



Plum Lines

A Quarterly Publication of The Wodehouse Society

Vol 10, No. 3

August 1989

WCY + 8

If that's England's
idea of good blood,
give me Kalamazoo!*

The 1989 Wodehouse Society Convention
(Domestic Edition)
Kalamazoo, Michigan
Oct. 6-7



*Spoken by J. Preston Peters in *Something Fresh* (Methuen & Co.) p. 245.

WELCOME to the Fifth International Convention!
The Wodehouse Society
Kalamazoo, Michigan

See details on page two.

The Wodehouse Society Convention registration form

Name _____

Other registrants _____

Your address _____

I am / am not driving. (Please circle one.)

Registration fee (includes pin) \$17 per person	_____	\$_____
No. of lunches \$7 per person	_____	\$_____
No. of dinners (including pre-prandials) \$20 per person	_____	\$_____
Total remittance for registration, lunch, and dinner	_____	\$_____

The Convention will be held at Mandelle Hall on the campus of Kalamazoo College. An academic setting sprang instantly to the collective mind of the planning committee, as the Third Convention was held on the Cornell University campus and the recent Pilgrimage began at Dulwich College.

We suggest you take stock of your collection of the Wodehouse oeuvre. We encourage you to bring books to swap or sell, and we expect at least one specialist bookseller to be on hand.

Please indicate on your registration form whether you will be driving. Three weddings on the campus have forced us to have our banquet at a different venue so we'll need as many drivers as possible. (We presumed everyone would be married by June or July at the latest.)

Housing. We will send each registrant a kit containing a campus and a city map along with a list of 33 places to stay. (Some of you have already received these exhibits, having asked earlier, right after the previous *Plum Lines* was mailed.) Because the time could be quite short, here is a list of the closest-to-the-campus places to stay, so you could arrange for your quarters before you receive the kit:

Hotel The Kalamazoo Center Hotel (formerly the Hilton), Kalamazoo MI 49007, (616) 381-2130.
About eight or nine blocks from Mandelle Hall. Mention The Wodehouse Society.

Bed and Breakfasts

Stuart Avenue Inn (Five beautifully restored Victorian houses)
(3 to 4 blocks)

405 Stuart Avenue
Kalamazoo MI 49007
(616) 342-0230

The Kalamazoo House (Site of Oct. 6 reception)
(About 7 blocks)

447 West South Street
Kalamazoo MI 49007
(616) 343-5426

Hall House (One block)

106 Thompson Street
Kalamazoo MI 49007
(616) 343-2500

Advertisement

Don't miss the Kalamazoo Convention!

All the Best People - and you too!

Food, fun, and laughs!

Sign up TODAY!

A few quick ones

New members

As you can see, nearly all of this issue is devoted to an account of The Wodehouse Pilgrimage. I wondered whether to use so much space in one issue for one event, but the story is timely and I believe most members will want to read it. I've chopped the story into bite-size chunks for easier ingestion and added some drawings to break up the vast acreage of print. Most of the drawings are by Pauline Blanc, who sketched as we traveled, and I'm grateful for permission to print her work. I hope the account reflects our pleasure. As Florence Cunningham wrote, weeks after the event, "I'm still under the spell of that enchanting trip." A number of items scheduled for this issue will appear in November.

President Bill Blood has a special request. Our efforts to have PGW commemorated with a plaque in Westminster Abbey have so far been unsuccessful. A petition through the post to the Dean is a possible next step. Bill says that such a petition is being prepared, and he asks any readers who have ideas or information that might improve such a petition to write him *as soon as possible* at 82 Evergreen Drive, New Britain PA 18901.

In the May *Plum Lines* I suggested that the Society might want to purchase a copy of the forthcoming McIlvaine/Heineman Wodehouse bibliography. I was very happy to get a letter from Bill Horn almost immediately, offering to contribute \$25 of the approximately \$120 cost, for a copy "to be in the keeping of the serving OM." On the strength of this groundswell of support, I decided to contribute \$25 myself and promptly ordered a copy from Hawthorn Books. Len Lawson tells me that William McConnell has offered to contribute \$10, bless his heart. Only \$60 to reach our goal - any more benefactors out there? Latest word is that publication is delayed until next March.

Several people have sent in entries for Eliot Milstein's Great Scrymgeour Contest, some of them scornfully implying that the contest was too easy. Ha! No one has won, and a clarification is necessary: the name Scrymgeour is mentioned in *two* stories, published in separate books. In one story it is mentioned repeatedly, and that's the reference all the contestants have found. But no one has yet found the single mention of the name in the other story. The contest is still open and Eliot's golden hoard of treasure is still intact.


The Oldest Member

Something new

Len Lawson

From Shropshire, the heart of the Wodehouse country, comes word from Jim Earl of an item he saw while at Stratford-on-Avon. Way back in 1905 PGW wrote the poem "Too Much Hamlet" for the monthly periodical *Books for To-Day and Books for To-Morrow*. Somehow the Shakespeare folks at Stratford heard about it recently and put it in their pamphlet advertising a current production of *Hamlet*. You will be saddened, I know, to learn that it is too late to book seats for said production but all is not lost. You will find the poem in the next issue of *Plum Lines*.

Jim also sent me a long list of PGW anthologies published in England. Toni Rudersdorf and Charles Bishop also sent lists of anthologies, and I have added all these to my existing list, which now contains 133 titles. An SASE will get you a copy of this list.

Florence Cunningham - far and away the loveliest president The Wodehouse Society has ever had - spotted an article called "Poolside Fiction" in a recent issue of the British Airways magazine *High Life*. It deals with authors who are fun to read on vacation, and PGW is prominent among them.

My convalescence was lengthened by the Berties, Sean Harmon and David Landman of Bertie Books, who sent me a *Captain* magazine containing part 2 of *The Head of Kay's*. As the tissues were pretty well restored from my gall bladder operation, it was necessary to devour a large pizza. Then as the battle of the bulge raged down below I read part 2 with a clear conscience. I have offered my appendix for part 3.

Rhoda Robinson and Jan Kaufman pointed out Terrence Rafferty's review of *The World of Jeeves* and *The Penguin Wodehouse Companion* in the May 22nd issue of *The New Yorker*. It contains lots of good stuff.

By all means pick up Richard Usborne's *The Penguin Wodehouse Companion*. It's a combination of *A Wodehouse Companion* and *Wodehouse at Work to the End*. Richard Usborne has edited his two excellent books into one which contains an updated introduction, a synopsis of each of Wodehouse's books, chapters on each of the sagas, the text of the Berlin broadcasts and the very important much more. But Richard Usborne has proved himself fallible. He cannot count. He claims to give the plots of 92 books

when in fact he gives 93. I suppose he wanted to give us a bonus but was too modest to take credit.

Dolores Robinson has received a set of cassettes with an accompanying book called *American Musical Theater: Shows, Songs and Stars*. It ranges from 1898 to 1946 and contains 81 songs with several by PGW. The set is available from Smithsonian Recordings, P.O. Box 10229, Des Moines IA 50336, or call 1-800-678-2677. It is available in four cassettes, six records, or in CD form. The price is \$54 for each set plus \$5 shipping. Smithsonian members receive a \$5 discount.

Sharp eyed Doug Stow spotted some PGW books being used for display at a Macy's furniture store. I contacted Macy's in hopes that they might sell them to members at reasonable prices but they didn't want to sell piecemeal. So I went way out on a limb and bought all they had and now offer them to members at \$8 each postpaid. Published by Heron Books and presented in a series called "P.G. Wodehouse, Collected Works," they are bound in red leatherette with much gold decoration on the front cover and spine. The books are new but have been handled and most have a minor chip or two on the edges of the boards. Each volume contains two stories as follows:

Vol. 1 *Spring Fever* and *Pigs Have Wings*

Vol 2 *Heavy Weather* and *Service with a Smile*

Pigs Have Wings has the preface that did not appear in earlier editions and not in any U.S. editions that I have seen. I think this is good value for the money and you can probably save a marriage by buying one or both of these volumes. Can anyone tell us how many books there were in the series and what stories they contained?

The yew alleys at Sudeley Castle, mentioned on the following pages, remind me that the most famous words ever spoken about a yew alley were in response to certain footprints at the end of such an alley: "Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!"

The Wodehouse Pilgrimage

July 24 - July 30 1989

A Collective Memory

Jan Kaufman, Ed Ratcliffe, and others



Pilgrimage is an apt description of the trip that twenty four members of The Wodehouse Society made to Dulwich College, to Wodehouse's London, and to Wodehouse sites in the west of England. It was not a religious journey of devotion, but a happy tribute to a man who won our devotion with the greatest of gifts, joy.

The Pilgrimage consisted of trips to many of the places where he lived and visited, principally in his early years. Some of these places later appeared in his stories, often thoroughly disguised and under fictitious names. The originals of these fictionalized sites were tracked down and identified in a remarkable series of investigations by Lt. Col. Norman Murphy and described in his book *In Search of Blandings* (Topsfield, Massachusetts: Salem House, 1986). Lt. Col. Murphy was our guide on the Pilgrimage and references to "his book" below are to that book.

Dulwich



We gathered at Dulwich College, London, on Monday afternoon, July 24, where we were greeted by Alex Hemming, President of the Old Alleynians, offered refreshments, and assigned to our rooms in Blew House, one of the senior boarding houses. Mr. Anthony Verity, Master of Dulwich College, welcomed us at tea. After

dinner we assembled in the oak-panelled Master's Library, where Norman Murphy gave a fascinating slide talk, using his furled umbrella to point out some of the scenes and buildings he expected to show us. He urged us, when looking at modern English scenes, to make two leaps of the imagination in order to put ourselves into Wodehouse's time: ignore the motor vehicles, and imagine that everyone in the scene is wearing a hat. "Any man not wearing a hat in public before 1930 was a subject of police suspicion."

Next morning in the College library, Margaret Slythe, head librarian, described the College as it was in Plum's time, told us how he was greeted and introduced to the College on his first day, and discussed some details of his life as a student. Every hour of the day was programmed, so that he knew at every moment where he should be and what he should be doing. He was a member of the choir, and sang every day. Like all the boys, he played games with such vigor and frequency that his body, like his mind, was in excellent condition.

Then she turned us loose in the P.G. Wodehouse Library, a glassed-in corner area with Plum's desk, his Royal typewriter, his chair, corncob pipe, glasses, and many other mementos. The walls were lined with first editions - most or all of them, I believe, loaned by Barry Phelps. We were seized by a kind of frenzy. Flash guns created a small lightning storm. The desk, the chair, the typewriter, the books, the corncob pipe, every detail of the room, were photographed again and again, from every angle, from far and near, with cameras of every description. Some of us were photographed (not at all self-consciously) in The Chair, our fingers poised over the keys of The Typewriter. We swore, after touching, actually *touching*, a rare first edition, never to wash our hands again. It was an exalted moment.

Upstairs, we examined a large exhibit of Wodehouse memorabilia in glass cases and roamed at will (Margaret Slythe is a brave woman) through stacks of Wodehouse material - notebooks, theater posters, autograph letters, accumulations of all kinds - and were even admitted to a climate-controlled strong room where the most valuable library materials are kept.

Valley Fields

That afternoon Norman Murphy led us on a walk through a section of Dulwich Village, quite near the College, which became Valley Fields in Plum's books. (For map lovers, we walked along Thurlow Park Road, Croxted Road, Park Hall Road, and Acacia Grove, just west of the tracks.) So much was still there: the news kiosk where Plum waited for the latest issue of *The Strand*, the West Dulwich railroad station where he met visiting aunts, the modest residence he called Peacehaven (still with its sphinxes guarding the door) where Mike Jackson roomed, "the little gate by the railroad bridge" leading into the College cricket grounds, where a lonely Mike remembered happier days - and so much more. A No. 3 bus arrived, obligingly, from Piccadilly, just as it did in *Sam the Sudden*. We even saw two police constables on bicycles, a mode of constabulary transport common in the Wodehouse world, but now almost vanished. We photographed them assiduously and I thought of, but did not execute, the forward tilt followed by the upward lift.

Dulwich



Elm Lawn

This little tour of East Dulwich, on the wrong side of the tracks, was followed by a visit to the Master's residence, Elm Lawn, most definitely on the right side of the tracks, where the Master and Mrs. Verity very kindly gave us tea in their spacious garden. The tea included, among many other goodies, a beautifully decorated white cake with "P.G. Wodehouse / Dulwich College / 1894-1900" written in blue. The Master and Alex Hemming were resplendent in white flannels, Dulwich striped blazers, and boaters, or "barges" as Alleyneians call them. Margaret Slythe, though not an Old Alleyneian, was also resplendent in white flannels and a boater. The Master pointed out the section of the house, now gone, where Wodehouse had lived as a student. It was on the first floor (English), or second floor (American).

In the evening Professor Philip Thody of the University of Leeds gave a most interesting talk on "P.G. Wodehouse and English Literature." He pointed out that at Dulwich PGW became well acquainted with Greek and Latin, as well as English, literature, a training denied to most writers. Prof. Thody presented examples of the roots of Plum's writing in literature of the past, and discussed several peculiarly English aspects of his work. Lest you think Philip Thody is a dusty academician, you should know that at dinner preceding his talk, when he learned of our convention at a certain city in Michigan this fall, he and Brian Hemming broke into a spirited rendition of "I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo." Our meals were like that.

London

Our next day was a mad round of sight-seeing in the West End, led by Norman Murphy with typical energy and enthusiasm: Plum's residence at No. 17 Dunraven Street, where the Queen Mother unveiled the blue plaque last year; Dover Street, site of the Drones Club and of many real clubs; Berkeley Square; Buck's on Clifford Street, the original of the Drones Club; lunch at the Sherlock Holmes pub; a quick stop at Westminster Abbey to present a petition to the Dean's secretary asking that Plum be honored with a plaque in the Abbey; a special tour of Claridge's Hotel, called Barribault's in the later stories; and more, more, more. Do I sound breathless? We were.

Norman Murphy was the proper London gentleman that day: his outfit included a bowler and a tightly furled umbrella. Never mind that bowlers are rarely seen these days - Norman said that this outfit had been useful in his investigations. It gained him immediate attention and respect in many quarters where less distinctive equipment might have led to the stony stare and the closed door.

The Literary Executors of the Estate of P.G. Wodehouse treated us most royally to an evening at the theater. Not just any old theater, but the Prince Edward, where we had excellent seats for a revival of the 1934 musical "Anything Goes." The original book, by Wodehouse and Bolton, has been revised, but we flattered ourselves that we could pick out The Master's lines. With the glorious music and lyrics of Cole Porter, it was a big, bright, lavishly produced show full of laughter and fun. (It's a hit in New York as well as London.) The Executors also treated us to a coach and driver from Dulwich, and drinks (not lemonade) in the interval. It was an evening of pure delight, and we are most grateful.

We were pleased to learn that the Queen Mother, an honorary member of The Wodehouse Society, attended the play a few evenings later as part of her 89th birthday celebration.

Dulwich

Thursday was a free day on our schedule and we scattered in all directions. Some had tea at Brown's Hotel, Norman Murphy led another London tour, and others, I suppose, visited the den of the faceless fiend.



The Old Library, Dulwich College

In the evening we gathered, nothing loath, in the Lower Hall of the College for cocktails. Nearly all the stars of the Wodehouse firmament were there, but the most welcome guest of all was Mrs. Amine "Nella" Wodehouse, widow of Plum's elder brother. It was a privilege to meet her and have her with us for the evening. Mrs. Wodehouse's son Patrick and his wife Nancy were also present, having come from Rome for the occasion.

The banquet that followed was a feast in every sense: excellent food and drink, and the best of company. Duck a l'Orange and plum pudding live in my memory with particular fondness among the succession of courses served that evening. Alex Hemming, as President of the Alleyn Club (made up of Old Alleynians), was Master of Ceremonies, and began the after-dinner proceedings with the Loyal Toast to the Queen. He then introduced Mrs. Armine Wodehouse, to a hearty round of applause. Possibly in deference to Plum's dislike of long speeches, most of the speakers were brief. Patrick Wodehouse, in a few sentences, outlined the history of the family since the twelfth century, and revealed the hitherto unknown facts that Plum's favorite food was corned beef hash and that, for breakfast only, he enjoyed liberal portions of plum cake.

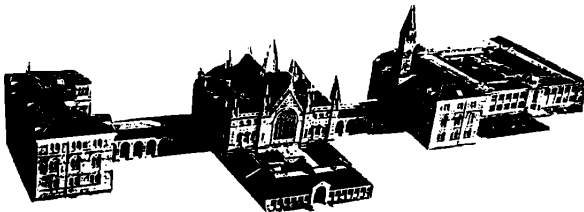
Sir Nicholas Henderson, former ambassador to the United States, said that when he was in Washington, Americans expected him to behave like that well known Englishman Bertie Wooster, while the Foreign Office much preferred him to act like Jeeves. Mr. T.J. Walsh, Deputy Master of Dulwich College, welcomed us to the College. Richard Osborne, a leading Wodehouse scholar, spoke briefly. Tony Wittome, of Century Hutchinson, the English publishers of Plum's books, announced the winner of the P.G. Wodehouse Humour Prize: Dennis Gunning's first novel *Good Stuff*, to be published by Century in October. Barry Phelps spoke feelingly on the joys of book collecting. In the midst of Benny Green's entertaining comments on PGW's contributions to musical theater (400 lyrics!) his wife, Toni Kanal, a professional actress, surprised and delighted us with skits in the character of Corky Potter-Pirbright. Phil Ayers read an amusing message from Bill Blood, President of The Wodehouse Society, who was unable to

attend, and paid tribute to the doyen of Wodehouse scholars, Richard Osborne. Norman Murphy concluded the evening with brief plans for our tour of the west of England, to begin the next morning. It was an evening of no common delight to us all.

Other guests at the banquet, in addition to those listed at the end of this account, were Lady Henderson, wife of Sir Nicholas; Mr. Arthur Bush, new president of The Alleyn Club; Mr. Roger Cordery; Mr. Joseph Connolly, author of *P.G. Wodehouse, an Illustrated History*; Mr. John Fletcher of the Drones Club; Mr. and Mrs. C. Godbold, TWS members from nearby Sidcup; Mr. Brian Hemming, Old Alleynian, TWS member, and a mover and shaker in our Dulwich visit; Mrs. Joan Hemming, wife of Alex; Dr. Richard Jones; Mrs. Charlotte Murphy, wife of Norman, and their children Helen and Tim; Mr. Hilary Rubinstein, formerly Plum's English literary agent, and Mrs. Rubinstein; Mr. Tom Sharpe, the well known humorous writer, and Mrs. Sharpe; Miss Caroline and Miss Sally Sheldon; Prof. Philip Thody of the University of Leeds; Mrs. Margaret Slythe, head librarian of Dulwich College; Mrs. Julia Field, Enterprise Manager of Dulwich College; and Dulwich students Mr. Simon Brown and Mr. Richard Ford.

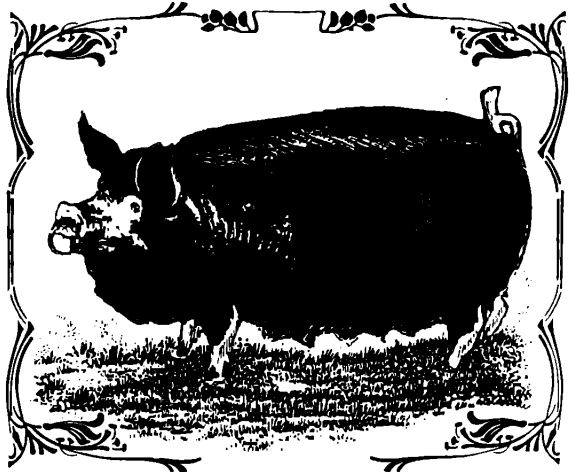
We greatly regretted that Mr. Edward Cazalet, QC, could not be with us; his official duties required his presence in the north of England that week. He is the grandson of Lady Wodehouse and one of the Literary Executors of the Estate of P.G. Wodehouse.

Next morning we presented Margaret Slythe with our gift to the Dulwich College Library, the beautiful University of California edition of *The Adventures of Hucklebery Finn*. After reluctant goodbyes to Alex and Brian Hemming and the Dulwich staff which had taken such good care of us, we boarded a comfortable coach and set off for Norman Murphy's "Wodehouse Triangle" in the west of England.



Blandings Castle (the grounds)

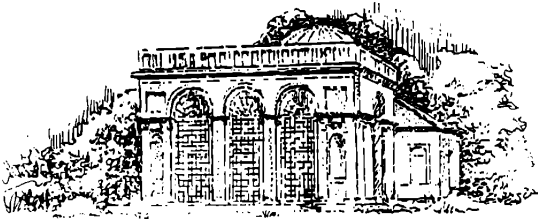
Our first stop was at Weston Park, near Telford, residence of the Earl of Bradford and clearly a Stately Home. Its grounds, Norman Murphy claims, are the grounds of Blandings Castle. Norman had done a lot of preparation here - as we got out of our coach we were greeted by the administrator of the estate, other staff members, and a number of press and television people. Eventually we disentangled ourselves from the photographers and interviewers and began to follow "The Blandings Trail at Weston Park," described in a newly-prepared brochure handed out to us. It lists the many features of Blandings Castle for which Norman has found counterparts at Weston Park: the rose gardens, the terraces sloping down to open parkland with the lake in the distance, the drive that does not go the front door, the rhododendrons in just the right place by the drive, and much more.



The Empress

One feature of Blandings was installed at Weston Park for our visit: a pigsty containing a large black Berkshire sow. We trooped back to this establishment and found the noble animal inside its house and unwilling to come out, not even in response to repeated calls of "Pig-Hoo-o-o-ey!" and the earnest persuasion of a young male press photographer wearing an intensely tweeded suit and five earrings. One of the greatest moments of the entire Pilgrimage occurred when the Empress later deigned to

emerge in all her porcine glory and let Norman Murphy scratch her appreciative back with the ferrule of his umbrella, while the intensely tweeded photographer lay at full length on the ground, in the pigsty, photographing the spectacle.



The Grecian Temple, Weston Park

In the Grecian temple we were treated to a sumptuous tea at small round tables, each decorated with fresh flowers and pink damask napkins, and loaded with cucumber and cress sandwiches, muffins served with honey from the estate, cakes, and the most enticing cream-filled scones with strawberries. There couldn't have been a happier group of people in England's green and pleasant land. Farther along the Blandings Trail we visited the boat house and lake, the gamekeeper's cottage, and much more. We lingered as long as we could in the grounds of Weston Park that glorious summer afternoon. I think this is where we felt closest to the world of Plum's stories. Surely, as Norman wrote, "this is the centre of the world Wodehouse drew - the smiling beautiful countryside he loved so much and called Blandings."



The Gamekeeper's Cottage, Weston Park

Stableford

Leaving Weston Park, Norman took us through the villages of Weston-under-Lizard (the original of Blandings Parva), just outside the estate, and Shifnal (with the location, but not the appearance, of Market Blandings). Perhaps nine miles south of Weston Park we reached the hamlet of Stableford, with its three story red-brick farmhouse known as The Old House, where Plum visited his parents while a student at Dulwich and later as a bank clerk in London. It was here, he said later, that he spent some of his happiest years. An elderly widower has lived here for fifty years. He was expecting us and invited us to walk over the grounds and examine the croquet lawn laid out by Wodehouse's father. Norman points out in his book that *Tales of St Austin's* picks up just about every village name within walking distance of Stableford.

At Shrewsbury's Lion and Pheasant Inn we were warmly greeted by TWS members Jim and Margaret Earl, who live a few minutes from the hotel. They joined us for drinks and a good dinner at the Inn, led us on a sight-seeing tour of Shrewsbury's ancient half timbered buildings, and came back to the hotel next morning to see us off. It was a great pleasure to meet them.

Matchingham Hall

On Sunday morning, heading down the Severn Valley in beautiful sunshine, we stopped briefly at the gates of Aldenham Park near Bridgnorth. In *Pigs Have Wings* "the car slowed down and slid to a halt beside massive iron gates flanked by stone posts with heraldic animals on top of them. Beyond the gates were opulent grounds and at the end of the long driveway a home of England so stately that Maudie drew her breath in with a quick "Coo!" of awe." That description exactly fits Aldenham Park, and for that and other reasons Norman believes it is likely to be the original of Matchingham Hall, home of Sir Gregory Parsloe.

Market Snodsbury Grammar School



Hanley Castle Grammar School - circa 1910

One of Plum's aunts married the vicar of the village of Hanley Castle, near Great Malvern, and Plum visited the vicarage many times as a child. The Hanley Castle Grammar School was, and is, near the vicarage. As we got out of our coach in front of the school we were greeted by the Chairman of its Board of Governors, his wife, and the assistant headmaster, who very kindly showed us through the school and pointed out the features of its high-roofed main classroom, recently restored to its original appearance with timber roof-beams exposed. It is the original of Market Snodsbury Grammar School, scene of Gussie Fink-Nottle's celebrated prize-giving. We also visited the church; we can be sure that Plum was familiar with its interior. Since learning about Plum's early visits to the village and Gussie's eventful evening, the school has invited Norman Murphy to give out the prizes at the end of term next May. I wish I could be there.

Brinkley Court

Across the main road from Hanley Castle is the appealing red-brick Tudor manor house of Severn End, which Plum transformed into Aunt Dahlia's home, Brinkley Court/Manor. It was just the house for Aunt Dahlia, beautiful without ostentation, comfortable, and enduring. The Hanley Castle vicar would have been invited there frequently, and Plum must have known the house well. Here, as elsewhere on the trip, our driver performed miracles, threading his huge vehicle down a lane meant for something much smaller, so that we could have a close look at the exterior of the house.

The Angler's Rest

The village of Hanley Castle seems too small to be the original of the town Wodehouse called Market Snodsbury, but Norman believes the town of Upton-on-Severn, a mile or so away, might well be the original. We stopped there for lunch and found the place alive with color. Row upon row of beautifully restored old steam engines, brightly polished and painted, were on exhibit in a green meadow by the river, blowing white puffs of steam into the sky. Gaudily painted boats lined the river bank, and wedding guests in colorful plumage streamed down to the water's edge for a river boat reception. Our party scattered to the local pubs for lunch. Norman believes, tentatively I gather, that the pub nearest the bridge, facing the river, in Upton-on-Severn may be the original of The Angler's Rest.

The Care of the Pig

In the hamlet of Greet, near Sudeley Castle, we paused at The Homestead, the only known home of Wippel the pig illustrator, quite likely the original of Wiffle the pig authority, whose *The Care of the Pig* gives solace to Lord Emsworth in trying moments. (See Murphy's book, 1986 edition, page 68. Not listed in index.)

Blandings Castle (building exterior)

Sudeley Castle (the building exterior only, not the grounds) near Winchcombe, is, according to Norman Murphy, the original of Blandings Castle. He points out, with considerable evidence, that the exterior of Sudeley fits Plum's description of the exterior of Blandings, the geography of the vicinity is right, and the location of Sudeley "even solves the other half of the great railroad question" discussed in his book.

We explored the building and rambled all over the gardens. I looked for Eddie Coote in the great yew alleys, double lines of towering yews forming long narrow walks in the garden behind the Castle. He was there in *Leave it to Psmith*, Chapter 12, but has apparently moved on since then. The gardens provide such romantic,

rose-scented settings that we can see why Wodehouse heroines considered that a kiss in such a situation was an engagement.



Old Granary Wall, Sudeley Castle

Passing through Cheltenham, we stopped for a moment at the terrace house in Royal Crescent where Plum's parents lived after they left Stableford in 1902.

At the Crown of Crucis Inn, in Ampney Crucis near Cirencester, we hung over the bridge railing above the tiny stream in the quiet eventide and watched the ducks and swans drifting beneath us - very olde worlde. Some of us played a challenging game in which contestants drop sticks into the water on the upstream side of the bridge, the winner being the person whose stick appears at the downstream side of the bridge first. I emphasize that only a few of us played this game - one of whom shall remain nameless because she is my wife.

Cheney Court

Our next visit, on Sunday morning, was to Cheney Court near Box, east of Bath. It's a large, dignified, Jacobean country house, yet small enough and comfortable enough to be an attractive residence. I think we were all charmed by it. Plum's maternal grandmother moved here with her five unmarried daughters in 1887, when Plum was only five, and for the next seven years it was his permanent address, his home whenever he was not at boarding school. The

place must have seemed aunt-infested to a small boy, and what is a grandmother but a terminal case of an aunt? His life at Cheney Court was reflected years later in *The Mating Season*, in which the young squire shares his house with five domineering aunts and finally turns on them at the end of the story. The novel, Norman pointed out, was not written until two years after the last of those Cheney Court aunts had died.

The building is occupied and beautifully maintained by Linguarama, an organization which teaches English to foreign executives. Its representatives welcomed us to the house with refreshments and generously allowed us to poke around the place, inside and out, to our heart's content. The interior was cozy and the gardens, the lawns, the village nestled in trees across the valley, were beautiful. Norman was beaming when he found that brass name plates had recently been installed on two rooms, henceforth to be known as the Blandings and the Wodehouse rooms.

Blandings Castle (hardly at all)

We stopped for lunch at the town of Corsham, buttoned up tight for Sunday a few miles east of Cheney Court. While most of us hunted for an open pub, a few of our group, less subject to the grosser appetites, checked out nearby Corsham Court as a source of Blandings - we know that Plum had some contact with it. Their conclusion agrees with Norman's: Corsham Court contributes nothing but "a memory of a great house looming over the countryside."

Market Blandings (High Street)

Finally, on Sunday afternoon, our coach turned back toward London, passing along Marlborough High Street so that we could see the town Wodehouse said looked like Market Blandings. (See Richard Osborne's Supplement to *Plum Lines*, August 1988.) When we reached London and went our separate ways at Heathrow and Victoria Station, I think we all felt a sense of camaraderie after this remarkable week dedicated to the artistry and imagination of P.G. Wodehouse.

The Pilgrimage was an enormous success. We visited Plum's world - the world of his childhood, so much of it unchanged, and his fictional world as well, and every moment of the visit was a joy. The companionship of other Wodehouse fans was a great pleasure, and we met with kindness and hospitality wherever we went. We extended the public awareness of P.G. Wodehouse to a considerable degree. Above all, we felt nearer to Plum than ever before.

Our group came together from just a few areas: in addition to Lt. Col. Murphy there was one member from England, Rowena McKenzie; four from Holland, Wim and Suzanne Duk and Rob and Frieda Kooy; nine from the state of Washington, Phil Ayers, Florence Cunningham, Joel and Amy Cunningham and their children Erin and Rad, Brian and Pat Cunningham, and David Taylor; and nine from California, Charles and Walter Bishop, Pauline Blanc, Shirley Harris, Jan Kaufman, Ed and Helen Ratcliffe, and Tom and Beth Wainwright. John Fletcher, of the English Drones Club, was with us throughout the Pilgrimage. Brian Cunningham, TWS member from San Francisco, was with us at Dulwich.

Media people traveled with us for part of the trip and the next issue of *Plum Lines* will include information about press and BBC television coverage.

Acknowledgments

Our first thanks must go to Mr. Anthony Verity, Master of Dulwich College, for affording us the great privilege of visiting the school where P.G. Wodehouse spent some of his happiest years and received the excellent education that fitted him for his career as a writer. The Master's welcome and the gracious hospitality extended by him and Mrs. Verity added greatly to the pleasure of our visit.

We thank the Literary Executors of the Estate of P.G. Wodehouse most heartily for their generosity and kindness in providing a marvelous evening of theater, to which P.G. Wodehouse himself contributed.

Alex and Brian Hemming, Old Alleynians, added to our pleasure in so many ways with their contributions to the planning and preparations at

the College, their thoughtful hospitality, and their excellent bar, which made beverages of all kinds available at all hours. Alex, as President of the Alleyn Club, presided over the banquet, and the cosmopolitan Brian added his own touch of fun to many occasions.

We are indebted to Mrs. Margaret Slythe for the planning and preparation necessary for our visit to the College. For all her arrangements, rearrangements, adjustments, phone calls, letters, and details, we extend our gratitude and our heartfelt thanks.

To Mrs. Julia Field and all the staff at Dulwich College who contributed to our visit, we offer our warm thanks. You made us feel so welcome, you provided such delicious food and such comfortable accommodations, and you did it with so little visible effort. You could not have been better hosts.

Lt. Col. Norman Murphy's findings, detailed in his *In Search of Blandings*, provided the groundwork for our Pilgrimage. In future years a Norman Murphy Wodehouse attribution will doubtless be considered as definitive as a Bernard Berenson attribution of a Botticelli. Norman has an immense knowledge of Wodehouse and his stories, and a boundless enthusiasm for imparting that knowledge to others. More than any other person he made the Pilgrimage the unforgettable experience it was. Norman is also the author of the just published *One Man's London* (London: Century Hutchinson), a fascinating book.

Mrs. Pauline Blanc, of the San Francisco chapter of The Wodehouse Society, was the committee chair responsible for all arrangements between The Wodehouse Society, Dulwich College, Lt. Col. Murphy, and the invited guests at the banquet. Without her innumerable letters and phone calls, extending over two years, there would have been no Pilgrimage, and we owe her a great debt of gratitude.

Mrs. Beth Wainwright, also of the San Francisco chapter, arranged our coach transportation to the west of England and our hotel accommodations in that area, not a simple or easy task at a distance of six thousand miles. Without her work, it would have been a long walk.