



# Plum Lines

A Quarterly Publication of The Wodehouse Society

Vol 12, No 1

Spring 1991

WCY+10

## Notes from Plum

I've often wondered what P.G. Wodehouse would think if he knew there were several literary societies in his honor. He made such wonderful fun of literary societies in his stories, peopling them with pompous officers and high priestesses of lit'rary exaltation. So I was happy to receive a copy of a letter from Plum in which he expressed his delight at the founding of the P.G. Wodehouse Society of the Netherlands. (That Society, as you can see by the date of Plum's letter, is senior to ours by about seven years.) Rob Kooy, fearless editor of the Netherlands Society newsletter, sent me the letter.

P. G. Wodehouse  
Rensselaerburg  
Long Island, New York 11960

May 30.1973

Dear Mr Barnhoorn.

I cannot apologize sufficiently for my delay in writing in answer to your letter, which the Watt people forwarded on to me.

I am more than delighted by your idea of founding a P.G. Wodehouse Club, and you certainly have my blessing. I hope it will be a tremendous success. I particularly like the idea of the Butler for the Year!

With best wishes and again many apologies

Yours

*P.G. Wodehouse*

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## Note from Ethel

Elizabeth Ganns sends the following letter from Plum's widow Ethel Wodehouse. The letter was written five years after Plum's death and more than three years after the opening of the Wodehouse Corner of the Dulwich College Library in London. (The Corner is a glassed-in area housing his desk, typewriter, chair, and other personal items, with a large collection of first editions. Dulwich College was Plum's public school.)

Lady Wodehouse died four years after writing this letter, still at the family home in Remsenburg, Long Island, at the age of 99.

March 4, 1980

Dear Ms. Ganns.

I was thrilled and delighted to receive the photographs you took of the Wodehouse Corner at Dulwich. How wonderful of you to think of sending them to me. I am glad your holiday was such a success and that you enjoyed it so much.

Unfortunately, I am the world's greatest invalid and rarely leave my bedroom. My greatest companions are my three dogs. I can't walk without assistance so I seldom go out. I spend most of my time in my chair watching the birds that flock around my bedroom window. They are quite tame as I put masses of food out for them.

I am deeply grateful to you for sending me the pictures. I have them by my side now as I am writing this with my secretary.

I have very pleasant memories of California. Plumie did a picture in Hollywood and we had a great time there.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Ethel Wodehouse

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# The Wodehouse Society Convention '91!

October 12 and 13  
Saturday and Sunday  
1991

## Sheraton Park Avenue Hotel

45 Park Avenue at 37th Street  
New York, New York 10016  
Phone (212) 685-7676

A block of rooms has been set aside for us at the Sheraton. A room will be \$180 per night for one or two people. Please make your own room reservations, and mention the Wodehouse Convention.

The program for the weekend has not been finally settled, but some of our speakers will be Peter Schwed, Plum's American editor, who will bring Wodehouse memorabilia, Margaret Slythe of Dulwich College, Tony Rudersdorf, Jan Kaufman, and Robert Hall. Jimmy Heineman, Wodehouse collector, Wodehouse publisher, and Wodehouse bibliographer extraordinaire, will be on hand with memorabilia and, it is rumored, an oil portrait of the Empress. That last item alone is surely worth a trip to New York from wherever you live. Norman Murphy, author of *In Search of Blandings*, and a man with something approaching total recall about most things Wodehousian, will be present from England.

The banquet on Saturday evening will be \$40 per person and will include an open ("free") bar for cocktails before the banquet.

In addition to the convention on Saturday and Sunday, we will make a trip to Remsenburg, Long Island, on Friday, October 11, to visit the home where Plum and Ethel lived for their last 20 years. Details have not yet been worked out, but it will probably take most of the day. If you are interested in this trip, inform Phil when you send your registration check, so plans can be made for transportation.

## *A Few Quick Ones*

Lisé Kartak says she is "absolutely tickled pink" about the Summa Cum Laude Certificate of Wodehousian scholarship and knowledge she received recently from James Heineman. The certificate, as you may know, is given to those happy few who fill in all the blanks correctly in the quiz that constitutes the last chapter of Charles Gould's book *What's in Wodehouse* (James Heineman, New York, 1989). The quiz is formidable indeed, the certificate is in Latin, and it is signed with the hoof-print of a gigantic pig.

Mrs. Margaret Slythe will retire as librarian of the Dulwich College Library at the end of July 1991, according to a note from Bill Blood. Margaret's plans and preparations contributed greatly to the pleasure of our Pilgrimage to Dulwich in 1989. We look forward to seeing her again at the New York convention in October.

Dorothy Sherman presents proof that Wodehousiana are permeating every nook and cranny of our culture. In *The Cat-A-Log* (Guinness Books, 1987) she finds that among the "outstanding names of winners" in the 1986 National Cat Club Show in London was Balsa Bertiewoosta.

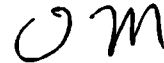
A few people have asked for the meaning of that mysterious "WCY" on the masthead. It's just Wodehouse Centennial Year. PGW was born in 1881, so this year is WCY+10.

Len Lawson was the source of the "Christmas Everywhere" article in the last issue of Plum Lines. I churlishly lost his name and could not give him credit at that time.

Rowena Mackenzie writes, via Florence Cunningham, that England is enduring its worst winter in many years. At one period she was without (modern) light or heat for three days in her village of Oldfield, Worcestershire. Her fireplace barely heated the small room in which she and her friend lived for that time. "At night," she writes, "I read P.G. Wodehouse by candlelight to dispel the gloom." What a picture: a tiny

glow in the vast darkness and cold of the English countryside, and sitting beside it, a woman reading stories in which "it is always high summer."

I've run out of "Notes from Plum" for the first page. They have been popular, and if people will send more, I'll print 'em.



The Oldest Member

Information and New Memberships  
Marilyn MacGregor

Dues Payments and Address  
Changes  
Tom Wainwright

Editorial Contributions  
Ed Ratcliffe, OM

All quotations from P.G. Wodehouse  
are reprinted by permission of the  
Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate.

She frowned. And as she frowned, she tapped her foot. And as she tapped her foot, she said "H'm!" And she meant it, too.

*Hot Water, 1932*

## Bertie Run to Earth

Norman Murphy

Norman's *In Search of Blandings* (1981, 1986) described his relentless and successful search for the originals of such things as the Drones Club and Blandings Castle. This article describes his latest find.

On a sunny day in July 1989, I stood with the Wodehouse Pilgrims on the pavement on the south side of Berkeley Square in London's Mayfair.

To the right was Berkeley Street and Hay Hill, leading up to Dover Street and the site of the Bath Club where Wodehouse located his Drones Club. A hundred yards beyond that was the original of the Drones itself, Buck's Club in Clifford Street, whose membership of wealthy young men about town was exactly as Wodehouse described.

Ahead of us lay Berkeley Square itself with Davies Street running up to Claridge's Hotel, better known to us as "Barribault's," where Ethel Wodehouse used to meet her friends for tea.

To our left was No. 47 Charles Street, once the home of Wodehouse's friend and collaborator Ian Hay, but immortalised as the home of Aunt Dahlia in *The Code of the Woosters*. A few feet beyond that was Hay's Mews, the scruffy backwater Wodehouse called "Halsey Court" and made the home of half a dozen characters.

In the far left corner of the Square, Mount Street led to Park Lane and to 17 Norfolk Street (now Dunraven Street), Wodehouse's home for ten years.

We stood in the heart of Bertie Wooster's London but there was one house I was unable to point out - the bijou residence of Bertie himself. In *In Search of Blandings* I regretted my inability to identify it but expressed my optimism. I said then (1981):

I live in hope. If I can find a factual basis for most of the London addresses Wodehouse used from his own first lodgings in 1900 to his grandchildren's addresses in the 1970s, then one day I'll find Bertie's flat as well - and the reason Wodehouse used it.

We all know where it ought to be. It is either "Number 6A, Crichton Mansions, Berkeley Street" ("Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch"), or "Berkeley Mansions" (*Thank You, Jeeves*). Berkeley Street runs north from Piccadilly to Berkeley Square; Berkeley Mansions lies at the top left-hand corner

of the Square itself. I had looked through the street directories for both but could not find a name I recognized. If it was a service flat, as Wodehouse described, then the tenants would be transitory and their names might never appear in the directories. It was possible that Wodehouse himself had stayed in such a flat, but for ten years I looked in vain.

I was in London a couple of weeks ago, in the Savage Club of which Wodehouse had been a member in the 1920s. With time on my hands, I started to look through the old volumes listing the names of candidates proposed for membership.

"Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch" which located Bertie at "Crichton Mansions, Berkeley Street" appeared first in *The Strand Magazine* for March 1922. The Savage Club entry for Wodehouse's candidature in February 1922 shows his address as - 15 Berkeley Street!

I knew I'd find it some day.



## *P.G. Wodehouse on Audio Tapes*

In our current search for Wodehouse audio and video tapes, **Len Lawson** has compiled this list of Wodehouse audio material. See also the information from William Hardwick on the next page.

BBC Radio Collection, P.O. Box 900, Slough, SL1 4JY, England. Phone (0753) 692252.

Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, with Michael Hordern as Jeeves and Richard Briers as Bertie. (ZBBC 1116/ISBN (0563) 410329) Peter Davelle of the London *Times* has this to say about the recording: "Faultless in their period detail, Richard Osborne's Radio 4 adaptations of the Wooster/Jeeves canon are uncannily respectful to Wodehouse. This should not surprise anyone since Osborne is our leading P.G.W. exegete. In my opinion, no gentleman's gentleman can clear his throat as deferentially as Hordern, and not even Hugh Laurie's Wooster on ITV (in all other respects, Bertie to the life) can manage to misquote Voltaire with such gay abandon as Brier's Wooster." [Let's have a little immodesty here: Richard Osborne is One of Our Own - our honorary president, in fact...OM]

Summer Lightning, read by Ian Carmichael, who played Bertie in a television series years ago. (ZBBC 1044/ISBN (0563) 225807)

These tapes are part of a series. A BBC flyer says that cassette packs in the series have "a playing time of up to 3 hours on high quality tape." We are instructed to use the ZBBC number in record shops and the ISBN number in bookshops. The BBC flyer does not list prices, but an American catalog (see *The Mind's Eye* below) offers these sets at \$14.95 each.

I understand that British audio (but not TV) tapes can be played on American machines without difficulty.

Books on Tape, P.O. Box 7900, Newport Beach CA 92658. Phone 1-(800)-626-3333.

P.G. Wodehouse: Selected Stories, #9902. Read by Timothy Carlton. 6 short stories (Lord Emsworth and the Girlfriend, Jeeves and the Yuletide Spirit, Ukridge's Accident Syndicate, Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo, Anselm Gets His Chance, The Clicking of Cuthbert.) 6 hours. Rental \$13.50, purchase \$48.

Caedmon, 1995 Broadway, New York NY 10023

Jeeves, #SWC 51137. Terry-Thomas and Roger Livesey play Bertie and Jeeves in two short stories (Indian Summer of an Uncle and Jeeves Takes Charge). One hour. Purchase price approximately \$10. This can be ordered from most record stores. I have seen this offered in Barnes and Noble catalogs.

Crystal Clarity, Publishers, 14618 Tyler Foote Road, Nevada City CA 95959 Phone 1-(800)-545-7475. They offer the following cassettes, each with one short story, a tea bag, and a scone recipe (no kidding!). Californians add 6.25% sales tax. The price is \$9.95 per cassette. Shipping is \$2 for 1 or 2 cassette, \$3 for 3 or 4 cassettes, and \$4 for 5 or more cassettes. The stories available are as follows:

Jeeves and the Song of Songs  
The Smile that Wins  
Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo  
Archibald and the Masses  
The Clicking of Cuthbert  
The Passing of Ambrose  
Honeysuckle Cottage  
Uncle Fred Flits By  
Gala Night

*The Mind's Eye*, P.O. Box 1060, Petaluma CA 94953, USA. Phone 1-(800)-227-2020.

Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, read by Richard Briers and Michael Hordern. This novel was published in the US as *Bertie Wooster Sees It Through*. 3 hours, purchase \$14.95

Summer Lightning, read by Ian Carmichael. This novel was published in the US as *Fish Preferred*. 3 hours, price \$14.95.

These are the same items offered by the BBC Radio Collection (see above).

Recorded Books, 270 Skipjack Road, Prince Frederick MD 20678, USA. Phone 1-(800)-638-1304.

In Defence of P.G. Wodehouse & Rudyard Kipling by George Orwell. Read by Patrick Tull. 1.4 hours. Purchase only, \$14.95

## More on Audio Tapes from William Hardwick

The following are all unabridged readings by Alexander Spencer:

Jeeves and the Old School Chum 5 short stories (Jeeves and the Old School Chum, The Ordeal of Young Tuppy, Episode of the Dog MacIntosh, The Love that Purifies, The spot of Art). 3.5 hours. Rental \$9.50, purchase \$21.95.

Jeeves and the Song of Songs 6 short stories (The Song of Songs, The Inferiority Complex of Old Sippy, The Kid Clementina, Indian Summer of an Uncle, The Yuletide Spirit, The Impending Doom). 4 hours. Rental \$9.50, purchase \$21.95.

Jeeves Takes Charge 6 short stories (Jeeves Takes Charge, Without the Option, The Artistic Career of Corky, The Aunt and the Sluggard, Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest, Jeeves and the Hardboiled Egg). 4.5 hours. Rental \$9.50, purchase \$21.95.

The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy 4 short stories (The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy, Fixing It for Freddie, Clustering Round Young Bingo, Bertie Changes His Mind). 3 hours. Rental \$7.50, purchase \$16.50.

Code of the Woosters 8 hours. Rental \$12.50, purchase \$39.50.

Right Ho, Jeeves! This novel was published in the US as *Brinkley Manor*. 6 hours. Rental \$11.50, purchase \$36.50.

Thank You, Jeeves 6 hours. Rental \$10.50, Purchase \$29.95

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Ann Whipple has just informed me of an excellent cassette she recently ordered by mail:

Buckingham Classics, Ltd., Box 597441, Chicago IL 60659, USA. One cassette containing two short stories read by Edward Duke (Jeeves Takes Charge, Bertie Wooster Changes His Mind). Purchase about \$8.50. Edward Duke is familiar to many Wodehouse fans who enjoyed his terrific one-man stage show "Jeeves Takes Charge" a few years ago. ...OM

William Hardwick in Salt, Staffordshire, one of our newest and shiniest members, has just sent me the following information about various audio tapes.

BBC tapes: William lists the two sets on the previous page (and notes that Summer Lightning is abridged), and adds a third set, The Golf Omnibus, consisting of 6 stories read by Simon Cadell. (ZBBC 1160). These 3 sets can be ordered from:

BBC World Service Mail Order  
Bush House  
Strand  
London WC2B 4PH  
England

Cost of each set is £6.99 plus about 20% for postage. They are not insured. Payment must be in English money or credit card. Phone 071-257-2575, hours 10 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm.

William rather bravely, I think, offers to copy some of his own tapes:

"I also have some other plays and readings, as listed below, and would willingly supply copies to anyone, as long as they send cassettes and return postage. [See his address in our New Members list.] The recordings in my possession are:

*The Inimitable Jeeves* read by Jonathan Cecil on six 60 minute tapes. Possibly abridged.

*Much Obliged, Jeeves* read by Dinsdale (sp?) Landon on three 90 minute tapes. Possibly abridged.

*Jeeves in the Offing* read by Ian Carmichael on two 90 minute and two 60 minute tapes. Possibly abridged.

*Very Good Jeeves* (includes four of the eleven stories in this collection) read by Martin Jarvis on two 90 minute tapes.

*Bring on the Girls* (includes ten 15 minute readings from the book) read by Robert Powell on two 90 minute tapes.

Love's silken bonds are not broken just because the female half of the sketch takes umbrage at the loony behaviour of the male partner and slips it across him in a series of impassioned speeches. However devoutly a girl may worship the man of her choice, there always comes a time when she feels an irresistible urge to haul off and let him have it in the neck.

*Joy in the Morning, 1947*

## *A Search for Amaryllis*

Bob Plunkett has a problem, and we must cluster round to help. He writes:

Do you suppose through *Plum Lines* the TWS might help me locate a reference in Wodehouse, which I'm sure is there, to "sporting with Amaryllis in the shade"?

I think there was a scenario something like this: An object (a silver cow creamer or equivalent) must be stolen from a country home. The suspicious owner hires a local bobby to protect his property. The bobby is in love with one of the local maidens. The perpetrator of the theft, who presumably is also our hero, hopes that the bobby may be lured from his duties in order to "sport with Amaryllis in the shade."

I would have said the above was part of a novel rather than a short story, but after about a year of desultory searching I've given up trying to find it other than by accident.

I'm hoping of course that one of our more scholarly members will be able to put his finger precisely on the mark. If he cannot then I'm prepared to concede that I dreamt the whole thing, which is very possible.

A situation similar to this occurs at the end of *Thank You, Jeeves*, when Sir Roderick Glossop has been stored overnight in the potting shed ("The larger potting shed, m'lord, not the smaller one," says Jeeves. "The potting shed to which I allude...") by Constable Dobson, who still guards the shed the next morning. Jeeves frees Sir Roderick after luring the constable away from the shed by informing him that his fiancée is waiting in the raspberry bushes with breakfast. But - fatal flaw - Amaryllis is not mentioned in the scenes I've just described. Nor can I recall a mention of her elsewhere in Wodehouse.

So, fellow Wodehousians, cluster round! Does Amaryllis appear in the canon, and if so, where?

## *Bertie is an Also-Ran*

Jim Earl, our racing correspondent, reports a conversation he had with Bertie Wooster, an 8-year-old whose performance has been less than spectacular lately:

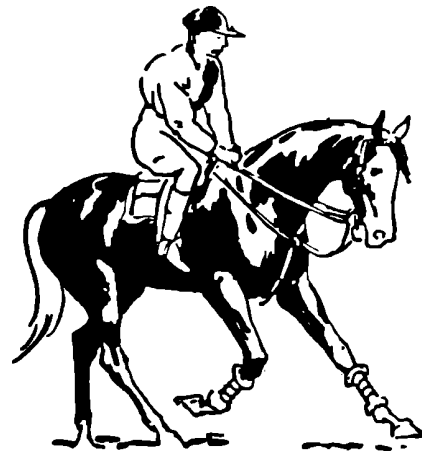
Berie Wooster finished nowhere again at Epsom. He saw me coming and tried to dodge. I said, "This is no good, old horse - I'm consistently losing money on you. Were you trying, or just at Epsom on Derby Day for the glamour of it and a possible glass of champagne?"

He shuffled his feet a bit and tried to get away, but I snaffled him and told him his many supporters were getting rather tired of making these investments which never paid off.

"To be honest," he said, "I got a bit overwhelmed being in the company of these hot shot horses - some of them cost 20 times my price - and I put it down to an inferiority complex."

"Now look here!" I said. "I want you to see a friend of mine named Sir Roderick Glossop who I am sure can help you out of any little mental difficulties you may have."

As soon he heard the name Glossop he took off like a shot and was last seen with his groom in hot pursuit, but getting nowhere. A pity he didn't shew such speed on the track.



The policeman was taut and alert, as became an officer who, after a jog-trot existence of Saturday drunks and failures to abate smoky chimneys, finds himself faced with crime on a colossal scale.

*Uncle Dynamite*, 1948



## Dues are Due!

It's dues time again, folks! Our annual dues are US \$15, as before. What do you get for your fifteen simoleons? The fellowship of kindred minds, essays by the leading thinkers of the day and answers to Life's Great Questions, such as the proper spelling of Wodehousian. I'll repeat the dues information from last issue:

(1) We ask for dues once a year, in the Spring *Plum Lines* issued early in March.

(2) Family and individual dues are the same, US \$15 a year.

(3) Please send your dues by May 1. It makes life easier for our treasurer, Tom Wainwright. Tom tends to become haggard and drawn when dues arrive late and require the mailing of back issues and the reinstatement of lapsed members.

(4) Your check or money order should be made out to The Wodehouse Society.

(5) Please send your dues to our treasurer:  
Tom Wainwright

(6) Members outside the US can pay dues in any of three ways: (a) with an international money order, (b) with a check specifying US dollars, drawn on a US bank or the US branch of a bank outside the US at which the check may be cleared, or (c) with \$15 in US currency.

Notes: An international money order can be expensive. If you send currency you must assume the risk of loss in the mail. We ask you not to send a check drawn on a bank outside the US because our banks charge huge sums to handle such checks, and put our treasurer to a lot of extra work as well.

(7) If you find a separate notice enclosed with this issue, stating that you are an honorary member, that means you have entered the ranks of the blessed and don't have to pay dues.

## Financial Statement, 1990

Tom Wainwright, Treasurer

Beginning balance, Dec. 31, 1989		\$3059.42
Income		
Dues and other charges	\$5551.00	
Interest	<u>162.37</u>	
		5713.37
Expenses		
Plum Lines (printing, copying, mailing)	\$3511.80	
Printer repair	202.20	
Correspondence with members (stationery, postage)	<u>355.64</u>	
		<u>4069.64</u>
Ending balance, Dec. 31, 1990		\$4703.15

## Is There a Muse of Dues?

Some member who name I've misplaced has sent me a poem about dues. It isn't often I come across a poem about dues, so I can't be comparative, but I'm positive this is superlative:

Dues may come and dues may go  
But TWS's leave a glow  
Or dare I say, even a giggle,  
An eyebrow twitch, a slight mouth wiggle  
I try to hide behind my sleeves.  
But it's no use - I'm reading *Jeeves*.  
What ho! My check is in the mail.  
I've sworn allegiance without fail.  
My verse may falter, but my heart is true  
To TWS and the whole crew.

Writers through the ages have made a good many derogatory remarks about money and one gets the impression that it is a thing best steered clear of, but every now and then one finds people who like the stuff and one of these was Jane. It seemed to her to fill a long-felt want.

*The Girl in Blue*, 1970

## Something New

Len Lawwson

Jan Kaufman, who seems to find at least one new item for each issue, has done it again. *Perfect Lies: A Century of Great Golf Stories* (Fireside/Simon & Schuster, paperback, \$9.95), edited by William Halberg, contains a PGW story as well as stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Updike and others.

Vic Bolwell sends information about two new UK books that include works of the Master. *The Penguin Book of British Comic Stories* (Viking, £15.99), edited by Patricia Craig, contains "Goodbye to All Cats." *The Laughter Omnibus* (Headline paperback, £4.99) includes at least one PGW story.

Len Lawson (sterling fellow!) has run across a couple of items all on his very own. Jon Winokur has compiled and edited two more books of quotations: *WOW: Writers on Writing* (Running Press, 1990, \$16.95) and *Friendly Advice* (Dutton, 1990, \$166.95), and both contain a couple of PGW quotes. These books are similar in format to Winokur's *The Portable Curmudgeon*.

The next two items would make excellent small gifts.

Redpath Press produces a series of little books called Book-Cards designed to be given as gifts. Each contains an illustrated short story by a famous author, with an envelope for mailing. One such offering is "The Clicking of Cuthbert." The price of each is \$5.95 with a minimum order of 3 books. Shipping is \$2.50 extra in the US. Order from Redpath Press, 420 N 5th St. Suite 710, Minneapolis MN 55401 or call 1 (612) 825-9154. They take plastic.

Jimmy Heineman has published three new books since last we met.

*Yours, Plum* (Heineman, \$22.95), edited by Frances Donaldson, is a collection of letters written by PGW to various friends and relatives. [Reviewed in the last *Plum Lines*....OM]

*After Hours* (Heineman, \$21.95) is a collection of talks and articles about PGW by Richard Usborne. These two books are available from International Book Distributors Ltd, 24 Hudson Street, Kinderhook NY 12106, or call toll free in the US at 1 (800) 343-3531. Shipping charges are \$3 for the first book and 25¢ for each additional book. They take plastic. If you ask they will send you a catalog of their PGW offerings which includes a few items yet to come.

*P.G. Wodehouse, A Comprehensive Bibliography and Checklist*, a long awaited work, is now available. See OM's review on page 10 for price and ordering information.

Bill Horn has come across *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley* (Oxford University Press, 1990, \$22.95) by Philip Furia, who delves deeply into the lyrics from that famous byway. PGW appears in two sections of the book.

. . . . .

Len tells me that US book-rate postage has just gone up, and is considerably higher than listed above.  
....OM

Market Snodsbury is mostly chapel folk with a moral code that would have struck Torquemada as too rigid.

*Much Obligated, Jeeves*, 1971

## The Musical Plum

Two excellent recordings remind us of Plum's theater days

Jan Kaufman and Christina Griffin report that John McGlinn has restored and recorded an excellent version of a Wodehouse musical from the 1920s. Excerpts from the *New York* magazine review follow.

For sheer musical bliss, nothing I have heard recently equals [McGlinn's] complete, lovingly restored version of *Sitting Pretty* (New World 80387-2, CD), first performed in 1924 and the last of the Kern-Wodehouse-Bolton Princess Theater musicals. The show produced no enduring hits, but I guarantee that you will be enchanted by the score's melodies and disarmed by the enchanting performance. The book's zany frivolity and Kern's richly inventive music combine in mysterious, oddly moving ways. When Horace and Dixie, sitting pretty, finally declare their love, McGlinn describes the effect exactly: "Amid all the giddiness, ghastly puns, and general high spirits, such a moment of distilled sweetness can pierce the heart. Such is the power of this gentle, silly little show.." Treat yourself.

This recording was mentioned in the last issue of *Plum Lines*, but it's so good it merits a second notice. Do not miss it. Plum wrote the lyrics, he and Guy Bolton wrote the book, and Jerome Kern the music.

Kathy Sawyer writes that if you can't get this two-CD set from your local record store, you can order it in the US by phone: 1-800-233-6357. Kathy also points out that the stock number given in the last newsletter was missing a digit; the number above is correct.

Jan Kaufman sent another page from the same issue of *New York*, recommending the delightful McGlinn recording of the Bolton-Wodehouse musical, *Anything Goes* (EMI/Angel 49848), with some comments on the problems of restoring these ephemera:

We may prize such musicals of the twenties and thirties, but their creators treated them as amusements of the moment. Full scores were never printed or duplicated, orchestral parts were seldom saved, unpublished songs cut from tryouts often vanished, and composers even lost track of their piano manuscripts. The situation exactly parallels



that of Baroque opera in the early 1600s: a popular-entertainment industry turning out novelties by the dozens to satisfy the demand, producing works that were performed, enjoyed, and casually discarded with no thought for posterity.

The Bolton-Wodehouse script for *Anything Goes* was rewritten by Lindsay and Crouse before the show was produced, so that hardly a trace of the original remained. That little was profitable, however, as shown in a letter from Plum to a friend (in *Performing Flea*) several months after the opening:

Just got the *Anything Goes* script from America. There are two lines of mine left in it, and so far I am receiving £50 a week apiece for them. That's about £3 10s [or \$17] a word, which is pretty good payment, though less, of course, than my stuff is worth.

Does anybody, anywhere, know what those two lines were?

## *The Comprehensive Bibliography is Here!*

*P.G. Wodehouse, A Comprehensive Bibliography and Checklist* is here at last, and a great many Wodehouse fans are rejoicing - dancing in the streets at this moment, most of them. For the first time PGW's output is laid before us in all its range and in considerable detail. We can never be sure that every word of such a prolific writer has been rounded up, but it's a safe bet that the great majority of his work is included here.

Wodehouse wrote professionally for 75 years and his output was enormous: perhaps 75 novels (depending on how you count them), hundreds of short stories, several semi-autobiographical works, a dozen plays and adaptations of others' plays, articles by the score, movie scripts, hundreds of song lyrics and many scripts for the musical theater.

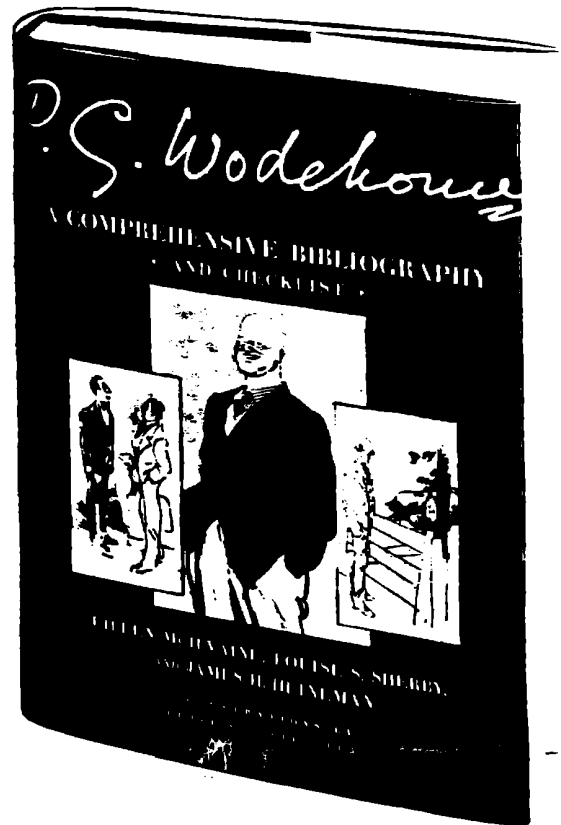
Anyone trying to find his way through this wilderness of words has had until now only a few guides to follow, all of them limited in scope. The earliest I know of are Geoffrey Jaggard's *Wooster's World* (1967) and *Blandings the Blest* (1968). David Jasen's *Bibliography and Reader's Guide to the First Editions of P.G. Wodehouse* appeared in 1970, with a second edition in 1986. *P.G. Wodehouse, A Centenary Celebration, 1881-1981*, includes a bibliography compiled by Eileen McIlvaine, the basis of the present much larger one. Dan Garrison's *Who's Who in Wodehouse* (1987, 1989) is an excellent listing and description of characters.

The book is the work of Eileen McIlvaine as editor in chief, Louise S. Sherby, James H. Heineman (who is also the publisher) and a platoon or two of researchers, gatherers, checkers and transcribers, as well as scholarly consultants. The whole crew worked on their own time, without pay. To all these people we offer our gratitude and thanks for a prodigious piece of work carried out to the highest standards.

There is no better way to show you what riches await you in this new volume than to list some of the table of contents:

Introductory Essay by Anthony Quinton, formerly President of Trinity College, Oxford, now Chairman of the Board, British Library.

Preface, P.G. Wodehouse and English Literature, by Philip Thody, Professor of French Literature and



Head of the Department of French, University of Leeds.

Foreword, *Leaving It to Others*, by Richard Usborne, Wodehouse savant.

A Bibliography of P.G. Wodehouse, Eileen McIlvaine, Editor in Chief. The entries cover 414 large pages and comprise the following sections:

Novels and Semiautobiographical Works

Omnibus Volumes

Published Plays (Including Adaptations)

Periodicals (listing 148 journals and 1765 article titles)

Contributions to Anthologies, Introductions and Prefaces (148 entries)

Translations (listing 524 titles in 19 languages from Burmese to Ukrainian, including Esperanto, and the list is incomplete)

Published Music (56 pages)

Works about Wodehouse (biographies, articles, essays, etc.)

The Dramatic Wodehouse (the stage and

## It's a major event in the Wodehouse world: our first reasonably complete guide to everything he wrote

movies; 87 entries)

Then there are sections on named editions, imitations, parodies, manuscripts, archives, correspondence, and a checklist of "a major private collection of Wodehouse material" including artwork, photographs, correspondence, theater programs, etc.

Lest you think the book is a mere set of lists, let me tell you that its 16 full-color plates on glossy stock include 133 luscious photographs of dust wrappers and covers of PGW books, from his first novel to his last, several omnibuses, and three plays. Many, if not most, of these are first editions. Only a few of his early books are missing from this magnificent set of photographs. It makes a mere reader like me yearn to spend vast sums and become a collector.

The profuse illustrations are by Peter van Straaten, than whom there is none whomer. The plum-colored endpapers carry a repeating pattern of the coats of arms of Bertie Wooster (banjo, roadster, top hat) and Lord Emsworth's family (pig, pumpkin, castle). The gray cloth binding carries "P.G. Wodehouse" writ large in his own handwriting. And the dust wrapper is gloriously plum colored.

When I try to describe this book I find myself using nothing but clichés. But even a cliché has a right to live. The book is monumental: a monument not only to Wodehouse but to the many years of painstaking research by editors who held themselves to the highest standards in gathering and checking thousands of facts, and arranging them in easy-to-get-at-able form for us, the spectators of the great Wodehouse show. The book is a classic, in the special sense of work that will not need to be done again.

"This volume," says the dust wrapper, "is directed to the scholar, the researcher, the collector, the casual reader and, not least, to the fan. . . ." Its value to the collector is obvious. (Here the Great Editor turns aside for a moment, then turns back to his audience wearing his entirely spurious Collector's Hat.)

"A couple of years ago," he says, "I picked up a Herbert Jenkins *Ring for Jeeves*. Could it be a first edition? I turn to item A74a in the new bibliography and compare my book with a description of its first English edition. The first six pages, from the synopsis through the disclaimer, agree just fine, including the vital publication date, 1953; the text page numbers and

the book list on the last page agree, and finally the description of the cover agrees: I have a first edition. I now sneer insufferably at the eight later editions listed in the bibliography and turn to fresh triumphs."

You can identify more than first editions, of course: those eight later editions are also described in sufficient detail for identification.

But the book is a great source of information for ordinary readers too, who simply want to find out what they are missing in the Master's work.

The US price of the book is \$135 - I don't have the English price. The US source is Omnigraphics, 2500 Penobscot Bldg., Detroit MI 48226, phone 1 (800) 234-1340. The English source is William Dawson Ltd, Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5EE, attention Scott Brinded. Readers who find that one source has dried up can try the other. I understand that only 1250 copies were printed. Of these, 1000 copies were made available to the US market and 250 to the British market. Many copies will surely go to libraries - better order now if you want one.

Finally, I'm happy to tell you that our Society owns a copy of this wonderful book - several members contributed to a fund for its purchase a couple of years ago. Bill Horn, one of the contributors, proposed that the book should be "in the keeping of the serving OM." Nobody has made a contrary suggestion, and since I'm the serving OM and can't bear to let the book out of my sight, I think it's a perfectly lovely idea. I use the earlier bibliographies several times a day when I'm preparing *Plum Lines* and answering correspondence, and this new book will be most useful.

We are working out arrangements to share the book with other members. Details in the next issue. In the meantime I'll be happy to copy out not-too-long items for anyone who writes or calls.



## *Charles Bishop is New Chapter President*

Once again the reins of power have passed into new hands in our San Francisco chapter. Tom Wainwright has served as president of our chapter, as well as treasurer and membership secretary of our Society, for the past two years, and has earned some time off.

Charles Bishop was chosen as our new president in a recent election that I must confess was pre-cooked: Charles was the only nominee and had agreed before-hand to take the job. (Short of picking a member at random, throwing him to the ground and stomping on his face with hobnailed boots, this is the only way we can get a volunteer.) Charles is world famous in the San Francisco area for his annual literary tea on Plum's birthday, and we look forward to a bright future under his benign rule.

## *Cowed But Not Bullied*

Mindi Reid's poem, "With a Friend Like This", appeared in the Winter 1990 *Plum Lines* with a serious typo: Mindi described Ukridge as "ever unbowed", but slips of my finger made him "never uncowed" - a most inappropriate description of that buoyant entrepreneur. You may want to correct this error by applying a little Wite-Out to the appropriate place in the last stanza. Your ever-cowed editor is simply writhing on the floor with embarrassment.

My blunder is as bad as the substitution of "not" for "now" described in Plum's poem "Printer's Error." Plum, you remember, went after the printer with a loaded gun and this ominous warning:

I know how easy errors are.  
 But this time you have gone too far  
 By printing "not" when you knew what  
 I really wrote was "now".  
 "Prepare," I said, "to meet your God  
 Or, as you'd say, your Goo or Bod  
 Or possibly your Gow."

## *More Wodehouse Societies*

Norman Murphy sends word of three Wodehouse societies to add to the two (the Dutch and ours) mentioned in the last newsletter. Norman found them listed in the great new McIlvaine *Comprehensive Bibliography* reviewed on page 12 of this issue.

### *The Drones*

New York, New York

"A group of loyal Wodehousians," says the bibliography, "who meet for three dinners a year, and possibly a luncheon about Christmas time. Their activity to date is to throw breadrolls at each other at dinner but in gentlemanly fashion. The group is not incorporated, it has no by-laws or officers, nor has it dues. No minutes are kept of the proceedings. They are distinguishable by a Wodehouse tie which is in insufficient supply. The membership is limited to twelve people, although there are no more than eleven elected at one time."

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## *New Members*

## *New Jeeves and Wooster TV Show*

I wrote to Granada Television recently, asking when their new "Jeeves and Wooster" series would be shown in England and North America. They replied on February 27, saying that "A new series of Jeeves and Wooster will be shown in England later this year but we do not at present have a definite transmission date."

As for North America, "As yet no American or Canadian broadcast network has purchased the new series, but there is still time for that."

Let's write letters and make phone calls to our American and Canadian networks - let 'em know that We Want Jeeves!

. . . . .

## Keeping a Literary Candle Burning Bright

Max Davidson looks at the growing popularity of literary societies in these excerpts from his article in the English *Daily Telegraph*, provided by Norman Murphy

Cosy get-togethers of literary folk are almost as old as literature itself, with the worst offenders being poets. If people write poetry, it is a safe bet that they enjoy reading their poems aloud in a quavering falsetto - and the only reliable audience for this purpose is other people who have written poems of their own. So A praises B's sonnets, B says A's haikus really work for him, C is roped in to make the sandwiches and, before you know it, the Stow-on-the-Wold Poets Circle is meeting on the first Tuesday of each month. It has been happening since Roman times.

In English letters, the most famous mutual appreciation society of this sort was the Bloomsbury Group. Before that there was Samuel Johnson's Literary Club. But as well as the back-scratching, these societies provided a forum for the leading writers and artists of the day to meet and exchange ideas.

Today's literary societies are very different. They are run by consumers, not practitioners, and are consecrated to a particular author....Apart from one or two ancient foundations such as the Dickens Fellowship, they are of comparatively recent origin and are proliferating fast. Since 1989 there has even been an Alliance of Literary Societies, to which some 40 societies are affiliated.

Authors who attract societies are typically dead, but not too dead. Their spoor is still fresh and their admirers can experience the *frisson* of unearthing new curiosities about them. Their birthplaces can be turned into shrines, their elderly nephews tracked down in Birmingham, Alabama, and invited to be patrons of the society.

To a particular kind of purist, all this is so much hokum. A writer's significance begins and ends with his books: it does not matter where he lived or what he did when he was not writing. Literary societies rely on the opposite assumption - that you can better appreciate, say, the poems of Wordsworth standing on a fell in the Lake District than sitting in a library in Cambridge. Better still, why not get a coachload of Wordsworthians to stand on the same fell and share the experience?

. . . . .

The perfect literary society author is associated



with some particular place where his spirit lives on and his disciples can congregate on high days and holy days - like the Brontë Society at Haworth or the Hardy Society at Dorchester.

On the analogy with groupies in other walks of life, you would expect that, the more popular the author, the more likely he was to attract a fan club. If anything, the reverse seems to be the case.

R.S. Surtees has a following and so does G.A. Henty. Ralph Caldecott is honoured, Evelyn Waugh is not. They still hold a candle for Henry Williamson in Barrow-upon-Humber, but Henry James has been quietly forgotten.

The reason for these anomalies is not far to seek. Writers like Waugh need no special sort of commemoration: they are part of our common, immemorial heritage. Why travel 100 miles to meet fellow Waugh enthusiasts at a cheese-and-wine party when you can find them on the same street?

Apart from established worthies like Dickens, Jane Austen, Dr Johnson and the Brontës, it is on the whole the writers whose reputations are the least secure who attract the most ardent support groups. What binds the acolytes together is not just their common enthusiasm, but a determination to maintain the enthusiasm in the teeth of other's scepticism.

I have never broken bread with the Angela Thirkell Society, but I imagine their get-togethers in Stanhope Avenue, Horsforth, are marked by the same quiet fervor as gatherings of early Christians.



. . . . .  
I attended the third annual dinner [of the Trollope Society], and a very odd occasion it was. People who had learnt Trollope at their mother's knee rubbed shoulders with people who could not tell a Trollope from a Daudet but were there to lend tone to the evening.

. . . . .  
It was a black-tie affair and the venue was the library of the Reform Club. The whole effect was of the Establishment honouring one of its own. You could not imagine a Lawrence or an Orwell being fêted in quite the same way.

Any hopes I had of enjoying myself were dashed when I consulted the seating-plan and found myself sitting opposite Graham Greene. The effect was rather like being told by one's secretary that God was on the line and would hold. It turned out to be the great man's nephew, but the damage had been done.

When the woman on my right introduced herself as a Trollope - a great-great-great-niece, if I counted correctly - my retort, that I was delighted to make her acquaintance as some of my best friends were trollopes, nose-dived. Then came an even more bizarre episode as I was leaving.

A middle-aged man considerably the worse for drink approached me on the steps of the club. "Do tell your uncle how much I enjoyed his last book," he whispered, and disappeared into the night.

I hope Trollope laughed.

. . . . .  
Most societies are very modest affairs. They boast a couple of hundred members, if that, and are run by a harrassed secretary sending out dog-eared mailshots from a three-bedroom semi in Nuneaton. If the secretary goes under a bus, and there is no replacement waiting in the wings, the society folds. It is as simple as that.

What keeps the show on the road is not the author's books, but the envelope-stuffers at the grass roots. Christopher Dean, the energetic secretary of the Dorothy L. Sayers Society, is a case in point. There would be a Dorothy Sayers Society without Dorothy Sayers: without Christopher Dean, it would be impossible. He is the *ne plus ultra* of envelope-stuffers.

The Society relies on the notion that Sayer's fictional detective, Lord Peter Wimsey, was a real person. Conferences are organised on this basis, trips to France undertaken, scholarly articles circulated.

When I caught up with the society, it was having lunch in the Randolph Hotel, Oxford, to mark the 55th anniversary of Lord Peter's engagement to Harriet Vane. All very odd.

This sort of *jeu d'esprit* is notoriously hazardous. It is like wearing paper hats at a Christmas party: everyone can suddenly come to their senses with a jolt and feel the sadness of the world wash over them. What you must have is someone who puts on his hat first and, by force of personality, sustains the general levity. In this rôle, Christopher Dean was consummate.

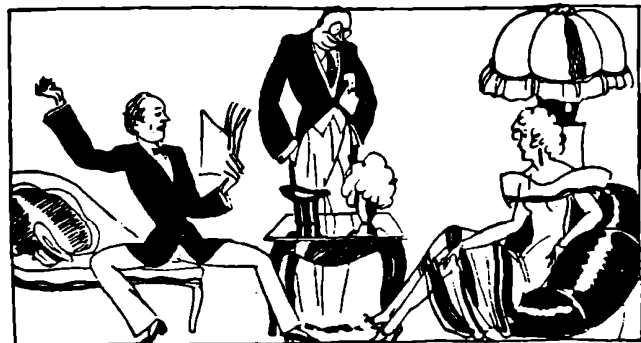
He led the make-believe about Wimsey and the rest followed like lambs. I could see the guest of honor, the Master of Balliol, looking about him with a bemused air, but everyone else revelled in that gently eccentric world which is the Englishman's second home.

. . . . .  
The presence of such diverse human types [at the lunch] was indicative of another quintessentially English characteristic on which literary societies thrive: the reliance upon institutional frameworks for social contact. We are a nation of joiners, paradoxically, because we are a nation of deaf-mutes.

Imagine an Englishman with an enthusiasm for Gerald Manley Hopkins. Does he tell his friends? Of course not. Does he confide in his neighbors? Not on your life. He consummates his passion at dead of night under a 40-watt bedside lamp, and only when he reads about the Gerald Manley Hopkins Society in a newspaper does he start to share it.

Once he has crossed that Rubicon, though, a whole world opens up to him. The range of activities offered by literary societies is considerable: everything from laying a wreath with the George Eliot Fellowship to trekking around Jordan on a camel with T.E. Lawrence Society.

He can join members of the Lewis Carroll Society for a talk on "The Chesire Cat and the Stabilised Retinal Image", or toast Thomas Hardy at a pub supper with the apple-cheeked villagers of Melbury Osmon. He can even dress up as a fairy at the Tolkein Society's annual Oxonmoot.



## *For One Night Only*

P.G. Wodehouse

I met him in a crowd:  
 As if with care 'twas weighted,  
 His shapely back was bowed,  
 His brow was corrugated.  
 I asked him "Why so pale?  
 What grief you soul has cankered?"  
 And gleaned his painful tale  
 Over a friendly tankard.

"Once," the sad wight began,  
 I knew not what the blues meant:  
 I was a genial man,  
 And never shirked amusement.  
 I shot, I rode, I rinked,  
 I trod the mazy measure:  
 My life, to be succinct,  
 Was one long round of pleasure.

In those delightful days,  
 I do not mind confessing,  
 That, if I had a craze  
 It was for perfect dressing.  
 One night - it serves to show  
 How *labor omnia vincit* -  
 I tied a perfect bow:  
 I've not been happy since it.

I worked with watchful eye,  
 With fingers swift but wary:  
 It seemed a decent tie,  
 But not extraordinary.  
 But when at length I gazed,  
 To put the final clip in,  
 I staggered back, amazed,  
 Ejaculating 'Rippin'!

Oh had I but the pen  
 That serves the inspired poet,  
 I'd try to picture, then,  
 (With proper force and glow,) it  
 The billowy waves of white . . .  
 The folds . . . The spick-and-span knot . . .  
 Were I a bard, I might;  
 But, as it is, I cannot.

Suffice it to observe  
 That on minute inspection  
 It showed in every curve  
 The hall-mark of perfection.  
 The sort of tie which you  
 When wrapped in sweetest sleep oc-  
 Casionally view:  
 A tie to mark an epoch.

That night no peer I owned,  
 I carried all before me.  
 Society" - he moaned -  
 "United to adore me.  
 Whenever I passed by,  
 Men stopped their conversation,  
 Drank in that Perfect Tie  
 In silent adoration.

Since then the striking feat  
 (Such dreams th' ambitious male lure)  
 I've striven to repeat:  
 Result: completest failure.  
 Though toiling, as I say,  
 As much as blood and flesh'll  
 The bows I tie today  
 Are good, but nothing special.

So now my fellow-man  
 I shun, no matter who 'tis:  
 As far as mortal can,  
 I cut my social duties.  
 I seldom eat or rest,  
 I'm gloomy, haggard, mirthless,  
 To one who's known the best,  
 All other things are worthless."

. . . . .

Jay Weiss found this poem in a 1919 *Vanity Fair*. It brings to mind the immortal exchange:

Bertie (in a dither): "What do ties matter at a time like this?"  
 Jeeves: "There is no time, sir, at which ties do not matter."