



Plum Lines

The quarterly journal of The Wodehouse Society

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WODEHOUSE PILGRIMAGE 1996

By Carolyn M. Pokrivchak

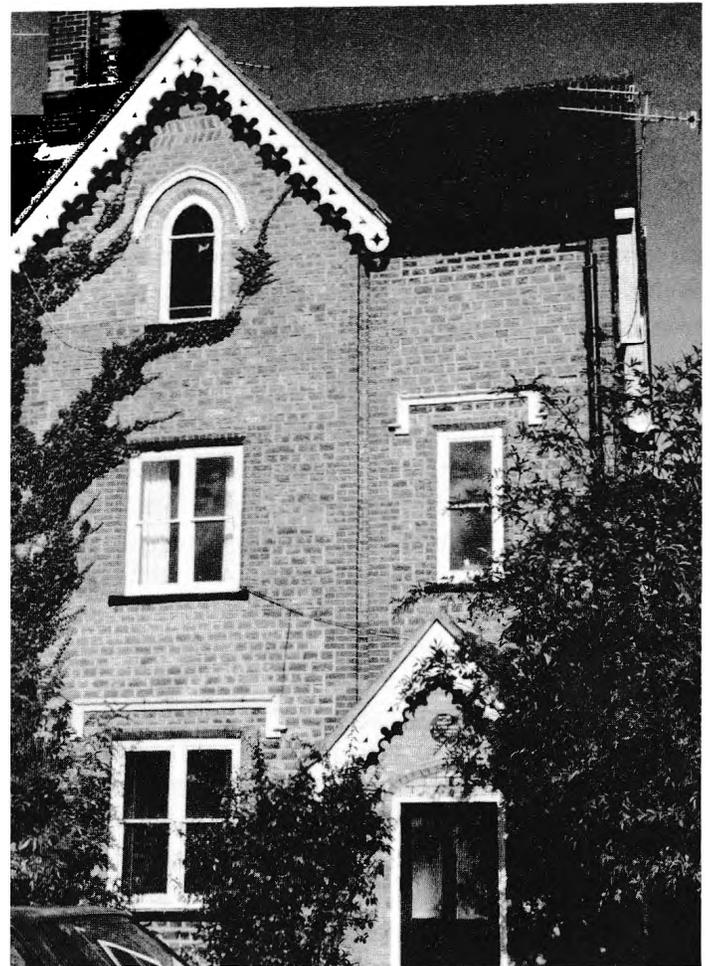
Thanks to *Plum Lines*, we learned that Toni Rudersdorf and the Houston Drone Rangers were planning a Wodehouse Pilgrimage to England. What follows is a tale of this homage to Plum as experienced by your correspondent, one of the seventeen lucky pilgrims from five U.S. states to make the trip.

A record of any trip to England would not be complete without a weather report. So how was it? Well, we had weather—and lots of it! It was cloudy, rainy, blustery, sunny, too hot, and too cold. My umbrella was buffeted to uselessness and its replacement was never used!

Our pilgrimage officially began on Sunday, October 27, when most of us gathered at The Oliver, a charming small hotel in the Earl's Court area of London. A group dinner at a local bistro started the festivities in high style. Then a few hardy souls (fortified no doubt with liberal doses of gin and orange juice) inaugurated the sightseeing by riding a double-decker bus from the hotel to the end of the line and back.

On Monday we scattered and played at being tourists, with visits to the Tate, the Victoria and Albert, and the Royal Air Force Museums. We cruised the Thames, bought books, straddled the zero meridian at Greenwich, and much, much more. If our group was an indicator, Kodak stock rose significantly! We were aided throughout the week by the very kind Paul Madge, a friend of Toni's who was most helpful with directions and information—our “native guide,” as it were. Paul joined us that evening at Porter's Restaurant for a very British dinner—mine was a tasty pork and PLUM casserole.

Wednesday was another tourist day for us, highlighted by book buying trips to Cecily Court and Charing Cross Road. We met for dinner at the Stock



Birthplace of P. G. Wodehouse, Guilford

Pot, followed by a theater party to see *By Jeeves*. Some of us found time in a very busy week to admire ballets, enjoy symphony concerts, and attend shows featuring Albert Finney, Leo McKern, Margaret Tyzack and Maggie Smith.

But the heart of the trip was Plum and his world. We had the best possible introduction: On Tuesday, Norman Murphy, complete in bowler and “brolly” (umbrella, that is), led us on his One Man’s Walking Tour of London. We were delighted that Tony and Elaine Ring came in from the suburbs to share this special experience with us. With ears attuned and eyes sharpened, we followed Norman at a breathtaking pace, scribbling notes shakily on the run. Starting at Berkeley Square, Norman swept us through much of Mayfair: the Claridge Hotel (the renowned Barribault’s of several novels); Buck’s (the model for the Drones Club); the site of the Bath Club (whose pool suggested Bertie’s immersion in faultless evening dress); the home of Aunt Dahlia; Plum’s residence in King Street; one of Plum’s clubs, and more, more, more. Norman’s knowledge of the area seemed limitless. We saw the Marley’s Ghost door knocker; the home of Benjamin Franklin; the site of Henry the VIII’s cow shed; St. James’s Square; a seventy-foot totem pole in the New Zealand High Commission Building, and much more. At the end of the tour Norman took us to his club for tea and cakes, a real and most welcome treat. We were happy to be joined there by Norman’s daughter, Helen Murphy. A group of us led by Norman placed flowers at a memorial to Rupert D’Oyle Carte, Wodehouse’s model for his character Psmith. Then, with throbbing feet and spinning heads, several of us ended a busy, informative day at the Sherlock Holmes Pub.

On Wednesday evening everyone enjoyed *By Jeeves*, the new Ayckbourn-Lloyd Webber musical. The characters were sufficiently Wodehousian, the music was clever, and many sight gags added to the fun. After the show we met the actors at the stage door, where they graciously signed our programs and chatted a while. A quick pub stop was a pleasant ending to the evening.

The highlight of our trip was undoubtedly our visit on Thursday with Sir Edward Cazalet, Lady Ethel Wodehouse’s grandson, at Shaw Farm, south of London. Eleven of us trained through the rain to Hayward’s Heath, where we were met at the station by Sir Edward himself and ushered into a small bus he had obtained to transport us to Shaw Farm. There we were received by Lara Cazalet, Sir Edward’s daughter and sister to Hal (who sang at the Boston convention). We assembled in the living room, where we received the first of many delights: a tray filled with a frosty bottle of champagne and stemmed glasses (to be continuously refilled throughout the day). But there was even more for our wondering eyes and ears to take in: Sir Edward had put out several family albums for our pleasure, and Lara delighted us by singing two Jerome Kern songs: “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” and “Bill”—the latter with

lyrics, of course, by our own Plum. Like her brother, she is an excellent performer and should do well in her acting career.

Then we adjourned to the billiard room, where we enjoyed looking over many of Plum’s books, manuscripts, albums, and personal papers. These included notebooks in Plum’s hand containing anecdotes (numbered for his reference) that had been told to him by friends and acquaintances—good, ripe stuff! While we pored over this treasure trove, Sir Edward escorted small groups of us to the Archive upstairs, where we saw Plum’s personal library of best-loved books. What a rare treat!

Our luncheon was a beautifully prepared and served English meal enhanced by lively conversation and Wodehouse quotes read out amid much hilarity. After lunch we were turned loose to roam the house and extensive grounds, browse through books, albums, and diaries, and hope that the Cazalets would adopt us so we could stay forever. Before taking our reluctant leave, we gathered to hear a recording of Hal Cazalet singing “Sonny Boy.” Sir Edward escorted us to the station, where we said good-bye to him and to a truly outstanding day of Plum Paradise.

Wodehouse event number four was a two-part excursion for six of us on Friday. First stop: Plum’s birthplace in Guildford, about an hour’s train ride from London. We hiked about the town for a while before we found the house on Epson Road where Plum was born. Note for future pilgrims: it is a small and



“Peacehaven” and sphinxes in Acacia Grove/Mulberry Grove, *Big Money*

unimpressive brown brick house with a small plaque on the front announcing its place in literary history. After boosting Kodak stock once more, we visited the “Alice Through the Looking Glass” garden. Guildford, it seems, was once the home of Lewis Carroll, who is buried there. We also made the requisite visit to a local bookstore for PGW books.

From Guildford we trekked to the small town of Emsworth on the south coast, where Plum lived for some years as a young man. We were met by four gracious hosts, including Bruce Doxat-Pratt, Tessa Daines, Eddie Lewis, and Strahan Soames. Later, we were also fortunate to meet Mary Soames and Dorothy

Bone. After short tours to Emsworth House (the model for the school in *The Little Nugget*), Threepwood House, and the waterfront, our hosts took us to the Emsworth Museum. There we were impressed with an extensive exhibit of PGW photographs, mementos, and a collection of his writings. The library staff treated us to an English tea party of cucumber sandwiches, watercress sandwiches, plum cake, and tea. Thus ended another splendid day of gracious people extending thoughtful hospitality to admirers of their beloved Plum, and we returned to London tired but very happy indeed.

Our last day was one of our best. We took a double-decker bus south of the Thames to Dulwich with Helen Murphy and her friend, Raicho Raichev, both TWSers. They gave us a guided tour through "Valley Fields" to Dulwich College, where Wodehouse was educated and played his beloved sports. Helen was an excellent guide, pointing out Acacia Grove and other places that had figured in Plum's books (the owners of "Peacehaven" are aware of the Wodehouse connection and promised to take good care of the sphinxes!), as well as the school field on which Mike and his school chums had played cricket. At the college Archivist Jan Piggott greeted us and showed us through the main building, including the awesome Great Hall. Dr. Piggott told us about Plum's life at the school and described the Wodehouse Library. We were again impressed by the time and effort our host had expended to arrange an exhibit of books, letters, school records, and other ephemera for our visit. Best of all, we were allowed to enter the small recreation of Plum's writing room, equipped with his desk, chair, typewriter, lamp, pipe, and many of his personal books. Kodak stock rose once again as we took turns sitting in Plum's chair at Plum's desk!

At the end of another outstanding Wodehousian day, we bussed back to London and joined Norman Murphy and Paul Madge for a sumptuous farewell dinner. Since most of us were flying home early next morning we were off to our hotel early. We packed, relived the events of a very happy week, and exchanged good-byes. A last breakfast at the Oliver, and then it was "See you in Chicago!"

It was over all too soon, but it was a jolly good time from start to finish. Thank you, Toni, for a wonderful Wodehouse Pilgrimage 1996!

The Pilgrims:

Anne Bianchi (Texas)
Ed Bronstein (California)
Jane Cherry (Texas)
Charles Chester (Texas)
Brad Frank (Texas)
Rebecca Joiner (Texas)

THE LUCK STONE

Tony Ring reports the publication of another "find" from Wodehouse's early years. *The Luck Stone*, which was serialized in *Chums* magazine in nineteen weekly installments from September 1908 to January 1909, is to be published as a book for the first time. This edition, which is expected to be available by March 31, 1997, incorporates reproductions of the original illustrations.

Publication is restricted to 250 numbered copies, and the book cannot be reissued once it has sold out. Plummies who order and *PAY FOR IT* by March 31, 1997, will benefit from a discounted price—so now is the time to order!

PRICE:

For books ordered and paid for by March 31, 1997:

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Barbara Workman (Massachusetts)

(Thanks to Toni Rudersdorf for her contributions to this report, and to Elin Woodger and Ed Ratcliffe for their editorial assistance.)

FIRST LOVE: READING WITH P. G. WODEHOUSE

By Mary Lydon

This is an abridged version of an essay in *Profession 94*, a periodical published by the Modern Language Association. It was sent by Peter Cannon, who remarked, "this piece goes to show that at least some people in the academy appreciate Wodehouse."
—OM

When my friend and colleague Elaine Marks invited me to write about a book, a text, a passage, or a line that, for whatever reasons, I had come to associate with what literature "is," it seemed at first that I had been given the assignment of a lifetime. When it came to doing it, however, I found, to my surprise and dismay that I was completely stumped.

The specific cause of the impediment, I soon realized, was my assumption that the assignment required me to go back to an early time of my life when the recognition, while reading, that *this* was literature could have produced the notion of what literature "is" that would have made me want to devote my life to it. "Why literature?" it seemed to me, was a question about the origins of a calling. But looking back over my childhood and adolescence, I discovered that the pleasure my favorite writers had given me, being as immediate as it was intense, precluded the self-consciousness that the recognition of what literature "is" requires.

I was, in my early days, swallowed up by the texts I read as by a whale, a blissful Jonah about whom it might be asked if I had been reading at all, in any but the most primitive sense of the word. For "in order to read," Cixous writes, "we need to get out of the text. We have to shuttle back and forth incessantly. We have to try all possible relations to a text. At some point we have to disengage ourselves from the text..., in order to study its construction, its techniques, and its texture."

Yet I remained convinced that I had had a precocious intuition of literature as an object of desire, surpassing the immediate delights of the text at hand. This intuition could only have come from the kind of disengagement Cixous describes. The question then was, Where and when did that disengagement occur? What reading was its occasion?

An old memory stirred, and all at once I had it. The writer with whom I learned to read, in the strong sense that Cixous gives the verb, who enabled me to "get out

of the text," who made it possible for me to "shuttle back and forth incessantly," to disengage myself enough to become aware of (if not yet to study in any systematic way) the text's "construction, its techniques, and its texture" was none other than P. G. Wodehouse.

And then it all came back to me: the nights devoted to the guilty pleasure of reading such chefs d'oeuvre as *Right Ho, Jeeves*, *Summer Lightning*, and *The Code of the Woosters*, with the aid of a flashlight, under the covers of my dormitory bed (I attended a convent boarding school where lights-out at nine o'clock was the unalterable rule); the clandestine circulation of his books among Wodehouse fans (our leisure reading was closely monitored); the gleeful exchange of quotations among initiates. Prompted by these long-forgotten memories, I took down *The World of Jeeves*, the sole remaining emblem, in my library, of that youthful passion; and rereading the first story, "Jeeves Takes Charge," I recovered rapture. Not however, the rapture of being swallowed up by the text. Aside from the fact that Wodehouse's technique firmly, if tacitly, discourages such a response, it is highly unlikely that a young Irish convent girl would have identified with the trivial and improbable adventures, so remote from her experience, of a silly young swell and his valet. No, my pleasure all those years ago had been of another order, its source the first explosive inkling not only of the what and why of literature but also of the quest for the *mot juste* and the incomparable and endlessly renewable pleasure that attends it.

To paraphrase Barthes, "You can only read what you've read before", a statement of which Cixous's remarks about reading are a variant. This, the first principle of literary study, as I now believe and try to teach, was unforgettably brought home to me when I would come upon statements like the following (the speaker is Bertie Wooster): "I remember Jeeves saying to me once, apropos of how you can never tell what the weather's going to do, that full many a glorious morning had he seen flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eve and then turn into a rather nasty afternoon". The joke depends of course on the reader's recognizing Shakespeare's sonnet, and my burst of laughter, at the age of fourteen or so, a time when I was being required to learn large chunks of Shakespeare by heart, was the delighted laughter of recognition. Recognition out of

context, I must emphasize, so that the sonnet, treated thus familiarly, was paradoxically *defamiliarized*, given to be seen, as literature, the one thing that Bertie and I did have in common and that transcended all barriers of class, gender, and nationality. For what Bertie's irreverent appropriation of "Full Many a Glorious Morning" held out was nothing less than the exciting possibility, of "taming" Shakespeare's text, of "riding on it, rolling over it" as distinct from being swallowed up by it.

Quotation, the sine qua non of the literary critic's practice, is the dominant characteristic of Wodehouse's writing in the Jeeves and Wooster series. Every reader familiar with these books will remember that lines from "the poet Burns," as Jeeves persistently calls him, and from the poet Keats, Browning's "larks and snails," and Shakespeare's "quills upon the fretful porpentine" are the coin of Jeeves's exchanges with his master (Keats, incidentally, is immortally described as "the fellow who on looking at something felt like somebody looking at something": Bertie's schematic recollection of "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer.") These quotations become, as a result, the delight of the Wodehouse devotee, who typically turns into an inveterate quoter both of the canon according to Wodehouse and of Wodehouse himself. I will control the urge on this occasion and limit myself to citing a typical passage from *The Mating Season*, which has the advantage of sustaining the Shakespearian theme.

In the passage, Bertie's friend Gussie Fink-Nottle has been arraigned for some prank such as stealing a police officer's helmet, and Bertie asks Jeeves why the judge let Fink-Nottle off with a fine. Here is Jeeves's reply and the dialogue it generates:

"Possibly the reflection that the quality of mercy is not strained sir."

"You mean it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven?"

"Precisely, sir. Upon the place beneath. His worship would no doubt have taken into consideration the fact that it blesseth him that gives and him that takes and becomes the throned monarch better than his crown."

In response to which Bertie, reverting to his role as narrator, then says: "I mused. Yes, there was something in that." For neophyte readers of *The Merchant of Venice*, the pleasure of coming across this exchange is quite simply unbearable. It is, furthermore, enough to make literary scholars of them on the spot, for in what other context can they justifiably hope to bandy quotations, a la Jeeves and Bertie, with other readers like themselves?

Kristin Thompson, in her excellent book *Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes: or, Le Mot Juste*, accurately

describes what Bertie and Jeeves do as "linger[ing] over the conventions of language." In addition to discussing Wodehouse's use of quotation with considerable insight, Thompson addresses his brilliant use of cliché, or idiom, as I would prefer to call it. Indeed, I would argue—going a step further than Thompson—that, just as Wodehouse's deployment of quotation teaches what reading is, so his handling of idiom reveals his uncanny ability to teach one how to write. This ability is directly related to his treatment of idiom, since Bertie often gets stock expressions wrong, like so many students who seem to be only half familiar with the common coin of English, not to mention literary criticism. Thus, when I read in a student paper that an incident "heralds back" to an earlier one, I wish ardently for a Jeeves at the writer's elbow to murmur, "Harks back, I believe, is the phrase you are seeking, sir."

But if Wodehouse should be required reading in freshman composition classes, he would provide an equally useful corrective to the excesses that threaten more sophisticated academic writers. In "Jeeves Takes Charge," Bertie is pursued by Florence Craye, a woman with intellectual pretensions who is bent on improving Bertie's mind but whose educational methods are, according to Jeeves, "a little trying". Freed from her clutches by Jeeves, Bertie idly picks up the reading she had assigned him before their engagement was mercifully dissolved. A weighty volume called *Types of Ethical Theory*: "I opened it," he says, "and I give you my honest word, this is what hit me":

Of the two antithetic terms in the Greek philosophy one only was real and self-subsisting; and that one was Ideal Thought as opposed to that which it has to penetrate and mould. The other corresponding to our Nature, was in itself phenomenal, unreal, without any permanent footing, having no predicates that held true for two moments together: in short, redeemed from negation only by including indwelling realities appearing through.

Bertie's flabbergasted response to this verbal onslaught is properly aphasic: "Well—I mean to say—what?" The rhetorical question marvelously, by its very incoherence, conveys a critical judgment.

If literature is the web of idiom and quotation, the lingering over language, that I take it to be, and if *The Code of the Woosters*, one of Wodehouse's best-known titles, may be taken as descriptive of his oeuvre as a whole, then I am prepared to argue, not that *The Code of the Woosters* is literature, though it undoubtedly is, but rather that literature was for me, inaugurally and unforgettably, *The Code of the Woosters*.

DOING NEWTS A BIT OF GOOD

By Jean Tillson, Anne Cotton, and Elin Woodger

Inspired by the smashing success of the Great Non-Political Newt Project, achieved through the humanitarian efforts of Susan and Daniel Cohen and their comrades in Philadelphia's Chapter One, the New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS) has sponsored a newt exhibit of its own.

On October 20, 1996, the grand opening celebration of this exhibit was held at the Franklin Park Children's Zoo in Boston. In attendance were members of the NEWTS and the New England Herpetological Society (NEHS), an organization which provided the NEWTS with invaluable guidance in planning this exhibit. We were also pleased to have a few members of the general public show up—the more so because this was a day when Mother Nature decided to make merry with the residents of Boston and graced us with a raging nor'easter that flooded city streets and prevented many from attending the celebration.

Despite the weather, everything went—well, swimmingly! The festivities began with opening remarks from Jean Tillson, newt project coordinator, and two representatives from the Franklin Park Zoo. This was followed by a short reading from *Right Ho, Jeeves* designed to explain and celebrate the Wodehouse/newt connection for the benefit of the lay people in attendance. It all went over very well, especially given the hysterical treatment provided by cast members John Fahey as Bertie, Richard Morrissey as Gussie, and Max Pokrivchak as Jeeves. Anne Cotton provided the narration.

The audience then viewed an entertaining slide show prepared by Joe Martinez of the NEHS and Ed O'Brien of the Franklin Park Zoo. The exhibit was prepared with the assistance and support of the NEHS as a means of publicizing the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Herp Atlas Project. The goal of the project is to collect data that will allow Mass Audubon to map the location and population of New England's amphibian and reptile species.

After presentations were made to those who had worked hardest on the exhibit, there was a short adjournment for refreshments, including cakes brought by various NEWTS to celebrate Plum's birthday. The group then donned slickers, put up umbrellas, and slogged over to the Reptile House. There we met John Berkholtz, the zookeeper who played the largest part in designing and setting up the exhibit. John had placed a sort of curtain thingummy over the front of our newt tank. He raised it to much applause, and we laid our eyes on a sight that Gussie Fink-Nottle would have dearly loved.

The display provides a permanent, loving home to a

few lucky *Notophthalmus Viridescens*, also known as the red spotted newt (the area's only indigenous newt species). Joe Martinez, President of the New England Herpetological Society, describes the unique qualities of these fascinating little chaps: "The red spotted newt is interesting in that it has three developmental stages, whereas most amphibians have only two. The larval stage occurs in the water, then the newt metamorphoses into a 'red eft' and becomes terrestrial for a few years, then transforms a third time into an adult and becomes aquatic once more."

Well, I mean to say, what?! We think Gussie would be justifiably proud of the home that has been provided for these fascinating creatures. It consists of a half terrestrial, half aquatic exhibit that features graphics designed to support the Herp Atlas Project. There is even a delightful little waterfall at the back of the tank, and a large, beautiful plaque directly over the tank announces to all and sundry that the exhibit is sponsored by the New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society.

NEWTS President Anne Cotton then dedicated the exhibit:

"We are gathered here today to unveil this splendid exhibit of Red Spotted Newts, assembled by our friends at the Franklin Park Zoo and the New England Herpetological Society, and funded by the New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society. We, the NEWTS, herewith dedicate this exhibit to the memory of Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse, who introduced many of us to the newt as something other than a crossword puzzle clue, and who created the man who has to be the foremost newt-lover in all of literature. And so, in gratitude for the many hours of fine and funny reading he has given us, we dedicate this exhibit to P. G. Wodehouse."

Much applause and snapping of cameras then ensued, and congratulations were distributed all around.

Amongst those present was a large and lovely bread-newt, created for Chapter One's newt exhibit opening and presented to the NEWTS at the 1995 convention. This bread-newt having become the NEWTS's mascot, as well as a symbol of Chapter One's inspiring example, it was only right that he should be there to share the fun!

The NEWTS wish to acknowledge and thank all those who made monetary contributions to help fund our exhibit—it wouldn't have been possible without you! Our deepest gratitude and appreciation also go out to Mike Lensch and John Berkholtz of the Franklin Park Zoo and Joe Martinez of the New England Herpetological Society. Thanks to these fine gentlemen, there will always be a good home for some lucky and deserving red spotted newts!

48 Savage Club.—Candidates' Book.

Date of Nomination *2nd Feb.* 1922

Selected March 2nd 1922 Chairman.

Candidate *Pelham Grenville Wodehouse,*

Qualification *Literature*

Address *15, Berkeley Street, W1.*

Proposed by *A. Greenough Smith*

Seconded by *F. Britton Austin*
Frederic Shaw

SUPPORTERS.

FROM PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE ONLY.

FROM GENERAL KNOWLEDGE.

Norman Murphy's *In Search of Blandings* (1981, 1986) described his relentless and successful search for the originals of such places as Blandings Castle and the Drones Club, among many others. His thesis, as you probably know, is that Plum based a great many of his fictitious people, places, and events on originals he found in the real world. In case after case Norman found convincing evidence that Plum's fantasies were rooted solidly in his immediate experience.

But one important question went unanswered in *In Search of Blandings*: where did Bertie live in London? As Norman noted in his book: "I live in hope. If I can find a factual basis for most of the London addresses Wodehouse used . . . then one day I'll find Bertie's flat as well—and the reason Wodehouse used it. We all know where [Bertie's flat] ought to be. It is either 'Number 6A Crichton Mansions, Berkeley Street' ('Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch'), or 'Berkeley Mansions' (*Thank You, Jeeves*)."

Norman answered his own question, as he described in a Spring 1991 *Plum Lines* article: "I was in London a couple of weeks ago, in the Savage Club of which Wodehouse had been a member in the 1920s [and of which Norman is now a member]. With time on my hands, I started looking 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."

Here's a photocopy of part of the crucial page itself, recently provided by Norman. The Berkeley Street building where Plum lived in 1922 is still standing, sound in mind and body, and at last report was still used for flats. There'll always be an England and a 15 Berkeley Street, London W1.

BY JEEVES, AMERICAN STYLE

By Aunt Dahlia

When word of *By Jeeves*'s arrival in the U.S. reached our eager ears, phone lines and e-mail wires immediately began buzzing with excitement: It was time for another joint expedition! A date was quickly settled on (November 16), the good word was put out, and thirty Plummies from six northeastern states signed up to converge on Chester, Connecticut and the Goodspeed-at-Chester/Norma Terris Theatre for a night of good old-fashioned Wodehousian fun.

The night began for some of us with the requisite pre-theater browsing and sluicing at the Inn at Chester. We enjoyed ourselves so thoroughly that we barely made it to the theater for the nine o'clock curtain, and found the remainder of our group what-hoing us from their seats. Several members of the cast were milling about near the stage as we entered, the Rev. Harold "Stinker" Pinker among them. Finally Stinker stepped up to the stage and issued formal greetings to all—and the show was under-way!

After the show, some of the cast members were good enough to come out and meet with our group. "Good enough" hardly cuts it, for it was 11:30 p.m., they had just done two grueling performances in one day, and they were clearly exhausted. But, troopers to the core, they signed our programs, talked about the show and their characters, and asked about our group. Pleasant and personable coves all, they were especially interested in knowing whether we thought the show was true to Wodehouse.

Is it Wodehouse? Hmm... I mulled the question over and put it to my fellow Plummies, into whose faces I thrust my tape recorder rather liberally. What follows is, well, a joint review of sorts. Quotes from fellow theater-goers (who shall be anonymous) are in italics. The rest is all Auntie.

I thought Madeline Bassett was perfect!

Emily Loesser made a wonderful Stiffy. I thought the woman who played Honoria did a good job of making her hearty but not over-bearing.

The casting received almost universal favor. Especially noteworthy were the women, including Nancy Anderson as Madeline Bassett, Donna Lynne Champlin as Honoria Glossop, and Emily Loesser as the scheming Stiffy Byng. In both appearance and personality, they conveyed the loopiness of their respective characters to the general satisfaction of our resident Plummies. Thumbs-up to Honoria's laugh!

Among the men, Merwin Goldsmith as Sir Watkyn Bassett drew the most applause for conveying his character as most Plummies envision Bassett to be. Also satisfac-

tory were Ian Knauer as Stinker Pinker, Kevin Ligon as Gussie Fink-Nottle, and Jonathan Stewart as Cyrus Budge III (Junior). We had reservations about Randy Redd as Bingo Little; although his performance was fine, he physically failed to meet the Wodehousian vision of that role. As for Bertie and Jeeves, the reviews are decidedly mixed! Without question, these are the two hardest characters to cast in any Wodehouse-based production. There was considerable debate about Jeeves in particular.

Jeeves is too outspoken and directive.

In the books, Jeeves actually is quite fond of Bertie, and this Jeeves didn't seem to have that affection.

Jeeves is far too serious.

Auntie's view: Richard Kline has his work cut out for him, as any actor does who essays the inimitable Jeeves. On the whole, he did well with maintaining an air of calm dignity throughout (although he did cut loose in the final production number, which did not go over well with some Plummies). However, he did not meet most personal visions of Jeeves, and I tend to agree with Tony Ring's view that Kline is a little too old for the role.

I think Bertie's fine. Jeeves isn't doing too much for me.

Bertie is a little too slickly handsome.

I thought Bertie was great.

John Scherer as Bertie Wooster has the most demanding role, requiring his presence on stage for most of the production, as well as unrelenting energy. This energy he provides in spades—perhaps too much so. Certainly this Bertie is more zealous about performing than we would ordinarily picture in a chap who prefers to sing "Sonny Boy" in his bathtub rather than in a public forum. This, however, is not the actor's fault but the fault of the script. Several, in fact, expressed the view that Bertie's character was completely lost by the end of the show. All in all, though, Scherer does well with what he is given to do.

Someone who's not familiar with Bertie would have a hard time following this.

It was a little hard to follow all of the machinations.

I think Ayckbourn made some assumptions about the audience knowing the background of some of the characters.

It is definitely a difficult plot to follow. First of all, there's the story-within-a-story concept. Secondly, the characters of the inner story are played by characters of the outer story—got that? Bertie and Jeeves are B. and J., but, for example, Sir Watkyn Bassett is "played" in Bertie's impromptu narration by "Bumpy Bazely." So there's that obstacle for feeble minds to overcome; then one is faced with a retinue of characters who are familiar only to Wode-

house readers and must be explained to the general public; and on top of all this, there are mistaken identities in abundance. Even for us, the complications boggled the mind!

The first act seemed to go slowly, but the second went by in a flash. I think the second act moves very well.

It fell apart during the second act. It started okay, but did not hold its shape through to the end.

What worked and what didn't work? A lot depends on what people expect of a musical, much less a Wodehouse-based musical. The first act was generally regarded better than the second in terms of plot, but the music received better notices in the second act. The ending of the show provided the greatest debate, with the majority of Plumies issuing a thumbs-down. Jeeves's *deus ex machina* solution to all the silliness was not worthy of Plum; and the final production number, with its endless reprises and Wizard of Oz costumes, dragged the show on far longer than was necessary or desirable.

If they axed the last ten minutes of the show, it would be a good show, a good second act.



Bertie Wooster (John Scherer, left) and his manservant Jeeves (Richard Kline) weave a comic adventure in the American premier of *By Jeeves* at Goodspeed-at-Chester/The Norma Terris Theatre. Photography by Diane Sobolewski.

Despite this, some expressed the opinion that it *needs more musical numbers to make it work*. This, of course, depends on whether one actually likes the music in the show, and opinion in our TWS group ran about 50-50 on that score. The musical numbers ranged from the pleasant ("Travel Hopefully") to the downright silly ("Love's Maze"). I was disturbed by the number of sight gags thrown into the songs. It was almost as if the creators were afraid the audience may get bored with the music, so threw in some funny bits to make 'em laugh, rather than allow the songs to stand on their own merits. This was especially true of the ballad "Half a Moment," which was interrupted by a potted-plant sight gag that had the audience roaring with laughter, thereby drowning out the lyrics.

The final verdict?

There's the thing at the end of most of the stories when... Bertie realizes that Jeeves is responsible for the whole string of events. And we haven't had any of that kind of feeling in this.

Ayckbourn did capture one element of the Jeeves books that some people miss, that almost all of Bertie's friends and relatives treat him shabbily (even, to an extent, Jeeves), but he still does everything he can to help them.

It had elements of Wodehouse plots...but the style was missing. By which I mean the language, the felicitous phrase, the apt description or comment. It just didn't SOUND like Wodehouse.

It was funny, it just wasn't Wodehousian.

I thought the cast did remarkably well with what they were given. Pity they were not turned loose on real Wodehouse!

For those who are accustomed to Wodehouse's complex plots with all their misunderstandings and imposturings, this production does have somewhat of a Plum-ish flair to it. Without question, the actors try exceedingly hard to capture the Wodehouse spirit, and at certain points they succeed.

But is it Wodehouse? Well — no. It is an Alan Ayckbourn-Andrew Lloyd Webber musical with Wodehouse characters thrown into the machinery. As such, it will disappoint anybody who goes to the theater expecting a true Wodehousian experience. But in the end, it is our own personal experience in *reading* Wodehouse that matters more than how he is presented on stage or screen.

It might be advisable to forget any relationship to Wodehouse and expect just plain good musical theater. Amen!

BY JEEVES REVISITED

A comparative review by Tony Ring

Tony is an Englishman so devoted to matters Wodehousian that, in addition to attending the English opening night of *By Jeeves* (and earlier writing the program notes), he flew across the Atlantic to see the American production.

When Elin Woodger discovered that I was about to see *By Jeeves* at the Goodspeed-at-Chester / Norma Terris Theatre, she asked me to write a brief note comparing it to the London performance. I should start by saying that I thoroughly enjoyed the Goodspeed production, which was remarkably faithful to the original, and if characters or events are not mentioned, it is because in my view they were not sufficiently different from their London equivalent to call for comment.

Despite the all-American cast, and the introduction of a new opening song (which I'm not convinced is any better than the one in London), it is still the same funny, bubbly, and silly show which is there to be enjoyed by anyone prepared to obey Alan Ayckbourn's instructions and leave their brain outside.

The cast tried manfully to deal with the problem of speaking a foreign tongue—English—and by-and-large succeeded in producing a passable accent. John Scherer, as Bertie Wooster, struggled a little in the opening dialogue scenes, and I was preparing to dislike his performance when (possibly because he had one of Jeeves's specials offstage) things clicked into place, and he became much more convincing. The cast generally, though, tired a little towards the end, and their American pedigree was much more noticeable in the last half-hour or so.

On the night I went, I was able to enjoy a talk-back with the cast, from which only one member was missing, Donna Lynne Champlin, who played Honoria Glossop. I had thought that she was the weakest singer in the cast, her rendition of "That Was Nearly Us" lacking the drive and build-up which Lucy Tregear gives it in London, but it occurred to me that she might have been unwell, hence her non-appearance at the talk-back. Verdict on Honoria: Not proven.

I was also bemused once again about the casting of Bingo Little, although overall I preferred Randy Redd's rendition to the London equivalent. We Wodehouseans expect our Bingo to be a full-size Drone, not a weedy little shrimp, as both Bingos I have seen are. It was clear in London that this was for the purpose of the line "Things that mostly go over my head" in the title song,

at which cue Bertie and Gussie swing their arms over him, demonstrating how small he is. An elaborate justification for the casting, but at Goodspeed even this joke is wasted, for when the line came, Bingo was standing on a pedestal, towering over the other two. The cry goes round the theatre: Please can we have a Bingo we would recognise!

Emily Loesser, daughter of the late Frank, plays Stiffy with poise and aplomb in a manner so similar to that of London's Cathy Sara that they could swap theatres without need for rehearsal! Her duet with Stinker Pinker (who was perhaps physically lacking in breadth for one who was revealed as being capable of derailing a train by slamming its door) remains a musical highspot, with a visual gag drawing one of the biggest laughs of the night. The same apparently low-tech props as in London appear generally to good effect, although the layout of the theatre did not permit those used during "Travel Hopefully" to work as well as in the round at Scarborough, the musical's birthplace.

What about Jeeves? The perennial question. My conclusion is that, as with the London Jeeves, the role was performed with great dignity, competence and at times flair, but it is a pity about his appearance. He still looks at least ten years too old. The general public doesn't care; when the Wodehouse world closes its eyes it shouldn't care either!

Overall the show was most enjoyable. About 30-40% of the audience stayed for the talk-back, which strikes me as a high proportion, and half of those indicated they were familiar with Plum's books. Others said familiarity didn't matter, as it was no more difficult to get into the plot than with any other play. But the informality of the opening (with the Rev Stinker Pinker greeting some of the audience at the door as in a real Church Hall performance) confused some members of the audience, who thought it was the real local clergyman and started putting their hands in their pocket when he addressed them from the stage! Verisimilitude, to use one of Jeeves's, and an effect that outdoes the London original.

In order to make a song a smash, it is not enough for the singer to be on top of his form. The accompanist, also, must do his bit. And the primary thing a singer expects from his accompanist is that he shall play the accompaniment of the song he is singing.

"The Masked Troubadour"

Lord Emsworth and Others, 1937

MORE ON *BY JEEVES*

We have received two newspaper reviews of the American production of *By Jeeves*. Rather than print them in their entirety, we offer herewith a couple of selected paragraphs:

By Ben Brantley

From *The New York Times* of November 12, 1996.

By Jeeves, directed by Ayckbourn, is rife with the clunky schoolboy humor that is dear to the British heart and a strong argument for avoiding gatherings of hearty, chortling Englishmen. These elements are also evident in Wodehouse's fiction, but they're modulated by the ironic silkiness of his prose. Much of what makes the Jeeves stories so comforting is that they are tales told by an idiot, the rich, the slothful Bertie Wooster, who is utterly dependent on his peerless manservant, Jeeves. Even when the action is frenzied, Bertie's voice isn't: it's endearingly fuzzy, suggesting a cushion of languor, money and good old stupidity between him and the world.

By Ed Siegel

From *The Boston Globe* of November 14, 1996.

If one were to simply describe the Wodehouse stories, there'd be precious little to laugh about. The humor is in the telling, not the tales, and neither Ayckbourn nor the cast members are gifted enough farceurs to do justice to the telling. John Scherer as Bertie, for example, lacks all the self-confident dopiness that made Fry such a wacky Wooster. [He means Laurie, of course—AD] There's about as much inspired physical comedy on the Goodspeed stage as there was at the Republican National Convention. Richard Kline is a solidly stolid Jeeves, though not good enough to make up for the show's general lack of charisma. The downfall, though, isn't with the cast. The women, particularly Emily Loesser, are quite good. The low-tech, or no-tech, stagecraft is refreshing for a Lloyd Webber show—the idea is that the stage manager has to improvise with things like a sofa and cartons made up to look like a car. After a while, though, it's simply an advertisement for Ayckbourn's lack of imagination.

BETTING ON BERTIE OFF-BROADWAY

By Ward Morehouse III

From *The New York Post* of November 15, 1996.

Betting that Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical *By Jeeves* won't come to Broadway for at least the next several months, the producers of *Betting on Bertie*, which is also based on the "Jeeves" stories by the late P.G. Wodehouse, said *Bertie* will definitely open off-Broadway Feb. 13. "We want to beat the mad crunch of shows coming in this spring and also don't want to be a *By Jeeves* after-thought," said lead *Bertie* producer Michael Frasier yesterday.

The American premier of *By Jeeves*, Lloyd Webber's new version of his 1975 show *Jeeves*, got mixed reviews at the Goodspeed Opera House in Connecticut, where it opened last week. Sources close to the British impresario said that if it had been an unqualified hit, it would almost certainly come to Broadway before the end of the current season early next May. But other Broadway insiders say the fact that it wasn't—coupled with Lloyd Webber's own preoccupation with his other new musical, *Whistle Down the Wind*, scheduled to open on Broadway in April—has given some unexpected breathing room for *Betting on Bertie*. Both shows chronicle the misadventures of Bertram Wooster and Jeeves, his faithful English manservant. Wodehouse began working on *Betting on Bertie* more than 30 years ago. In the early 1970s, British producer Harold Fielding had the rights to present it in London when Lloyd Webber brought the rights to the characters of Bertie and Jeeves for a musical he was planning.



The February 13 opening date in the above article depended on the availability of a theater. The latest word is that *Betting on Bertie* is "circling the airport" and hoping to land in an Off-Broadway theater this spring. Stay tuned for details—one of which, by the way, is the good news that Simon Jones (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *Brideshead Revisited*) has joined the cast as Jeeves. We have also just learned that Jack Lee, who recently conducted a revival of *My Fair Lady* on Broadway and has other successes to his credit, has signed on as musical director.

—AD

CHICAGO! (AND ALL THAT JAZZ!)

The 1997 Wodehouse Society convention, produced by the Chicago Accident Syndicate

Correspondence: S. F. Ukridge, chez Garrison, 1220 Simpson, Evanston IL 60201

WHAT HO. WHAT HO! It's less than a year now to the next Wodehouse Society convention, lads and lassies, and the Chicago Accident Syndicate is working away feverishly, like a Welsh Rarebit coming to a boil, to put together an enjoyable and memorable convention weekend for you! Below, we endeavor to answer some of the questions you may have at this juncture, getting at the *res* of the thing, as it were.

TELL ME THE DATES AGAIN? Thursday October 2nd through Sunday the 5th, 1997. A very pleasant time in Chicagoland, when Indian summer gently caresses the brow, and cooling breezes from the Lake put thoughts of boat-races and policemen's helmets into a young man's mind.

AND WHERE DID YOU SAY IT WAS? At the Hotel Inter-Continental, 505 North Michigan Avenue—that glamorous part of Chicago's *fauborg* known far and wide as "The Magnificent Mile." And wait until you see the Inter-Continental. It was built in 1929 as a skyscraper clubhouse for the Medina Shrine (making it the place where Laurel and Hardy came for *their* convention in *Sons of the Desert*). Those Shriners denied themselves nothing, making the oojah-cum-spiff Inter-Continental one of the most atmospheric venues for the Wodehouse Society's conventions you've seen so far—something like Hearst-Castle-on-the-Lake, if you take my drift.

SHOULD I STAY THERE. TOO? We certainly think so. You can stay in the New Tower, where all is bright and clean and full of modern decor and conveniences; or, if you're feeling that half-measures are not what's called for that weekend, stay in the Original Tower, where the rooms and furnishings deliberately recall the 'days of the Drones.

HOW DO I RESERVE A ROOM? The toll-free number in the States and Canada is (800) 628-2112. From England it's (081) 847-2277 in London and (0345) 581-444 outside London. Be sure to tell them to give you the Wodehouse Society convention rate!!!

AND HOW DO I GET TO CHICAGO? Few destinations could be easier. Chicago is the transportation hub of America, if not the entire jolly old world. A multitude of airlines serve its two aerodromes, Midway and O'Hare, or Amtrak can bring you directly into Chicago's splendidly restored Union Station. You can even drive to Chicago! But whether you're coming from East or West, North or South, England or the Orient, you can get to Chicago easily and economically.

WHAT IF I'VE NEVER BEEN TO CHICAGO BEFORE? Come early, and enjoy one of America's most exciting cities! The Chicago Accident Syndicate is assembling an attractive package of ideas for things to see and do, known as "Uncle Fred's Day on the Town." Browsing and sluicing, jazz and blues, sightseeing and shopping, major-league sports,

cultural hotspots that Florence Craye herself would approve of, plus Wodehousean treats like the O.M.'s Golf Tournament and boating on Lake Michigan and the Chicago River. If you've never been to Chicago before, don't miss this opportunity!

THEN WHEN DOES THE BALLY CONVENTION ITSELF GET UNDERWAY? On the afternoon of Friday October 3rd, going until late morning on Sunday the 5th, tra-la.

ANYTHING SPECIAL TRANSPRING? The convention programme will be a fizzy cocktail mixed from ingredients old and new, familiar and exotic, serious and comic. We will have papers on this and that fruity aspect of the Master and his *oeuvre* by some of the great names in the Scholarship, and also by some newcomers whose progress you will watch with interest afterwards. Not to mention the ever-popular Business Meeting.

WHAT. JUST A LOT OF TALK? By no means, old thing, by no means! There will be Games, as usual. There will be the infamous Kazoo Chorus, and songfests around the old 'Eighty-eight. Dealers in Wodehousean books will tempt you with their wares. A Mastermind tournament, conducted by that canny Wodehousean mastermind, Tony Ring, will pit Wodehouse Society chapters and challenge teams against each other, to see which one takes the Blue Ribbon home. There will be the Saturday Night Gala Banquet. Costumes are heartily encouraged that night, with prizes for the best and cleverest. The weekend will wrap up with the tissue-restoring Sunday Brunch. And there will be some entirely new wheezes this year.

REALLY? LIKE WHAT? For one thing, a professional theatrical production. Throwing in with the Accident Syndicate is Chicago's City Lit Theater, which to the delight of theater-goers here has produced a new play based on a Jeeves & Wooster novel every year for the last five years. Mark Richard, City Lit's artistic director, who plays Bertie Wooster in these sparkling productions, has agreed to stage a special evening of Wodehouse for us the Friday night of the convention. P.G.W.'s characters and incidents will come marvelously to life before your eyes.—And then there will be The Great Poetry Handicap, your chance to add to the world's treasury of verse.

ER—POETRY. YOU SAY? Yes, indeed: Impressed by various efforts in *Plum Lines*, we think a poetry contest would be the cat's meow. Full details will appear in the next issue of *Plum Lines*; suffice it for now to say that entries may take any form, from ode to sonnet to limerick to haiku—as dignified as the Senior Conservative Club, or as madcap as Uncle Fred—as long as they do not exceed thirty lines, and take as their subject matter P.G.W. and/or his deathless characters and settings.

ALL RIGHT. HOW DOES ONE SIGN UP? About time you asked! Simply fill out the registration form inside this issue of *Plum Lines*, and send it to us along with your oof. The sooner the better, since the convention rate goes up on April 30th not to mention the Banquet and Sunday Brunch as well. And by registering before April 30th, you will be automatically entered in the convention's "Money in the Street" raffle. (If your Aunt Agatha won't let you come, for a mere \$25 we will send you the convention mailings and loot, and you will still be eligible to enter The Great Poetry Handicap.)

THANK YOU, JEEVES

By Dan Garrison

Thank You, Jeeves is on at the Ivanhoe at 750 W. Wellington Ave in Chicago through February 2, and if the mischances of Wodehouse theater elsewhere are leaving you feeling a bit piqued, you have every reason to hie yourself to The Windy City for a little balm in Gilead. Of course, I'm talking about the good old City Lit Theater, whose artistic director Mark Richard TWS plays Bertie to Page Hearn's Jeeves. Here's what the *Chicago Tribune's* Lawrence Bommer had to say about opening night:

Jeeves and Bertie, the infallible valet and his imperfect master, spark industrial-strength laughs in *Thank You Jeeves*, City Lit Theater's latest dramatization of a novel by that master of merriment, P. G. Wodehouse.

As always, Mark Richard's swift-moving adaptation and Sandra Grand's sparkling staging mete out the tangy slang and cascading crises [easy there, Larry!]. Anchoring the farce is the series' most endearing element, the child-like dependence that ties Bertie, a clueless upper-class twit, to Jeeves, a superior who only seems a servant.

As ever, Bertie gets embroiled in scrapes from which only resourceful Jeeves can (barely) save him. This time he must avoid being ensnared into a forced marriage with a former flame, an American heiress who's jealously courted by Bertie's hot-headed chum and fearfully guarded by her millionaire father. It hurts that Bertie seems haplessly alone when Jeeves gives notice rather than endure Bertie's wretched recitals on the "banjolele."

Throw in an overzealous constabulary, an interfering society doctor, a heavy-drinking socialist butler, and a blackmailing brat—and Jeeves seems terribly underpaid. (The one caricature missing is Bertie's ferocious, umbrella-swinging aunt.)

Quicker to turn comic than last year's *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*, *Thank You, Jeeves* bogs down a bit in the rather thick second act. Happily, the combustible comedy never flickers. Mark Richard's Bertie, who drolly narrates the mayhem (and plays a mean banjo), remains a marvel of comic deflation, deadpan asides, and stiff-upper-lip chaos. (At the drop of a difficulty, Bertie's body suddenly dispenses with his brain.) Page Hearn deftly plays both the virtuous valet and his anarchist successor.

Fiendishly funny are Joao de Sousa's deeply shallow

lover and Henry Michael Odum and Wendi Weber as the filthy-rich and perky-loud Americans. And watch how cleverly silhouettes change the scenes in John Murbach's Deco set.



A note from Mark Richards of City Lit:

A *Daily Telegraph* reviewer recently wrote that "All Wodehouse adaptations are handicapped by the fact that they have to jettison his marvelous narrative . . ." On the contrary—Wodehousians world-wide should know that at City Lit, Bertie's narration, the *sine qua non* of Wodehouse's style, is left intact, making our adaptations the most genuine stage versions of the master's work to date.

—OM

PLUM TO PETER UPDATE

There is good news for the New Year from Peter Schwed: Copies of *Plum to Peter*, his limited edition of Wodehouse letters, are still available! As reported in the last edition of *Plum Lines*, this lovely volume contains facsimiles of letters written by Plum to Peter, who was his editor at Simon and Schuster. Prefaced by Peter's article entitled "Wodehouse's Editor: A Painless Job", which was written for the 1981 centenary celebration, this book is a must for any Plummie's library. Bound in a beautiful Royal Blue Eurohide, with gold lettering on the cover, it has been produced in a limited edition of 500, with each copy numbered and signed by Peter Schwed himself. Peter will also be glad to pen in an inscription, if you wish. Simply include a note with your order, specifying the wording.

Plum to Peter is already a collector's item that will increase in value in years to come. In fact, it is a pretty nifty addition to anybody's collection, and well worth the price of \$33.50 per copy, which includes shipping and handling. For orders outside the U.S., the price is \$37.50.

We highly recommend this lovely and elegant book to you, and suggest that you don't delay—place your order now! Make your check payable to Peter Schwed and send your order to:

A DINNER IN HOLLAND

By Helen Murphy

Helen recently attended the First P.G. Wodehouse International Memorial Dinner in Oud Zuilen (near Utrecht), Holland. Following is her report of that very successful occasion.

About eighty-six of us attended the Wodehouse Memorial dinner near Utrecht on Saturday, 12th October. I was the sole representative from the UK, so was feeling very ambassadorial. I had been thinking of a long weekend in the Netherlands, which I had never visited, and what could have been a better excuse than the invitation to all PGW society members conveyed in the pages of *Nothing Serious*, the Dutch society newsletter? The president of the Swedish society, Jacob Bagge, and several Belgians were also present. I can only say that those of us who were guests from other countries could not possibly have been received better or more kindly. I was acquainted with a few people already, but the pre-dinner champagne and mingling gave ample opportunity to meet others, including the handsomely (and justifiably) kilted Henk Meier, editor of *Nothing Serious*, and the magnificent Erica Terpstra, fittingly known as their "Aunt Dahlia." Mrs. Terpstra also happens to be Holland's Health, Welfare, and Sports Minister, as well as an ex-Olympian.

The society was kind enough to seat me and the Swedish representative at the top table with Mrs. Terpstra and the other speakers, and asked me if I would like to toast our Queen Mother, their patroness. Of course I was honored to do so, and was glad to pass on the greetings from the U.K. society, the international one, and the Drone Rangers chapter, on Toni Rudersdorf's behalf.

The dinner was beautifully prepared and thoroughly justified the Anatole award presented to the chef. Readers of *The Code of the Woosters* will recognize the following dishes as part of the dream menu concocted by Bertie and Aunt Dahlia when he thinks he is going to spend twenty-eight days in the jug: *salade d'endive et de céleri avec saumon mariné et caviar frais*; *timbale de ris de veau à la Toulisiane avec pointes d'asperges*; *carré d'agneau aux légumes à la grèque*; *le bombe Nero*, *le café et friandises*.

The dinner was accompanied by various wines of distinction and followed by brandy and port from the proprietor of Mulliner's, the Amsterdam bar where the society was founded in 1981 and meets regularly. The

proprietor also presented Mr. Bagge and me each with a bottle of Jeeves Gin. Anyone who wishes a more detailed description of the feast has only to ask in order to fall into a foaming heap of envy. Some of the friandises at the end of the meal consisted by pieces of fudge in the shape of books with the initials PGW written in chocolate on the cover. A lot of people had been to an awful lot of trouble!

There were some very funny speeches, the unveiling of a new painting of Plum which may hang in Mulliner's, and a good deal of singing and general revelry. Much of this was in English, a supremely courteous gesture, and in addition our hosts had seated excellent interpreters beside us non-Dutch speakers, for which we were most grateful.

The next day Hans and Marian Poot and their family took me on a tour, ending up with a walk through Amsterdam and its beautiful flower market. We also paid a visit to Mulliner's, where whom should we meet but the Swedish representative again! I was even driven to the Hook of Holland, rather than taking the train.

What can I say? It was a super first experience of a country and the best traditions of browsing, sluicing, and international good fellowship at which Plummies seem to excel. Thank you, to all of them!

CHAPTERS CORNER

If you have felt there was something missing from *Plum Lines* in the past couple of issues but couldn't quite put your finger on it, the editors can tell you, albeit with reddened faces. The Chapters Corner has been shamefully neglected, and at a time when our chapters are deserving of for their activities. This is only right to Corner back as to assign one of busier than ever and prominent notice Wodehousian acting the case it seems bring the Chapters a regular feature and the editors as its caretaker. The short straw has been drawn by Aunt Dahlia. Chapters, take notice! Please add Auntie to your mailing lists for newsletters and reports of chapter activities, and she will see to it that you receive the appropriate mention in *Plum Lines*.



MR. MULLINER AND HIS RELATIVES, PART II

By Robert Creamer

This is the conclusion of the two-part article begun in the last issue of *Plum Lines* about the justly celebrated Mulliner family. It's the result of a great deal of careful work and is, I think, a considerable achievement: for the first time we know who was who (or in a few doubtful cases, who was *probably* who) in that vast family tree. Bob Creamer has described, among the tangled leaves and branches, relationships hitherto unsuspected. I wonder what a diagram of that tree would look like. —OM

Cats Will Be Cats

Lancelot Mulliner again. Will marry Gladys Bingley.

Note. Uncle Theodore, Bishop of Bongo-Bongo, is not a Mulliner. When Lancelot at his uncle's request visits him at Widdrington Manor, Bottleby-in-the-Vale, Hants, home of Lady Widdrington, widow of Sir George Widdrington, CBE, in the guise of a lawyer, he uses his own name, Lancelot Mulliner. Uncle Theodore, who is fobbing Lancelot off as his legal advisor in an attempt to avoid marriage with the forceful Lady Widdrington, wishes that Lancelot had used a more legal-sounding name, like Polkinghorne or Gooch or Withers. If Uncle Theodore had been Lancelot's father's brother, his original surname would have been Mulliner, something which the marriage-bent Lady Widdrington surely would have known by now. But Lancelot's surname "Mulliner" does not seem to impress Lady Widdrington one way or the other, so we must assume that Uncle Theodore's original surname was something other than Mulliner. Rather than being Lancelot's father's brother he is Lancelot's mother's brother and, alas, not a Mulliner.

The Knightly Quest of Mervyn

33. **MERVYN MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's first cousin, once removed. Nephew of Lord Blotsam of Blotsam Castle, Blotsam Regis, Shropshire, and son of:

34. — — **Mulliner**, Mr Mulliner's cousin.

Mervyn is possibly a bigger chump than Mr. Mulliner's nephew Archibald. Likes to dance. Likes to eat strawberries. Loves and loses Clarice Mallaby.

Nor is Lord Blotsam, Mervyn's uncle, a Mulliner. Significantly, he sends Mervyn "the Curse of the Blotsams," not the curse of the Mulliners. Moreover, in touching on Lord Blotsam's family history Mr. Mulliner is critical, calling it in rather loud taste to stick

enemies' heads on spikes along the outer battlements. Mr. Mulliner is occasionally mildly critical of individual Mulliners but never of the Mulliner family or its history.

Mervyn's father is not named, but Mervyn is probably the older of the two sons of Mr. Mulliner's cousin Rupert, whose younger son is Anselm (see "Anselm Gets His Chance").

The Voice from the Past

35. **SACHEVERELL MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew.

A delicate youth, removed from Harborough College shortly after his 15th birthday and educated at home by a private tutor. Likes Proust, ballet, Japanese prints and James Joyce.

Shy, mild, shrinking until he takes a correspondence course on "How To Acquire Complete Self-Confidence and an Iron Will." Now will marry Muriel Branksome, only daughter of Lieut.-Colonel Sir Redvers Branksome of Branksome Towers, near Market Branksome Station.

Open House

36. **EUSTACE MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew.

Godson of Lord Knubble of Knopp, who uses his influence to get him a post with the British Embassy in Switzerland. Awarded Order of the Crimson Edelweiss, Third Class. Not terribly good with pet birds and dogs. In love with, successively and unsuccessfully, Beatrice Watterson and Marcella Tyrrwhitt. Favorite nephew of his aunt:

37. **GEORGIANA Mulliner (?) BEAZLEY-BEAZLEY**, Mr Mulliner's sister(?), who lives at Wittleford-cum-Bagsley-on-Sea and is the relict of the late Sir Cuthbert Beazley-Beazley, Bart.

Note. In speaking of Eustace, Mr Mulliner refers to "his Aunt Georgiana." In talking with Mr Mulliner, Eustace refers to her as "Aunt Georgiana," not "my" aunt Georgiana. Such usages could apply to an aunt on either side of Eustace's family. There is no further evidence either way but the 50/50 possibility exists that Aunt Georgiana is Eustace's father's sister, not his mother's, and is therefore Mr. Mulliner's sister. Flip that florin.

Best Seller

38. **EGBERT MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew.

Assistant editor, "The Weekly Booklover," novelist, short-story writer. Understands the first responsibility of an author who has received an advance from a publisher: cash the check. Will marry and ghost-write for Evangeline Pembury, author of *Parted Ways*.

Strychnine In The Soup

39. **CYRIL MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew.

Interior decorator. Fragile, delicate, vulnerable to ailments. Mystery story fan.

Wins out over Lester Mapledurham (pronounced Mum) for the hand of Amelia Bassett, daughter of Lady Bassett, big-game hunter who bears a resemblance to Wallace Beery and Victor McLaglen and who is also a mystery story fan.

Gala Night

Wilfred Mulliner and Augustine Mulliner from earlier stories ("A Slice of Life," "Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo," "The Bishop's Move"). No other Mulliners appear in this story.

Monkey Business

40. **MONTROSE MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's distant cousin.

Assistant director, Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corp. Excessively timid by nature but gives bananas to gorilla. Engaged to marry Rosalie Beamish.

The Nodder

41. **WILMOT MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's distant connection.

A nodder (less than a yes-man) at Perfecto-Zizzbaum. Loves Mabel Potter, an expert on cuckoos.

The Juice of an Orange

Wilmot Mulliner again. Is now engaged to Mabel Potter.

The Rise of Minna Nordstrom

The only Mulliner in this story is Mr. Mulliner himself.

The Castaways

42. **BULSTRODE MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew, younger son of:

43. **JOSEPH Mulliner**, Mr Mulliner's brother.

Bulstrode is a screenwriter for Perfecto-Zizzbaum. Betrothed to Mabelle Ridgway. Becomes involved with Genevieve Bootle, fiancee of Ed Murgatroyd, Chicago bootlegger.

Note: Bulstrode is Joseph's younger son, which indicates Joseph has one older son, probably Mr. Mulliner's nephew Lancelot ("Came The Dawn"), the poet turned Hollywood actor.

Archibald and the Masses

Archibald Mulliner again ("The Reverent Wooing of Archibald"). Paltering with the truth to say he is one of the quick-witted Mulliners. A Socialist sympathizer, briefly. His man Meadows is a member of The Red Dawn.

Visits Bootleton East, has bread thrown at him, eats fat reluctantly.

The Code of the Mulliners

Archibald Mulliner again, revealed as the son of:

44. **SIR SHOLTO MULLINER**, M.V.O., Mr. Mulliner's late brother(?), of whom Archibald's mother, Lady (Wilhelmina) Mulliner, is the relict. Archibald worries about insanity in the family but will marry Aurelia Cammerleigh.

Note. It is not stated but Sir Sholto, as the father of Mr. Mulliner's nephew, must be Mr. Mulliner's brother.

The Fiery Wooing of Mordred

45. **MORDRED MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew.

Poet. Comely, lovable, sensitive, large fawn-like eyes, delicately chiseled features, excellent teeth. Uses matches and paraffin well. Will marry Annabelle Sprockett-Sprockett, only daughter of Sir Murgatroyd and Lady (Aurelia) Sprockett-Sprockett, formerly of Smattering Hall, Lower Smattering-on-the-Wissel, Worcestershire, which Mordred has presumably burned to the ground.

Buried Treasure

46. **BRANCEPETH MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew.

Artist, portrait painter, animated cartoon creator. Will marry Muriel, daughter of Lord Bromborough, of Rumpling Hall, Lower Rumpling, Norfolk, whose moustache he inadvertently burns off.

Note. I assume that the incendiary Brancepeth and the incendiary Mordred are brothers.

Anselm Gets His Chance

47. **ANSELM MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's first cousin, once removed. Younger son of:

48. **RUPERT Mulliner**, Mr Mulliner's cousin.

Anselm is curate of the parish of Rising Mattock in Hampshire, under the vicar, the Rev. Sidney Gooch.

Inherited stamp album from his godfather, the recently deceased Mr. J. G. Beenstock. Will marry Myrtle Jellaby, niece of Sir Leopold Jellaby, O.B.E., local squire and millionaire philatelist.

Note: As suggested above, Rupert's older son is probably Mervyn Mulliner, the strawberry quester.

The Right Approach

49. **AUGUSTUS MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew.

A sometime horseplayer, good to his godmother (unnamed), who likes bazaars. Loves Hermione Brimble, daughter of the late Bishop of Stortford (who died, I gather, some time after his visit to Goresby-on-the-Ouse in "Unpleasantness at Bludleigh Manor"). She lives on Wimbledon Common with her aunt Beatrice, Mrs Willoughby Gudgeon, who knows:

50. **REV. THEOPHILUS MULLINER**, Mr Mulliner's nephew (?), who is Bishop of Bognor and Augustus's cousin. Or so says Augustus, buttering up the aunt, adding that he always calls him "Uncle Phil."

Note: Because Augustus is a Mulliner, all of whom, Mr. Mulliner has told us, love the truth and hate any form of deception, we take Augustus's statement at face value and welcome Theophilus to the family.

Big Business

51. **REGINALD MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew.

Singer of "Ol' Man River." Son of:

52. — — **Mulliner**, Mr Mulliner's late brother.

Lives modestly in a bungalow at Lower Smattering-on-the-Wissel in Worcestershire, the site of Smattering Hall, the home of the Sprockett-Sprocketts which Mordred Mulliner apparently set fire to in "The Fiery Wooing of Mordred."

Not strong in the head, not very gifted, but like all the Mulliners, extraordinarily handsome. Inherits £50,000 from a cousin in the Argentine:

53. — — **Mulliner** (?), Mr. Mulliner's nephew (?).

Reginald will marry Amanda Biffen, niece of her guardian, Sir Jasper Todd, retired financier, of Wissel Hall, who was thinking of burning down the Hall for the insurance money before Reginald's £50,000 came into sight. Amanda plays tennis at Knubble Towers and for a time is engaged to Percy, Lord Knubble of Knopp.

Note: The Florin Law applies to the Argentine cousin, since it's 50/50 he comes from Reginald's father's side of the family.

Lots of relationships pop up in this story. Lord

Knubble of Knopp of Knubble Towers may not be a blood relative, but he seems remarkably close to the family. Mr. Mulliner's cousin Cedric lunches at his house in London in "The Story of Cedric." Lord Knubble is godfather to Mr. Mulliner's nephew Eustace in "Open House" and uses his influence to get Eustace a position in the British Embassy in Switzerland. Knubble Towers is in Lower Smattering-on-the-Wissel, where Mr. Mulliner's nephew Mordred wooed and won Annabelle Sprockett-Sprockett in "The Fiery Wooing of Mordred." And here in "Big Business" is Mr. Mulliner's nephew Reginald living in Lower Smattering and wooing Amanda Biffen away from Lord Knubble, her sometime fiance.

The juxtaposition of Reginald and Mordred in Lower Smattering, and of Reginald and Eustace with Lord Knubble, and of Reginald, Mordred and Brancepeth (who torched a moustache in "Buried Treasure") with arson (planned, achieved or accidental) makes me feel the four are brothers, and if so they are probably brothers of the oddball Archibald, whose father in "The Code of the Mulliners" is the late Sir Sholto Mulliner. Tie this in with the intelligence that Reginald's father in "Big Business" is a "late brother" of Mr. Mulliner's, and it seems an open-and-shut case. And the father of George the stammerer in "The Truth About George" is also a late brother. Add George to the group.

Lots of odd children in Sholto's family. No wonder Archibald thought in "Code of the Mulliners" that his mother was looney.

George and Alfred

54. **GEORGE MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew (the third nephew named George).

55. **ALFRED MULLINER**, Mr. Mulliner's nephew.

Twin sons of:

56. — — **Mulliner**, Mr Mulliner's brother.

George is a screenwriter, Alfred a professional magician, or conjurer.

Another Christmas Carol

57. **EGBERT Mulliner** (?), Mr. Mulliner's cousin.

42, very fat. As a boy, showed no signs of possessing any intelligence whatsoever. Entered Civil Service. Wants to be interior decorator. Nephew of his fat and extraordinarily rich aunt:

58. **SERENA Mulliner**?, Mr Mulliner's aunt (?).

Note. Egbert Mulliner, the cousin, is not the father of Egbert Mulliner, the nephew in "Best Seller," whose father is one of Mr. Mulliner's brothers. The Florin Flip again does double-duty here, first making cousin

Egbert, whose last name is not given, a Mulliner, the son of a Mulliner father, and making his Aunt Serena an aunt on his father's Mulliner side, which makes her Mr. Mulliner's sister. In short, Egbert and Aunt Serena *could* be Mulliners all the way, and both are.

These parlays are difficult to pull off at Ally Pally or Goodwood, but they're a dead cert with the good old florin.

From A Detective's Notebook

Adrian Mulliner again (from "The Smile That Wins").

Private investigator.

Note: This story is a distinct oddity in that it is the only Mulliner story in which Mr. Mulliner does not appear.

Of the 56 relatives mentioned, 43 bear the surname Mulliner or can be reasonably assumed to have that name (Mr. Mulliner's brothers, for example). Seven of the 13 others are definitely related to Mr. Mulliner (the young second cousin, cousin Egbert, Lady Wickham, Bobbie Wickham, Agnes Flack's mother, Agnes Flack, and James Rodman). Stretching—florin flipping—gives us the other 6 (Aunt Marcia, her son Wilfred, Aunt Elizabeth, Aunt Georgiana, Aunt Serena, and the Argentine cousin).

Only 4 of the 56 (James Rodman, Agnes Flack, Bobbie Wickham, and Aunt Marcia's son Wilfred) have original surnames other than Mulliner, although the Florin Law is needed to give 9 others the Mulliner surname.

Mr. Mulliner's first name is never revealed. We do not know if he is married or ever has been married, but it seems unlikely that he's a married man now, not with the time he spends at the Angler's Rest. He never mentions children of his own. He never speaks of his father or mother, and mentions only 3 people from Mulliner generations earlier than his own (the Sieur de Moulinières, Uncle William, and Aunt Serena, slightly stretched into the role of Mr. Mulliner's aunt). He mentions only 6 relatives beyond first cousins (Montrose and Wilmot Mulliner, James Rodman, Agnes Flack and her mother, and the young second cousin).

Because all his first cousins are Mulliners by name, they all must be children of Mr. Mulliner's uncles, his father's brothers. Yet he mentions only 1 uncle, William. What else can we assume but that William had 8 children—not only his eldest son, John San Francisco Earthquake, but, I suggest, Clarence the angry photographer, Cedric the fussy clothes-horse, the tyrannical Lady Wickham, the innocuous Marcia, the dead Ed-

ward, the living Rupert, and the rotund Egbert.

Uncle William Mulliner is thus the grandfather of Lady Wickham's daughter Bobbie, Marcia's son Wilfred, Edward's son Lancelot, and Rupert's sons Mervyn and Anselm.

Mr. Mulliner's florin-flipped sisters, Elizabeth and Georgiana Beazley-Beazley, apparently have no children, or at least none that Mr. Mulliner seems interested in talking about. The 25 nephews and 1 niece are the progeny of his brothers.

It is clear from the stories that two of Mr. Mulliner's brothers, Wilfred and Joseph, have only 2 sons each, none of them named George. But Mr. Mulliner does have 3 nephews named George. Each of these Georges must have a separate father, because no father gives two or three of his sons the same name. Thus there have to be 3 other brothers of Mr. Mulliner in addition to Wilfred and Joseph. I have suggested that Mr. Mulliner's dead brother Sholto is the father of George the stammerer. That leaves 2 other brothers, each with a son named George, and I have posited a 6th brother. To the 4 brothers other than Wilfred and Joseph I have distributed sons (and a daughter) according to character, personality traits and other occult reasons.

Wilfred, the Buck-U-Uppo man, is the father of 2 sons: Percival and Ferdinand (the small and the large), and no others.

Joseph is also the father of 2: his younger son Bulstrode and, I suggest, Lancelot, both of whom went to Hollywood.

Sholto, the dead brother, has 6 sons: Archibald the hen imitator, and, I suggest, George the stammerer, Reginald the Ol' Man River singer, Eustace the pet mangler, Mordred the fire starter, and Brancepeth the moustache burner, these latter four being linked via Lord Knubble or Lower Smattering or arson. All 6 have a tendency toward the bizarre.

Brother Number 4, unnamed, has 6 sons: George the doctor and Frederick the egg-hater and, I suggest, Ignatius the tobacco-loving artist, Adrian the detective, Egbert the editor, and Theophilus the bishop. All 6 appear to be capable, accomplished and sure of themselves.

Brother Number 5, unnamed, has 6 sons and 1 daughter: the twins George and Alfred, and, I suggest, the Buck-U-Upped Augustine, Augustine's lying little brother, Charlotte the shootist, Augustus the horse-player and conniver, and the Argentine cousin. All 7 are somewhat daring and adventurous.

Brother Number 6, unnamed, has 3 sons: Osbert the jade collector, Sacheverell the esthete, and Cyril the interior decorator. All 3 are on the gentle side.

That just about does it. I trust that these revelations will prove sedative.

A FEW QUICK ONES

Susan Cohen reports that **Mary Blood**, widow of TWS founder Bill Blood, died on September 5, 1996. A resident of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, she was 85 years old. Bill died in the autumn of 1991, a few days before our New York convention. Bill and Mary were the prime movers of our society in the early years after its founding in 1980. Bill was untiring in seeking out and signing up PGW fans, and Mary kept the membership list and the financial records. They gave us our society, and we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

Bill Carpenter writes:

Please allow me to express my congratulations on your appointment of Elin Woodger as co-editor. I am one of her greatest admirers, and yet, without getting personal about it, wouldn't she be better described as the new "Editrix"? I recognize that "trix" words are not to everyone's taste, but "executrix" and "aviatrix" have an honourable history. A small group of us, trixists to the core, are still arguing about the status of "mentrix" and "mator" (a male "matrix"), but we all agree that "editrix" is perfectly proper. Or perhaps we just need to eat more fish.

To which Elin adds, "Just call me Trixie."

Kim Kleinman found that the Oct. 23, 1996, *Evening Standard* offered a list of "The 100 Books That Every-one Should Read." The selection was made by their literary editor, A. N. Wilson, who also served on the Booker Prize selection committee.

"As a loyal Wodehousian," Kim notes, "my response to the headline was to wonder who wrote the other six books. However, we were shut out. This grievous omission was duly noted by one of the celebrity respondents. John Mortimer, who had read 75 of Wilson's 100, commented:

The books I think should be on the list are Chekhov's *Complete Plays*, Oscar Wilde's *Complete Plays*, Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* and *Great Expectations*, which are both better than *David Copperfield*, *A Jeeves Omnibus* by P. G. Wodehouse, and *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins.

"I mean to say, what?" responded Kim.

Tony Ring checks in with the very welcome news that the Scarborough production of *By Jeeves* has won the American Express British Regional Theatre Award for 1996. It's an award for the best musical of the year outside of London. It's a great pleasure to see a version

of Our Hero's work thus recognized.

And from the Goodspeed Opera House comes word that *By Jeeves* has been extended through January 19, 1997, at the Norma Terris Theater in Chester, Connecticut—good news indeed for us Plummies! On November 16, 1996, a group of thirty Plummies from six states in the northeast US gathered in Chester for dinner and a night of *By Jeeves*. Read Auntie's report of this event elsewhere in this issue of *Plum Lines*.

Tony Ring sends news that six old movies based on Wodehouse stories were shown at the National Film Theatre in London during November and December of 1996. They ranged from *Brother Alfred* of 1932 to *The Girl on the Boat* of 1961. Tony promises "a comprehensive review [for *Plum Lines*], as I will be attending, weather permitting, all but two of the showings." Ah, the sacrifices some heroes make for Art!

British television did its bit and more to further the Cause in the same two months: six Wodehouse programs made up of various TV shows of the past.

Tom Wells noted an amazing anatomical feat on the part of Beach the butler in the first American (Little, Brown, 1933) edition of *Heavy Weather*. On the second page of Chapter Eighteen: "There was a soft note in the butler's fruity voice. He drew up the toe of his left shoe and rather coyly scratched his left calf with it." The first English edition got it right (right calf, that is), and so did the reprints from Little, Brown.

o m

The Oldest Member



—who (with Aunt Dahlia) wishes you a Happy New Year with lots of time to read Wodehouse stories.

SOMETHING NEW

Norma Frank of TWS and Mystery Books offers an unusual number of inexpensive Wodehouse books. She writes as follows:

We discovered to our surprise, at a recent TWS meeting, that many US members of the society were having trouble finding reasonably priced copies of the works of the Master. Now, we own a bookstore that carries books by Plum and we personally own copies of most of them, so it never occurred to us that other people were so dreadfully deprived. We came home and did some investigating. The result is the following two lists, one of British audio tapes and the other of paperback books. All of these are currently available to us. For the most part, the prices are the ones we have to charge for books imported from the UK. However, where we could get a book in the US, the price reflects that and is lower than it would be for an imported book. Also, if we can get a used copy of a given title, it will be cheaper.

Audio tapes

Blandings Castle \$17.98
Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit \$15.98
Leave It to Psmith \$17.98
Pelican at Blandings \$17.98
Right Ho Jeeves \$38.98
Uncle Dynamite \$15.98
Uncle Fred in Springtime \$17.98

Paperback books:

Adventures of Sally \$11.00
Big Money \$8.95
Blandings Castle \$12.00
Cat-Nappers \$10.00
Carry On, Jeeves \$10.00
Cocktail Time \$8.95
Code of the Woosters \$8.00
Company for Henry \$11.00
Damsel in Distress \$8.95
Do Butlers Burgle Banks \$8.95
Doctor Sally \$11.00
Egg, Beans and Crumpets \$12.00
Fore! The Best of Wodehouse Golf Stories \$11.95
French Leave \$12.00
Full Moon \$12.00
Galahad at Blandings \$8.95
Gentlemen at Leisure \$8.95
Girl in Blue \$12.00
Gold Bat \$10.00
Heart of a Goof \$8.95
Heavy Weather \$8.95
Hot Water \$8.95

How Right You Are, Jeeves \$10.00
If I Were You \$11.00
Imperial Blandings (omnibus) \$20.00
Indiscretions of Archie \$12.00
Inimitable Jeeves \$7.95
Jeeves \$7.95
Jeeves and the Tie that Binds \$10.00
Jeeves in the Morning \$11.00
Laughing Gas \$12.00
Leave it to Psmith \$8.95
Life at Blandings (omnibus) \$14.95
Life with Jeeves \$9.95
Little Nugget \$8.95
Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best \$12.00
Lord Emsworth and Others \$12.00
Luck of the Bodkins \$9.95
Man Upstairs and Other Stories \$8.95
Man with Two Left Feet \$8.95
Mating Season \$10.00
Mike and Psmith \$11.00
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Money for Nothing \$12.00
Money in the Bank \$11.00
The Most of P.G. Wodehouse \$12.95
Pelican at Blandings \$12.00
Piccadilly Jim \$8.95
Pigs Have Wings \$6.95
Plum's Peaches \$12.95
Pothunters and Other Stories \$14.00
Psmith in the City \$8.95
Psmith Journalist \$8.95
Quick Service \$8.95
Right Ho, Jeeves \$7.95
Sam the Sudden \$14.00
Service with a Smile \$10.00
Small Bachelor \$8.95
Something Fresh \$12.00
Spring Fever \$11.00
Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves \$10.00
Summer Lightning \$12.00
Summer Moonshine \$8.95
Sunset at Blandings \$8.95
Thank You, Jeeves \$10.00
Ukridge \$11.00
Uncle Dynamite \$6.00
Uncle Fred Omnibus \$20.00
Uncle Fred in Springtime \$12.00
Uneasy Money \$8.95
Very Good, Jeeves \$7.95
Wodehouse is the Best Medicine \$12.95
Wodehouse on Wodehouse \$20.00
World of Psmith (omnibus) \$20.00
Young Men in Spats \$12.00

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NEW MEMBERS

TIS THE MONTH BEFORE CHRISTMAS

By Charles E. Gould, Jr.

Tis the month before Christmas and throughout the house:
Mouse.

Need I say it twice?

Mice.

My cat and I sleep soundly; vision of sugar-plum
Renders us numb.

What is a sugar-plum, anyway,

If you've got mice to meet and debts to pay?

Well, in fact a sugar-plum is how

You pay your debts, and entice the mice, till, WOW!

The cat comes in

With faint remains of mousing on his chin,

And checks go out

With faint remains of what I've been about.

It all reminds me of the times when Bingo Little

Tried to touch Lord Bittle-

Sham, his uncle.

Each time was a debunkle.

Devoted to his wife, he couldn't touch — well — boss her,

And so, by Fate's dark happenstance, to Oofy Prosser

He turned.

That Oofy can't be touched he never learned.

My cat and I don't learn much either, frankly,

Except that we approach this season thankly.

It's funny:

All of us are very fond of money,

Like Lord Bittlesham. But when Christmas comes

We feel that all the world and we are chums.

We feel like settling, my cat and I, for just a crumb:

He for a mouse or two, and I for Plum.



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AN EDITORIAL NOTE

These are red-letter days for us Plummiess! It seems hard to believe that there was once a time when we merely lived from convention to convention, our only word of Wodehouse being what we read in the latest issue of *Plum Lines*. All that has changed, however. We find frequent references to Wodehouse in our daily papers and increasingly encounter people who don't fix us with a quizzical look when his name is mentioned.

Chapters are sprouting up all over and are co-mingling with other chapters between conventions—not to mention going on pilgrimages to England. And, perhaps best of all, Plum's work has found increasing acceptance in the theater and television worlds as a rich source of entertainment for the masses. Witness the PBS presentations of the Bertie and Jeeves stories, as well as last winter's showing of *Heavy Weather*; and witness the current gold mine out in the theaters: *Betting on Bertie*, an original Wodehouse and Bolton musical, now due to open off-Broadway this spring;

Thank You, Jeeves, the City Lit Theater's original production currently playing in Chicago; and *By Jeeves*, the Alan Ayckbourn–Andrew Lloyd Webber musical now playing on two continents. We got Wodehouse—who could ask for anything more?

Well, in fact, some of you may be asking: "When is my contribution to *Plum Lines* going to be printed?" Alas, our only response can be: Soon! The fact is that with all these Plummie happenings of late, we have felt obliged to give higher priority to current events in choosing what to print. This means that some of the more scholarly and entertaining articles that we have received have unfortunately received "back burner" status. But take heart—you have not been forgotten! We have a treasure trove of gems from talented contributors that are awaiting—and *will* receive—their moment in the sun. We therefore ask your patience and your indulgence, and your continued contributions; for we admit that it is rather jolly not to have to go begging for articles, but instead have enough ripe stuff to keep *Plum Lines* in business for some time to come!

—AD and OM

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Information and new memberships
Marilyn MacGregor

Dues payments and address changes
Tom Wainwright

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