeves*, 'Jeeves and the Old School Chum'.

My old partner of joys and sorrows

Ring for Jeeves Ch 9

Not traced yet.

Drain the bitter cup

Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves Ch 1

I don't think this is a quotation but just an old expression. For example, Bishop Hall writes in *Occasional Meditations* (1633): "Why do not I quaff up that bitter cup of affliction?"

I love little pussy; her coat is so warm;
And if I don't hurt her, she'll do me no harm

Aunts Aren't Gentlemen Ch 4

Bertie thinks this is 'probably' by Shakespeare. But I'm afraid not. It is a nursery rhyme, first printed in 1830, that has been attributed to Jane Taylor, the writer of *Twinkle, twinkle little star*.

The female of the species is more deadly than the male

Aunts Aren't Gentlemen Ch 9

When Jeeves quotes this, Bertie considers "what a lot of good things Shakespeare had said in his time". But no. This is from Rudyard Kipling's poem, *The Female of the Species*.

Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire?

by Stu Shiffman

The new aristocracy of burgeoning wealth in the United States of the post-Civil War era had much to offer the often-impooverished nobles of the British Isles and the continent. Even the less well-endowed but well-endowed daughter could find husbands from among the highest rungs of the aristocracy and gentry. In this period of 1865-1914, some 454 American heiresses married European nobles, 100 of them with British titles. Six of the hundred who made their love connection in Britain married Dukes, in most cases arranged by their matrimonial stage-mothers. They included Consuelo Yznaga (who wed the 8th Duke of Manchester), Lily Hammersley (the 8th Duke of Marlborough), Consuela Vanderbilt (the 9th Duke of Marlborough), Helena Zimmerman (the 9th Duke of Manchester), and May Golet (the 8th Duke of Roxburghe). It became so common that the practice left its fossils in the culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Large amounts of buxom American cash was more important in deciding a match than purity of blood or descent.

This practice shows its signs in the popular culture of the period. Look at Edith Wharton's well-known novel, *The Buccaneers* (1938), with its wealthy Americans in search of noble marriages, or the many references in the works of P G Wodehouse. You see it in his novels such as *Big Money* (1931) in which the impoverished Earl of Hoddesdon is perennially putting the bite on all and sundry for fivers, and his son Godfrey, Lord Biskerton ('the Biscuit') becomes engaged to an American millionaire's daughter. As the Biscuit explains to his old friend Berry Conway:

"The fact of the matter is, laddie, there's nothing in being an Earl nowadays. It's a mug's game. If ever they try to make you one, punch them in the eye and run. And being an Earl's son and heir is one degree worse."

Conway is, naturally, aghast to discover that his friend who seems to be living the high life is as broke as is he.

"But I've always thought of you as rolling in money, Biscuit. You've got that enormous place in Sussex?"

"That's just what is wrong with it. Too enormous. Eats up all the family revenues, old boy. Oh, I see how you came to be misled. The error is a common one. You see a photograph in *Country Life* of an Earl standing in a negligent attitude

outside the north-east piazza of his seat in Loamshire, and you say to yourself, 'Lucky devil! I'll make that bird's acquaintance and touch him.' Little knowing that even as the camera snapped the poor old deadbeat was wondering where on earth the money was coming from to give the piazza the lick of paint that it so badly needed."

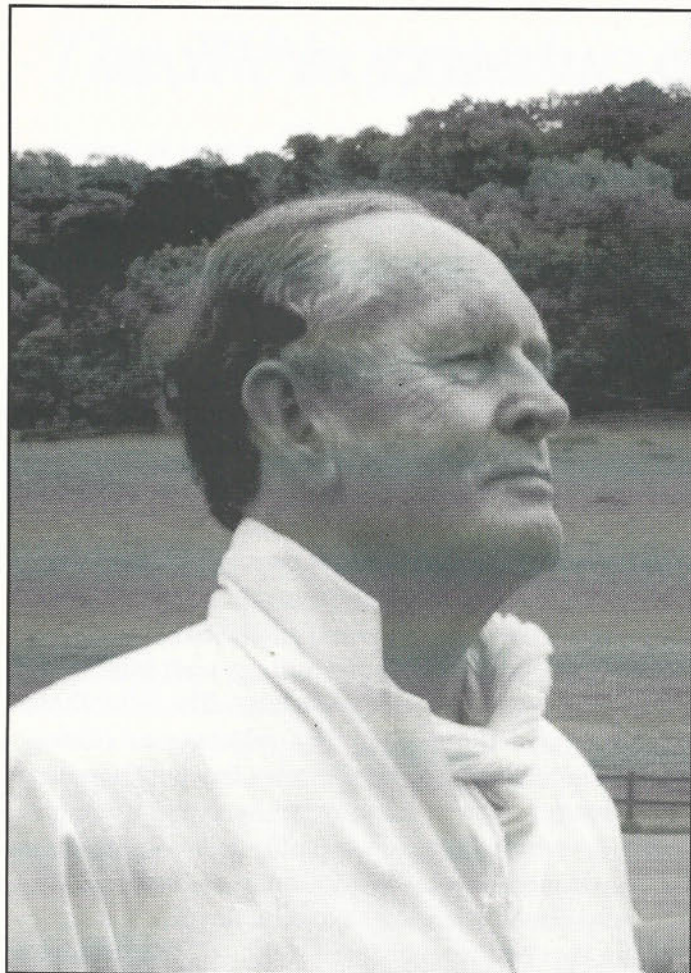
A situation like this demanded an infusion of large bags of cash as well as some more diverse DNA to lend a bit of hybrid vigour to the family.

Many another of Wodehouse's aristocrats manage to get by economically by renting the ancestral seat to wealthy expatriates, and with some luck marry their daughters. This is the case with Bertie Wooster's friend and fellow member of the Drones Club, the Right Honorable Lord Chuffnell, the 5th Baron ('Chuffy'). In *Thank You, Jeeves* (1934), Chuffy is rustivating at his somewhat dilapidated seat, Chuffnell Hall, Chuffnell Regis in Somerset, in the unfortunate company of his step-mother, the Dowager Baroness, and her son Seabury. Millionaire J Washburn Stoker has two daughters, Pauline and Emerald, the former being the only documented female to be found in Bertie Wooster's bed in Bertie's own mauve pyjamas. Despite this potentially scandalous occurrence, all works out for the best through the assistance of Jeeves as Pop Stoker takes Chuffnell Hall and Pauline marries Chuffy.

Even Freddie Threepwood, younger son of Lord Emsworth, is happily married to the heiress of Donaldson's Dog Food and now lives on Long Island.

We see the practice clearly delineated much earlier in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's tale *The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor* and the case of Hatty Doran being offered up to Lord Robert St Simon. The groom's family is very ancient and, undoubtedly, they were mentioned in dispatches at Agincourt and Crécy. The bride's father, old Aloysius Doran, originally dug his fortune out of the Californian soil and is described as being 'the richest man on the Pacific slope.'

This was the situation when the two different worlds collided. The trade for both sides was quite clearly delineated. The young women and their families wanted titles to validate their rise above often plebeian origins, and the penniless noble houses wanted their money. Some historians have estimated that some \$220 million crossed the stormy Atlantic in the dowries of these 'dollar princesses.' During



PROFILE OF A PATRON

Murray Hedgcock met Wodehouse when at ten, he found on his parents' shelves *The Ordeal of Young Tuppy*, in *The Great Book of Humour*. It was not until his thirties that he began to read PGW regularly, and he is grateful to the British and American Societies for putting him on the proper path of wholehearted appreciation. An Australian who came to England first in 1953, he regrets that PGW passed up the comic possibilities of his country and countrymen, but is rather uneasy about the one significant Australian character – The Old Stepper (*Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*). He is proud to compare his career to that of PGW (both bank clerks switching into newspapers – although Hedgcock spent much of his career not as a writer, but as a sub-editor, processing reporters' stories). He took early retirement in 1991, after 15 years as London Bureau chief for News Limited, Australia's biggest newspaper group. Now he is pleased to write for *Wooster Sauce* and the Society website, and linked the passions of his life by editing the 1997 Hutchinson book, *Wodehouse at the Wicket*. Married with four children, he has lived for 35 years at Mortlake in South London.

Barry Day came across this opinion in a letter from Noel Coward to Alexander Woolcott, dated 4th November, 1935. The song Coward refers to is, of course, *Till The Clouds Roll By*, for which PGW wrote the lyric.

‘Your horrid little note arrived just as I was about to ravish my Manchester public but now that they are successfully ravished I can write and tell you my favourite song. My first favourite is my own *Bitter Sweet* waltz which I think delicious; failing this slightly egotistical opinion I would say the good old *Rain* song from *Oh Boy!* by my dear Mr Kern.’

Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire, continued

this period, a quarterly tip-sheet periodical named *Titled Americans* could be purchased for a dollar, and included a listing of the extent available, titled noblemen in Europe. Perhaps there should have been such a sheet listing the unmarried heiresses too.

The trans-Atlantic horse-trading practice was happily lampooned in the comic papers of the day on both sides of the Atlantic, in such periodicals as *Punch* and *Puck* or *Life* in the United States. Charles Dana Gibson, renowned penman of the past and creator of the quintessential Anglo-Saxon American ‘Gibson Girl’ and ‘Gibson Man,’ is among the many cartoonists who touched on the phenomenon in their work. In such collections as his *London as Seen* by Charles Dana Gibson (Charles Scribner’s & Sons, 1897), he illuminates the scenes of the American beauties being presented at Court and in London

society. His *Sketches and Cartoons* (R H Russell, 1898) includes *A Special Exhibit*, in which a stately long-necked beauty is being regarded by two older gentlemen in elegant tailcoats:

“Are you exhibiting at the Horse Show this year?” asks one.

“Yes, I am sending my daughter,” is the reply of the other.

The Latest Nobleman shows a bevy of Gibsonian beauties surrounding a rather effete-looking European aristocrat:

“Girls, girls, don’t press his Grace! He can only take one of you, and with him it is purely a matter of business.”

Reality seems to have been at least as absurd as any cartoon.

Recent Audio Representation of Plum

Two recent BBC Radio adaptations of Wodehouse stories, coupled with Simon Callow's latest readings of abridgements of Jeeves novels from Penguin Audio and the imminent release by Chivers of the unabridged reading by Jonathan Cecil of *A Few Quick Ones*, offer an opportunity to contemplate the strengths and weaknesses of different types of audio representation of Wodehouse.

They can be divided into three categories: the unabridged reading, the abridged reading and the dramatisation. Chivers (through the Audio Book Collection) have a virtual monopoly of unabridged Wodehouse readings in the UK and in theory these are the easiest to produce. Since the whole of the author's writing is included, there are no difficult editorial decisions for an adapter, and all you need is a reader who is both in sympathy with the subject matter and capable of distinguishing a myriad of different characters for the benefit of the listener. As has been stated many times in these pages, Plum has received sterling service from Chivers in this respect, especially from the prolific Jonathan Cecil, whose reading of *A Few Quick Ones* will be reviewed in September. At the time of writing, he is about to enter the studio to record *Hot Water* for November publication.

The second category is the abridged reading, first represented in this sample by Simon Callow with *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit* and *Ring for Jeeves*. Not only the reader but the adapter as well must be in sympathy with the text. Unless the adapter can meet the stringent requirements of his role, even the most capable reader will be out in the cold. The Penguin adapter, Martin Franks, has skilfully accomplished his task, retaining just about all the clues which Wodehouse provides towards the plot dénouement, maintaining continuity within short passages and including those many favourite nifties which so distinguish the author's writing.

The adapter then hands over the baton to the reader, and when he has Simon Callow to receive it his job is a little easier, for Simon has the ability to record that little bit more quickly, without seeming to hurry, which makes all the difference. His technique is superb: for example in *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit* you are never unsure whether the words are coming from Bertie the narrator (who seems to be having a conversation with the listener) or Bertie the character. His subtle use of voices permits one to know with certainty who is speaking, and in the case of 'Stilton' Cheesewright to imagine the physical attributes of the individual.

Ring for Jeeves, of course, has no Bertie as narrator, and Simon Callow's task was a little easier as a result. These are two highly recommended tapes, especially for the car: each lasts for almost three hours.

I suggested earlier that even the best reader would struggle with an indifferent adaptation, and BBC Radio 4 fell into two traps earlier in the year with their series of Blandings stories. The adapter was unable to provide an adequate abridgement in the fifteen minutes allocated for each story. Thirty minutes is the length that a classic Wodehouse story requires, twenty minutes is surely an irreducible minimum. Squeezing quarts into pint pots always causes spillage, and the resulting contents were diluted beyond acceptable levels. The BBC then compounded the problem by selecting as reader Alan Titchmarsh for, Wodehouse fan and popular broadcaster though he may be, he is not an actor with the required vocal gymnastic skill to interpret a dozen or more voices. Whilst innate professionalism ensured that his readings were better than you or I telling the children a bedtime story, . . . but you see what I am getting at. With poor materials to work with, the goods he produced were Ratner rather than Cartier.

Contrast that series with the Mulliner dramatisations from the same stable, which reached their halfway point as this review is being written. They are a full half-hour in length, have a cast with no more than two characters assigned to one actor, benefit from Richard Griffiths' gentle narration, and allow much of the flavour of the prose to emerge.

Critic David Sexton, in a *Sunday Telegraph* review of the first story, *Honeysuckle Cottage*, agreed that the programme made a 'pleasing mid-morning half-hour', but added 'Yet no Wodehouse dramatisation is ever quite satisfactory and this was no exception. None deliver the same pleasure as the written page because, however carefully stylised, they take too much reality on to Wodehouse's world. Of necessity, the characters take on weight, they belong to a certain social class, they can be dated to a specific epoch.' All this, he adds, makes the stories 'sound more affected than they seem in print'. Sexton's comment is well-founded, yet for the listener, these competent dramatisations are incomparably superior to the bland irrelevance of the Blandings series.

The conclusion remains that the unabridged and well-abridged recordings will be more satisfying than all but the most brilliant dramatisation.

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

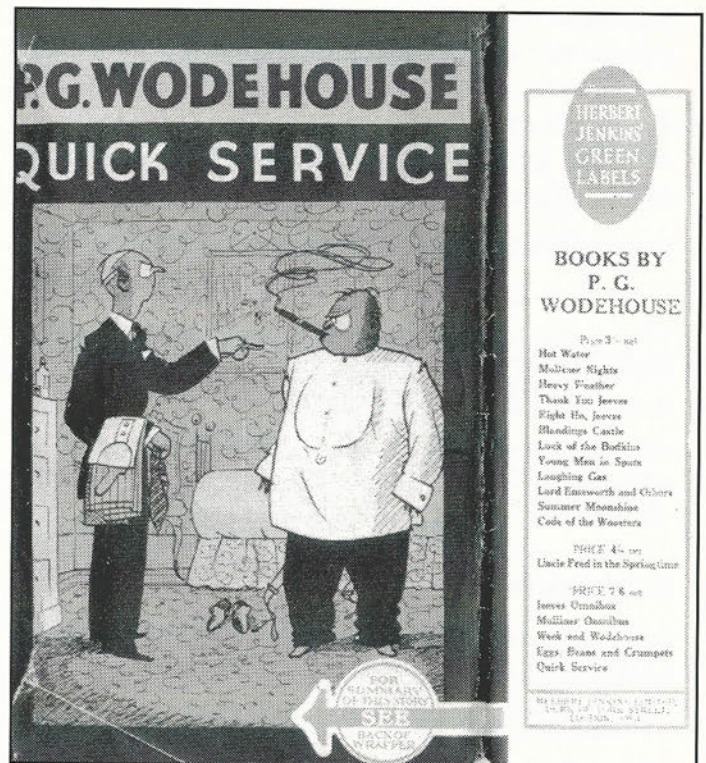
Titles from the 1930s and 1940s

The scarcity of some titles, and in particular the accompanying dustwrappers, makes it difficult to be sure that one has complete information about them. This explains why there are various gaps (mainly in respect of first edition dustwrappers and variant first editions and/or reissues) in the information given by *McIlvaine* for the titles of this period.

There are some titles where variant first edition dustwrappers exist but are unrecorded by *McIlvaine*. For instance, according to *McIlvaine*, the dustwrapper for *Thank You, Jeeves* (A51a) should contain advertisements for seven Arthur Gask books on the back flap; however, a variant exists which lists five William Townend books, but which is otherwise identical to *McIlvaine's* description. Similarly, whereas *McIlvaine* states that the dustwrapper for *Right Ho, Jeeves* (A52a) should contain advertisements for six Bindle books on the back flap, a variant exists which lists Wyndham Martyn books, but is otherwise identical to *McIlvaine's* description. Again, *McIlvaine* records that the dustwrapper for *Quick Service* (A63a – illustrated) should list 18 Wodehouse titles on the front flap and 22 on the back flap; but a variant exists with the flap information reversed (i.e. there are 22 titles on the front flap and 18 on the back).

Price stickers on the first edition dustwrappers also differ from *McIlvaine*. According to *McIlvaine*, for *Thank You, Jeeves* (A51a) the green price label on the spine of the dustwrapper should show '7/6 NET'; however, there are dustwrappers in existence priced '5/- NET'. A possible explanation is that remaindered stocks of the first edition were subsequently sold at the lower price. Similarly, for *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets* (A62a) *McIlvaine* records a price of 7/6, but copies also exist with a publisher's sticker of 5/- over the original price. Indeed, copies of *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets* exist with no price at all on the price cartouche; these might be advance review copies.

Turning to variant first editions, it is invariably the colour of the boards that is critical. For example, for *The Code of the Woosters*, *McIlvaine* records the true first as having green cloth with black lettering (A60b), but also records three other variant firsts, having stone-grey cloth with red lettering (A60b2), orange cloth with black lettering (A60b3) and turquoise cloth (A60b4). Inevitably, *McIlvaine* does not record all variants. According to *McIlvaine*, the



true first of *Laughing Gas* was in purple-red cloth with black lettering (A56a) with a variant in maroon cloth (A56a2); there is also an unrecorded variant in orange cloth. For *Lord Emsworth and Others*, the true first was in bright red cloth with black lettering (A57a), the variants in grey (or stone coloured) cloth with red lettering (A57a2) and orange cloth with black lettering (A57a3). There is also an unrecorded variant in beige cloth, although this may merely be a bookdealer's description of the grey or stone coloured cloth. For *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, the true first was in dark red cloth with gold lettering (A61b), with reissues in orange cloth with black lettering (A61b2) and turquoise cloth with dark brown lettering (A61b3); there is also an unrecorded variant in green boards, although again this may be a dealer's description for the turquoise cloth.

The question of what constitutes a variant first edition or a reissue is a vexed one. It is worth noting that, according to the auction catalogue for the Heineman collection, what *McIlvaine* describes as the first reissue of the American *Blandings Castle* (A53b2), in orange cloth with green lettering, is actually a variant first; and that what *McIlvaine* describes as the first reissue of the *Luck of the Bodkins* (A54a3), in blue cloth with gold lettering, is probably a variant first, rather than a reissue.

Forthcoming Wodehouse Events

Dulwich Exhibition for *Pothunters* Centenary

Jan Piggott, Keeper of Archives at Dulwich College, has advised that to celebrate the centenary of the publication of PGW's first book, *The Pothunters*, the College will stage a Centenary Display of his school stories and novels, from October 15 to December 14. The exhibition will be open on schooldays only,

Summer Fields School

There will be a presentation about the work of Wodehouse to the boys of Summer Fields School on November 9, to be followed by two readings from Wodehouse stories with the boys' participation.

Great Missenden Library

There will be a panel display about the life and work of Wodehouse in the windows of the library at Great Missenden, in Bucks from October 8 to 21, and an illustrated talk by Tony Ring on the evening of PGW's birthday, October 15.

Geoff Hales's *Weekend with Wodehouse*

The next performance of this weekend will take place on October 27 to 29 (Sunday to Tuesday) at Higham Hall, in Cumbria. Details from Geoff

Forthcoming Publications

Everyman Publications

The next four titles, to be published by Everyman in September, will be:

Blandings Castle	ISBN 184159 119 X
Jeeves in the Offing	ISBN 184159 116 5
The Luck of the Bodkins	ISBN 184159 117 3
Young Men in Spats	ISBN 184159 118 1

Granada DVDs

The third and fourth series of the *Jeeves and Wooster* television programmes are being published by Granada on video in July and the New Year respectively. Also in July they are releasing an Omnibus video, with one episode from each series.

Penguin Classics

Following the release of *Love Among the Chickens* with introduction by Robert McCrum, Penguin Classics have now published a new edition of *Summer Lightning* with an introduction by Nick Hornby.

Penguin Audio

As mentioned in *Wooster Sauce* in March, the abridged recording by Simon Callow of *Ring For Jeeves* (ISBN 01418035670) is being released on July 25, and that of *The Code of the Woosters* (01418036730) on September 26.

Chivers Audio

The unabridged recording of *A Few Quick Ones*, read by Jonathan Cecil is being released in June. The Chivers Audio reference is CAB 2270 and the ISBN is 0-7540-0848-7.

Emsworth Museum Has a New Attraction

'I always looked on her as the best and kindest woman I knew.'

So wrote P G Wodehouse to the family of Lily, his housekeeper at Threepwood, in Emsworth, Hampshire, on being informed of her death. Lily died in 1974, and he recalled that he had known her in 1903.

Emsworth Museum is proud to have been given eleven letters covering their correspondence between 1914 and 1973. From washing the dishes and feeling homesick to tales of his beloved animals or memories of Emsworth, they are fascinating reading. Copies are now on view in the Museum.

Emsworth Museum is open until the end of October: on Saturdays and Bank Holidays, and Fridays in August, from 10.30am to 4.30pm, and on Sundays from 2.30 to 4.30pm. It is located at 10b North Street, above the Fire Station.

I SAY!

Favourite Exchanges – 22

We went down by the lake and started throwing little bits of stick at the swans and suddenly Ronnie sort of grunted and said "I say!" and I said "Hullo?" and he said "Will you marry me?" and I said "All right," and he said "I ought to warn you, I despise all women," and I said "And I loathe all men" and he said "Right-ho, I think we shall be very happy."

From *Summer Lightning*, 1929

Suggested by Thea Crapper of Arncliffe

Society Matters

The Lincoln's Inn Dinner

Tim Andrew reports

This year's Dinner will be held in the Old Hall at Lincoln's Inn, one of the finest venues in London. It was built in about 1490 during Henry VII's reign, before Christopher Columbus set sail for the New World. The Old Hall has many notable features including a wooden screen designed by Inigo Jones and in the windows the arms of Sir Thomas More (elected Treasurer of the Inn in 1511). You can take a virtual look at Lincoln's Inn by visiting its website www.lincolnsinn.org.uk

For nearly one hundred and fifty years, until the Royal Courts of Justice were opened in 1882, the Old Hall was regularly used for sittings of the Court of Chancery. It is the setting for the famous opening scene of Dickens' *Bleak House*.

We promise you a wonderful evening consisting of a champagne reception and a four course meal with wine provided, followed by entertainment, which will be, in what has become the tradition of the

New Committee Member

Paul Rush has joined the Committee, and offers the following biographical note:

I am 36 years old, and live and work in Norfolk.

I have been reading and enjoying PGW since my early teenage years, having been introduced to the books by my father - himself also a member of the Society. My particular favourites are the Jeeves and Blandings stories, both of which are well represented in the *What Ho!* anthology, which is a permanent resident on my bedside table.

I have been fortunate enough to have attended most of the meetings at the Savage Club over the last few years, to have played cricket for the *Gold Bats* in the annual *Dulwich Dusters* match and to have attended several of the formal dinners.

Cricket Match against The Sherlock Homes Society of London

The Society's cricket team, *The Gold Bats*, will play their second game of the season on July 14, against The Sherlock Holmes Society of London at the West Wycombe ground. Spectators are welcome and are advised to bring their own picnic lunches. Members who wish to play should contact

to see if vacancies in the team remain.

Society, staggeringly brilliant. Generous sponsorship by HSBC Republic Bank (UK) Ltd has enabled us to keep the cost of the evening down to £55 per head. Tickets will be allocated on a first come, first served basis and strictly limited to one per member, so unless your husband, wife, partner or significant other is him or herself a member of the Society, he or she will not be able to accompany you.

Please fill in the form enclosed with this *Wooster Sauce* and send it to Tim Andrew with a cheque for £55 as soon as possible.

Subscription Renewals

Members whose subscriptions expired on 31 May and do not pay by Bankers' Order should have already received a renewal form. If you have not yet returned it, please send it as soon as possible

If you think you should have received a form but have not done so, please contact Nick

AGM

The society's AGM will be held during the meeting to be held at the Savage Club on November 12. More details of the agenda will be given in September's *Wooster Sauce*, but any members interested in standing for election to the Committee are advised to contact the Chairman

Possible Formation of a Scottish Branch

The first meeting of the Society in Scotland was held in Glasgow during 2000. The convenor, Joe Harkins, would like to establish a Scottish Branch of the Society for members in Scotland and the north of England, with a regular programme of meetings encompassing discussions of particular books or characters, local outings, an e-mail discussion site, and possible other events such as a visit to London for a Wodehouse walk. Joe envisages the creation of a small committee of interested local members and suggests the objective should be to allow local members to 'get most out of the Society and enrich their knowledge and appreciation of Plum'.

Would any member who is interested in Joe's idea, either as a potential member of the branch or as a volunteer for the committee, please contact Joe

Recent Press Comment

Audio Times, February 2002

The newsletter for Audio Book Collection customers, no 27, featured PGW in the *Favourite Authors* series. (The November 2001 issue had shown *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets* read by Jonathan Cecil among the top ten sales titles for the period then ended.)

Forbes, February (from Jan Kaufman and John Baesch)

In an article entitled *Remembering the Oldest Member*, Patrick Cooke reminded readers about the sources of PGW's golf stories.

The Hindu, February 17

Author Shashi Tharoor wrote an appreciation of P G Wodehouse's writing in an article entitled *Wodehousean Magic*.

Newsweek, February 14

Malcolm Jones praised PGW and drew attention to the new Overlook editions (identical to the Everyman editions in the UK).

Evening Standard, February 20

An article on Alan Titchmarsh identifies PGW, Alan Bennett, and Jane Austen as his favourite writers 'who use language the way he uses secateurs'.

(The *Radio Times* of 23 February carried a letter from a listener in praise of his readings of the Blandings stories.)

New York Times, February 24 (from John Graham)

Johanna Keller previewed the Hal Cazalet/Sylvia McNair concert in New York.

The Cricketer International, March (from Murray Hedgcock)

Included an article by Christopher Sandford about Hollywood Cricket Club (*Caught Niven Bowled Flynn*), looking at the C Aubrey Smith days, in which he commented imaginatively that 'P G Wodehouse took notes from the boundary'.

The Times, March 1

Philip Howard's article on foul language and other habits suggested that they were as prevalent in the upper as in the lower classes. He claimed 'The last refugees of serial smokers are the Drones Club and

Blandings Castle. And at the other extreme, low life public bars and bingo halls.'

New York Times, March 5 (from Charles Gould)

Anne Midgette favourably reviewed the Cazalet/McNair concert in New York.

The Observer, March 31

Pointed out that the forthcoming Penguin Classic edition of *Summer Lightning* featured a pink pig instead of a Berkshire on its cover.

Esquire, April (from Tamara Schonsberg)

Referred to PGW as one of the three greatest golf writers in history (the other two being Dan Jenkins and Tom Chiarella).

The Times, April 2

A brief report on the fortunes of Internet search engine *Ask Jeeves* said that it was inspired by P J Wodehouse's manservant in the Jeeves books!!

Brisbane Courier, April 4 (from Alan Symons)

Gerard Henderson claimed that 'King George VI was not very bright; he was a real live Bertie Wooster

character out of a P G Wodehouse novel'.

The Times, April 5

Philip Howard used one of his dialogues between Bertie and Jeeves to comment adversely on the prevalence and use of the mobile phone.

Book-Case, April (from Kristine Fowler)

Book-Case is a wide celebration of comic, humorous and nonsensical writing. It chose Wodehouse as its author of the month, and quoted from an essay by Michael Dirda.

Telegraph Magazine, April 6 (from Eric Coulton)

Commented on the origin of the expression 'dish the dirt', which the *OED* attributes wrongly, it claims, to PGW.

The Times, April 12

In the 'Questions Answered' column, one question published asked if Bertie Wooster was ever really in

Daily Mail, May 18

In an long article in which he called for a plague on political correctness, Patron John Mortimer wrote:

But the weirdest, most senseless example of word abuse comes when a policeman innocently talks about a 'good egg'. To P G Wodehouse, that great master of English prose before whose books every politically correct scribbler should bow down in awe, the world is full of eggs. The good eggs are Jeeves, certain members of the Drones Club and a few well-intentioned aunts. Bad eggs are Aunt Agatha and Sir Roderick Glossop, the loony-doctor (sorry, I forgot we cannot say loony any more because it insults the mentally ill). I challenge any happy reader of Wodehouse's marvellous books to have been caused the slightest embarrassment by his use of the word 'egg'. Partridge's dictionary of slang confirms the meaning of 'egg' as a good, or bad, person. And yet whoever is master of language-twisting in the police claims to have discovered a piece of rhyming slang which translates 'egg and spoon' as 'coon'. All I can say is that I had never heard of it, and it doesn't appear in Partridge's dictionary.

POETS' CORNER

The Muse and the Motor

A Berlin paper offers a prize for the best motor-bicycle song submitted to it. The following effort, though it may fail to obtain the judge's decision, can be sung with effect in any drawing-room.

The Heavens are looking their bluest,
The dicky-bird pipes on the spray;
So put on your hat that is newest,
And let's spend a rollicking day
(with rollicking abandon)

My motor-bike waits propped up at your gates
'Neath the shade of a neighbouring (ff) tree.
So (pp) give them the slip, and come out for a trip,
Oh, come with my motor and (forte) me-e-e
O-o-oh ker-um with my motor and me.

Chorus

Riding along on my motor-bike
Oh won't we be happy, my own!
If you look, you will find there's a trailer behind:
Take care when we bump on a stone.
If it happens to spill, as it probably will,
Why, that will be fun, if you like.
A trifle so small doesn't matter at all
When you're out on a motor bike.

Hold tight to the side while we're starting.
(Yes, it always makes noises like that.)
The dust's in your eyes, and they're smarting?
Try shading them under your hat.
You are not feeling well? You do not like the smell?
Brace up. These are things which must be.
Don't (p) let a perfume cast a shadow of gloom.
O'er (rollickingly) a ride on my motor with me-e-e
O-o'er a rah-ide on my motor with me.

Chorus

Riding along on my motor-bike,
Oh, watch how the mile-stones flash past!
Concealed in the gorse you will notice the Force;
They think that we're going too fast.
Did you hear a shrill squeal from beneath the front wheel?
'Twas a dog we had happened to strike:
But a canine decease doesn't trouble your peace,
When you're out on a motor bike.

(Note - This, strictly speaking, is all. But as it is inconceivable that an intelligent audience will allow it to go on unencored, an additional verse has been written. Unfortunately, it turns what promised to be a happy romance into a tragedy, and it should therefore be sung only when, in the opinion of the singer, the audience is sturdy enough to stand it.)

Love Among The Chickens

The latest Penguin Classic reviewed

There are two particularly good things about the new reprint of *Love Among the Chickens* which has now been published as a Penguin Classic. One is that we can now easily find what has recently been an elusive early Wodehouse title: in 1906 it was the first novel which he aimed at an adult market, although of course what we have here is the more familiar 1921 revision. The second is Robert McCrum's *Introduction*, which lays out the history of how the story came to be written in the first place, and analyses, *inter alia*, how Wodehouse's first American literary agent not only claimed the copyright, but retained Plum's advance for the book, kept the royalties and later charged him \$ 250 to release the film rights. A shame, perhaps, that Wodehouse did not turn this bizarre sequence of events into a fictional plot – he would at least have been able to recover his losses from the sale. Robert's authoritative article is written with much good humour, and as an aside, it augurs well for the new Wodehouse biography is writing for publication in 2004.

Love Among the Chickens Penguin Classics
ISBN: 0-141-187-042 £ 7.99

The Muse and the Motor, cont.

This morning she sent back my letters,
Along with the presents and ring:
She freed me, she said, from my fetters;
(Bitterly) A nice way of putting the thing.
She felt that her life would be nothing but strife,
A burden and grief, she could see.
As she brutally said, she would rather be dead
Than ride on my motor with me-e-e,
Ride again on my motor with me.

This poem first appeared in the UK edition of *Vanity Fair* on 2 March, 1905.

Recent Press Comment continued

love. Replies were published on April 16, 18 (three) and 23.

Radio 4, April 15

The source of Wodehouse misquotations was the basis for a whole round of questions in Nigel Rees's quiz show *Quote ... Unquote*

Radio 4, May 8

Wodehouse was chosen as author of the week for the panel quiz programme *The Write Stuff*.

FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

July 2, 2002 – The Savage Club

Murray Hedgcock will speak on *The Australian View of Wodehousean England*. The Savage Club is in the premises of The National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London, close to Charing Cross Station, and members gather from around 6pm.

July 14, 2002 – Cricket Match v The Sherlock Holmes Society of London

At West Wycombe, starting at 11.30am. See page 21.

July 20, 2002 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Join the Chairman on one of his famous walks round Wodehouse's London. Call Norman Murphy to book a place, and to find out where and when to meet.

July 20, 2002 – Meeting at Bolton

To be held at the Little Theatre, from 2pm to 5pm. The programme will include items on the prose, poetry and lyrics of Wodehouse. Members may wish to meet for lunch beforehand at noon at Harvey's Restaurant. Local members will receive a letter with full details: others interested contact

September 14, 2002 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk
See above.

October 10 to 12, 2002 – Prince's Theatre, Clevedon, Somerset

Staging of *Summer Lightning*, adapted from the book by Giles Havergal. It is expected that a meeting of local members will be arranged before the Saturday performance.

October 15, 2002 – Great Missenden Library

Illustrated talk on the life and career of PGW by Tony Ring, at 6.30pm.

October 17, 2002 – Society's Formal Dinner at Lincoln's Inn

Advance notice of the Society's biennial formal dinner, to be held at Lincoln's Inn. This will be a black tie event, with attendance restricted to around 100, and we are planning excellent after-dinner entertainment. Ticket application forms have been included with this *Wooster Sauce*.

November 2, 2002 – Meeting at Bolton

Advance notice of another meeting to be held at Bolton. Contact Mark Reid (see above) for details.

November 12, 2002 – The Savage Club

The final meeting of the year, for which details will be provided later.

EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

James Robinson has drawn attention to a book written in Czech in 1936 by Karl Capek, entitled *War with the Newts*, about the discovery and exploitation of a race of intelligent bipedal newts who ultimately rebel against man. Remember Gussie's plaintive "I wish I were a newt."

Meanwhile in April Ceefax reported the discovery of a colony of protected great-crested newts which were holding up engineering work at Stansted Airport. They were found by engineers from London Electricity who had kept newts as children, recognised their rarity and called in the experts. (A permit from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is required before the newts can be moved.)

The traditional policeman's helmet is to be replaced by an attack-proof alternative. The new design will be tougher, closer-fitting (to the chagrin of the Drones) and will offer greater protection to the wearer.

The American *Book Magazine* in March/April included Jeeves (*My Man Jeeves*) as one of the *100 Best Characters in Fiction Since 1900*, at number 35.

Member Antonella Ruggiero has successfully completed her Masters degree at Trieste University with a thesis entitled *L'Umoreismo di Wodehouse: Analisi Delle Strategie Umoreistiche e Proposte di Resa in Italiano*.

My favourite story about the late Queen Mother appeared in *The Times*. Apparently, a lack of money caused the loss of Lucifer, her pet Berkshire pig. When their father gave it to the village fete as a raffle prize, the young Elizabeth and her brother David emptied their pockets and piggy banks, gathered their entire worldly means, and dashed to the village in the hope of buying all the raffle tickets. But they could only afford a handful, the winning ticket was not among those which they bought, and Lucifer was lost forever.