



Plum Lines

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WCY+10

The Wodehouse Society Convention '91!

Sheraton Park Avenue Hotel
45 Park Avenue at 37th Street
New York City, New York 10016

October 12 and 13, 1991
Saturday and Sunday
with a trip to Remsenburg
Friday October 11

I've been to two Wodehouse conventions, and I've never had so much fun on a weekend anywhere else. Hock the family jewels and come! See page 13 for more information. OM

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Young Men with Notebooks

P.G. Wodehouse

Reprinted from *Cavalier* magazine, December 1964

Plum was not fond of critics, as readers of his letters know. His opinion of interviewers was hardly better, as shown in this article provided by Len Lawson.

When you are getting on in life, as I am, you have a tendency to look back over the years and you have regrets, not so much for what you have done, but for what you have left undone, and, as I sit in my inglenook mumbling over my clay pipe, I think what I regret most is that I did not murder more interviewers. A few are buried in my garden, but you should have seen the ones that got away.

Evelyn Waugh is the only litterateur I know who is capable of dealing with these notebooked young men as they should be dealt with. He just throws them out. I lack his splendid courage. When one of them calls on me, I wear the mask and no doubt give the impression of being suave, but my thoughts are black. Down on Long Island, where I live, there is a species of tick which crawls up your trouser leg and sucks your blood. I have seldom met an interviewer who could not have passed himself off as one of them and no questions asked. Bless my soul, what illegitimate offspring and sons of bachelors they are, to be sure. Is there any hope, I wonder, that they will all choke on fish bones?

You can rely on this description being correct, for I am a man who knows. I was once an interviewer myself, and I can assure you that I impressed everyone I met in just this way. They must have heartily disliked my internal organs. I was working for a London weekly paper which ran a page entitled "The Bravest Deed I Ever Saw" and I got a small sum for going about asking celebrities what was the bravest deed they had ever seen. "What was the bravest deed you ever saw?" I would say, and then sit looking at them like a sheep looking over a hedge. And, as hardly any of them had ever seen a brave deed, and conversationally I had shot my bolt, long silences ensued, and they were relieved when I rose to go. They were all very nice to me except Winston Churchill, who very wisely refused to see me, but I

must have ruined their day.

Still, they had at least the satisfaction of knowing that whatever I wrote about them, it would not be mordant and satirical. The mordant interview is a modern product. In the old days a celebrity could be sure that when any member of the Jukes family intruded on his privacy, whatever appeared in print would be highly complimentary. None of that business you have today of making a monkey out of the man.

We were reverent then and treated celebrities as celebrities. We featured their noble brows and calm steady eyes and would not have dreamed of calling attention to their thinning hair and bulging abdomens. But modern interviewers seem to look on a celebrity as if he were a book sent to them for review. People are always coming up to me in the street and saying "Hello there, Wodehouse. Don't you wish you were a celebrity?" and my invariable reply is "No, Smith or Jones or Johnson (if it happens to be Lyndon Johnson), I do not."

For even if, as sometimes happens even today, the interview is complimentary, what does the celebrity get out of it? Not a cent. He is supposed to be compensated for giving up a working afternoon by a few kind words scattered here and there.

"He looks like a debonair magician, quick and agile, in his fashionable suit of gray and elegant black patent-leather shoes."

That was what the London "Daily Express" said about Cecil Beaton when they interviewed him. A poor substitute for hard cash.

And it was an important interview, too, for in it Mr. Beaton revealed for the first time the sensational facts in connection with his visit to the chateau where he had been staying in the wine country of France.

"Summer had come," he said (Exclusive), and I found the atmosphere most stimulating. We had an amusing dish for dinner, a delightful creamy mixture

of something I can't quite remember, but I recall truffles in it."

All that free! The circulation of the "Express" shot up. The interviewer had her salary doubled. But what was Mr. Beaton's cut? All he got was the passing gratification of seeing himself described as a debonair magician in black patent-leather slippers. Does that pay the rent? It does not. You can wear black patent-leather slippers until your eyes bubble, but the landlord still wants his so much per each week.

Recently, however, there have been indications that better times are coming. The name of John Harrington is probably not familiar to my readers, so I will explain that he is director of sports at a Chicago broadcasting station, and the other day he received a stunning blow. He is still walking around in circles, muttering to himself, and the mildest of the things he mutters is "Bloodsuckers! Bloodsuckers!"

What happened was that he wanted to interview some members of the Kansas City Athletics baseball club and was informed by them that they would be charmed if he would do so, provided he unbelted \$50 per member, cash in advance. No 50 fish, no interview. It was a new experience for him, and he is living it deeply and fully, like a character in a Russian novel.

And then there was the case of Mr. William (Bill) Terry, former manager of the New York Giants. Some magazine wanted to do a piece about him, and a representative duly arrived at his address.

"Where were you born, Mr. Terry?" he asked, starting to get down to it.

A wary look came into Wm's face.

"Young fella," he said, "that information will cost you a lot of money."

That ended the love feast.

But though I raise my hat to those Kansas City athletes and bow respectfully to Mr. Terry, approving of this resolve on the part of the celebrated to get in on the ground floor and make a bit, I am not blind to the fact that there is a danger of the whole thing becoming more than a little sordid. At first, until a regular scale of prices is set up and agreed to by both contracting parties, one foresees a good deal of distasteful wrangling.

Let us suppose that you are a young man named .



. . . what shall we say? . . . well, make it Elmer Quackenbush . . . and you have just won the raw-egg-eating championship by getting outside 24 raw eggs in 14 minutes. Next day the Press calls upon you.

"Tell me, Mr. Quackenbush, how did you do it?"

"I ate twenty-one eggs in twelve minutes, and then I ate another three, making twenty-four in all."

"Very interesting. Could you describe your methods?"

Well, I ate the first egg, then I ate another egg, then I ate another egg, then I ate another egg, then . . . but just a minute. What were you thinking of paying for the Quackenbush story?"

"Fifty dollars?"

"Make it a hundred."

"Shall we call it seventy-five?"

"It depends. Are you going to refer to me as stumpy, balding, and spectacled and say that my clothes don't fit and that I need a shave?"

"Certainly not. Something on the lines of a debonair magician, quick and agile, was what I had in mind."

"Yes, I like that."

"Adding that success has not spoiled you."

"Excellent. I don't mind knocking off five per cent for that."

The Work of an Instant

"Or ten?"

"No, not worth ten."

"Very well. And may I say that you did it for the sake of the wife and kiddies?"

"Not for anything under the level hundred you can't."

You see what I mean? Sordid. These negotiations are best left to one's agent. I have instructed mine to arrange for a flat payment of \$60, to be upped, of course, if they want to know what I had for dinner at that amusing chateau in the wine country.



Pipe Organ Builders Galore

Paul Pickerill, in England, contributed a letter to *Plum Lines* recently, and I added a note saying that he was surely the only pipe organ builder among our members.

Now I hear that Peter Jewkes, one of our new members in Australia, is also a pipe organ builder. He joined not knowing that Paul was a member. More than that, he describes himself as a "friend and former employer" of Paul Pickerill. A remarkable coincidence.

Is there something about pipe organ building, I wonder, that impels pipe organ builders to join our tiny group? There are very few of them - there are very few of us. And here we are together. It's a mystery only Jeeves could solve.

In any case we are most happy to have Peter and Paul with us, and we hope to stay in tune till the last echoes have died away.

A man who wore a tie that went twice round the neck was sure, sooner or later, to inflict some hideous insult on helpless womanhood. Add tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses, and you had what practically amounted to a fiend in human shape.

"Best Seller," *Mulliner Nights*, 1933

Dan Garrison writes:

In *Homage to P.G. Wodehouse* (p. 11), Richard Usborne records his effort to trace the phrase "was the work of an instant." I can now add something to the history of that phrase, as used for example by Gally when he confesses putting the Empress in Vee Wedge's bedroom in *Full Moon*: "To whisk the Empress from her sty and put her in the forefront of the battle was with me the work of an instant." The phrase goes back to the 1742 Charles Jarvis translation of *Don Quixote* (I 8): "This invocation [of Dulcinea del Toboso], the drawing of his sword, the covering of himself with his buckler, and rushing with frenzy on the Biscayan, was the work of an instant." This version went through some 99 printings between 1742 and 1933, becoming one of the standard translations. A later translator, Henry Edward Watts, remarked in a note to his own 1888 translation "This is probably the first appearance of this familiar locution, of so much use to writers from that time to this, in novels of one, two, and three volumes." The "familiar locution" is in the original *El decir esto, y el apretar la espada, y el curbirse bien de su rudela, y el arremeter al Vizcaino, todo fue en un tiempo.*

.....
Jane Austen used the nearly identical "the work of a moment" in Darcy's letter to Elizabeth Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*, 1813....OM

Dues are Still Due

Tom Wainwright, our treasurer, reports that quite a few members have forgotten to pay their dues. We love you, but love doesn't pay the postage. Check your records and if you haven't paid up, let Tom hear from you soon, please. It costs money to send out reminders.

Antidote

John Hoppe writes:

I would like to make a suggestion to any Society members who have been suffering from organized [American] sports burn-out. Being a devoted baseball fan for many years, the contract squabbles, drug and alcohol problems, legal entanglements and the like had really depressed me, even to the point of making me not care whether I played softball this spring. After moping for a few days I found the solution. I pulled my copies of *The Pothunters and Other Stories* and *The Gold Bat and Other Stories* from their revered places on the bookshelf. In less time than it takes to write, the sport was back in sports for me and I went cheerfully and confidently into softball season. I still didn't play well - I never do - but I had fun. The preceding is a prescription which I heartily recommend to anyone suffering from the same complaint.

Picture That!

Elliot Milstein asks for our help in *The Adventure of the Missing Portrait*:

In celebration of PGW's 90th birthday, my father painted his portrait and sent it to him as a gift. He received a nice note back from PGW (now framed and in my father's possession) in which PGW states that the portrait "hangs in a place of honor." I have always kidded my father that this was a euphemism for "attic."

When we heard that the recreated study at Dulwich had a portrait we got very excited, but a report from my friend Curtis, who had been there, that it was not the same painting, dampened our spirits. Since that time we have wondered where the thing ended up. If it is, in fact, in someone's attic, I would like to get it back - it was a pretty good picture. Naturally if it is being enjoyed by its present owner, by all means let them continue to enjoy it. In any case, it would be nice to know who has it and especially what that "place of honor" really was. Can anyone help, do you suppose?

.....

The Ickenham System

Tony Ring writes:

The PGW play "Good Morning Bill" was recently very successfully produced at Newbury, Berkshire, England. My family and I attended the last performance, and as we left the theatre we overheard a conversation between two men which went something like this:

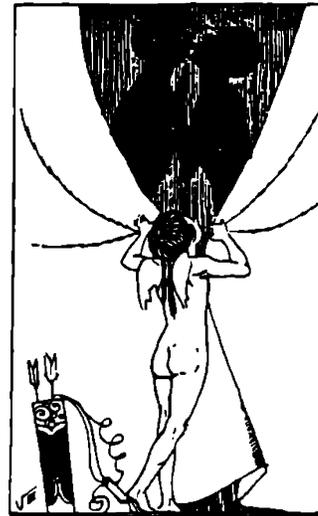
Character A (a hairy Scot, aged 20-ish): Do you know what, I found that play so sentimental that I proposed twice during the performance.

Character B (a young man of more traditional appearance but uncertain nationality):.....

Character A: Pardon?

Character B: I was speechless.

From the subsequent actions of the Scotsman and, presumably, the recipient of his overtures - which actions looked like an application of the Ickenham System of Wooing, involving clasping the lady to the bosom, showering kisses on the upturned face, and saying "My mate" - we assumed the Scot was accepted.



New "Jeeves and Wooster" Series on British TV

"Fry and Laurie are quite perfect"

Reviews of the second series of Jeeves and Wooster shows on British television are arriving, and the verdicts are highly favorable. Alex Hemming sends the following from the *Times* of London, via Pauline Blanc:

I was unenthusiastic about Stephen Fry as Jeeves and Hugh Laurie as Bertie last time out. Jeeves seemed to be too young, and Wooster too old. They are now beginning to grow on me, however, possibly because, as with all great writers, familiarity with what was written for the page, rather than adapted for the stage, is the key element.

So Fry and Laurie, I now think, are quite perfect, and Dennis Price and Ian Carmichael have been expunged from memory. Carry on, Wodehouse.

Elsewhere in the same paper reviewer Lynne Truss has further compliments:

Jeeves and Wooster (Granada) returned for a new series last night with a much-truncated version of *The Code of the Woosters*. Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie are now immovably identified with the roles, having quickly banished any vestigial thoughts of Dennis Price and Ian Carmichael. Laurie is such a good interpreter of Wodehouse that he doesn't seem to be interpreting at all. If he were ever down on his luck, he could tour the country, giving readings.

I grieved for the missing bits of *The Code of the Woosters* - Fink-Nottle's leather notebook, the episode of the policeman's helmet. However, adapter Clive Exton cleverly made amends by introducing some nice new material, including a sepia scene at the decorous club for butlers - the Junior Ganymede in Curzon Street. While the butlers swapped progress-reports ("My man is coming along quite nicely"), one half expected to see Kazuo Ishiguro in the shadows of this brown study, making notes for *The Remains of the Day*.

Meanwhile, over at the *Daily Mail*, Jeannette Kupfermann found much to praise, as these excerpts, forwarded by Christina Griffin, show.

For some reason we never tire of our upper classes - for entertainment, that is. Nor do the Americans. The popularity of LWT's excellent series has shown that we have an enduring fascination with that world which represents perhaps the last bastion of

tradition....an England of country houses, village halls, egg and spoon races and Sporting Times; where London could be summed up in half a dozen restaurants and clubs like the Carlton, Ritz or Ciro's.

A world in which misogyny was not only respectable but institutionalized in schools, universities, and especially clubs like the Drones, where overgrown boys got up to their eternal japes and wheezes. If these men could produce heirs without women, they would.

Clive Exton, in his excellent adaptation, has firmly resisted going over the top and making Bertie nothing more than a gormless eccentric and Jeeves an oleaginous, obsequious robot. Exton's script - which follows the Wodehouse dialogue, if not the plots, very closely - is a marvel of economy, every line betraying the character's inner essence.

"Wish I had a daughter: wonder what the procedure is?" sighs Bertie, while Jeeves says he has promised himself "a quiet evening with an improving book." Only the upper classes are allowed to be stupid.

Jim Earl, who provides so much good material from the English press for our enjoyment, has sent along, via Pauline Blanc, two items about the series from *TV Weekly*. Summaries follow.

What the Butler Said

Ivor Spencer, head of the UK's world-famous School for Butlers, has some professional comments about Jeeves and Wooster of the TV series.

Ivor, who has trained nearly 150 butlers over the last decade, has every sympathy for Stephen Fry who plays Jeeves.

"The qualities we most admire in Jeeves should be the aim of every good valet - honesty, loyalty and discretion. But Wooster really does try his patience to the limit. Jeeves is a long-suffering man but he never loses his cool. He is utterly devoted to Wooster.

"And devotion is very much a part of his job. It's all about love and care and affection for one's master. He may not be paid the earth for his trouble but his relationship with his master more than makes up for the lack of salary.

Bibliography is Available

"He's a good valet and can be cunning at times - only in the best interests of his employer, of course. But he would never be dishonest or cook the books on his expenses. He is friendly but never familiar.

"I watched the first series and it strikes me that Wooster is one of the world's most impossible bosses. Jeeves is like a mother and father to him. He has to anticipate his every move, helping him out of scrapes all the time.

"Wooster is an endearing chap but rather helpless. The man's got no common sense at all."

Hugh Laurie (Bertie) and Stephen Fry (Jeeves) were asked for their views on playing these parts.

Hugh Laurie said: "It was particularly worrying to be asked to play the part because Wodehouse's adorners all have an image of Wooster's world in their heads. There is always the possibility that anyone who plays them might ruin that image."

Stephen Fry said: "One of the problems with Wodehouse is that there are so many really devoted fans that the terror of getting it wrong was very great. It's interesting to note that Wodehouse wrote Wooster for Americans. Somehow they all imagine English people as having a butler and wearing tweed suits.

An "image" of Wooster's world is just what I do not have. The whole Wodehouse world is a world of words for me. I have no mental image of Bertie at all, and I'm quite happy without one - Bertie exists in words. Any illustration of a Wodehouse story is an intrusion. I don't feel this way about any other writer's work.

Note to American readers: Have *you* called or written your local PBS station, asking - nay, demanding! - that they show the series this year?
....OM

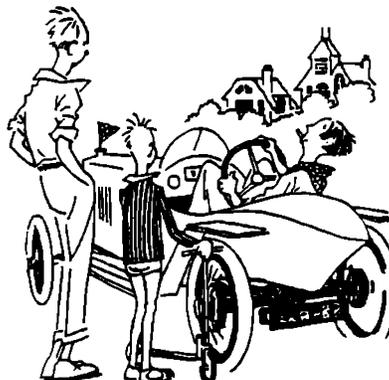
Our Society has bought a second copy of the excellent new Wodehouse bibliography edited by Eileen McIlvaine and reviewed in the last issue of *Plum Lines*. The first copy, paid for by several members, will live with me as a reference while I continue as OM. Our second copy lives with our librarian, Phil Ayers, and can be loaned to any member of the Society for a reasonable period. Phil's address is P.O. Box 631, Freeland, Washington 98249. Phone (206) 221-8854 evenings and weekends.

No Amaryllis

Wanted: Shepherdess fluent in Latin

As faithful listeners will remember, we left Bob Plunkett in our last episode uttering his *cri de coeur* for Amaryllis. Bob was fairly sure that the phrase "sport with Amaryllis in the shade" occurred somewhere in Wodehouse, but his search had been fruitless and he turned to us for help.

That issue of *Plum Lines* had hardly been deposited with the U.S. Postal Service before Ann Whipple phoned, reminding me that the phrase is from Milton's "Lycidas." (It occurs, as you doubtless recall, when Milton asks whether it wouldn't be better to have fun with his girl friend than to herd sheep and think about poetry. Any man who can ask a question like that...!) Except for that response from Ann, I've heard nothing. The score to date is Milton 1, Wodehouse 0.



The Great Cricket Year

Cricket, as every self-respecting Wodehouse fan knows, was a most important game for P.G. Wodehouse. He was on the First XI at Dulwich, his public school, and was an enthusiastic fan and supporter of the Dulwich team to the end of his long life. In his fifties, a famous and highly paid writer, he made trips across the Channel from his home on the French coast to see the Dulwich matches and write accounts of them for the school paper. It was just then that the Dulwich team earned its greatest glory: the 1938 team won every match of the season.

Seven surviving members of the team held a fiftieth reunion at the school on May 28, 1988. An account of the reunion, published in *The Old Alleynian*, was kindly sent to me by Alex Hemming, an Old Alleynian himself. The account noted that Alan Shirreff, captain of the team, ended his reunion talk "by producing a letter sent to him by P.G. Wodehouse, who congratulated the side on their achievement and enclosed a five pound note for the team to enjoy themselves! It is now history that that is exactly what we did: we had a meal and went to the London Palladium."

Alex sent me a copy of that letter last year, and I now print it for you - hanging my head and shuffling my feet a good deal over the delay. The letter demonstrates Plum's detailed knowledge of Dulwich cricket.

14. ERESBY HOUSE,
RUTLAND GATE, S. W. 7.
KENSINGTON 0071.

July 12, 1938

Low Wood
Le Touquet
France

Low Wood
Le Touquet
France

July 12, 1938

Dear Shirreff,

Congratulations on your great season, and on your bowling against Tonbridge. What a shame the Mill Hill match was not played. We would have been bound to have won and you would have beaten the 1921 record.

Who will be staying on next season to keep it up while you are getting your Blue at Cambridge?

I wish I could have got over for the Tonbridge match, but it was blowing a gale and I couldn't face the crossing.

I enclose a purse of gold for you to buy bats with, by way of celebration. Good luck vs the Foresters.

[Signature]

P.G. Wodehouse

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I enclose a purse of gold for you to buy bats with, by way of celebration.

Good luck vs the Foresters.

Yours

P.G. Wodehouse

Toowoomba Triumphant!

Alex Hemming notes that his friend Shirreff did indeed win his Blue for cricket at Cambridge a year later. Plum's letter of congratulations to him on that occasion follows.

June 7, 1939

Golf Hotel
Le Touquet
France

Dear Shirreff,

I was delighted to read in this morning's Times about your Blue. I have been following your progress with terrific interest from the start of the season. I had an idea that that steady three wickets per innings would do the trick sooner or later. Now all you need is a couple of centuries to put you in the vein for Lord's.

This will probably necessitate the purchase of a series of bats, so I am enclosing a contribution towards it, with my best wishes.

I am going over to England on the 16th to see the Brighton match, and hope to be able to stay for the O.A. game on the following Saturday. I suppose you will be there.

I hope this means that you will be captain in 1941. It will be marvellous having three captains in eight years.

Yours sincerely

P. G. Wodehouse

Wodehouse's hope of a team captaincy for Shirreff at Cambridge was cut short by World War II. Shirreff joined the RAF and rose to become a Squadron Leader. "Alan was a superb cricketer," writes Alex, "and captained the RAF and Combined Services teams and later played for Kent. A great character that PGW would have admired."

Cricket is played occasionally even on the western edge of the United States of America: a dozen or so members of our San Francisco coven attended a cricket match on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in June almost within sight of the Golden Gate Bridge. We wanted to learn about the game because of our interest in the stories of P.G. Wodehouse, as we explained to several other spectators who were, as it turned out, Australian. (Our speech was perfectly normal, but we noticed that they all talked funny.) They were parents and supporters of the Toowoomba Grammar School cricket team from Queensland, returning home from a sight-seeing tour of England and several matches with English teams.

The Toowoomba team, boys from 15 to 17, was playing the Marin Cricket Club (MCC!) that afternoon. We asked the Australians *hundreds* of questions about the rules, the positions, the ball, the bat, the shoes, and that mysterious activity out on the field. By the end of the match we were, if not expert, at least able to read Plum's school stories with far more understanding. We are indebted to our Toowoomba friends for their patience and kindness.

They told us we had already grasped an essential feature of the game - we had brought along lots of good things to eat and drink - and they shared their goodies with us between innings. They also gave us memorabilia we treasure: a cricket cap and ball. Cricket *lives* in this corner of the Wodehouse Society!

I had looked up Toowoomba in my atlas before I went to the match. That afternoon Toowoomba changed from a dot on a map to a city of friendly people. The benefits of reading Wodehouse are many.

I nearly forgot to tell you - Toowoomba won the match. And we all had a good time.

In stories of "Not Really a Duffer" type, where the nervous new boy, who has been crying in the boot-room over a photograph of his sister, contrives to get an innings in a game, nobody suspects that he is a prodigy until he hits the Bully's first ball out of the grounds for a six.

Mike, 1909

A Few Quick Ones

Our members find evidence of Our Hero everywhere:

Christina Griffin made several discoveries on a recent trip to England. One was that that her cousin Mark "met Stephen Fry (Jeeves of the TV series) *in person* when he inspected Fry's newly acquired house for dry rot or something." A dry rot friend - Plum could have made a funny line out of that.

Christina also found that "Laurie and Fry have a TV commercial for a building society (credit union) in which - refreshingly - Fry (Jeeves) portrays the bungling idiot and Laurie (Bertie) the sensible and prudent friend. Interesting switch!"

"In St. Ives, Cambridgeshire," she adds, "where my mother now lives, there is an Anglers Rest, no longer, alas, a hostelry but an upscale B & B, so not worthy of consideration by Plum pilgrims."

Finally, on the plane home to America, she came across a magazine article, "The Men's Club," which mentioned Bertie and the Drones. A fitting benediction.

Holly Schwartz also made a Wodehousian discovery in England:

"Last July my husband and I were fortunate enough to spend more time than usual in southwest England and Wales, and we ran across Bertie Wooster's Restaurant. (This was on our way to Lizard Point, and I believe was on the northwestern area of the Lizard.) Does anyone know anything about this restaurant? It was unfortunately closed at the time we stopped, and no one was about."

Jeanne Sylvester writes that Plum is properly appreciated in Bermuda:

"While on vacation in Bermuda recently I noticed that the Bermuda Book Store Ltd. devoted three entire shelves of paperbacks to old Plum. For a relatively small bookstore, that's a pretty substantial following!"

Bermuda is flung pretty far, even for an outpost, and Jeanne's discovery is heartwarming.

Our usual list of new members is omitted in this issue because all members, new and continuing, are

included in our annual membership list.

This issue of *Plum Lines* is a month late. The newsletter, my TWS correspondence, and a great many other things had to be put aside while my wife and I spent two months preparing one of our houses for sale in a competitive market. I've had to leave out a number of good contributions to avoid further delay. Back on track next time!

OM

The Oldest Member

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

Satire, Humor and the TLS

Seth Sharpless found a typically learned review of the new Wodehouse bibliography in the *London Times Literary Supplement*: its opening sentence is ten lines long and mentions Plato, Aristophanes, Socrates (twice), and Zeus. I've already published a review of that excellent bibliography, but I must quote a few juicy lines from the TLS review.

The reviewer begins with Plato's implication that Aristophanes was an irresponsible satirist but a pure humorist, remarks that "humour sees the world from a more profound and timeless view than satire," and continues:

John Bailey makes a similar point...when he says that we can find more of Shakespeare's buoyancy in the use of language in P.G. Wodehouse than in James Joyce, "the same light-heartedness in the exercise of the muscles, joy that makes for a sense of life far greater than that of more preoccupied humorists."

Wodehouse is the least preoccupied, the purest humorist in English, perhaps in any literature. Evelyn Waugh thought that for him there had been no fall of man.

Wodehouse's novel *The Code of the Woosters* trembles beautifully between humor and satire [in its treatment of Roderick Spode, the Fascist leader, who resembled the real-life Sir Oswald Mosley. Both men drew some of their income] from a hidden source which - if it were made public - would, as Jeeves realizes, make it impossible for Spode to be a successful dictator. It would seem that Wodehouse did not so much want to attack Mosley as to express delight in his absurdity.

Humour incidentally and carelessly does the work of satire, and places Mosley the more successfully because it does so from a point of view outside antagonisms and politics - a point of view which outlasts and transcends particular issues.

Like Aristophanes, Wodehouse may therefore last indifferently through the centuries, and cross cultures unpredictably. While human beings are human, Wodehouse will be - the uncomplaining word must be used - loved.

Pig Stamp

Francine Kitts has discovered a rubber stamp that depicts a rather charming fat pig - surely the Empress of Blandings if you use black ink. Here is the pig, full size:



You can obtain your very own Empress stamp by sending your \$8 check to Good Impressions, Shirley, West Virginia 26434, phone (304) 758-4252. Ask for item C87. The company also accepts Visa and Master Card. You had better write for ordering instructions if you live outside the U.S. Francine says she is having a great time with her pig. We are so glad.

Pins, Anyone?

Judy Finnegan's beautiful little TWS lapel pins, first distributed at our Kalamazoo convention two years ago, have been so popular that they are all sold out, and the demand continues. In response to a recent request, she wrote:

I regret that the pins are all gone. If there is sufficient interest, perhaps we could get another batch produced - maybe even a new design. They're made in Taiwan and take four months to manufacture. My middle man tells me that the factory doesn't like orders for less than 500. He says the factory was willing to accept our small initial order of 100 as a favor since he had a large order at the same time. I hope we can negotiate another order.

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The pins are beautifully designed and made. Such is their beauty that when you wear one passers-by will exclaim, "How far that little pin sheds its gleams. So shines a good deed in a naughty world," and you will feel more than usually smug. Let Judy know if you're interested in one or more, so she can gauge the extent of our interest. Her address: 3414 Fleetwood Drive, Portage MI 49008. The first time around the price was \$10 each. OM

Something New

Len Lawson

Tales of the Drones Club (International Polygonics, Ltd., New York City, \$21.95) contains twenty-one stories and makes its first appearance in the U.S. Barnes and Noble offered this book at \$14.95+\$4 S&I about two months ago. You might still get it. The number in their catalog was 01705540 and their address is 126 Fifth Avenue, New York NY10011,

The Golf Omnibus (Bonanza Books, New York) is back, thank goodness. I have seen it locally at B. Dalton and Waldenbooks for \$8.95. Edward R. Hamilton, Falls Village CT 06031-5000 offered it for \$8.95 + \$3 S&H. I don't have their catalog number for it. This book contains 31 stories, some of which are very hard to find elsewhere. PGW was excellent when writing about sports and his golf stories are some of his best. I hope this stays in print for a while. This is an excellent gift for anyone and more so for a golfer.

Frederick (Frits) Menschaar is offering his first catalog of P.G. Wodehouse books. It contains a full range from the rare to the inexpensive.

Peter Cannon was good enough to inform us that *Crypt of Cthulhu*, issue No. 77, contains a sequel to "Scream for Jeeves." This one is called "Something Foetid" by H.P.G. Wodecraft. The previous issue cost \$4.50 + \$.50 p&h. Order from Necronomicon Press, 101 Lockwood St., West Warwick RI 02893.

G.K. Hall Audio Productions offers five PGW books on audio cassettes. *The Code of the Woosters*, *The Inimitable Jeeves*, *Jeeves in the Offing*, and *Right Ho, Jeeves!* are \$49.95 each and consist of six cassettes each. *Carry on, Jeeves* is \$64.95 on an unspecified number of cassettes. *Jeeves in the Offing* is read by Ian Carmichael and the others are read by Jonathan Cecil. In England these cassettes are published by Chivers. G.K. Hall is located at 70 Lincoln Street, Boston MA 02111. Can someone give me some information on these recordings to pass on to the membership?

Book and Magazine Collector is a monthly magazine which contains articles on authors, books, and magazines as well as ads from individuals and dealers with items for sale or wanted. With each article on an author there is an accompanying bibliography and price guide. All but one of the issues are still available and of those available two contain articles about PGW: numbers 6 and 48. In the U.S. and Canada the minimum number of back issues in one order is three. In the U.S. the cost for three issues is \$18, in Canada \$20. In England and Europe issues may be purchased individually: in England for 2.20 pounds sterling each, in Europe for 2.40 pounds sterling each. Each issue contains an index of all preceding issues, so you may want to pick up the current issue to see what else you may find of interest. The June 1991 issue is number 87. The address is 43-45 St. Mary's Road, Ealing, London W5 5RQ, U.K.

A ray of sunshine, which had been advancing jauntily across the carpet, caught sight of his face and slunk back, abashed.

"Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best",
Blandings Castle and Elsewhere, 1935

Convention '91

Activities

The best activity isn't listed below, but it happens at every one of our conventions: the fun of talking and laughing with other Wodehouse fans for a whole weekend. I'm already looking forward to it.

Friday Day: A bus trip to visit Remsenburg, Long Island, the small town where Plum lived his last 20 years and where he and his wife are buried. I believe the trip will take about two hours each way, so the whole trip will require most of the day.

Evening: A social gathering at the Harvard Club.

Saturday In our meetings during the day, speakers will be, in alphabetical order, David Jasen, Jan Kaufman, Eliot Milstein, Toni Rudersdorf, and Peter Schwed. David Jasen wrote the biography, *Portrait of a Master*, and *A Bibliography and Reader's Guide*, two of the most valuable works on PGW. Peter Schwed was Plum's American editor for many years. Topics have not been announced for any of the speakers.

Jimmy Heineman, Wodehouse collector, publisher, and bibliographer extraordinaire, will be on hand with memorabilia and, it is said, a portrait of the Empress. A genuine portrait of the pig, painted from life, is surely worth a trip to New York from wherever you live.

Col. Norman Murphy, a repository of Wodehouse knowledge and author of *In Search of Blandings*, will be on hand from England with - I won't tell you. You gotta come and find out for yourself!

President Phil Ayers expects one or two Wodehouse short stories to be read, possibly by Eliot Milstein, a wildly popular speaker at our last convention.

We will also elect officers for the next two years in a brief business meeting.

Evening: Banquet, featuring Margaret Slythe, recently retired librarian of Dulwich College Library, as our speaker.

Sunday Morning: Many of us will surely want to get together for a final meal (breakfast or brunch), but no formal arrangements will be made before the convention..

Accommodations

Vivian Swift, a New York City member of TWS, has visited our convention hotel and a dozen others, less expensive. Her information should be very useful to us in choosing accommodations in Manhattan. Her experience as a former concierge at the St. Regis Hotel makes her judgments especially valuable. We are greatly indebted to her for facts and comments we could not have obtained otherwise. Here is her information:

The Sheraton Park Hotel [our convention hotel] is a lovely hotel consciously attempting to simulate the ambience and decor of an English gentlemen's private club (I know because I asked the manager). It is small and well off the beaten tourist track which suits its clientele of garment industry execs and low-profile diplomats. The neighborhood, known as Murray Hill, is a pleasant residential area of brownstones and luxury apartment buildings, and the Sheraton is situated on a "quiet" stretch of Park Avenue South. [I believe the weekend rate for

a single or double is \$180 per night plus 19% tax, but see my note about prices at the end of Vivian's hotel listings. The Sheraton phone is (212) 685-7676 OM]

Limiting myself to 10-12 blocks in either direction off this hotel (which in New York geography is a half mile and a very easy stroll), I searched for hotels suitable to the traveler who lacks the Park Avenue-style expense account. Of the dozen that I inspected I found six acceptable and have listed them in order of my preference (sorry - I guess you'll have to trust my judgment).

1. Doral Court (212) 685-1100
130 East 39 Street (800) 624-0607
(39th at Lexington Avenue)

Weekend rate \$130 per night includes parking and a complimentary cocktail.

Charming small hotel on a quaint (for mid-town Manhattan) side street. Veddy English decor (flouncy floral slipcovers, antique tea tables and chairs) in luxury-sized guest rooms. Geared for the business traveler. Refined and friendly. [Three blocks from convention hotel...OM]

- 2 Hotel Lexington (212) 755-4400
Lexington Ave. at 48th St (800) 448-4471

Weekend rates \$99 - \$120 per night includes \$15 discount on dinner in hotel restaurant.

Just 10 blocks north of the Sheraton Park Avenue. A gracious - dare I say romantic? - hotel busy with foreign tourists and flight crews. Swank on a small scale. Luxury guest rooms in cream and pastel colors. [12 blocks from convention hotel...OM]

3. Roger Smith Winthrop (212) 755-1400
501 Lexington Avenue. (800) 223-0945
(at 47th Street)

Weekend rate \$125.00 per night includes continental breakfast.

Efficiently run business and luxury travel hotel. Very spacious rooms, mostly newly renovated for a spare but homey feel (management has been upgrading the hotel in the last few years). [11 blocks from convention hotel...OM]

4. Hotel Beverly (212) 753-2700
50th St. at Lexington Ave.) (800) 223-0945

Weekend rates: junior suite \$99.00, two-room suite \$119.00. Most rooms have kitchenettes.

In the thick of a bustling tourist area. Comfortable rooms (picture any Marriott) but staff seems desultorily attentive. Same neighborhood as the Waldorf-Astoria and is a good central location for exploring the famous Upper East Side. [14 blocks from convention hotel...OM]

- 5 Chatwal on Park Avenue (212) 532-4860
 429 Park Avenue (800) 826-4667
 (between 29th and 30th Sts.)

Singles \$85.00
 Doubles \$105.00
 Junior suites \$130.00
 (all rates for renovated rooms on 5th, 6th, and 7th floor)

Sliver of a hotel nestled among coffee shops on Park Avenue South. Unusual bargain for New York City. The tiny lobby is spruced up and renovations bring it up to one-star standard (imagine same in Latin Quarter). New mauve carpets and grey furniture do not lighten up the rooms much due to expansive black paneling of big wall units. 30-year-old bathroom fixtures and depressing narrow hallways. Very helpful staff. [Seven blocks from convention hotel...OM]

6. Aberdeen (212) 736-1600
 17 West 32 Street (800) 826-4667
 (between 5th and 6th Avenues)

Rates: Single \$75.00
 Double \$85.00

Well, the hallways are cheerier than what I saw at the Chatwal, but the rooms are smaller, plainer, and shabbier - probably because the lighting is so dismal. I think the one light fixture had a 40-watt bulb. Only the 11th and 12th floors are renovated. The Spanish staff is very pleasant and the hotel was busy with tour groups when I visited it, and if you don't mind walking down a street that looks creepy even in the middle of a sunny day, the place could be OK. I probably would have thought it was OK myself before I got snobby. [8 blocks from convention hotel....OM]

Special note about hotel prices:

Several of us have been given inconsistent prices when we called to make reservations. Also, it is often difficult to determine whether the price quoted on the phone includes the tax (19%!). I strongly urge you to make careful inquiries about price and tax, to avoid unpleasant surprises....OM

Vivian also included three possibilities from the American Automobile Association guide book for New York City. She made no comments about these places and did not list them in order of preference.

Travel Inn, 515 West 42nd St. between 10th and 11th Aves. (212) 695-7171 or (800) 869-4630. Single \$84.00, double \$94.00. Garage. Three blocks west of Times Square, about 13 blocks from convention hotel.. AAA recommended.

Paramount, 235 West 46th St., between Broadway and 8th Ave., (212) 764-5500. Weekend: single or double \$90.00 - \$120. "Chic and small." Parking lot. One block west of Times Square, about 10 blocks from convention hotel.

Quality Inn Midtown, 157 West 47th St. between 6th and 7th Aves. (212)768-3700. Senior discount. About 12

blocks from convention hotel. AAA recommended.

Staten Island Special

Joan Russo, a TWSer who lives on Staten Island, has made a most generous offer: "I just wanted to let you know that my brother and I are willing to host a few people (we have two spare double beds and/or floor space for hearty souls) for the weekend if they can't afford to stay at the hotel. Anyone who is intrested can write to me at the following address: Joan Russo, 242 Maryland Ave., Staten Island, NY 10305. We don't mind if you wear purple socks or sing "Sonny Boy" in the bath, but please no smoking in the house."

Costs and Deadlines

Registration fee for Convention: \$35 per person, due by September 15.

Banquet on Saturday evening: \$40 per person, due by September 15.

Bus trip to Remsenburg: \$20 per person. Please make this a separate check marked for the bus trip. Due by September 1.

Please write all checks to Phil Ayers, our president, and have them in his hands by the dates shown above.

