

The quarterly journal of The Wodehouse Society

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See pages 16–19 for some last-minute convention news.  
We hope to see you in St. Paul on June 12–14!



## Wodehouse and the Comic Concussion

BY DAVID LANDMAN

*Who would these swings and parries take  
When he might a quietus make  
With a bare knuckle?*

—Willie “The Shaker” Shakespeare

ONCE, WHEN RECONNECTING a loose wire under the dash of my Hudson Hornet, I stretched out on my back the length of the front seat. Made aware that the open door was blocking traffic, I reached back to the armrest and, forgetting that it extended a good three inches beyond the plane of the door, slammed it shut. When I regained consciousness my first thought was that Stumpf, who spoke of the “*falscher Schmuck und nutzloser Plunder*” of feudalism, was talking through his Kaiser Bill pickelhaube. After that, I thought no more for a week as I wandered aimlessly along Slaphappy Street. A concussion is not a funny thing.

Except in Wodehouse. Setting aside the sagas of professional bruisers like Kid Brady, I speak here only of the collateral havoc wreaked upon itself by the civilian population. It is remarkable how many of them are flattened and how readily they bounce up off the canvas, not much the worse for wear, in that martial arts academy known as the English country house. I do not complain. It is mostly the deserving who get their comeuppance. I remark only how smoothly the scorched-earth policy goes down thanks to the effervescence of the Wodehouse touch.

In his novels, not a few neck-high soups are traversed dry shod by the deft application of cosh, knuckle, and priceless Meissen. And the knockees always come up to scratch with a heart for all fates when the bell sounds for the next chapter. Take, for example, that premier fight card known as *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* (1963) where Gussie Fink-Nottle, attempting to flee the wrath of the eight-foot gorilla Spode, collides with the very aesthete who seeks to ascertain the color of his insides. This Spode affixes a meat hook onto Fink-Nottle’s scruff and utters the freighted word “Ha!” But before Spode



David Landman, fully recovered (we think) from his Hudson Hornet concussion, looks on with amusement.  
(Photo by Elizabeth Landman)

can commence excavations, the Rev. “Stinker” Pinker intervenes, and in the Gandhi spirit lays an irenic hand on Spode’s shoulder while uttering a mild “I say.” To the run-amok Spode, them’s fightin’ words, and he responds by plugging the curate on the schnozzola. This, in turn, induces a degree of resentment in the man of the cloth, and discovering that his curatical inhibitions have been washed away in the blood of the wham, he uncorks a seismic lollapalooza. The resultant tremor that shakes the would-be dictator’s frame can be traced to the tectonic superimposition of Pinker’s interphalangeal joints upon Spode’s maxilla (i.e., a knuckle sandwich on the chops). We applaud because, after all, it *was* Spode’s fault. “The next thing one observed,” says the bemused Bertie, “was Spode on the ground looking like the corpse which had been in the water several days.” For his part, Pinker, as fine a specimen of muscular Christianity as one could wish, retires “to staunch the vital flow which was considerable.”

Just the ordinary skylarking of a day in the country one might say, but there’s a sequel that makes my point. Spode, having returned from his sojourn in the Isles of the Blest, comes crashing into the kitchen “like a herd of hippopotami going through the reeds on a river bank,” with the aggravated intention of resuming his researches into Gussie’s sweetbreads. No dull throb in the lemon, no invisible blue bird twittering in the ears, no punch-drunk shuffle, just the familiar, gale-force Spodean frenzy. This time—in a page Norman Murphy calls one of Plum’s best—he is spiflicated by Emerald Stoker with a thick china basin filled with beans, and once again is tumbled in the spin cycle of life. Yet a few pages later, a second time risen from the dead, he is sufficiently compos mentis to transfix Bertie with the famous eye that could open an oyster at sixty paces and growl, “So!” Only slightly less menacing than “Ha!” one supposes, but for a man twice consigned to cold storage within a matter of minutes, not bad, not bad at all.

“Even mild concussions occurring within hours or days or weeks of each other,” writes Thomas A. Hammeke, Professor of Neuropsychology, Medical College of Wisconsin, “can result in ‘second impact syndrome,’ which can be fatal.” But not to worry. Wodehouse’s characters, as we know, are immortal.

The *Cecil Textbook of Medicine* is of the opinion that a concussion is the result of changes in the brainstem

that probably account for the “apnea and bradycardia that immediately follow the blow as well as for the unsteadiness and giddiness with change in position of which patients often complain for a time. Amnesia, forgetfulness, irritability, fatigue, and impaired memory are attributed to neuronal damage in the cerebrum.” Tommyrot, as anyone who has read Wodehouse knows. Cecil was probably making up excuses for forgetting his wedding anniversary.

Take the case study reported in *Bertie Wooster Sees It Through/Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit* (1955), where Spode is coshed by Aunt Dahlia, and next morning Bertie observes only that he was “looking a little paler” and discomfited when “oscillating the bean,” but otherwise none the worse for wear. Since neither of those mild symptoms manifested eight years later when he was treated to the doubleheader recorded above, the Hippocratic oath obliges us to conclude that Spode’s post-concussive sentience improved with use.

Bradycardially speaking (and apneatically as well), Spode’s tentorial notch, uncus, and ipsilateral third cranial nerve improved with regular exercise.

An energetic pugilist for Dulwich College, Wodehouse was eventually barred from lacing up the Everlasts because of bad eyesight. There are, as far as I am aware, no records of his performance in the ring, but one doubts he ever kissed the canvas for dear old Alma Mater, or spilled a half pint of nose-claret

on its well-rolled lawn. Had he done so, I wonder if he would be so cavalier about hanging widow-makers on the vitreous front porches and domes of his creations. We know that he once witnessed a brutal schoolboy fight in which one of the contestants was nearly beaten to death, but apparently that did not diminish his enthusiasm for the fictional roundhouse as a way of resolving divergent opinions.

It was so from the start. If his schoolboy novels are as close to truth as they are reputed to be, it seems that in English public schools the monotony of parsing Ammonius Saccas was regularly relieved by bare-knuckle dustups. In *Mike*, the scrappy Adair, keen captain of the cricket eleven, eschews the diplomatic approach and finds he achieves much swifter assent to his views by dotting the opposition in the mush. This tactic brought the reluctant cricketers Stone and Robinson to see things his way before you could count



ten. If you seek the school of hard knocks, Sedleigh would be a good place to start.

Even when he lost in fisticuffs, Adair's hard-sell technique was effective. While attempting to reform Mike's negative views on Sedleigh cricket, Adair carelessly Leipzighed when he should have Zagrebed, and Mike delivered a bouquet of fives to his gob whereupon Adair folded like a do-it-yourself deck chair. Worried because "Adair looked unpleasantly corpse-like," Mike asks the onlooking Psmith, "Is he hurt much, do you think?" And Psmith, whose degree in neuroscience had to this point been concealed from the reader, answers, "He's all right. In a minute or two he'll be skipping about like a lambkin." And, of course, he is. The next morning a bright-eyed Adair is up with the rathe lambs and, meeting Mike on the way to class, discovers that the mere fact of having heard the bells of the cosmic Good Humor man at the hands of his schoolmate has created an eternal bond. Concussion, as the saying goes, *macht* chums.

Of the scholar pugs one regrets not having followed their bliss, one is the Rev. Harold P. "Stinker" Pinker whose ex cathedra sweet swot we have chronicled above. A heavyweight boxer for Oxford (as were Stanley Brandon [another man of the cloth who carried the Good Book in his right hand and a good hook in his left], Harold "Ginger" Winship, and Freddie Widgeon's cousin George), he could have been a feared lip splitter in the alleys and fight clubs of Bottleton East had he clung to the rugged right cross, but somewhere along the line he hung up his leathern muffles and thereafter delivered his Sunday punches almost exclusively from the pulpit.

Psmith, that man of dignified wrath, is also no slouch when it comes to administering a massive cranial stimulus package. In *Psmith, Journalist* we find him on a tenement rooftop to which there is only one entrance, a trapdoor. Heads of his thuggish adversaries serially pop up through the trap like golf balls at a driving range, and Psmith, remembering to follow through, sloshes them good with his knobkerrie. However, though his method is successful, he does not exhibit good form. Depicted on the dust jacket of my copy is an exquisitely attired Psmith down on one knee (the trouser crease!!!) about to crown a goon on the bonce. I've seen Arnold Palmer successfully play a ball embedded under the lip of a pot bunker from just such a stance. Psmith, approaching a similar lie, does not show to advantage. Though using the recommended grip, he has bent his left elbow and allowed the right to stray too far from the body. It is only because the gorilla's gourd is about 30 times the size of a Titleist that Psmith was able make the pshot at all.

Since it's all harmless fun, we are free to back the gladiator or gladiatoress of our choice, and my money's on the delicately nurtured. In that division there are two main contenders, and I waver between raising the manicured mitt of Dora "Dolly" Molloy or the pampered paw of Gertrude "Sweetie" Carlisle. In *Hot Water*, Gordon "Oily" Carlisle is, from poignant personal experience, well aware of his loved one's virtuosity with a vase, and he notes with satisfaction that the one with which she lays out Soup Slattery is a particularly "large, hard, thick, solid vase in every way superior to the one which a year ago she had bounced on his own head." In *Cocktail Time*, Sweetie soaks Cosmo Wisdom on the napper with a blackjack. Three bouts, three KOs, a most impressive record, but, after carefully calculating the points, the decision of the judges goes to that bantamweight patootie, Dolly Molloy. Sweetie may take the full Vardon swing with plenty of follow-through, Emerald Stoker may swing a mean basin of beans, and there is no gainsaying the Gentleman Jim elegance with which Jeeves put the kibosh on Constable Dobbs, but it is Dolly whose dexterous pickers-and-stealers must be raised in victory, for she fights in both prelims and main bouts on the same card without disturbing a platinum hair. In *Money in the Bank*, she applies the crockery (a stoneware tobacco jar) to the conk of Jeff Miller, sending him staggering to the Aubusson and inspiring Wodehouse to write admiringly that "she possessed good, muscular wrists and had a nice sense of timing." But to Dolly, braining Jeff was mere rope-a-dope. Not more than three pages later, in the main fixture, she soaks Chimp Twist on the occipital bone with the butt of a revolver. (Chimp's ability to stop hard objects with his bulb and come up for more in the next chapter is one of the glories of English literature. Wodehouse is a good corner man.) True, Dolly does not book Chimp passage on the Cloud-Cuckoo Express as she had for Jeff. She succeeds only in devoting Chimp's brains to a standing eight count. But this is time enough for her and Oily to beat it, and I record it as a TKO. "You're certainly hitting 'em right tonight, pettie," says her adoring husband. "It's all in the follow-through," Dolly replies with becoming modesty.

So my hat's off—but certainly not thrown in the ring—to Dolly Molloy. Cinch her 20-inch waist with the silver-studded belt. Long may she reign as the once and future champeen of Wodehouse's world of comic concussions.



# Treasurer's Report for 2008

BY JEAN TILLSON

<b>Balance as of December 31, 2007</b>	<b>\$21,377.02</b>
Income:	
Membership dues	\$11,642.31
2007 Convention income	\$25.00
2009 Convention income	\$3,352.41
Drones Club ties (orders filled from inventory) <sup>1</sup>	\$84.00
Interest, misc. <sup>2</sup>	<u>\$542.55</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$15,646.27</b>
Expenses:	
<i>Plum Lines</i> production and mailing	\$11,590.20
2007 convention general expenses	\$53.85
2009 convention general expenses	\$1,000.00
Correspondence, supplies, other	\$136.00
Drones Club ties (shipping)	<u>\$4.60</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$12,784.65</b>
TWS Convention Reserve Fund:	\$9,434.11
<b>Total Balance as of December 31, 2008</b>	<b>\$24,238.64</b>

<sup>1</sup> No stock now remaining.

<sup>2</sup> Includes a \$500 donation in memory of Ray Steen (from his brother).

# In the Green Wode

LARISSA SAXBY-BRIDGER of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) found a website via the *Daily Telegraph* that sells secondhand books. Upon checking out the website, Larissa typed in "Wodehouse" and found many books as promised. A donation is also made to the Woodland Trust, which is a green initiative designed to recycle books. The website is [www.greenmetropolis.com](http://www.greenmetropolis.com).



It was pleasant on the boat deck, or would have been to any man whose life was not wrecked and whose hopes were not lying in ruins. A soft breeze was blowing and quiet stars shone down from a cloudless sky. Reggie hardly felt the breeze, scarcely saw the stars. He clutched the rail as a short while before he had clutched his chair. Solid wood to grasp at is what a man needs at these moments.

*The Luck of the Bodkins* (1935)

\* \* \* \* \*

# In a Galaxy Not So Far Away . . .

RALPH DOTY tells us that Jasper Fforde's novel *Thursday Next: First Among Sequels* (New York, Penguin, 2008) is based on the premise that books constitute a separate universe in which the characters are actual people. Like actors, the characters make their appearances and say their lines whenever someone's reading the book, but when the book goes back on the shelf, they knock off for a quick one. And where do they go for refreshment? From page 211:

It was called the Paragon and was the most perfect 1920s tearoom, nestled in the safe and unobserved background fabric of P. G. Wodehouse's *Summer Lightning*. To your left and right upon entering through the carved wooden doors were glass display cases containing the most sumptuous homemade cakes and pastries. Beyond these were the tearooms proper, with booths and tables constructed of a dark wood that perfectly matched the paneled interior. This was itself decorated with plaster reliefs of Greek characters disporting themselves in matters of equestrian and athletic prowess. To the rear were two additional and private tearooms, the one of light-colored wood and the other in delicate carvings of a most agreeable nature. Needless to say, it was inhabited by the most populous characters in Wodehouse's novels. That is to say it was full of voluble and opinionated aunts.

# Wodehouse Book Dedications Quiz

COMPILED BY KEN CLEVENGER

*Ken takes a break from his "Mulliner Menagerie" series to perform valuable research about Wodehouse's book dedications. (Never fear, avid MM reader, it will return in the Autumn issue.) For those whose curiosity is only whetted by Ken's article, he's happy to share the complete list of all 54 dedications with you. His article begins on page 6, but before you dive in to Ken's erudition, a bit of fun: he put together a quiz to test your dedicatory knowledge. Answers may be found on page 10.*

"This is dedicated to the one I love."\*

or

"Who do you love?"\*\*

\*song lyric by Lowman Pauling and Ralph Bass

\*\*song lyric by Ellas B. (Bo Diddley) McDaniel

(1) Plum dedicated five of his books to one person, but two other people were honored with four book dedications each. Who were these two four-book fortunates?

(2) How many books had Plum published before his first dedication of a book to his mother?

(3) How many books had Plum published before his first dedication of a book to his father?

(4) Plum had three brothers, Peveril, Armine, and Lancelot, to use their middle names. How many books did Wodehouse dedicate to his brothers?

(5) Who had the most Wodehouse books dedicated to him or her?

(6) For two dedicatees Wodehouse's book dedications refer to the support and encouragement of the dedicatees, absent which the books could have been "finished in half the time." Who were these two people?

(7) What book was dedicated to Bert Haskins?

(8) Wodehouse made his dedications extended and humorous on several occasions. Once he illustrated a somewhat "livery" dedication that an out-of-sorts

author might make to the reviewers. Complete the dedication: "TO THE CRITICS ... .."

(9) Name the two Hollywood stars to whom Wodehouse dedicated books.

(10) Name two O'Sullivans who have Wodehouse books dedicated to them.

(11) Pokes appear in dedications in which two books?

(12) In the years 1935 to 1951, inclusive, Wodehouse published at least 36 books in the United States and the United Kingdom. How many were dedicated to published novelists?

(13) Only one brother/sister pair were honored as Wodehouse book dedicatees. Who were they?

**Extra Credit (not answered in the article):**

(14) Only once was a Wodehouse dedication made in Latin. Which book and to whom?

(15) Name seven authors of published novels to whom Wodehouse dedicated at least one of his books.

(16) Wodehouse frequently wrote of other "novels" in his books and short stories, most often purely fictional works of fiction, but what three real novels by other authors did Plum mention in his book dedications?

(17) Agatha Christie, Anthony Berkeley (A. B. Cox), Compton Mackenzie, and Leslie Charteris share a common Wodehouse book dedication circumstance. What is it?

(18) What singular distinction do Alan Durand, Leslie Havergal Bradshaw, George Blake, and the very-much-still-alive David Jasen all share?

(19) Plum had especially fond memories of his time at Dulwich College from 1894 to 1899. To how many of the Masters at Dulwich did he dedicate books?

(20) How many sports were mentioned in Wodehouse book dedications and what were they? N.B.: We do *not* count dog fighting as a sport!

# Wodehouse Book Dedications

BY KEN CLEVENGER

As a Wodehouse Society member, it's safe to say that I appreciate P. G. Wodehouse and his works. But whom did Wodehouse appreciate? Perhaps we may find an answer, to some degree, in his book dedications.

Though an exact count is difficult, by using as reference the invaluable *P. G. Wodehouse: A Comprehensive Bibliography and Checklist* (McIlvaine, Sherby, and Heineman), it is fair to say that over 200 discrete books were published in which Wodehouse could have included a dedication. Barry Phelps, to whom I am indebted for much of the information herein, writes in *P. G. Wodehouse: Man and Myth* that there are 53 (I count 54) of Wodehouse's books for which he chose to write a dedication. Within these, 42 people are honored as dedicatees. While space prevents covering all of them here, we will look at a sampling from various categories of the honored few.

In 1921 Wodehouse dedicated both the U.S. and U.K. versions of *Indiscretions of Archie* to B. W. King-Hall. Baldwin ("Buddy") King-Hall was headmaster at Emsworth House, the school where Herbert Westbrook was employed, and where Wodehouse had Threepwood Cottage. This is one of the rare extensive dedications:

## DEDICATION TO B. W. KING-HALL

My dear Buddy,

We have been friends for eighteen years. A considerable proportion of my books were written under your hospitable roof. And yet I have never dedicated one to you. What will be the verdict of Posterity on this? The fact is, I have become rather superstitious about dedications. No sooner do you label a book with the legend:— TO MY BEST FRIEND X than X cuts you in Piccadilly, or you bring a lawsuit against him. There is a fatality about it. However, I can't imagine anyone quarreling with you, and I am getting more attractive all the time, so let's take a chance.

Yours ever, P. G. Wodehouse

Judging by this, King-Hall was obviously a good friend.

In ten other books, seven friends were honored by Plum, including Herbert Westbrook twice and William Townend three times. Family members were given dedications in ten books. Professional associates were frequently honored, as were members of the inevitable

"others" group. Sometimes the honoree can be classified in more than one group. For example, Bernard Le Strange, to whom both the U.S. and U.K. versions of *Carry On, Jeeves* were dedicated in 1925, could be either family or friend.

The professional associates group is even harder to label as many of the fellow writers, agents, editors, actors, and publishers in that group were friends too. Both Westbrook and Townend could easily and properly be classified as professional associates but also as intimate friends. Guy Bolton, too, was clearly a friend as well as a professional colleague. Peter Schwed, likewise a friend and professional colleague, has the honor of being the nonfamily person most frequently honored by Wodehouse dedications.

"To Peter Schwed / But for whom . . ." was the dedication in the 1953 U.S. version of the semiautobiographical book *Author! Author!* This is a reprise of the Denis Mackail dedication "To Plum, But for whom" in *How Amusing*, a 1927 collection of Mackail's short stories. In 1953 Schwed had just recently become the Simon & Schuster editor for Wodehouse. Plum deeply appreciated Schwed's support and confidence in bringing Wodehouse's new work before the public, despite the lingering issue of the wartime Berlin broadcasts. In 1954 Wodehouse dedicated the U.S. version of *Bertie Wooster Sees It Through* to Schwed. This dedication is almost an encyclopedia of dedications. It runs to three and a half pages, is informative, funny, and shows a wonderfully self-confident Wodehouse. In it, Wodehouse says that if an author "were feeling a bit livery, the nasty dedication: TO THE CRITICS THESE PEARLS" might be used or, if feeling more than mere warmth toward the dedicatee, an author might use "one of those cryptic dedications with a bit of poetry shoved in underneath in italics." Thus did Wodehouse dedicate *Bertie Wooster Sees It Through*: "To P. S. / *Half a league / Half a league / Half a league / Onward / With a hey-nonny-nonny / And a hot cha-cha / P. G. Wodehouse / Colney Hatch, 1954.*" In classic Wodehouse style, this dedication was largely reused as the foreword to *Over Seventy*, the 1956 U.K. version of the semiautobiographical book *America, I Like You*.

Peter Schwed surely deserved Plum's deepest appreciation. It would overstate the case to say that Schwed saved Wodehouse's career, but it's fair to say that Schwed revitalized it. In 1967 Plum dedicated *The Purloined Paperweight* (the U.S. version of *Company*

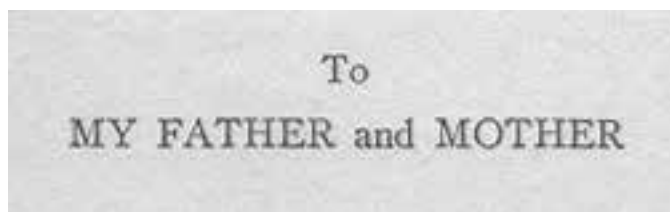
for Henry) “To Peter Schwed, best of publishers.” A bit awkward for Herbert Jenkins and the boys in Britain, going back as they do to 1920 with Wodehouse, but perhaps they did not see the U.S. version. In 1974, the U.S. edition of *Bachelors Anonymous* was dedicated “To Peter Schwed, as always.” This final tribute to Schwed was also Wodehouse’s final dedication.

We understand Wodehouse better through his book dedications. We find clues in the substance of the dedications, the absence of them, the particular book or version being dedicated, or the timing and distribution of all the dedications among children, family, friends, and professional associates. These patterns give us a glimpse of who was really most important in Wodehouse’s life.

Consider first the set of dedications to family members. These span nearly 70 years, starting with his third book, *Tales of St. Austin’s* (1903), which was dedicated “AD MATREM.” Barry Phelps, in his article “TO THE CRITIC, THESE PEARLS: P. G. Wodehouse Dedications” (from the April 1983 *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*), characterizes this dedication as “an impersonal, standard tag from a dead language.” The dedication in *The Head of Kay’s* (1905) simply says, “TO MY FATHER.” So, Plum’s parents, like Ethel, were the subject of only two dedications apiece, the second for each when Wodehouse dedicated *Bill the Conqueror* (1924) “To My Father and Mother.” Ethel and Plum were married in 1914, and she was honored in 1916’s *Uneasy Money* and again in 1920 in the U.K. version of *Jill the Reckless*, but not again after those two dedications.

Of all the family graced by a dedication, Leonora Cazalet, Ethel’s daughter, was an obvious favorite. In *Piccadilly Jim* (1917), the first of three dedications that appear in five books altogether reads: “To my step-daughter Lenora [sic], conservatively speaking the most wonderful child on earth.” (The misspelling of her name is unaccountable.) In *Leave It to Psmith* (1923), Leonora is the dedicatee thusly: “To my daughter Leonora, Queen of her species.” The 1917 dedication was expansive, but this 1923 promotion was a significant step up—both embracing and ennobling. However, the epitome of Wodehouse’s homage to Leonora is in the 1926 dedication of *The Heart of a Goof*. That dedication reads “To my daughter LEONORA without whose never-failing sympathy and encouragement this book would have been finished in half the time.” Wodehouse apparently felt completely at ease and able to joke in that manner; it seems to be the mark of a deep and rare bond of intimacy for him.

In 1906 Wodehouse dedicated the first edition of *Love Among the Chickens* “To Sir Bargrave & Lady



*Simple—and rare. Wodehouse’s parents only received two dedications each, including this dual dedication in Bill the Conqueror.*

Deane.” Phelps identifies the gentleman as the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Bargrave Deane, QC, a “first cousin once removed on [Wodehouse’s] mother’s side.” The connection, family though it is, was presumably cemented by fond recollections of visits to the Deane home as a peripatetic youth on boarding school holidays.

The Deane dedication is a curiously singled-out one as the young Wodehouse stayed with numerous relatives in the period 1886–1896 during his English school boarding, while his parents served the Empire in Hong Kong. Likewise singular is the dedication of *The White Feather* (1907) “To my brother Dick.” Plum had two older brothers, Peveril and Armine, to use their most commonly used middle names. Dick (Richard Lancelot) Wodehouse was 11 years younger than Plum and just 15 years of age when this school story was dedicated to him. Robert McCrum says the younger brother, who died of disease in Hong Kong in 1940, “hardly featured” in Plum’s life. Nevertheless, he was the only brother ever thus honored.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have already mentioned the B. W. King-Hall and Bernard Le Strange dedications as examples of the “friends” grouping. Another group of friends honored with dedications includes the three Bowes-Lyon sisters, Joan, Effie, and Ernestine. Plum’s first book, *The Pothunters* (1902), was dedicated to the young Bowes-Lyon sisters with whom Plum played and socialized when he was a 20-year-old budding author. The Bowes-Lyon family befriended him, and if you include Leonora at age 13, and Dick at age 15, they are among the seven children honored with book dedications. And yet Wodehouse has a reputation for disliking children! Biddy (Bridget) O’Sullivan, to whom the 1904 book *William Tell Told Again* is dedicated “for a Christmas present,” was a child of about three. (According to Norman Murphy, she was the daughter of a London theatrical friend.)

These dedications by Plum to children may seem rather curious. Of course, except for *Piccadilly Jim*, they were children’s stories. But certainly in each

case Wodehouse knew the young person and took an interest in him or her at the time. And it is, of course, a compliment to the family generally. I would also posit that the kind, young author had reason to feel rather neglected as a child by adults and may have thought the unusual attention of a book dedication would mean something special to these children.

Two people who are easily identified as Plum's friends are also multiple dedicatees. William Townend was Plum's oldest and dearest friend. Their friendship began before the turn of the 20th century at Dulwich College and lasted until Townend's death in 1962. Wodehouse dedicated *A Prefect's Uncle* (1903), his second book, "To W. Townend." In 1924 he dedicated both *Ukridge* and *He Rather Enjoyed It* (the U.S. version) "with esteem and gratitude to OLD BILL TOWNEND / my friend from boyhood's days who first introduced me to Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge." And going back to 1920, a rewritten U.K. version of *Love Among the Chickens*, this time published by Herbert Jenkins, is now dedicated "To W. Townend" instead of the Deanes. This dedication goes on for two pages and contains a sartorial joke, youthful sports references, and insights to the Wodehouse method of writing. This was not the only time Plum rededicated a book to a new dedicatee, as we shall see.

Herbert Westbrook must have been a unique friend. *The Gold Bat* (1904) was dedicated "To That Prince of Slackers, Herbert Westbrook." Westbrook was without a doubt a slacker, especially as an author, at least compared to the Wodehouse model of highly self-disciplined writing. We see another example of Westbrook's reputation in the dedication of *A Gentleman of Leisure* (1910): "To Herbert Westbrook, without whose never-failing advice, help, and encouragement this book would have been finished in half the time." This is, of course, the same joke Wodehouse used with Leonora in *The Heart of a Goof*. The story became a play in 1911, with Wodehouse and John Stapleton collaborating. It starred Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., in New York. In 1921, Herbert Jenkins reissued *A Gentleman of Leisure* in the U.K. and the book was dedicated "To Douglas Fairbanks who many years ago played 'Jimmy' in the dramatized version of this novel."

The last person I'll mention from the "friends" grouping is Bert Haskins. Haskins was Wodehouse's fellow internee in 1940–41, and a lifelong friend thereafter. Wodehouse dedicated the Tauchnitz edition of *Money in the Bank* (published in Germany in 1949): "To Bert Haskins with deep affection." This seems to demonstrate the strong bond that resulted from their shared captivity.

Ella King-Hall (later Westbrook) was the sister of B. W. King-Hall and Wodehouse's English literary agent beginning in 1912. Plum was fond of Ella and dedicated *Not George Washington* (1907) to her. This began a long series of dedications to people who were often correctly described as friends, but who mainly share a professional link to Plum's work. The dedication of *The Adventures of Sally* (1922)—"To George Grossmith"—is an example of this. Grossmith, an actor, writer, and theater manager, was a "firm friend" according to Phelps but later a friend lost over business dealings. In the dedication, Wodehouse notes the fun he had working on the musical *The Cabaret Girl* with Grossmith. The dedication speculates on the show's future success. The dedication also features a few transatlantic sailing references including "the Sinister Affair of the Rose of Stamboul."

Two actresses also made the dedication list. The first, Maureen O'Sullivan, a Peke lover and friend from Hollywood and New York, was the dedicatee of the U.S. and U.K. editions of *Hot Water* (1932). This dedication is unique as it was made "with love from Ethel, Leonora, Miss Winks, John-John, and the Author." Of course, Miss Winks and John-John were the Wodehouse family dogs. The other honored actress, Ellaline Terriss, was married to Seymour Hicks, who as an actor-manager had engaged the young up-and-coming Wodehouse as a lyricist. Wodehouse had visited the Hicks's family home, but in Plum's inimitable style he secluded himself in order to write and earned the nickname "The Hermit." The dedication of the U.K. edition of *The Prince and Betty* (1912) is "To Ellaline Terriss from The Hermit."

\* \* \* \* \*

A substantial percentage of Wodehouse's dedications are to theatre people; not surprising, given his close association with the stage. In addition to the actors and actresses already noted, and several others, the U.S. version of *A Damsel in Distress* (1919) was dedicated "To Maud and Ivan Caryll." Ivan Caryll was a spectacularly mustachioed Belgian composer who worked with Wodehouse and Guy Bolton on the Broadway show *The Girl Behind the Gun*, which was a bigger hit in London as *Kissing Time* later in 1919. This is the one Wodehouse book dedication not noted in Phelps's writings.

Plum dedicated the U.S. edition of *If I Were You* (1931) to Guy Bolton. Bolton certainly deserves to be known as Wodehouse's friend as much as anyone, certainly after 1947, when Wodehouse came to reside permanently in New York. But it is the brilliant work over the long course of their professional lives in the



theatre, and the undedicated book *Bring on the Girls*, that is their lasting, joint monument.

The final theatre-related dedication was in 1952. Stuck for a plot, Wodehouse bought the rights to the story line of a 1925 comedy called *The Butter and Egg Man*. In his hands this became *Angel Cake*, which was dedicated to George S. Kaufman, the original author. This dedication, like much of Plum's stuff, is tinged with the Bard: "TO THE ONLIE BEGETTER OF THESE INSUING SONNETS Mr. G.S.K." This 1952 dedication to Kaufman broke a 17-year drought of dedications in U.S. or U.K. publications.

Raymond Needham, K.C., a successful barrister, was the dedicatee in the U.K. version of *Right Ho, Jeeves* (1934). The dedication was "with admiration and affection," doubtless due to Needham's very successful pleading of Wodehouse's U.K. tax case. One can only wonder with a shudder how the legal profession would have been portrayed in future Wodehouse works if Needham had lost.

Another set of professional associates to be recognized are the bookmakers. Not the Silver Ring turf accountant types, but publishers and agents. Plum's last American agent, Scott Meredith, was the dedicatee of the U.S. version of the novel *The Brinksmanship of Galahad Threepwood* (1964). To best illustrate the crossover in my categorizations, Plum's endorsement reads: "To Scott Meredith / Prince of literary agents and best of friends." Wodehouse and Meredith collaborated on several book editing projects, including *The Best of Modern Humor* (1951) and *A Carnival of Modern Humor* (1967). Each dedicated the former book to the other and the latter "To Don Fine," a former Meredith colleague then at the publishing house, Delacorte Press. (Considering Meredith's role in them, I have not counted these dedications in my total.)

George Blake, the dedicatee and publisher (at Faber & Faber) of *Louder and Funnier* (1932), could be both a friend and, in a different subcategory of professional associates yet to be addressed, a fiction author, who, according to Phelps, wrote novels "set in Scottish shipyards." The dedication states, "To George Blake. A Splendid Fellow and Very Sound on Pokes\*," and the footnote cautions, "But he should guard against the tendency to claim that his Peke fights Alsatians. Mine is the only one that does this."

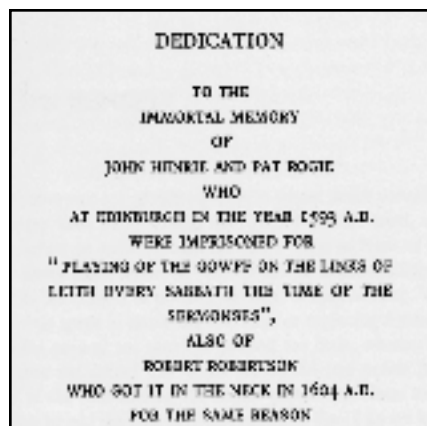
The final group of professional associates are fellow authors. Plum's first literary biographer, Leslie Havergal Bradshaw, wrote a piece

about the young Wodehouse in 1910 for *The Captain* magazine. The two men became friends, and later in 1910, Wodehouse dedicated *Psmith in the City* to Bradshaw. In 1963, Plum dedicated the U.S. edition of *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* to a future biographer and bibliographer, David Jasen, who was also a friend.

Three novelists of note are included on the list of Wodehouse dedications to professional associates. The 1930 U.K. version of *Very Good, Jeeves* was dedicated to E. Phillips Oppenheim, whose memoirs have so kindly provided us with an insight into Plum's use of bar drinks as characters in the Mulliner stories. Oppenheim later dedicated his novel *Up the Ladder of Gold* to Plum. Next, Denis Mackail was the dedicatee of the U.K. version of *Summer Lightning* (1929). As noted earlier, Mackail had also dedicated a book to Plum. Wodehouse's dedication reads "To Denis Mackail / Author of 'Greenery Street,' 'The Flower Store' and other books which I wish I had written." Finally, Wodehouse dedicated the U.K. version of *Sam the Sudden* (1925) to Edgar Wallace. Wallace later dedicated two of his 175 novels "To my friend, P. G. Wodehouse."

The last two dedications are not subject to any common classification. For an author who was remarkably apolitical, it may seem strange that a Prime Minister, the Earl of Oxford and Asquith (previously Mr. H. H. Asquith), should have been a dedicatee in *Meet Mr. Mulliner* (1927). But apparently Mr. Asquith, whom Wodehouse knew and liked, was a fan. According to Phelps, the honorable gentleman had consoled himself over a political reversal by reading a diverting Wodehouse novel.

The final dedication to note is from the 1922 collection of short stories *The Clicking of Cuthbert*. It is dedicated "to the immortal memory" of John Henrie, Pat Rogie, and Robert Robertson, who around the end of the 16th century in Scotland, were placed in durance vile for the crime, or sin as the case may be, of "playing of the gowff on the links of Leith every sabbath the time of the sermones." (Doubtless the rabbits were all in church and a tee time was easy to get.) The U.S. version (*Golf Without Tears*) scratched Robertson and added R. T. B. Denby, "my partner in many a pleasant Sunday round." Bobbie Denby was a friend of Ethel but, less so of Plum, due to an unsavory business affair. Not a very sympathetic figure to Wodehouse fans, but to the extent we are indebted to Denby for the golf stories, we can share the kind spirit of Plum's dedication.



If the story of his book dedications means anything, it is that Wodehouse was as close to his select friends, most of whom also had a close professional connection with his work, as he was to his family. Leonora had five books dedicated to her; William Townend and Peter Schwed each had four. The dedications often show the humor and wit we associate with his literary style. The kindness and courtesy displayed in them reflect the graciousness and the unfailing manners we always find in his public dealings and generally see in his private life. The fact that so many books were undedicated strongly suggests that the highly self-contained image we have of the Master is also valid. We must thank Providence that Plum was so dedicated to his craft.

## Answers to the Wodehouse Book Dedications Quiz

(1) William Townend: *A Prefect's Uncle* (U.K.), *Ukridge* (U.K.), *He Rather Enjoyed It* (U.S.), and *Love Among the Chickens* (U.K., 1921). Also Peter Schwed: *Author! Author!* (U.S.), *Bertie Wooster Sees It Through* (U.S.), *The Purloined Paperweight* (U.S.), and *Bachelors Anonymous* (U.S.).

(2) Two. *The Pothunters* in 1902 and *A Prefect's Uncle* earlier in 1903 before he dedicated *Tales of St. Austin's* to her.

(3) Five. *The Pothunters* in 1902, *A Prefect's Uncle* and *Tales of St. Austin's* in 1903, *The Gold Bat* and *William Tell Told Again* in 1904 and then *The Head of Kay's*, which was dedicated to his father in 1905.

(4) One, to Dick (Richard Lancelot Wodehouse), his younger brother, in *The White Feather* (1907).

(5) Leonora with five: *Piccadilly Jim* (U.S.), *Leave It to Psmith* (both the U.S. & U.K. editions), *The Heart of a Goof* (U.K.) and *Divots* (U.S.).

(6) Herbert Westbrook in 1910 in *A Gentleman of Leisure* and Leonora in 1926 in *The Heart of a Goof* (U.K.) and *Divots* (U.S.). It appears again in the omnibus *Wodehouse on Golf*, which reprints *Divots*, including that dedication.

(7) *Money in the Bank*, the 1949 Tauchnitz edition published in Germany. Wodehouse wrote the book while he was interned. Bert Haskins was a fellow internee in 1940–41 and thereafter a lifelong friend. The earlier U.S. and U.K. editions were not dedicated

to anyone.

(8) "... THESE PEARLS"

(9) Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., in 1921 in *A Gentleman of Leisure* and Maureen O'Sullivan in 1932 in *Hot Water*.

(10) Maureen O'Sullivan in 1932 in *Hot Water* and Bidy (Bridget) O'Sullivan, the three-year-old child of London actor-singer friend Denis O'Sullivan, in 1904 in *William Tell Told Again*, according to Norman Murphy's *A Wodehouse Handbook*.

(11) *Louder & Funnier* (U.K.) in 1932, dedicated to George Blake and *Hot Water* (both the U.S. and U.K. editions), also in 1932, as from the Wodehouse dogs.

(12) None. In fact, none of the books published in that 17-year time span in the United States or the United Kingdom had a dedication. *Money in the Bank*, however, was published in Germany in 1949 and dedicated to Bert Haskins.

(13) Baldwin (Buddy) W. King-Hall in *Indiscretions of Archie* (both the U.S. & U.K. editions) and Ella King-Hall (later Westbrook) in *Not George Washington* with Herbert Westbrook credited as a coauthor.

### Extra Credit:

(14) His mother, Eleanor, in 1903: "AD MATREM" in *Tales of St. Austin's*.

15) William Townend, Herbert Westbrook, Leslie Havergal Bradshaw, Edgar Wallace, Denis Mackail, E. Phillips Oppenheim, and George Blake.

(16) *Greenery Street* and *The Flower Store* by Denis Mackail in *Summer Lightning* (U.K.), and *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy in *Bertie Wooster Sees It Through* (U.S.).

(17) According to Barry Phelps, each author dedicated one of their novels to Wodehouse, but no return of the compliment, at least via a Wodehouse book dedication, was made by Plum.

(18) All had a Wodehouse book dedicated to them.

(19) None.

(20) Four. Golf in *The Clicking of Cuthbert* (U.K.) and *Golf Without Tears* (U.S.); rugby football, cricket, and boxing in *Love Among the Chickens*, the rewritten 1921

# Pig Tales

BY JAMES HOGG

MANY READERS remember the groundbreaking researches by Norman Murphy and David Landman (see “Fred Patzel: Pavarotti of the Piglot,” *Plum Lines*, Vol. 21 No. 2, Summer 2000) into the real-life inspiration behind Wodehouse’s short story “Pig-hoo-o-o-o-ey!” Between them they revealed that Fred Patzel, the Nebraskan hog caller cited by James Belford in the story as the ne plus ultra of his craft, was not an invention. He won the World Championship in Omaha in 1926.

I’m pleased to say I now bring further intelligence concerning the place of hog calling in American culture. It was my friend Michael Pointon, a keen snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, who drew my attention to a book called *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery* by B. A. Botkin (1945).

Among the recollections of former slaves is one with the intriguing title *Pig-ooie, Pig*. In it the speaker tells a tale of theft, deceit, disguise, and detection—ingredients so often ingeniously mixed and stirred by P. G. Wodehouse. The narrator in *Pig-ooie, Pig* is not quite in the same class—who is?—but with clarity and a degree of Schadenfreude he tells what went wrong when his friend Ned tried to steal Old Master’s big blue hog. It wasn’t the first time. After an earlier abduction, the following day Ned had made an ostentatious show of trying to find the missing pig, when he knew perfectly well it was cut up and stored in his own loft. And here we come to the moment which links Ned to Fred Patzel and all the thousands of traditional hog callers from time immemorial. As Ned went about his fruitless task he called out: “Pig-ooie, pig! Somebody done stole Old Master’s big blue hog.”

Having got away with it once, Ned laid plans to have another go. But what he didn’t know was that this time he’d been rumbled. Old Master had caught wind of the plot hatched by Ned and his accomplice John and decided to pull a stunt of his own. In good Wodehousian style he squared John, borrowed his clothes, blacked up, and joined Ned on the job. The hypercritical may doubt the key element here: Ned’s failure to spot that his partner in crime was not only a ringer, but was actually his master covered in burnt cork. Well, it was dark and I’m not here to pick holes in the story, anyway. Naturally, the rules of drama dictate that the night ended badly for Ned. But let’s hope that, when Abolition came, he continued to bawl “Pig-ooie, pig!” in the time-honored way, only this time at pigs of his own.

If you thought that was the end of it, fear not. There is more. The scene shifts—note the language of the cinema—

James Hogg and friend



from the Deep South to Hollywood. Again it is Michael Pointon who has provided me with further evidence of the hog callers of yesteryear.

In his article about Fred Patzel, David Landman brought us as near as seemed possible to knowing what a hog caller of the interwar period sounded like. He found and printed Fred’s own musical notation of his call. But in fact we can go a step further. There exists not only a recording of hog calling of that era, but film of it. Albeit in a fictional context, it has every appearance of being the genuine article.

In 1937 Bing Crosby starred in a Hawaiian-themed musical called *Waikiki Wedding*. Let’s not concern ourselves with the plot, which doesn’t exactly sparkle on the printed page. I draw attention instead to one of the supporting actors, Bob Burns, who specialized in country characters with straw in their hair. He had a long career in radio, including a six-year stint on Crosby’s *Kraft Music Hall* show. Later he had his own program, playing the bawooka and recounting the doings of his hillbilly relations, Uncle Fud and Aunt Doody.

In much the same vein *Waikiki Wedding* casts him as Crosby’s sidekick Shad Buggle (you get the picture). At one point in the story (don’t ask), a pig swallows a precious pearl and goes missing. Announcing himself as the champion hog caller of Crawford County, Arkansas, Shad comes to the rescue, adding: “I hope you don’t think I’m braggin’, but there just seems to be somethin’ about me that a pig can’t resist.”

He then goes into a call which Fred Patzel, the larcenous Ned, and every other oldtime hog caller in the United States would have recognized. It’s more in the nature of an “Oo-ah” than Fred’s “Poo-ee,” Ned’s “Ooie,” or James Bartholomew Belford’s more histrionic “Hoo-o-o-o-ey.” Shad Buggle even adds a flourish of his own by appending a final “hoo” to his “Oo-ah.” But pigs have no time for orthographical niceties. They just know a hog call when they hear one. As Shad points out: “Hear him? He’s a long ways off, but he’s a-comin’.”

Sure enough, the pig enters stage left. Such is the magic of Shad’s call that every other pig on the island shows up as well. We’ll leave Shad to sort that out for himself, but for those who have longed to see a hog caller in action ever since they read “Pig-hoo-o-o-o-ey!,” I believe this glimpse into porcine history is available on DVD. Don’t miss it.

# P. G. Wodehouse and The Other Club

BY TODD MORNING

I RECENTLY READ *Troublesome Young Men* by Lynne Olson, about members of the British Parliament who led the rebellion against Neville Chamberlain that swept Winston Churchill to power in 1940. In the book, the author refers to The Other Club, founded by Churchill and fellow politician F. E. Smith in 1911. She writes, “Members came from all three political parties, about half from the House of Commons and the rest a widely disparate group that included, at various times, the Duke of Marlborough, P. G. Wodehouse, Lord Beaverbrook, South Africa’s prime minister Jan Smuts, and Frank Hodges, the head of the miners’ union.”

My immediate thought was that Ms. Olson had made a mistake. Could Wodehouse have been a member of The Other Club? It didn’t seem likely. For one thing, this wasn’t the first time I had read about The Other Club. The dining society is mentioned in most Churchill biographies, and I had never before come across a reference to Wodehouse as a member. Noted most often is the dramatic dinner of The Other Club on the night of September 29, 1938, when Chamberlain’s Munich accord with Hitler was announced. At that meeting, Churchill directed his fury at cabinet ministers and fellow club members Walter Elliot and Duff Cooper, and shouting matches erupted between Cooper and Churchill and nearly everyone else in the room. Would Wodehouse have been a member of a club with such a highly charged political atmosphere?

Then there is the October 1929 letter from Wodehouse to his friend William Townend, in which he tells of meeting Churchill in Hollywood: “I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that I must have one of those meaningless faces which makes no impression whatever on the beholder. This was—I think—the seventh time I have been introduced to Churchill and I could see that I came upon him as a complete surprise once more.” Robert McCrum in his biography states that Wodehouse and Churchill were fellow members of the Beefsteak Club, but he makes no mention of The Other Club. McCrum does say elsewhere that Wodehouse was “surprisingly clubbable,” listing the Constitutional, the Garrick, the Savage, and the Beefsteak as his London clubs.

A little research (meaning a scan of the notes at the back of Lynne Olson’s book) revealed that a book had been written about The Other Club, called (you guessed it) *The Other Club*. A few days later, thanks to interlibrary loan, this book, written in 1971 by



newspaper editor and Other Club member Sir Colin Coote, was in my hands. On page 27 Coote quotes from a letter he received from Wodehouse in 1970:

I considered it a great honor to be asked to join . . . though it seems very unlikely that I shall ever go to another dinner. I shall be eighty-nine in October. . . .

It must have been at my first dinner that I sat next to F. E. Smith. Conversation was a bit sticky at first, but when I asked him why he didn’t get his Rugger Blue in 1893, he never stopped talking and we got on splendidly.

I enjoyed the dinners tremendously though being overwrought at being in such company.

Discovering that Wodehouse had definitely been a member of The Other Club didn’t answer all my questions. The more I read about The Other Club, the more surprised I was that Wodehouse had been a member. It seemed an odd fit. (Wodehouse himself seemed surprised too, if the last sentence of his letter to Coote is anything to go by.) Certainly Wodehouse was an outstanding Englishman of his time, but he never directed any great events, nor did he seem much concerned with his era’s major political ideas.

As stated above, The Other Club was founded by Churchill and F. E. Smith. Of course, Churchill needs no introduction to Americans, but Smith (later Lord Birkenhead) does. Like Churchill, he was considered to be one of the most brilliant young politicians of his day, and even though he was a Conservative and Churchill at the time was a Liberal, they formed a close personal friendship. Churchill and Smith may have gravitated to each other because they were both considered by the political establishment to be talented but mercurial and pushful. This may be why they were not invited to join The Club, an august dining society that traced its

roots to the 18th century, with Samuel Johnson, Joshua Reynolds, and Edmund Burke among its founding members. In response, Churchill and Smith formed their own dining club—The Other Club.

Unlike London clubs that inhabit actual buildings filled (I imagine) with leather chairs and snoozing members, The Other Club's activities revolve around fortnightly dinners on Thursday evenings (when Parliament is in session) in the Pinafore Room of the Savoy Hotel. Yes, The Other Club still exists, although I could find no information about its current membership. Canadian politician Jerry S. Grafstein neatly summed up the club's atmosphere in a 1995 speech at the University Club of Toronto: "They established a dining club for politicians of all stripes and outstanding non-politicians interested in ideas, served up with superb cuisine, laced with fine wine, and shrouded by mellow smoke of aged cigars."

The membership was limited to about 50, with not more than 24 coming from the House of Commons. According to Lynne Olson, "a prospective member had to be highly accomplished and highly entertaining."

Smith and Churchill established the 12 rules of The Other Club, which are read aloud at the beginning of each meeting. Rule number 2 states that "The Object of The Other Club is to dine." Rule number 12 always seems to be quoted whenever The Other Club is mentioned: "Nothing in the rules or intercourse of the Club shall interfere with the rancour or asperity of party politics." That sentence sounds like pure Churchill to me, but those in the know seem to think it came from Smith. In Smith and Churchill's day, all club decisions, including the final choice of new members, were handled by the Executive Committee, and rule number 10 states: "The names of the Executive Committee shall be wrapped in impenetrable mystery."

The Other Club had nothing against writers and theatre people. H. G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling, and Arnold Bennett were among the earliest members and John Buchan (later landing a perfect Wodehousian name, Lord Tweedsmuir) of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* fame was a member, along with Gerald du Maurier and Laurence Olivier. The membership also included such notables as David Lloyd-George, Lord Kitchener, Harold Macmillan, the economist John Maynard Keynes, and Field Marshals Alexander and Montgomery. In fact, name any of 20th-century Britain's most influential and powerful men (women weren't invited to join) and chances are they were members of The Other Club. Even non-Britons have been members, notably Aristotle Onassis. At Churchill's specific request, the Savoy Hotel's famous three-foot-tall wooden black

cat, Kaspar (kept on hand at the Savoy as the 14th placeholder in case there are 13 guests for dinner), also attends all meetings of The Other Club, even when a 14th member is not needed. Members spend their time dining (rule number 2), conversing, and occasionally giving and listening to testimonial speeches. They also lay some pretty substantial bets, recorded in the club betting book. For example, in 1948 Churchill won a bet that Harry Truman would be reelected President.

Interestingly, The Other Club has inspired at least four Other Clubs on college campuses in the United States. The University of Wisconsin's Other Club is called The Other Other Club, and The Other Club name has even entered the American blogosphere, as a website that takes its inspiration from club rule number 12, which mentions the noninterference in the rancor and asperity of party politics.

All this leads to questions about Wodehouse's membership. When he became a member and who put him up for membership are the two major issues. Unfortunately, my expense account for this article didn't allow me to go to Churchill College in Cambridge, England, where the Churchill papers are kept. An Internet search of the online catalog of the Churchill archives produces quite a few references to Other Club documents that would no doubt be helpful in discovering more about Wodehouse's involvement. For now, though, we will have to be content with some armchair detective work.

When did Wodehouse become a member? The letter from Wodehouse to Colin Coote makes it clear that Wodehouse attended his first dinner before the latter part of 1930, because F. E. Smith died at age 58 in September 1930. We also know that Wodehouse wasn't among the founding members in 1911. Since he spent most of the First World War years in the United States, an educated guess would be that he became a member in the 1920s. In the 1930s, he spent a great deal of time in the United States and France and, obviously, didn't attend any meetings in the 1940s. So another educated guess would be that he attended most frequently in the 1920s. His 1970 letter to Colin Coote suggests that he kept up his membership subscription—the excuse he gave for not attending is that he was 89. Yet it seems unlikely that he kept up his membership after he settled permanently in America.

Even more mysterious is who put him up for membership. According to club rule 4, any member could propose a candidate, but the final decision rested with the anonymous and dictatorial executive committee. This secrecy means that we may never know how and why Wodehouse was asked to join this

elite and largely political dining club. In the meantime, though, we are left with the intriguing possibility of P. G. Wodehouse and John Maynard Keynes sitting down to dinner together. Perhaps Kaspar, the wooden cat, can tell us what that moment was like.

A crusty roll, whizzing like a meteor out of the unknown, shot past the Crumpet and the elderly relative whom he was entertaining to luncheon at the Drones Club and shattered itself against the wall. Noting that his guest had risen some eighteen inches into the air, the Crumpet begged him not to give the thing another thought.

“The Shadow Passes”  
from *Nothing Serious* (1950)



Todd Morning enjoys Kaspar's company.

## My First Time

BY AJAY RAMACHANDRAN

IT WAS INEVITABLE, and it was about time I visited the “House of Wode.” Many trips I had made along literary streets and gone past that house, casting looks of longing and yet continuing on my way. I knew of its eminence and also knew about its master. I knew of Jeeves before I set foot in the house.

My father was a devotee. I assume most Indians of his generation were enamored of Pelham Grenville Wodehouse. Wodehouse, like cricket, is Indian, if not in origin, then in practice. They were both privileged stepchildren, though cricket grew up to be spoiled and is now a high-stakes hustler stripped of grace or innocence.

My friend regarded me as a teacher might a truant. It's not possible. I am what you might call an illiterate and irresponsible reader. The same applies to movies. When films like *Star Wars* or *The Terminator* are talked about, it only makes me blush in embarrassment. I can stand leg-pulling and can endure downing a whole raw green chili, but I certainly cannot entertain ignorance. On my part, that is. My school emblem was emblazoned with the words “Knowledge is Power,” and I suspect I took it to heart.

With Wodehouse it was chance and a bit of laziness, not choice, that kept me putting off reading him. Entering the house of Wode, I was at home at once. Jeeves made sure of that.

“Good morning, sir. Delighted to have you, sir,” he said. Wodehouse is a serious writer. He is a comic writer, of course, so when I say “serious” I mean his writing contains laughable scenes but the quality of his

work is never laughable. The yardstick I use to measure a writer's importance is to weigh my own style beside theirs. If I believe I can write better than they can, the so-and-so is for the most part a poor writer. If it is the other way around, like Wodehouse, where you despair that you never would have thought of this apt simile or that romantic prose, then I consider that writer a serious writer. John le Carré has admitted Wodehouse's influence on his writing, and I hear Salman Rushdie has done the same. What would Oscar Wilde have thought of Wodehouse? It is not just that wit and word choice sparkles with both; I propose that Wilde would have loved Wodehouse because of Wilde's theory of art for art's sake. Wodehouse's fiction is in most ways not real. “Make him laugh and he will think you a trivial fellow, but bore him in the right way and your reputation is assured,” wrote Somerset Maugham. For some, humorous writing is escapism, and for that reason, they doubt its worth. This raises the question: What should be the aim of writing? I believe this is in the same unanswerable category as “What is the meaning of Life?”

“Right ho, Jeeves!” I hear Bertie Wooster sing to Jeeves's announcement of my arrival. The house is already starting to fill up. It is, I gather, a party where all of his characters lampoon their creator.

*Right, all you readers, each and every one of whom has had a First Time: Let's hear your stories! Whether poetically done, with a touch of fantasy, or “just the facts,” we want to know the truth, approximately, of your first Wodehouse experience(s).*  
—Ed.

# When the Wodehouse World Went Global

BY NORMAN MURPHY



*Norman Murphy (far left) conducts another international walk in October 2008 with (left to right) Kris Fowler (USA), Tamaki Morimura (Japan), Elliott Milstein (USA), Robert Bruce (U.K.). (Photo by Elin Woodger)*

IT WAS ELIN who reminded me that it is 20 years since it all began—20 years since the first Wodehouse Pilgrimage. That may not seem all that important to newer members, but I can tell you now that 1989 was the year when the Wodehouse world changed forever. Before then, Wodehouse societies had been formed in various places, but there had been little more than polite correspondence between them. 1989 changed all that.

Members from the United Kingdom now attend TWS conventions regularly with others from all over the world; and, equally regularly, The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) is delighted to welcome Americans and others, also from all over the world, to our biennial formal dinners. (I still harbor a secret desire to organize a sweepstake on which attendee at a U.K. dinner has come furthest. Off the top of my head, I think the winner would probably be Tamaki Morimura from Japan, or maybe Bill Franklin from California, or maybe Oomen and Judy Thomas from Malaysia. Just an idea, you understand.) At our thrice-yearly Wodehouse evenings in London, it is rare not to have an overseas visitor joining us, with Bill Franklin setting an example. I shall never forget the occasion when I was introducing the evening's speaker, and in through the door came Marilyn MacGregor from California, Sven Sahlen from Sweden, a Dutchman from Portugal, and somebody else from Europe. We had no idea they were coming, but that added to the pleasure because they were all old friends. And to reinforce the point, that was the evening

we were treated to a demonstration of hog calling from an Englishman who had learned it from an American in the Falkland Islands! I remember thinking that the world of Wodehouse really had “gone global.”

And 1989 was the start of it all.

I don't know who had the original idea for the Wodehouse Pilgrimage, but the suggestion was for a group to come to England and visit the Wodehouse sites I had identified in *In Search of Blandings*. If anybody wanted to join in from other Wodehouse Societies, they were welcome to come along, and I was to act as Native Guide. The Pilgrimage (24 Americans, four Dutch, and two Brits) went splendidly. We stayed at Dulwich, we walked round Bertie's Wooster's London, we had a magnificent dinner with PGW's sister-in-law Nella and nephew Patrick present, and then off by coach to visit Weston Park in Shropshire (the grounds of Blandings), Severn End (Brinkley Court), Hanley Castle (Market Snodsbury), and Sudeley Castle (the



*Patrick Wodehouse speaking at the 1989 dinner at Dulwich. His mother Nella (Wodehouse's sister-in-law) is on his right.*

*(Photo from Phil Ayers)*



*The 1989 Pilgrims gather in front of Weston Park.  
(Photo from Phil Ayers)*

source of Blandings Castle itself). It was a wonderful week, and it was all reported in the Autumn 1990 issue of *Plum Lines* and later detailed in the book Jimmy Heineman had me write, *A True and Faithful Account of the Amazing Adventures of The Wodehouse Society on Their Pilgrimage July 1989*.

But the important thing about the Pilgrimage was not that it was the first Wodehouse U.K. Tour. The vital element, the factor that changed the Wodehouse world for ever, was that until then we in Great Britain *knew about* the leading lights in the American Society and they *knew about* us. But that was all. The 1989 Pilgrimage changed all that—we got to know each other, we became friends, and the whole thing grew from there. The following year, I visited America for the first time and stayed with many of the pilgrims of the year before, and subsequently, some of them have come to stay with me. And now, 20 years later, along with other Brits, I am looking forward to meeting old friends at St. Paul, catching up on the news, making new friends, smoking my pipe with other sinners (outside, of course), arranging dates for Wodehouse Walks for Americans coming to London, and all the rest of it.

And, of course, if it hadn't been for 1989, I would not have made that visit to America in 1990, and I would not have stayed with Toni Rudersdorf. And if I had not met Toni, I would not have met Miss Elin Woodger, and the *Times* of London would not have been able to tell the world about the marriage of the president of The Wodehouse Society to the chairman of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK). Whoever suggested the Wodehouse Pilgrimage all those years ago really started something!

Mike felt as Robinson Crusoe felt when he met Friday. Here was a fellow human being in this desert place.

## ARRIVING AT THE ST. PAUL CONVENTION EARLY?

*Come and see  
award-winning  
folk singer/songwriter*

# TERRY KITCHEN

(aka the NEWTS' own Max Pokrivchak)

**Thursday, June 11, 2009**

**8:00–10:00 PM**

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**308 Prince Street, St. Paul**

*(Close to 4th and Broadway;  
only 3/4 mile from the St. Paul Hotel!)*

**651-228-9274**

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*The Black Dog Coffee and Wine Bar offers  
casual dining, desserts, coffees, beer, and wine!*



*Terry Kitchen*



With special  
guest:  
Gary Hall  
(editor of  
*Plum Lines*)

Directions from the St. Paul Hotel: Start out going south on Market Street toward Kellogg Blvd W. Turn left on Kellogg Blvd W. Turn left onto Broadway Street. Turn right onto Prince Street, and you're there!

***No cover charge!  
Casual dining & desserts!***



# Extra! Extra! Wodehouse Published in St. Paul!

BY PETER NIEUWENHUIZEN

*In the Netherlands there is a great deal of research into Dutch publications of Wodehouse's works, and sometimes this research leads to other interesting findings. Peter Nieuwenhuizen, chairman of the Dutch P. G. Wodehouse Society, throws light on the first discovery of Plum's stories published in St. Paul, Minnesota. The timing is, of course, perfect for The Wodehouse Society's June 12–14 convention to be held in that same city.*

EVERY CONVENTION of The Wodehouse Society has its highlights, but it may surprise everybody that “A Little Wodehouse on the Prairie” will receive a little help from the Netherlands. In my ongoing search for special Wodehouse publications, I recently discovered one that appeared in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Let's go back in time. In 1923 the story “First Aid for Dora” was published in *Cosmopolitan* (U.S., July) and in the *Strand Magazine* (U.K., August). A year later the story appeared in the novel *Ukridge*, and after that in *Nothing but Wodehouse* (1932) and *The World of Wodehouse* (1975).

The first translation of the story into a non-English language was a Dutch version in the Christmas 1932 edition of the monthly magazine *Nova* by the translator A. M. Buis, followed by translations into Italian (1933), Spanish (1981), and Czech (1998). In 1934 the story, translated as “Ukridge—wij helpen Dora,” was incorporated into the Dutch edition *Ukridge—een humoristische roman* by publisher Allert de Lange in Amsterdam. Three different editions were published, and in 1965 the book was retranslated by Albertus Richel as *De dolende schurk* for publisher Het Spectrum in Utrecht.

That's all for now as far as the Dutch input goes.

But besides the publications mentioned, I have recently discovered another one. On October 10, 1926, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* published “First Aid for Dora” in the *Sunday Pioneer Press Magazine* on pages 9–10 and 14. This is the first known publication of a Wodehouse story in a St. Paul magazine! It has the marks of a Real Discovery: the magazine is mentioned neither in the *McIlvaine Comprehensive Bibliography* nor in the *McIlvaine Addendum*.

As soon as I made this discovery, I contacted Tony Ring, editor of the *Addendum*. Tony suggested that the publication had probably been done via a contract for the syndication of “second serial rights.” Much of Wodehouse's work was offered nationwide, some years after original publication, to an agency that placed it where they could. Tony notes that the same *Ukridge* story was published on the same day in 1926 in the *Times-Picayune Sunday Magazine* from New Orleans.

“First Aid for Dora” is the well-known story of James “Corky” Corcoran and *Ukridge*. *Ukridge* decides to help Dora Mason, who is the secretary-companion to his aunt Julia *Ukridge*, the president of the Pen and Ink Club, author of rotten novels like *The Heart of Adelaide*, and owner of six Pekingese dogs. Corky gets into trouble when his butler Bowles unexpectedly lends out his evening dress to *Ukridge*, which Corky needed for a party. Corky has no choice but to dress himself in an old castoff belonging to the Earl of Oxted and to endure his friends' scorn.

When *Ukridge* and Dora arrive home too late after the party, Aunt Julia dismisses Dora. *Ukridge* comes up with a cunning scheme to get Dora's job back. Corky is sent to plead for his cousin Dora, but he fails when Aunt Julia catches him in his imposture. Fortunately, everything ends well. (Dora returns



*The dashing Dutch Dora detective, Peter Nieuwenhuizen*



*“Ukridge—wij helpen Dora” from a 1932 Dutch Nova magazine*



*The October 10, 1926, St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press Magazine*

# FIRST AID FOR DORA

Ukridge Exhorts to Chivalry, on the Part of His Friend, Who Consents to Be Noble.

By P. G. Wodehouse



would they do anything about it, I could not say.

That the late Earl of Oxted had indeed been a somewhat slenderer man than myself became manifest to me from the first pulling on of trousers. Hitherto I had always admired the slim, small-boned type of aristocrat, but it was not long before I was wishing that Bowles had been in the employment of someone who had gone in a little more heartily for starchy foods. And

Like Hamlet, I wanted to slay this man when he was full of brand, with all his crimes, head-blown, as flush as May, at drinking, swearing, or about some act that had no relish of salvation in it.

I remained, however, still in the habit of wearing a velvet collar on my evening coat. It is not to come in at all, and I had a few years longer before the light in my bedroom was so low as to be enough to show my feet and I looked in the glass.

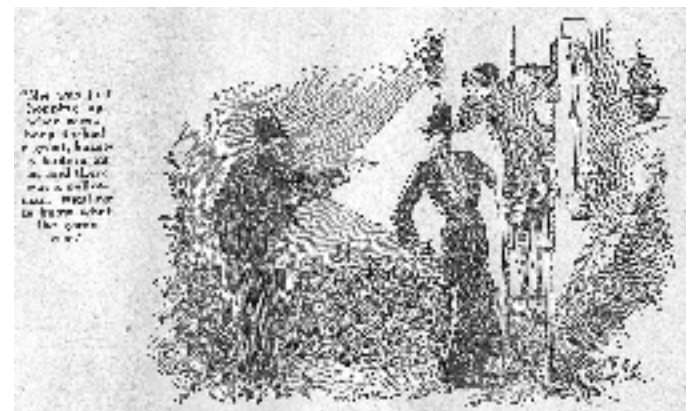
And I was never in a corner again. Most truthfully, this was the point I had decided. It might appear that I had done it. It seemed rather a long way to go, but I had done it, and I had done it in my full possession when I

The pioneering St. Paul Wodehouse page

once more in the sequel to this story, "Ukridge Sees Her Through," first published in September 1923.)

My research continues, and I have found other stories in the *Sunday Pioneer Press Magazine*: "The Exit of Battling Billson" (February 27, 1927) and "Thank You, Jeeves" (August 18, 1935).

The newly discovered issue of the St. Paul journal with the story "First Aid for Dora" will be presented to Kristine Fowler at the TWS convention in June 2009 in St. Paul, as a gift from the Dutch P. G. Wodehouse Society to TWS. Perhaps we can even start the search for more St. Paul publications on the spot. There is a world of Wodehouse discoveries to be found!



"The late Earl of Oxted had indeed been a somewhat slenderer man than myself became manifest to me from the first pulling on of trousers. Hitherto I had always admired the slim, small-boned type of aristocrat, but it was not long before I was wishing that Bowles had been in the employment of someone who had gone in a little more heartily for starchy foods. And

That the late Earl of Oxted had indeed been a somewhat slenderer man than myself became manifest to me from the first pulling on of trousers. Hitherto I had always admired the slim, small-boned type of aristocrat, but it was not long before I was wishing that Bowles had been in the employment of someone who had gone in a little more heartily for starchy foods.

"First Aid for Dora" (1924)

## A Little Last Advice for Conventioneers

FOR THOSE OF YOU who plan to attend A Little Wodehouse on the Prairie, this year's convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, remember that official convention events run from the Friday evening (June 12) through the Sunday morning (June 14), with optional activities on either end. You may visit the Northwodes website at [www.northwodes.org](http://www.northwodes.org) for last-minute convention information, such as the Northwodes' favorite local sites to visit before or after the main event.

### The Rummage Sale Returns!

The rummage sale at the Providence convention did a roaring trade, so naturally it will be reprised at the St. Paul convention. This is the place to bring your duplicate Wodehouse paperbacks, your spare Drones Club tie, the spats or Art Deco earrings you never wear, the "Jeeves and Wooster" videotapes, the Wodehouse-themed refrigerator magnets—you get the idea. If you bring a few odds and ends in your suitcase to donate to the rummage sale, then you'll have room to take home the spiffing finds you'll pick up there.

Proceeds go to the TWS Convention Reserve Fund, which provides seed money for future conventions and makes some extras possible without hiking up the registration fees. And it's also an efficient way to transfer Wodehouse-related items where they'll be most appreciated.

If you'd like to ship ahead or if you're not planning to attend the convention but would still like to help out, send items to Kris Fowler. Note: Donations cannot be returned if unsold, but anything left over will be forwarded to the planning committee of the next TWS convention (in this case the Pickering Motor Company) to help stock their own rummage sale.

... he hastened up and began buying everything in sight. And when a tea-cosy, two Teddy bears, a penwiper, a bowl of wax flowers and a fretwork pipe-rack had changed hands, he felt he was entitled to regard himself as a member of the club and get friendly.

"Lovely day," he said.

"The Right Approach" (1959)

## Chapters Corner

IT'S FUN BEING with other fans and reading about what others are doing. So please use this column to tell the Wodehouse world about your chapter's activities. Representatives of chapters, please send all info to the editor, Gary Hall (see back page). If you're not a member of a local chapter but would like to attend a meeting or become a member, you may get in touch with the contact person listed.

### Anglers' Rest

(Seattle and vicinity)

Contact: Susan Collicott

Phone:

E-mail:



### Birmingham Banjolele Band

(Birmingham, Alabama, and vicinity)

Contact: Caralyn Campbell

Phone:

E-mail:



### Blandings Castle Chapter

(Greater San Francisco Bay area)

Contact: Ed and Missy Ratcliffe

Phone:

E-mail:



### The Broadway Special

(New York City and vicinity)

Contact: Amy Plofker

Phone:

E-mail:



THE BROADWAY SPECIAL ankkled up to Broadway and 76th Street on the Ides of March to the new home theatre of our beloved Musicals Tonight! for a matinee performance—and the New York premiere—of the Wodehouse-Kern collaboration *Cabaret Girl*. This musical had a substantial run in London but never made it to the Great White Way. As always, the huge Musicals Tonight! cast carried their scripts for a staged reading on a bare-bones set with an enthusiastic pianist accompanying them in more than 20 numbers, some of which were interpolated by a savvy dramaturg. It may have been the extra numbers or just an overlong production of what is not one of the fruitiest of the Plum-Kern oeuvre that made a number of us very aware that it took two hours and 45 minutes to complete.

As is the Broadway Special's custom, our pre-theatre gathering at the Savann Restaurant drew a stalwart crowd of brunchers who browsed the Eggs Benedict and sluiced the Bloody Marys while tossing off bons mots and comparing notes on the weekend's other theatrical experiences—a Celtic Women concert for some, a gleeful revival of Coward's *Blithe Spirit* for others. We even had the time to pop into a cozy used-books store where we pulled out a Plum or two! It was a pretty swell Sunday in New York and a pretty special Broadway experience.

**Capital! Capital!**

(Washington, D.C., and vicinity)

Contact: Jeff Peterson

Phone:

E-mail:



**Capital F.O.R.M.**

(Friends Of Ralston McTodd—Ottawa and vicinity)

Contact: Megan Carton

Phone:

E-mail:



**Chapter One**

(Greater Philadelphia area)

Contact: Susan Cohen

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:



**E**XCITEMENT GREW as we talked about the upcoming TWS convention in St. Paul. A show of hands revealed that the Chaps will be well represented at the biannual Wodehouse fandom super event. We collected money for our annual newt adoption at the Philadelphia Zoo, raising a solid \$65, enough to keep our newts plump and prosperous for another year. Herb Moskowitz presented a brief report of his trip to New York to see a Musicals Tonight! script-in-hand performance of *Cabaret Girl*, by Jerome Kern and P. G. Wodehouse. John Baesch and Evelyn Herzog also saw the show. All three agreed it was great fun, with much praise for the professional cast. The show is available on CD from the Ohio Light Opera, based at the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio.

Now it was time for our main activity. Everyone brought a favorite Wodehouse quote to the meeting along with a quote from another amusing author. The Wodehouse quotes were the best, of course, but the other writers were pretty funny, too. The non-Wodehouse writers quoted included Shakespeare, Jerome K. Jerome,

Jane Austen, James Thurber, Dorothy Parker, William Kotzwinkle, G. K. Chesterton, Carl Hiaasen, David Sedaris, Cyril Connolly, Jon Lovitz, Pauline Kael, Oscar Wilde, and oh yes, that noted writer, Anonymous.

We will meet again on May 31 when John Sherwood's skit, "Wooster, M.D.," previously performed at the Clients of Adrian Mulliner meeting at the Junior Bloodstain, will be performed again by and for the Chaps.

**The Chicago Accident Syndicate**

(Chicago and thereabouts)

Contact: Daniel & Tina Garrison

Phone:

E-mail:



**The Clients of Adrian Mulliner**

(For enthusiasts of both PGW

and Sherlock Holmes)

Contact: Marilyn MacGregor

Phone:



**The Drone Rangers**

(Houston and vicinity)

Contact: Toni Oliver

Phone:

E-mail:



**The Flying Pigs**

(Cincinnati area and elsewhere)

Contact: Susan Brokaw

Phone:

E-mail:



**O**N SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, the Flying Pigs gathered at the home of the Rev. Bill Scrivener and his wife, Susan Pace, for our second annual Formal Wodehousian Dinner (Susan's Salute to Anatole). We welcomed a new couple, Bill and Ruth Boys, from Knoxville, Tennessee. Susan's fabulous menu started with shrimp remoulade followed by the soup (double mushroom), then a pork tenderloin with sides of risotto and a spinach/leek gratin. A *reine de saba* was presented for dessert. After dinner we did a reading from *Pigs Have Wings*. It was a lovely and rousing evening. This event was actually on our calendar months ago, but on that particular afternoon freak hurricane force winds blew up from the gulf and left our area dark, powerless, and full of tree limbs. Dinner that day was served by candle and flashlight to a smaller but stalwart group. Susan and Bill deserve a great deal of thanks for dragging out the saucepans and formal tableware to reschedule this event.

A sad note, though, from the Flying Pigs. Eleanore Dial, one of our chapter's founders and a great and lifelong Wodehouse fan, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly earlier this year. She was a delightful woman and we miss her very much indeed. She is survived by her husband John, who, some of you will recall, dressed as an Anglican priest at the Hollywood convention a few years ago. Our condolences to John.

### **The Mottled Oyster Club / Jellied Eels**

(San Antonio and South Texas)

Contact: Lynette Poss

Phone:

E-mail:



**F**IRST, on a serious note, we will dedicate this issue's MO/JE Chapter Report to Brian Davenport, who was such a valued member of our Jellied Eel activities. Brian left us, passing from this life on February 24, 2009, and will be missed.

Because your addled correspondent here overlooked the last deadline, I will play catch-up and give a summary of the goings-on in San Antonio since last you heard from us.

In December a few Oysters made it to Fort Worth for an excellent production of *The Code of the Woosters*. Thank you, Wynette Schwalm, for telling us about the run of the play. Well worth the trip about sums it up!

Way back in September, we discussed a change of chapter name. We've done this before, but have never been able to come to any conclusions. This time, there were several good suggestions, including the Alamottled Oyster, the Rosie M. Banks of the River Walk, Oyster Alamode, Jellied Oyster Alamode, the Threepwood Tumbleweeds, and the South Texas Cow Creamers. Bryan Lilius, Randy Anderson, and Jan Ford were among those contributing these gems. And thank you, Liz Davenport, for finding your notes from our name-brainstorming session! If and when we make a decision, *Plum Lines* will be duly informed.

In January we took our group to Fredericksburg, Texas, to join forces with one of our far-flung members, Ephraim Gadsby III, Esq. We had a great meeting, as usual, but somehow failed to make connections with Gadsby. We rather suspect that he was pinched—er—unavoidably detained, even though there were no boat races in the vicinity that night. We plan to make a second attempt in the near future, and perhaps old Ephraim can find his way to the pub this time from the Nasturtiums, Jubilee Road, to meet us.

In late April, one Drone Ranger and several Mottled Oysters got together to break (and perhaps throw?)

bread. Toni Oliver graced our fair city with Fred, her boarder of two months, who is a grad student from France at Rice on a fellowship. He shines in the field of chemistry, the young man does.

Future plans include several restaurants and much fine reading, including *Indiscretions of Archie*, *Uncle Dynamite*, *Heavy Weather*, and *Psmith in the City*. We hope to take another visit this year to the home of our Oldest Member, who welcomed us most graciously in February. We have Clark Adams to thank for the selection of that most apt nom de Plum, as April's meeting found us drinking a toast to Bob Adams's 95th birthday, as well as to his health. Cheers to him and to the rest of you wonderful Wodehouse fans out there, from the Alamottled Oyster Tumbleweed Banks Cow Creamers. Until next time, then!

### **The New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS)**

(Boston and New England)

Contact: David Landman

Phone:

E-mail:



**I**T WASN'T PLANNED as such, but the NEWTS "Welcome to Spring" nottle manifested as a gastronomic world tour. The convivial board sagged under the weight of south-of-the-border pork-and-apricot empanadas; Thai spring rolls; Indian dumplings; Italian minestrone; Mexican dip; French, Australian, South African, and Chilean wines; Mexican and Irish beers; French and Dutch cheeses; Greek and Spanish olives; German chocolate cake; guess-from-where deviled eggs; and Cajun jambalaya provided (with brother John's help) by Elena Kareores. Elena is a recent transplant from New Orleans who, by her ability to turn a wooden spoon into a magic wand, amply demonstrated her credentials for NEWT-hood. (We are ready to greet you, Elena, with open arms [and gullets] if you decide to take the leap.) The pièce of résistance was something your correspondent initially identified as Arctic whale blubber, hoping thereby to top off the global panorama, but which upon sampling proved to be Japanese tofu. A lively discussion followed as to the reason why, of all the NEWTS, only Jaganathan Ravi's face printed out blue in last meeting's group photo. No conclusion was reached, but it was agreed that the color was becoming. The next meeting is scheduled for July on the birthday of the chapter's president (who, incidentally, is fond of Corton-Charlemagne wine and Aston Martin roadsters).



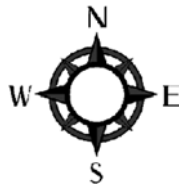
### The Northwodes

(St. Paul, Minneapolis, and vicinity)

Contact: Kristine Fowler

Phone:

E-mail:



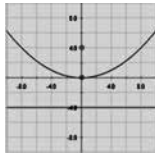
**T**HE NORTHWODES are busy, busy, busy preparing a convention to live in legend and song. We tie wet towels around our heads, drink black coffee, and plan, calculate, investigate, invent, and organize. And then we rest from our labors with a mint julep or two while watching the Kentucky Derby at the venerable Lexington Restaurant. New Northwode Gene Hogenson, who found out about us through Maria Jette’s announcement at one of her performances, scooped the buck-a-horse pot after Mine That Bird’s dramatic come-from-behind finish. We figure we’ve all learned a tremendous amount about judging form and can all clean up when we go to Canterbury Downs at the convention. So if you want a hot tip, ask a Northwode. The hottest tip, of course, is “join us for A Little Wodehouse on the Prairie.”

### The Pale Parabolites

(Toronto and vicinity)

Contact: Peter M. Nixon

E-mail:



**T**HE PALE PARABOLITES . . . those who are seeking the Pale Parabola of Joy . . . whatever that may be. The Pale Parabolites’ motto is *nil admirari*. Like the Empress of Blandings, the Pale Parabolites take things as they come and marvel at nothing.

### The Pelikan Club

(Kansas City and vicinity)

Contact: Sallie Hobbs

E-mail:



### The Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corporation

(Los Angeles and vicinity)

Contact: Karen Shotting

Phone:

E-mail:



**T**HE PZMPCo MET at Karen Shotting’s home on Easter Sunday because our usual venue, Vroman’s Bookstore in Pasadena, was closed for the holiday. The meeting began with tea and sandwiches and Doug’s rendition of “Galahad on Tea” from *Week-End Wodehouse*. The reading for the day was “The Great Sermon Handicap,” and as usual, our perusal of that

classic short story led us off on many tangents to other topics and favorite authors, including Barbara Pym and Arthur Conan Doyle. We rounded off the meeting with cake and other sweets because the attendees had not yet ingested quite enough carbohydrates.

The Perfecto-Zizzbaum Board of Directors (defined as anyone who attended the April meeting) reached certain executive decisions regarding the form and content of the May, June, and July meetings. The location for the May meeting will again be Karen’s house; the anniversary meeting in June will be at the Huntington Library, Botanical Gardens, and Art Collections; and the July meeting will be at Vroman’s. The reading in May will be *Galahad at Blandings* (aka *The Brinksmanship of Galahad Threepwood*), in June we’ll digest “The Rise of Minna Nordstrom,” and in July we’ll try on *Mostly Sally* (aka *The Adventures of Sally*).

Anyone wishing to join us for the May meeting should contact Karen (as above) for directions. It is not necessary to have read the selected novel or short story to attend our meetings—we welcome all Wodehouse fans.

### PGWinWNY

(Buffalo, New York, and vicinity)

Contact: Laura Loehr

Phone:

E-mail:



**O**N MARCH 22, 2009, the Buffalo Gay Men’s Chorus presented a concert called “The Land Where the Good Songs Go” at Daemen College. The name was taken from one of the songs in the concert. The lyrics to that song, of course, are by P. G. Wodehouse, who received good press in the concert program. Eight of us Wodehouseans decided to check it out. The concert was a delight—in addition to the featured song, many of the good old songs were included, and we all enjoyed it.

Some people had other plans for the evening, but five of us went to dinner at Siena Restaurant. We spoke of many things, some having to do with Wodehouse. The two major topics were “what to call the group” and “what our next event should be.” We are hoping to get good suggestions from our growing list of members. We will pass on suggestions and comments to everyone. By this summer we will vote on a name and hopefully find one that everyone feels comfortable with.

We would like to have a picnic this summer. We’re looking for a park where we can reserve a shelter in case of rain. Everyone would be asked to bring a dish to share. Activities would include Wodehouse contests such as an egg-and-spoon race, with prizes, and a vote on our

name with absentee ballots allowed. We're thinking of sometime in August, but do not have a date yet.

### The Pickering Motor Company

(Detroit and vicinity)  
Contact: Elliott Milstein  
Phone:  
E-mail:



**P**ICKERING TAKES to the road! Typically, the Board of Directors of the Pickering Motor Company meets in one of the directors' homes for rather heavy browsing and sluicing and somewhat lighter book discussions. But we know that these are not normal times for the auto companies, so the Pickerings decided to change it up. In March, we met at a jazz club for dinner and music. The inspiration for this trip was the addition to the Pickering ranks of the charming and lovely Mr. and Mrs. Adam Beyer, who live at the far-eastern side of Detroit. Having missed previous meetings because his Buffy-Porson could not make the journey, the other members, all of whom drive much more reliable Pickering autos, made the trek to his side of town, where the Dirty Dog Tavern has such wonderful food and music.

Not content with such out-of-the-box thinking, as is necessary this day and age to keep a domestic auto company afloat, the Pickerings quickly followed up with another tour, this time attending the opening-night performance of *By Jeeves*, the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical. No Pickering evening is complete without copious amounts of food and alcohol, so the play was preceded by a business meeting at a nearby eatery. All attendees were excited to discuss plans for the upcoming St. Paul convention during dinner, and later the play was thoroughly enjoyed by all as well.

If you live anywhere in the metro Detroit area, please contact the Pickering Motor Company and join in the festivities, especially since the next two years will be consumed with the exciting task of planning the 2011 convention in Detroit. Watch for our special presentation at the St. Paul convention.

### The Portland Greater Wodehouse Society (PGWs)

(Portland, Oregon and vicinity)  
Contact: Carol James  
Phone:  
E-mail:



### The Size 14 Hat Club

(Halifax, Nova Scotia)  
Contact:  
E-mail:



### The Soup & Fish Club

(Northern Virginia area)  
Contact: Deborah Dillard  
Phone:  
E-mail:

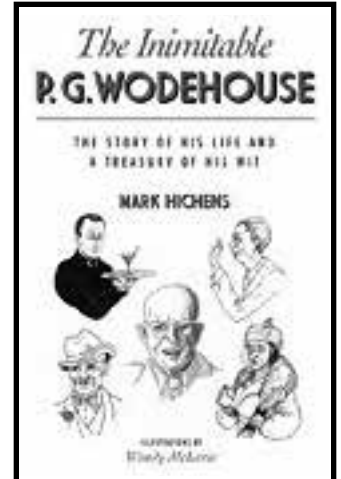


## The Inimitable P. G. Wodehouse

**K**ERRY HERBERT, Head of Marketing for Book Guild Publishing in the U.K., has informed TWS of a new book of interest: *The Inimitable P. G. Wodehouse*. Written by Mark Hichens, the BGP website says that his "lively account of Wodehouse's life reveals a man who could be both naïve and shrewd. . . . Hichens contends that as much light can be cast on Wodehouse from his fictional characters as from his autobiographies; he was more ready to put elements of himself into them."

The book is due out in June. For more information about the book, or to order a copy, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/qpspcc>.

(It would be terrific if a PL reader would volunteer to review this. Let me know! -Ed.)



## Cabaret Girl in New York

BY GUS CAYWOOD

**I**N MARCH the Musicals Tonight! series presented a staged reading of *Cabaret Girl* at the McGinn/Cazale Theatre in New York. Properly called *The Cabaret Girl*, this musical marked Plum's successful 1922 London reunion with Jerome Kern. Librettos were never his strong suit, though, and *The Cabaret Girl* lacks some of the flow and espièglerie of the Bolton-Wodehouse-Kern classics. This production was hampered by a warmish theatre and a running time of almost three hours, but it had points to commend it to Wodehouseans, including entertaining dialogue and comic numbers and references to familiar Wodehouse motifs such as get-rich-quick chicken farm egg production schemes. Kern's score sparkled frequently and illustrated his own talent for recycling. The spirited and talented cast handled the material well, especially Mark Woodard and Jackson Ross Best, Jr. as the comic pair Mr. Gripps and Mr. Gravvins, and Patricia Noonan as their super-competent secretary Effie.

## Audiobooks by CSA

TONY RING mentions that CSA Word Classic has produced several Martin Jarvis abridged (though still long) recordings of Wodehouse, including *A Pelican at Blandings*, *Summer Lightning*, *Heavy Weather*, and *Piccadilly Jim*, so far. You can find them at Amazon.com and other online sites.

## *P G Wodehouse: The Unknown Years*

WE HAVE RECEIVED word of a new book entitled *P G Wodehouse: The Unknown Years*, with a foreward by Edward Cazalet. It was written by Reinhild von Bodenhausen, who was a child when Plum and Ethel stayed at her family's estate twice during World War II, after his release from the internment camp. The book has been published in Sri Lanka and is available from the Lake House Bookshop, which you can find at <http://www.lakehousebookshop.com>; you may enter "Wodehouse" in the search box or click on the picture of the book on the home page. At the time of going to press, the U.S. equivalent price was \$15, though the final cost will depend on shipping charges, which can be expensive. The *Sunday Times of Sri Lanka* recently had an article about the book; it can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/dldzz4>. (*Any volunteer reviewers out there who'll take this one on? I'd love to hear from you! -Ed.*)

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*We appreciate your articles, research, Quick Ones, My First Time tales, and other observations. Send them to Gary Hall via e-mail or snail mail at the addresses above!*

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He endeavoured to withdraw, but a pulpy glove took him on the odd fungoid growth which he was accustomed laughingly to call his ear. Another glove impinged upon his jaw. And there the matter ended for Alf Todd.  
"The Return of Battling Billson" (1923)