

The quarterly journal of The Wodehouse Society

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The Early Days of The Wodehouse Society

BY LEN LAWSON

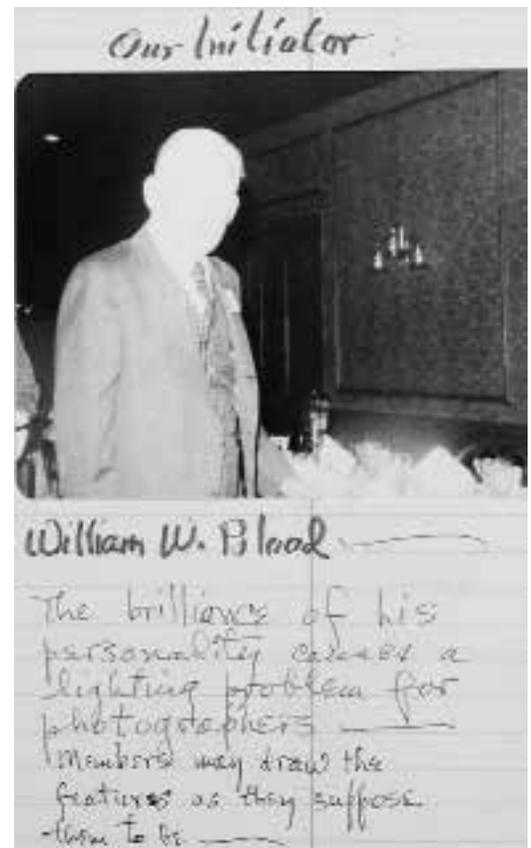
Past TWS President Len Lawson gave this presentation at the June 2009 convention in St. Paul. We're grateful that Len has helped preserve this historical information and has shared it with us so entertainingly.

THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY was founded by the gentleman you see pictured here, Captain William "Bill" W. Blood, USAF Retired. Not the best photo, but as you read in the caption, "The brilliance of his personality causes a lighting problem for photographers . . ."

The society was born with the meeting of Bill Blood and Franklin Axe (date unknown, probably 1979 or 1980). They met at an auction house (location unknown, probably near Doylestown, Pennsylvania) that often handled books. Frank's wife Edna was looking for Wodehouse books for him when she ran into Bill Blood, also looking for Wodehouse books. Bill asked Edna to bring Frank along next time so they could talk about Wodehouse. She did and they did. Frank and Bill had a great time talking about Wodehouse. Bill asked if Frank would like to meet like this once a month, perhaps with more PGW devotees. Frank said, "Of course." Somewhere along the way Bill suggested that they start a Wodehouse society, in fact, *The Wodehouse Society*. Since Bill agreed to do all the work, Frank said it was a great idea.

Bill started by writing letters everywhere and placing a few advertisements. He wrote a letter to the editor of the *New Hope Gazette*, published a few miles from Bill Blood's Doylestown in eastern Pennsylvania. Also, he penned a missive to *AB Bookman's Weekly* (see page 2), a paper that consisted primarily of ads for buying and selling books. This letter got me into the society. I had been buying Wodehouse books from Edward Lewald, a Baltimore book dealer. He told me a man named Bill Blood was starting a Wodehouse society. I wrote to Bill; he told me about Pauline Blanc, who was starting a TWS chapter in the San Francisco Bay Area; and I joined the society and the chapter immediately.

In addition to writing letters, Bill Blood advertised, including an item in the announcements column of the *Doylestown Daily Intelligencer*. (It was, however, not combined with the *Wheat Growers Gazette*.) When Bill and Mary Blood traveled, Bill would engage people in conversation and bring the topic around to Wodehouse. If he found



interested parties, he would sign them up and give them membership cards. Over the course of a few months, Bill was able to sign up quite a few members.

The big day finally arrived: At 3 P.M. on June 15, 1980, the first meeting of the first chapter, the Bucks-Montgomery-Philadelphia Chapter, was convened, probably at Bill's house. Present were Bill and Mary Blood, Franklin and Edna Axe, Frances LaRosa, and Frances's two sisters, Catherine and Jane Freimiller. If anyone knows of others, please let me know. When I asked those early members recently, they couldn't remember any others. This perturbed me until I tried to remember those present at the first Blandings Castle meeting and found that I, too, couldn't remember many.

This first meeting, in Doylestown, was just to organize the group. No Wodehouse discussions, no bread rolls thrown, and no stories read. Well, not quite. How can one get a group of Plumies together without talk about Wodehouse and his works? But primarily it was a working session. The name was quickly changed to The Delaware Valley Chapter, and it continued to meet until after the second convention, which was held late in 1983.



The first membership list

Dear Mr. Chernofsky:

I wonder if any AB readers would be interested in forming a society to perpetuate the memory of the late P.G. Wodehouse, to work for a continuing interest in his writing, and to share with others an appreciation of his rare and delightful humor.

Local groups could be organized, meeting for discussion, exchanging surplus copies of his books, and enjoying the fellowship of those who share a common admiration of Plum's humor.

Such local groups might then be cemented nationally by the publication of a periodic newsletter of interest to members, and of service to local chapters. This would be a non-profit effort completely. Lady Ethel Wodehouse has given her approval for such a society.

Any AB readers who are interested, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Capt. William W. Blood
82 Evergreen Drive
New Britain, Pa. 18901

The note heard 'round the Wodehouse world in
AB Bookman's Weekly

As mentioned earlier, the Blandings Castle Chapter was formed in the

San Francisco area. I was lucky to attend its first meeting in San Francisco on February 1, 1981, in the home of Pauline Blanc, organizer of the group.

Bill kept us all up to date with membership lists and newsletters. The first membership list, dated August 14, 1980, included 30 members, mostly from the Doylestown area, with a few others scattered as far as Canada. Two months later the second list showed 47 members, and by February 1981 we had grown to 83 members. The membership has continued to grow ever since. There is generally a boost in convention years because of local publicity and sometimes articles in national magazines.

Let us now wander back and talk about the newsletter.

Our early newsletters were published every two months. The first six issues were one-pagers called *Comments in Passing*, and they were composed, typed, duplicated, and mailed by Bill Blood. (I don't believe he made the paper.) The first issue (opposite page) was dated August 29, 1980. Surprisingly, the ever-optimistic Bill didn't give it a volume number or issue number, a fault he corrected in the next issue.

Bill gave the first issue of 1981 the volume number 2, so a volume would align with a calendar year. The practice has continued ever since except . . . sometimes. I'm sure Norman Murphy will have an explanation for this that will date back to the first earl of Emsworth's second son. The irregular volume numbers created problems for Norman and Elin when they prepared the *Plum Lines* index.

With the September issue of 1981, the newsletter became *Plum Lines*. Doris Frohnsdorff, and then Don Abbot, suggested the title. Doris was rewarded with a copy of *Jeeves and the Tie That Binds*, which she received on the second try. Apparently Lord Emsworth was put in charge of sending the prize and, of course, sent the wrong one on his first try. We know Bill would never have done such a thing.

Bill was not averse to putting laughs in *Plum Lines*, even if the laugh was on him. For example, Bill once wrote that "Errors in *Plum Lines* are intentional to allow bibliographers to determine 'points,' which increase the value of collector's items in years to come."

You will note that Bill Blood referred to himself as the initiator. He did not like to be called the founder because he said that was what horses did after they ate too much.

Two years after its founding, TWS held its first convention in Doylestown on July 16, 1982. Attendance was small, so Bill called it a gathering. Only eight members came to the business meeting, but 13 members plus three guests showed up for the dinner. As usual, the Eggs, Beans, and Crumpets shunned work but were always ready to tie on the feedbag.

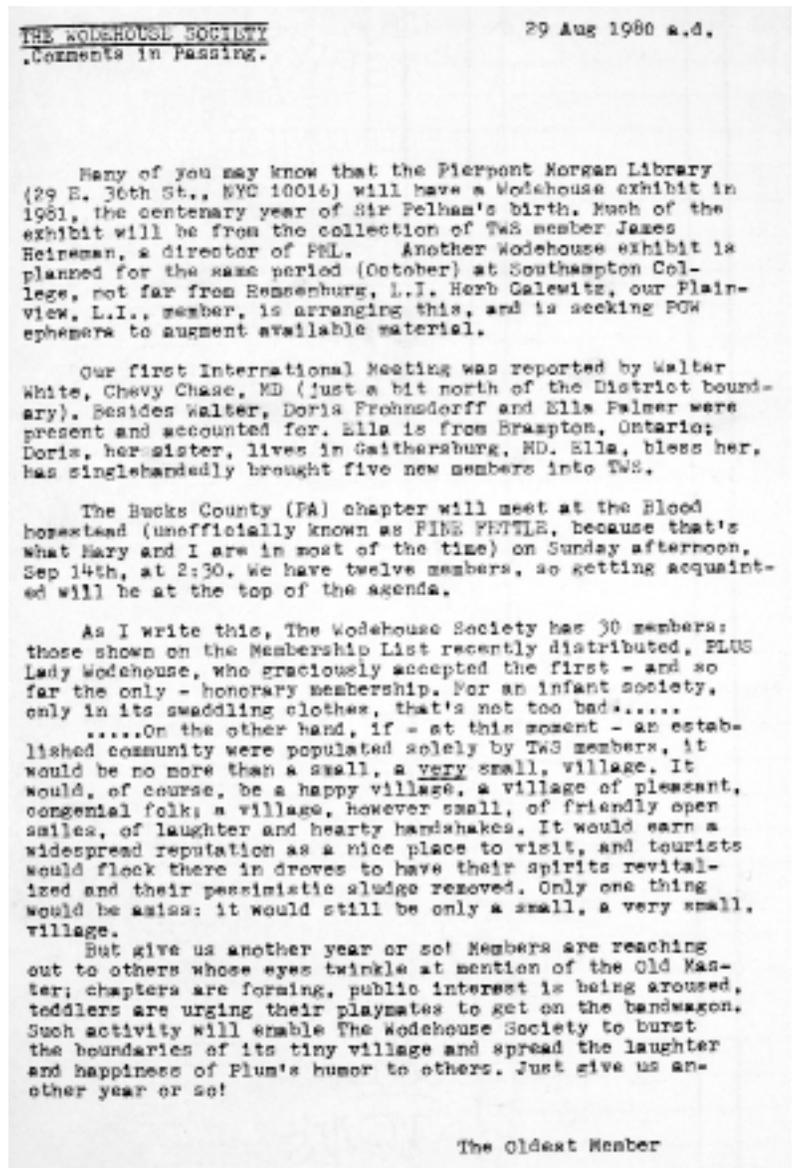
The agenda consisted of a business meeting in the afternoon and a dinner in the evening with talks and readings.

Lady Wodehouse issued a letter of greeting to the gathering, stating that she wished that she could attend but her health would not allow it, and that Plummy "would have been pleased" to know about the society. Here Bill describes the momentous event:

The first annual gathering of The Wodehouse Society was convened on the 16th of July, 1982. A constitution of broad, liberal scope was approved by the gatherers and will be submitted to the full membership with the September mailing of *Plum Lines*. The agenda concerned general policies, with which

all were in agreement, and the meeting ended on a high optimistic note. While only eight members attended the session at Delaware Valley College, the dinner at Missy's Inn was celebrated by a multitude of 13 members and three guests. Excellent chow. Whatever our gathering may have lacked in numbers it compensated for in cordiality. Lady Ethel sent a letter of greeting, which was read to the assembly. Louise Collins, TWS, who had interviewed OM on WBUX several months ago, read Isaac Asimov's foreword to *Wodehouse on Crime* with verve and consummate skill. David A. Jasen contributed a fine talk on Plum's life and career, very well received. Paul Taylor of WNPV gave a dynamic reading of "Goodbye to All Cats." He was ably assisted by Audrei Ewart, our Delaware Valley Chapter president, who had participated nobly in planning the gathering. A greeting card for Lady Wodehouse was signed by the members, who voted unanimously to send flowers also. All agreed that it had been a successful meeting and dinner.

A little over a year later the second convention (this time called a convention) was held in Doylestown on the anniversary of Wodehouse's 102nd birthday, Saturday, October 15, 1983. The agenda was about the same as at the first convention except there was a luncheon with the business meeting. Lady Wodehouse continued to correspond, this time thanking us for the flowers we sent to her. Dr. Robert (Bob) Hall Jr. of Cornell was elected president and James (Jim) Rodenback was elected vice president. Members voted to hold the conventions every two years.



The first newsletter of TWS, called Comments in Passing

Bill commented that “game four of the World Series had somewhat thoughtlessly been scheduled at the same time as our luncheon; but our hardy band of conventioners, faced with their duties as loyal Plummys, were undeterred from their responsibilities.”

Our third convention, the one that set the format for the core of all future conventions, was held on Saturday, October 19, 1985, at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Talks about Wodehouse occupied

the morning, lunch was followed by the business meeting, and talks continued until an early evening break. Attendees gussied up to an almost unbelievable extent for the social hour and banquet.

Bill Blood’s November 1985 issue of *Plum Lines* informed us that there were 24 members of the society at that meeting, and as usual a good time was had by all. Pictures of those conventioners are in *The Tome*.

Please note that a very dangerous precedent was set at the third convention: Florence Cunningham didn’t attend the convention, and she was elected president. So don’t take a chance by missing a convention.

Here I want to take note of a musical event that seems to coincide with each recent convention. I don’t know how it happens, but it seems that there is always a Terry Kitchen concert in the city of the convention. You must admit that this is an outstanding coincidence.

That concludes my talk about the early days of TWS. I would like to thank Neil Midkiff for his assistance in getting information from the *Tome* for us. Without that we would have been lost indeed.

All information for this talk came from the *Tome*, our scrapbook and compilation of historical material, and from conversations with early members of TWS. Seeing how much information has been lost about the early days of

our society, I have decided to gather information about the early days of the various chapters. I have contacted many of the chapters and have received information from many of them. If you haven’t responded, or if this is the first you’ve heard about it, please let me hear from you.

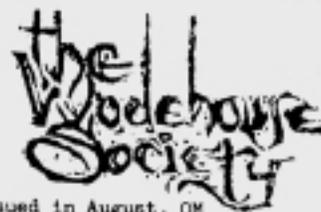
I would also like to hear from members of chapters that have ceased to exist, and ghost chapters. That is, chapters that never got started, but somehow the announcement went out that they had.



“Look,” said Annabel simply. . . . “That is Uncle Joe, taken in the lodge regalia of a Grand Exalted Periwinkle of the Mystic Order of Wheelks.”

“Romance at Droitgate Spa” (1937)

PLUM LINES - the newsletter of The Wodehouse Society.....Vol. II, No. 4.....
.....15 September 1981 WCY.....
“I am all for incest and tortured souls in moderation, but a good laugh from time to time never hurt anybody.” FGW - Author! Author!



You are very perceptive: no newsletter was issued in August. OM wants December for the enjoyment of The Holiday Season with its time-consuming shopping spree, exchanges of greetings, and celebrations by family and church. Thus this September issue, with November as its successor.

The title of our newsletter (you noticed!) was suggested by Doris Frohndorff, TWS. Don Abbott also suggested it, but Doris said it first by a week and won a copy of *Jeeves and the Tie that Binds*. 'Tis computerish to err, and she was sent the wrong book; amends were quickly made, of course. Walter White and Doug Stow sent entries, for which profuse thanks are awarded.....Four entrants per contest seems to be our maximum response for contests so far; only four (4) entrants for our logotype contest (the Great Insigne/Symbol/Device contest..remember?). Our Art Committee believes that the importance of developing the absolutely right design for TWS justifies suspending the selection date indefinitely. They thank those who have submitted designs, and hope that they, and many others, will give the matter much thought and effort. Suspended means postponed, NOT cancelled.

*The seventh issue of the TWS newsletter was the first to be called Plum Lines.
(Note: “WCY” is Bill Blood’s coinage of “Wodehouse Centennial Year” for 1981)*



Ethel Wodehouse’s letter after the 1983 convention

Pauline Blanc

PAULINE MARIE BLANC passed away at the age of 86 in San Francisco on December 22, 2009. Pauline was an important early member of TWS, as mentioned in Len's preceding article. From the *San Francisco Chronicle* of February 7, 2010: "Her parents were Emma Strand of Amsterdam, Holland and Peter Schouw of Antwerp, Belgium. Pauline married Stewart Sanborn Blanc in 1952. . . . Pauline was a talented artist who in 1939 earned a BFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. She studied with noted teachers including traveling to China with watercolorist Dong Kingman, workshops with Richard Yip, George Post, and Rupert Garcia. Pauline received recognition from various sources and was considered a pioneer in copy machine art. She was an early member of the San Francisco Women Artists. As a Wodehouse Society enthusiast, her dry and witty sense of humor was a trademark. Her friends will miss her generous spirit."

Not at All Gruntled about "Choate"

Thanks to Todd Morning for writing up this summary of one of the more important issues that arose in the chambers of the U.S. Supreme Court! Note that Tom Thomas sent us a copy if you would like to read it in full.

ON JANUARY 3, 2010, Ben Zimmer wrote, in his "On Language" column in the *New York Times Magazine*, about Supreme Court Justice Anthony Scalia's obsession with the legal term *choate*. Apparently, Justice Scalia thinks that there is no such word, believing that the word *inchoate* (commenced but not completed, partially done) should never be flipped to *choate*. Last November, when appearing before the court, a lawyer named Randolph Barnhouse used "choate" and Scalia stopped him saying, "There is no such adjective. I know we have used it, but there is no such adjective as choate. There is inchoate, but the opposite of inchoate is not choate." The Justice went on, "It's like gruntled." He then noted that some people think that the opposite of disgruntled is gruntled. To this, Zimmer added: "Tell that to P. G. Wodehouse, who wrote in one of his 'Jeeves' novels, 'If not actually disgruntled, he was far from being gruntled.'"

The above quote appears in *The Code of the Woosters* (1938) and is widely considered to be one of Wodehouse's best lines in one of his best books. In fact, *gruntled* appears in the OED with Wodehouse's quote to illustrate the definition. It's probably safe to say that *gruntled* made it into the dictionary mainly because of this clever line from Wodehouse, which is something that should make us all thoroughly gruntled.

The Legacy of Mr. Fergus James Brown

Our own Ken Clevenger recently coordinated an effort to use a bequest from Mr. Fergus James Brown, lately a member of TWS from north of the border. Here is Ken's report, and we must give significant thanks to him for carrying this terrific idea forward, thereby spreading the words of Plum ever further.

MR. FERGUS JAMES BROWN of Mississauga, Ontario, a Canadian member of The Wodehouse Society, was such a fan of Plum's works that, when Mr. Brown died, he left TWS a bequest to be used for a Canadian Wodehouse initiative. As a result, TWS has made a gift of Wodehouse books to two Canadian public libraries. The gifts were presented to the Saskatoon Public Library (Saskatchewan) and to the Spring Garden Memorial Library in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Each library received 33 hardbound books from the Overland Press reprint series. They were a mix of Wooster and Jeeves stories; the Blandings Castle saga; short story collections; and some of Plum's earlier novels, including *Piccadilly Jim*, *Jill the Reckless*, and *Psmith in the City*. The total number of pages of sweetness and light thus came to 16,608—a yard of Wodehouse books (or metre for our Canadian colleagues) on each library's shelf! To make the books really special, and to satisfy the terms of Mr. Brown's bequest, each book was affixed with a special bookplate inside the front flyleaf.

The bookplates were created by Bill Boys, a TWS member from Knoxville, Tennessee, who owns a print shop. On the plate, "P. G. Wodehouse" and "The Wodehouse Society" (in plum-colored ink, of course) accompany images of a smiling sun and a browsing pig. The text includes our website and mentions Canadian chapters in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec, as well as in several U.S. cities close to the border.

We're also indebted to Ms. Jill Cooper-Robinson of Halifax, Nova Scotia, who coordinated the presentation of these gifts. Jill is the curator of a collection of rare East Asian photographs and volunteered to arrange a liaison with Mrs. Brown and handle the publicity and presentations.

The Wodehouse Society is deeply appreciative of Mr. Brown's kind gift and trusts that the 66 books will be well-used by the Canadian reading public. We know that the libraries appreciate it also (see page 13). We hear that the winters up there can be long and confining, meaning that Wodehouse is just the uplifting reading material one needs to put one right until spring!

Letter from England

BY ELIN WOODGER



IF YOU ARE au courant on the headlines in England, then you know that it has been a dashed difficult winter here, with weather conditions that wouldn't faze those in my old stomping ground of New England but have rather put this country out. Fortunately, in times of cold and snow, one only has to take a Wodehouse work off the shelf to obtain a warm and happy feeling.

One can go to the theatre for the same effect, and last October (even before the cold weather set in), we did just that. By "we" I mean about 30 or so U.K. Society members who got together to see John Lithgow perform "Uncle Fred Flits By" in his one-man show *Stories by Heart*. Having heard and read about this show for so long (see, for instance, David McDonough's review in the Summer 2007 *Plum Lines*), I was more than keen to see it—and I was not disappointed. Mr. Lithgow brings the story to life on stage with only a minimum of props and an ability to convey each character—including the parrot—with such accuracy (and a touch of madness) that one feels completely drawn into the action. It is a masterful performance that is offset in the second half of his show with a darker story, "Haircut," by Ring Lardner. Mr. Lithgow is a storyteller par excellence, and if ever you have a chance to see *Stories by Heart*, don't miss it!

That show, along with the exhibition at Heywood Hill I reported on in my last Letter, was the highlight of my autumn. You may recall that I spoke of the many Wodehouse Walks Norman gave during the exhibition. Such was the success of these walks that he decided to reinstitute thrice-yearly full-length walks as part of the U.K. Society's schedule of events. But he has a soft heart, my Norman, and when fellow Wodehousians write to say they are coming to London from some other part of the world, they usually get an offer of a walk—though in the cold weather, it has to be the abbreviated version. This was how we had the pleasure of getting together with Lenny and Sandra Goldstein in November and with Shana Singerman and her family in late December—brave folks they for coming to London at such a time of year!

But Norman and I, along with Hilary and Robert Bruce, were even braver ourselves when, on a very frigid Sunday in January, we went on a different sort of Wodehouse Walk—one *not* led by Norman. When we learned that an organization called London Walks had scheduled a special walk called "What Ho, Jeeves! The London of P G Wodehouse"—*ho!* we cried. Can

such things be? Have they pinched their material from one N. T. P. Murphy? We'd better go along and find out. And so we did.

As it transpired, there was only a small bit of overlap with Norman's walk through Mayfair, and the walk leader, Richard Burnip, had done his homework well. He conducted an interesting and informative tour with much enthusiasm and plenty of Wodehouse quotations, starting in Dunraven Street, where Our Hero had once lived, and ending near a bookstore off Piccadilly where, possibly, Bertie Wooster had gone to get Spinoza's latest and ended up with a copy of *Spindrift* instead. In between we stopped at many locations that figured in PGW's works and heard much about his life. The sources for Richard's information included *In Search of Blandings*, something he reminded us of a couple of times during the walk, unaware that the book's author was in his group. But he began to suspect something when Norman asked him a pointed question or two that implied he knew more than he was letting on. We introduced ourselves at the end and said nothing of his occasional omissions—for instance, he apparently does not know (yet) that the Running Footman pub on Charles Street is the source of Junior Ganymede or that the real Drones Club is the very real (and still-existing) Buck's Club in Clifford Street.

Those small quibbles aside, it was a highly enjoyable walk, as London Walks usually are. I'm happy to say, though, that Norman's Wodehouse Walks still stand alone—not, of course, that I have any prejudice in the matter.



Norman, incognito in his hooded jacket, listens closely as Richard Burnip tries to keep the crowd warm with stories about Wodehouse's life and characters.

(Photo by Elin Woodger)

In Search of Lord Emsworth

BY ROGER PANCOAST



Mr. Pancoast says, "I must give Norman Murphy full credit for opening my eyes to the fact that so many of Wodehouse's people and places come from the real world. Without his landmark work, this article would never have been written."

UNLIKE OUR distinguished fellow member, N. T. P. Murphy, whose pioneering research found not only Blandings but nearly everything else in Wodehouse, I was not searching for Lord Emsworth. Finding him was more like the experience of stout Cortez who, while wandering about the isthmus of Panama one day admiring the scenery, noticed something blue in the foreground and found the wide Pacific.

In my case, I was leafing through a book by historian Barbara Tuchman about the state of the world before the Great War¹ and there he was:

He liked old baggy, casual clothes, never took the slightest trouble with his guests, deliberately ignored those who might prove tiresome, and once, when a speaker in the House of Lords was declaiming on "the greatest moments in life," the Duke opened his eyes long enough to remark to his neighbor, "my greatest moment was when my pig won first prize at Skipton Fair."

Hmm. Baggy clothes, ignores guests, pig-minded. Could this be the man after whom Wodehouse modeled Lord Emsworth? We know from Murphy's work that many of Wodehouse's characters and settings were based on fact. I felt it was worth a closer look.

The speaker was Spencer Compton Cavendish, eighth Duke of Devonshire, a complex and intriguing figure. He was head of one of the kingdom's richest families and moved in the highest social circles. His luxurious country estate, Chatsworth, had a renowned collection of books and pictures with full-time curators. It was surrounded by an 18th-century park designed by Capability Brown, with cascades that rippled over a series of stone steps 600 feet long.

But he wore old clothes, ignored his guests, and recognized the true worth of porcine triumphs at country fairs. As Tuchman puts it, he was bored by pomp and hated pomposity.

He was well enough respected in Parliament to become a member of a record five cabinets, but he appeared uninterested by politics, often going to sleep

in the midst of things. Once, when the Duke was speaking on the Indian budget, he paused, leaned over to a colleague, and whispered, "This is damned dull."

He owned land in seven English counties and in Ireland, and he personally went over all accounts of his estates. He was chancellor of Cambridge University, patron of various clerical livings, and director or chairman of some major corporations. Yet he was notably absentminded, being perhaps the only man in England to forget an engagement with his sovereign. When Edward VII arrived at Devonshire House for a dinner appointment, the Duke had to be hurriedly retrieved from the Turf Club.

After his brother was murdered in Ireland, the Duke began carrying a revolver, but absentmindedness triumphed over self-defense. He was always losing the weapons and buying new ones. According to his nephew, there were no less than 20 of them knocking about Devonshire House when he died.

He was married to one of the handsomest women in Europe, who exercised her formidable talents toward her major goal—making her husband prime minister. The Duke refused to cooperate.²

He was considered a persuasive public speaker, though to him giving speeches was a disagreeable task. He had a secret for getting through it which he shared with the young Winston Churchill (who seems to have profited thereby) and which Jeeves (who knows everything) later shared with Gussie Fink-Nottle in *The Code of the Woosters*.³

Well, all of this is a mixed bag for someone searching for Lord Emsworth. Much of the Duke's life is quite unlike Lord E's, but many personal traits do seem truly Emsworthian. So, let's take a look at how the Duke compares to Lord Emsworth as he first appears in *Something Fresh* (1915) and the Blandings stories published in the 1920s.

Wodehouse summarizes the Earl of Emsworth in a gifted sentence: "He was as completely happy as only a fluffy-minded old man with excellent health and a large income can be." We first meet him lunching at the Senior Conservative Club, chatting with the head steward and constantly losing the thread of the conversation. At the end of the meal, he absently puts a fork in his pocket. He later pockets the prize scarab of Mr. Peters's collection and gets the plot rolling.

So Lord E. was of the nobility, elderly, fluffy-minded and oofy. The Duke was also of the upper peerage, 48

years older than Wodehouse, notably absentminded, and outstandingly oofy.

I had never thought of Emsworth as seriously wealthy, probably because he is so unassuming. But consider the house party in *Something Fresh*: a dozen or two guests, each with his valet or maid, and a staff that included a butler, housekeeper, groom of chambers, housemaids, scullery maids, chauffeurs, footmen, under-butler, pantry-boys, odd man, steward's room footman, stillroom maids, nursery maids, laundry maids, and a chef. And all of them daily eating breakfast, elevenses, lunch, afternoon tea with cucumber sandwiches, and dinner, plus a tray of biscuits to take to their rooms at night just in case. Why, it would tax the wealth of a Croesus! Or a Duke of Devonshire.

And Blandings itself compares fairly well with Chatsworth. Consider the description in *Something Fresh* when Ashe Marson first sees the castle: nearly a mile of open park running through great trees, smooth lawns and terraces, lights blazing from a score of windows. It was "a noble pile, of early Tudor building" that "dominated the surrounding country."

Chatsworth housed a "princely" collection of books, pictures, and sculptures, presided over by curators. Blandings had a museum cared for by the efficient Baxter and a library catalogued by Eve Halliday (*Leave It to Psmith*).

The Duke never took trouble with his guests. "Lord Emsworth belonged to the people-like-to-be-left-alone-when-they-come-to-a-place school of hosts" (*Something Fresh*). When George Emerson found he had to leave the castle, he commented, "Now I'll go and pack and break it to my host that I must leave him. I expect it will be news to him that I am here."

The Duke liked to wear old baggy, casual clothes. So did the Earl. In *Something Fresh*, "He potted about the garden in an old coat . . ." And in "Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend," we see him writhing as a toad beneath the harrow of a top hat and stiff collar, and Lady Constance telling him to stop dressing like a tramp.⁴

The Duke had a beautiful and ambitious wife trying to make him prime minister. Lord E. had a succession of pushy sisters bullying him to act the lord of the manor. In "Girl Friend," Lady Constance not only tells him to change his wilted stiff collar for a fresh one that would again spike him like a javelin and then go into a tea tent which the blazing sun had rendered capable of teaching Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego something new about fiery furnaces, but gratuitously snipes, "I do wish you would realize your position."

The Duke "was bored by pomp and hated pomposity." If we define these qualities as "trying to impress people

with your importance," we would have to say that Lord Emsworth was armed so strong in honesty that they passed him by as the idle wind which he respected not. We simply cannot imagine Lord E. trying to impress anyone. At the village fête in "Girl Friend," a small boy throws a piece of coconut at the Earl's top hat. Lady C. vows punishment for this affront to their dignity; Lord E. wants to shake him by the hand, commenting that "a boy who throws coconuts at top hats is fundamentally sound in his views."

So, was the Duke of Devonshire the model for Lord Emsworth? My answer is an unqualified no—but on the other hand, yes.

There is one critical difference between the two. The Duke of Devonshire was, despite all of his quirks and foibles, a competent and effective person. The Earl of Emsworth was barely able to find his checkbook and left everything else to Baxter.

On the "yes" side, we have a significant number of similarities of circumstance and behavior rooted, I think, in one defining character trait: dislike of pomposity. In other words, though they were of ancient lineage and had the stuff in sackfuls, they did not, as Mike Jackson might have put it, swank about trying to impress people.

It is quite likely that the youthful Wodehouse was familiar with the Duke and his eccentricities. According to N. T. P. Murphy in Volume 1 of *A Wodehouse Handbook*, Wodehouse had an extraordinary memory, and was always looking for material. A man as prominent and eccentric as the Duke would certainly have been discussed in Wodehousian circles, especially after the two-volume *Life of the Duke of Devonshire*, written by his private secretary, was published in 1911. This was only three years before Wodehouse began work on *Something Fresh*. The Empress, of course, did not appear until "Pig-hoo-o-o-ey!" in 1927, but Murphy tells us that Wodehouse sometimes saved ideas that would appear in a few months, and sometimes 20 years later.

It would strain the bounds of credulity to assume that all the similarities between Devonshire and Emsworth were mere coincidence, or that Wodehouse wrote a story about a potty peer whose supreme achievement was that his pig won first prize at a country fair without being aware of an earlier eccentric and well-known peer whose proudest moment was when his pig won first prize at, yes, a country fair.

Murphy gives us good reason to suspect that the Duke's dislike of showing off would have appealed to Wodehouse. In his chapter on "Potty Peers," he says, "From his earliest school stories, Wodehouse

attacked pomposity and arrogance. Bad schoolmasters, overbearing bishops' wives, pompous Members of Parliament, and self-satisfied novelists were all mocked—and eccentricity of behavior was to be encouraged since it upset the natural order of things (and made the reader laugh) and applauded when it helped to bring about the happy ending.”

Wodehouse's method was parody. As Murphy says, “He exaggerated what he saw and made it funny.” This seems to be what he did with the Duke of Devonshire. He started with a prominent but eccentric peer. He then reduced or eliminated the peer's normal qualities to highlight and exaggerate the humorous ones. Thus, he reduced the Duke to a mere earl, called him Emsworth after a town he lived in off and on, moved his estate from Derbyshire to Shropshire, and gave his new character the problems that a rural peer would have problems with: gardeners, younger sons, lovelorn nieces, pumpkins, pigs, and especially absentmindedness. Instead of forgetting dinner appointments with kings and losing guns, he loses eyeglasses, card cases, and shirt studs. When dining, he puts forks in his pocket and when visiting collectors of, say, Egyptian scarabs, he absentmindedly pockets the gem of their collection. And therein may lie a story . . .

Endnotes

1. Tuchman, Barbara W. *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World before the War, 1890–1914*, Macmillan Company, 1966. All quotes are from pages 38 to 44 of this book unless otherwise stated.

2. The situation of an ambitious female pushing the reluctant male to become someone important is a familiar theme in Wodehouse. The cases of Bingley Crocker, marooned in England far from the Polo Grounds until he received a peerage, and of J. Wellington Gedge, who was meant to become Ambassador to France and wear knee breeches, spring to mind.

3. Hint: Gussie implemented Jeeves's advice with the aid of a small leather-covered notebook.

4. For more on “Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend” see *Plum Lines*, vol. 29, no. 3.

Norman Murphy replies: Roger Pancoast wonders if the Duke of Devonshire was the model for Lord Emsworth and has decided the answer is “an unqualified no—but, on the other hand, yes.” Certainly the similarities between the two men are striking as the author points

out very well. But there were many peers of the time who took an inverse pride in dressing like a tramp. The Duke of Norfolk was another well-known example, and there were many who were equally engaged in breeding prize cows/pigs/sheep. It was the fashion of the time. Even Queen Victoria had a prize herd of Berkshire pigs at Windsor.

Roger has a point since Devonshire was the best known of them and his Skipton Fair comment is famous over here—and certainly Wodehouse would have known this and used him (and those like him) to create our beloved woolly-minded Lord Emsworth.

Nonetheless, I plumped for the 6th Earl of Dartmouth—and still do—because he was a pig-breeding earl whom Wodehouse probably knew as a boy in Shropshire, though he was only one aristocratic pig enthusiast among many. Devonshire was undoubtedly the best-known of the time, and he certainly played a part in the “background” of Lord Emsworth. He was a remarkable man in many ways: he led three political parties and turned down the premiership three times. Perhaps that is the reason there is a statue to him in the middle of Whitehall. But there were many, many like him, and I still favor Dartmouth, who lived just down the road from Wodehouse.

As a matter of fact, the gardener—that is to say, the stocky, brown-faced man in shirt sleeves and corduroy trousers who was frowning into a can of whale-oil solution—was the Earl of Marshmoreton.
A Damsel in Distress (1919)

Calling all Floridian Plummies!

It's always exciting when a new chapter forms! Here's a word from Tallahassee Wodehouse fan Ali Currie:

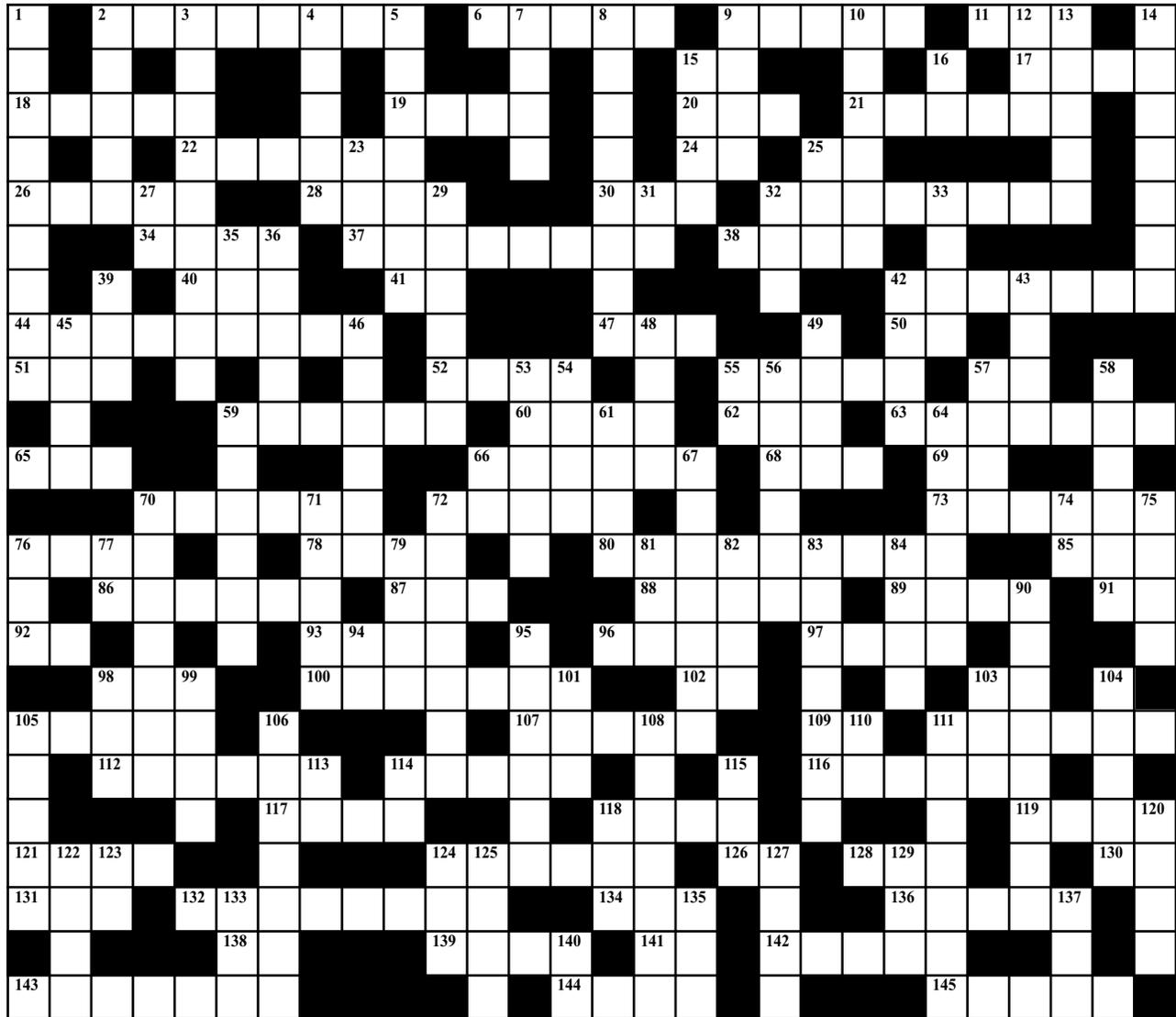
IT HAS COME to our attention that, to date, Florida has been remiss in properly organizing a Wodehouse chapter! In order to rectify this, we are attempting to establish a chapter the likes of which, we hope, will rival the crowds of spring break. We hereby give you The Dangerous Intellectuals!

While we will focus on cultivating a membership of Florida residents, anyone is welcome. Owning a beach chair and appropriate swimming attire is a bonus, though optional. The chapter website and first meeting are forthcoming. All interested parties are asked to contact us.

A Little Crosswode Puzzle on the Prairie

BY DICK HEYMANN

For the June convention, Mr. Heymann created this challenging piece. While we can't promise a reward if you're able to complete the entire puzzle without peeking at sources or the answers (page 23), you will certainly gain the respect of your peers and have bragging rights at any Wodehousean gathering. Enjoy!



ACROSS

2. *The _____ of Cuthbert*
6. Cricketers (Pongo, Gussie, Dunstable, et al.)
9. The Bassett's star chain
11. Signed (e.g., by author) (abbr.)
15. ____ Conservative Club (abbr.)
17. Dahlia, for one
18. Ickenham and Emsworth
19. ____ Porter (at Oxford with Bertie)
20. "Our views on each other . . . were definite. His was that what England needed if it was to become a land fit for heroes to live in was fewer and better

21. Member recalling Cuthbert Banks
22. Shorthand for Whiffle's magnum opus (2,4)
24. Wire service reporting on PGW's internment plight
25. ____ H (e.g., Prince Harry)
26. ____ Rabbit
28. What, besides to turn, Bertie can expect to do when he goes to bed after becoming engaged to the Bassett.

30. Pride of Matchingam, for example
 32. Home of Sir Watkyn and the Bassett
 34. PGW's favorite dog breed
 37. Empress's favorite food
 38. Feared by Sir Roderick
 40. Absent from Wodehouse novels
 41. Pilbeam is one (abbr.)
 42. Tilbury wants to publish Gally's
 44. *Summer* _____
 47. Parsloe seeks to insert one into Blandings to keep an eye on the Empress
 50. "The girl laughed—the gay, wholehearted laugh of youth. Pongo remembered that he had laughed like that ___ the days before he had begun to see so much of his Uncle Fred."
 51. Leg Before Wicket
 52. Gussie's face looks like one
 55. _____-Bottle
 57. Foreign Office
 59. Nice smile (e.g., Veronica Wedge's): "_____ whites"
 60. Mexican staple (sorry – hard up for material)
 62. Solid golf
 63. Bertie and Chuffy are each an old one
 65. Lord Nelson, for example (abbr.)
 66. Stinker's real name
 68. *Something* _____ (U.S. version of *Something Fresh*, the first Blandings novel)
 69. Frequent comment of pigman Pirbright (Geo. Cyril Wellbeloved's successor)
 70. PGW's brother
 72. Emsworth and Tilbury, for example
 73. *The* _____ of *Jeeves* (*Ring for Jeeves* in GB)
 76. On which would read "Beetle and Wedge" or "The Jolly Cricketers"
 78. How many times TWS convention held in St. Paul
 80. Irish (e.g., Pat and Mike)
 85. "The impression Agnes formed was of something that might be all right stepping out of a _____ at a bachelor party, but not the type you could take home to meet mother."
 86. Efficient
 87. The ___ Freddie Threepwood (abbr.)
 88. Florence _____ (one time fiancée of Bertie, Boko, Stilton, et al.)
 89. Noted Wodehouse scholar/author
 91. Bertie's cousin Claude's brother's initials
 92. Term for the Queen
 93. Psmith and Lord E are; Dunstable and Tuppy aren't
 96. Golf: each provides a fresh opportunity and hope for better things to come
 97. An easily cowed man
 98. Dahlia's husband
 100. "One of those robust, dynamic girls with . . . a laugh like a squadron of cavalry charging over a tin bridge." (Once thought of marrying Bertie "to make something of him.")
 102. Monogram of a rich uncle
 103. "His resemblance to a corpse that had been ___ the water several days was still pronounced, but it had become a cheerier corpse, one that had begun to look on the bright side."
 105. *The Adventures of* _____
 107. Plum's degree
 109. "___, Kay!"
 111. Probably based on Dulwich, not Eton
 112. _____ Handicap
 114. Where Seppings was when Bertie rang the fire bell
 116. Banks (5,1)
 117. Announces arrival of George Cyril Wellbeloved
 118. "To attract attention in the dining room of the Sr. Conservative _____ between the hours of one and one-thirty you have to be a mutton chop, not an earl."
 119. Mrs. TMWKAE
 121. TMWKAE
 124. Where we are (or where we were last June!) (2,4)
 126. Warner Bros.
 128. Stoutest of English trees
 130. Where Remsenburg is (abbr.)
 131. "Few things in life are more embarrassing than the necessity of having to inform an old friend that _____ have just got engaged to his fiancée."
 132. Novel where Mrs. Gedge blackmails Sen. Opal in hopes of getting Mr. Gedge, against his will, made Ambassador to France (3,5)
 134. Established (abbr.)
 136. "Cora McGuffy Spottsworth might, and probably would, recline on tiger skins in the nude and expect Sidney to drink champagne out of her _____, but she would never wear high heels on the links or say Tee Hee when she missed a putt."
 138. Where NEWTS live (abbr.)
 139. _____ accountant (bookie)
 141. What Baxter must have said when shot in the fanny by the toy airgun
 142. Tipton Plimsoll likes Veronica Wedge because, inter alia, "I want a wife with about the same amount of grey matter I have," noting that Vee "probably thinks _____ is a brand of instant coffee."
 143. Duff and _____ (hams)
 144. Freddie and Lord Bosham are Clarence's
 145. Jeeves's niece (engaged to Biffy Biffen)

DOWN

1. In the air at Drones Club dinner (5,4)
2. “Years before, when a boy, and romantic as most boys are, his lordship had sometimes regretted that the Emsworths, though an ancient clan, did not possess a Family _____. How little he had suspected that he was about to become the father of it.”
3. Where a pig might live, when not in a bathroom, cottage, vehicle, etc. (2,4,3)
4. What Anatole said when Gussie, Tuppy, and Dahlia followed Bertie’s advice and spurned supper (1,4)
5. Noted brain specialist
7. What Bartholomew says
8. Like Eggs and Beans
9. Fate of H’s in Bottleton East
10. Spode wears ’em
12. *Laughing* ____
13. Modern ____
14. Emerald and Pauline
15. Landseer’s _____ at Bay
16. Sir Roderick is one (abbr.)
23. Party of Taft and Coolidge (abbr.)
25. ____ *Water*
27. Same as 24 across (oops)
29. Behind the theft of Constable Oates’s helmet
31. “There are girls, few perhaps, but to be found if one searches carefully, who when their advice ____ ignored and disaster ensues, do not say ‘I told you so.’ Mavis was not of their number.”
32. Woes prompting pre-war move to France
33. “_____ at normal times Aunt Dahlia’s map tended a little towards the squashed strawberry. Now she looked like a tomato struggling for self-expression.”
35. To know (esp. if one is a Scot), e.g., to ____ what to do with hollyhocks or roses
36. What PGW went into after WWII
39. Himself
42. Best batsman of the five Jackson brothers at Wrykyn
43. From Oxford
45. In the same book, chapter, page, etc.
46. Where to find McAllister
48. Shot in Blandings Castle’s billiard room
49. Brinkley started one at Bertie’s Chuffnell Regis cottage
53. God’s daisy chain
54. ____ ware won by Empress at Shropshire Agricultural Show
55. Initials of Stiffy’s fiancé (according to Bertie, anyway)
56. Where Beach keeps his port
57. Look out!
58. Does a wonderful Bertie Wooster
59. Immaculate clothes, cricketer, socialist, journalist, secretary to Lord E, etc.
61. A favorite tool of the trade for Gertrude (Mrs. Oily) Carlisle
64. Root vegetable the Empress might enjoy
66. What ho, what ho, what ____!
67. Writes of the peerage (and read by Lord Ickenham because the names are funny)
70. Temperamental foreign chef
71. St. Paul convention host _____ wodes
72. Daughter, “without whose never-failing sympathy and encouragement would have been finished in half the time.” (*The Heart of a Goof*)
74. “No, Ronnie. It’s nice of you to try to cheer me _____. But I regard the entire personnel of the ensembles of our musical comedy theatres as—if you will forgive me for being Victorian for a moment—painted hussies.” “They’ve got to paint.” “Well, they needn’t huss. And they needn’t ensnare my son.”
75. Arches back when mating
76. Tattooed on Monty Bodkin’s chest
77. Another name for the United Kingdom (abbr.)
79. “Beach the butler was a man who had made two _____s grow where only one had been before.”
81. ____ in the Bedroom
82. Bottleton ____ (found in a very tough area of London)
83. Where PGW said that “being there was like being in heaven—without going to all the bother and expense of dying.” (3,4)
84. “. . . _____ mule.” (Finish of quote in 120 down)
90. Junior _____
94. What ho, what ____, what ho!
95. Spode
98. *Times* Literary Supplement
99. Daughter of Lady Constance’s eventual husband (the American millionaire James Schoonmaker)
101. Nectar of the Emsworth Arms
103. Causes (frequently) the Duke of Dunstable to apply poker to room’s furnishings
104. George _____ Wellbeloved
105. “_____ Boy” (music to throw vegetables by)
106. Bertie _____
108. Jean _____ (Pighooey)
110. What ____, what ho, what ho!
111. Bobbie _____ (volatile and frivolous redhead)
113. Initials of Freddie Threepwood’s wealthy American fiancée (named after the Niagara Falls hotel where her parents honeymooned).
114. Where Bertie goes when red spots appear (abbr.)
115. Leg Before Wicket (again, sigh—sorry)
118. Jeeves always arrives on _____

120. "Braid Bates was a young plug ugly of some _____ summers, in appearance a miniature edition of his father and in soul and temperament a combination of Dead End Kid and [see 83 down]."
122. The cook "looked like something out of a traveling company of *Macbeth*, _____ing the smaller towns of the North."
123. Opposite and reverse of "down"
124. One of three needed for a gentleman's Wimbledon win (one of the two for the ladies)
125. True or false: Uncle Fred and the Duke of Dunstable BOTH appear in *Service with a Smile*
127. _____ Fittleworth
129. "Gussie had bunged his heart at her feet; she had picked it up, and, almost immediately after doing so, had discovered that he had been stewed to the eyebrows all the time. No girl likes to feel that a chap has got to be thoroughly plastered before he can _____ her to marry him. It wounds the pride."
133. "Madeline Bassett laughed the tinkling, silvery laugh which was _____ of the things that got her so disliked by the better element."
135. The Wodehouse Society
137. Great favorite of Gally's: _____ Brown
140. __ F (initials of notable St. Paul sluicer and novelist)

Flash: Western New York Chapter Has New Name!

PGWINWNY HAS a new name! We are now known as Friends of the Fifth Earl of Ickenham (spreading sweetness and light wherever we go). This moniker was voted favorite of all the suggestions at our meeting on November 8, 2009. Our next meeting is (or was, depending when *Plum Lines* reaches your mailbox!) on Sunday, March 14, 2010, at 1 P.M. at Plaka Restaurant in Kenmore (contact information on page 15). We will read "Pig-hoo-o-o-ey!" and other pig stories, and will plan our spring trip to the pig farm near Medina.

Turn Plum, Drop Out

ANN NICHOLSON spotted an obituary in *The Week of British comic author Keith Waterhouse (Billy Liar, Jubba, etc.)*, in which it is mentioned that "Waterhouse was inspired to drop out of school and become a writer by reading Mark Twain and P. G. Wodehouse." (Note that the article attributed this statement to the London *Daily Telegraph*.)

Thanks from Halifax

On page 5, Ken Clevenger describes a gift of books TWS made to two libraries thanks to a bequest we received. Here is a letter we received from one of those libraries.

Dear Mr. Clevenger:

My name is Kristina Parlee. I am writing from Halifax Public Libraries, where I am Fiction Selector for our libraries' collections. I received your name and contact information from Jill Cooper-Robinson, with whom I have recently been in contact, regarding a generous donation of P. G. Wodehouse books to our library. I understand that you were responsible for arranging that Halifax Public Libraries would receive the materials at the bequest of Mr. Fergus J. Brown.

I want to sincerely thank you on behalf of the library here in Halifax for helping to facilitate this donation. P. G. Wodehouse remains a popular and well-read author amongst our readership here, and we are very glad to be able to provide new copies of his books to our patrons. The materials made available through this generous bequest will certainly be well-used and will bring hours of enjoyment and laughter to many.

As you know, each of the books has been fitted with a book plate that acknowledges Mr. Brown's generous donation to the library. We are also pleased to be hosting a lunchtime lecture on February 25th entitled "Very Good, Sir: Wodehouse, Jeeves & Comic Tradition," presented by a local university professor. The program is being held in recognition of the donation.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Kristina Parlee, Adult Services Librarian

Spring Garden Road Memorial Public Library

Whither the Lost Site?

SPENCER ERVIN, a new society member from Maine, was very impressed by the www.blandings.org.uk website. He tells us that it "contained an extraordinary commentary on plots, references, etc., of the entire corpus. Unfortunately, it has now been discontinued although it is stated to be rebuilding." He asks the membership: "Did anyone download the splendid Blandings website, www.blandings.org.uk before its unfortunate demise? Compiled by 'Reggie,' it contained lists, references, etc., for all of e-Wodehouse." If you have information, let your friendly Editor in Chief know. You can find the address information on page 24.

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 met at The Players Club in Manhattan on December 4, 2009, for our seasonal holiday meeting, which naturally meant a reading of "Jeeves and the Yule-Tide Spirit" in addition to Plum's 1915 Christmas essay "Just What I Wanted." The latter work demonstrates that the concept of "regifting" was current at least as early as World War I and that the number one characteristic of a Christmas gift is that it should be shiny. The notes taken at this meeting are as chaotic and stream-of-consciousness as our conversation actually was (and which they usually are), ranging over topics as diverse as 3½-pound lobsters, an upstate New York eyebrow tweezers and nail file corporation, pink-necktie reminiscences, and our wondering to which club in New York Bertie Wooster

belonged. At least that last one makes sense, and the University Club was offered as a possibility. What we meant in our meeting notes by "Cute blonde soccer ball" is anybody's guess.



The Broadway Special's Burns Night at The Players

The chapter convened once more at The Players on January 22 for our annual Poet Burns Night, missing the actual Burns Night by only three days. This time the reading was "Indian Summer of an Uncle," a story with a substantial discussion of dear Robbie. Of course, the wearing of tartan plaid was de rigueur, and for this one evening Scots bonnets were considered Broadway Specials. Those present agreed that "Indian Summer" is a first-rate story from end to end, with virtually every line evoking satisfaction and often belly laughs, not to mention Sherlockian references including Wisteria Lodge, the Criterion Bar, and Bertie's claim to observe and deduce, weigh evidence, and draw conclusions. To help Bertie out, we parsed and explicated Burns's poem/song "A Man's a Man for A' That" (and indeed closed the meeting with lusty singing of that song along with "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose" and "Auld Lang Syne"). During the course of the gathering we learned from Curtis Armstrong that Hugh Laurie almost declined to play Bertie owing to his fear of his potential audience's critical literacy. The Broadway Special evinced this quality all evening, with knobs on, resulting in a very agreeable convocation.

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: 609-465-3043

Fax:

E-mail:



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:



Friends of the Fifth Earl of Ickenham (See page 13)

(Buffalo, New York, and vicinity)

Contact: Laura Loehr

Phone:

E-mail:



The Mottled Oyster Club / Jellied Eels

(San Antonio and South Texas)

Contact: Lynette Poss

Phone:

E-mail:



The New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS)

(Boston and New England)

Contact: David Landman

Phone:

E-mail:



TWENTY-ONE NEWTS, their gelid amphibious blood inflamed by a Yule log blazing in the Dedham

clubhouse of Ellen Donovan and Bob Norberg, swarmed merrily and gaily trolled the bowl. Swarming and trolling over, the group divided into teams and settled into a cutthroat game of Persian Monarchs researched, introduced, and captained by Max Pokrivchak and Lynn Vesley-Gross. The ancient game of Persian Monarchs, we were told, bears a striking resemblance to the modern card game called Blind Hooky. As has often been noted, if you can play Blind Hooky, you can play Persian Monarchs. We were not informed if the reverse was true. To the winner went the honor of smashing a plaster statuette of The Infant Samuel at Prayer (kindly donated by Lynn). Be it noted that the first annual winner was Anne Cotton, who, out of what could only be a misguided sense of propriety, scrupled to smash the statue. It has been held over until next year, when the winner will get to bust two.

The Northwodes

(St. Paul, Minneapolis, and vicinity)

Contact: Kristine Fowler

Phone:

E-mail:

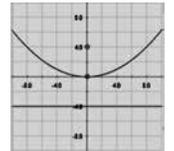


The Pale Parabolites

(Toronto and vicinity)

Contact: Peter M. Nixon

E-mail:



THE 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:



PZMPCO DETERMINED that it would dedicate the January meeting to anyone who had ever overindulged in spiritous liquors in celebration of the New Year. With that in mind, we read "The Story of Webster," PGW's Mulliner story about everyone's favorite bibulous cat, Webster. At the same meeting the

PZMPCo Board of Directors also passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, it has been the custom and practice of the Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corporation to meet monthly to discuss and marvel at the genius of Pelham Grenville Wodehouse; and,

WHEREAS, the Board has determined upon inquiry and belief (see, e.g., *Wodehouse Is the Best Medicine*) that it is in the best interests of the company and its members to continue to pursue their mutual interests in the works of said Pelham Grenville Wodehouse;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Company's schedule of events for the upcoming months shall be as follows:

In February, the reading(s) will be a choice of any or all of the following: "Honeysuckle Cottage," "The Artistic Career of Corky," or "Fixing It for Freddie." The format for this meeting will be to compare these tales of Wodehouse heroes who do not (or almost do not) get the girl, and which nonetheless, in true Wodehouse fashion, end happily. All are short stories.

The March reading will be *The Inimitable Jeeves*, with, perhaps, some comments by Doug, our resident expert-on-all-things-Japanese, on the Japanese manga version of the novel, if he is available. This meeting may be moved to the principal office of PZMPCo's Santa Clarita subsidiary, Medulla-Oblongata-Glutz Pictures, Inc., to accommodate Doug's schedule.

April's reading will be *Spring Fever* in honor of the season, location to be determined (either Pasadena or Santa Clarita).

In May, a road trip to a cricket match at the Hollywood Cricket Club shall be in order, along with readings of one or more school stories. Stay tuned for more details.

Our anniversary celebration in June, following our tradition, will feature tea at the Huntington Library and a reading of our namesake-featuring short story, "The Rise of Minna Nordstrom."

All meetings, unless otherwise indicated, are at Vroman's Bookstore in Pasadena on the second Sunday of the month at 12:30 P.M.

The Pickering Motor Company
(Detroit and vicinity)
Contact: Elliott Milstein
Phone:
E-mail:



THERE IS NO TRUTH to the rumor that The Pickering Motor Company is filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

It has, however, recently been delisted for failing to make its quarterly report. This omission is being corrected with the current report, which summarizes the 2009 year.

The year has been a great success for the Pickerings. Like Ford Motor Company, we have eschewed federal bailout money and weathered the storm well. Not only has our membership grown, but new members Adam and Kate Bayer have also grown, as it were, by giving birth on October 14 to TWS member-to-be Flora Bayer. The Pickerings set another record in 2009 for browsing, sluicing, failing to read the book of the month, and having a wonderful time.

Of course, the high point of the year was being awarded the contract for hosting the 2011 TWS convention and the trip to St. Paul to show our plans to the membership at large. All the Pickerings are quivering in anticipation of welcoming TWS to Detroit for an extravaganza.

Our latest meeting was the second annual Holiday Festival at Larry Nahigian's home, where he served the traditional holiday brunch, an Armenian egg and vegetable dish so savory it defies description. Had Anatole the talent to concoct something this wonderful he surely would have called it *Le plat d'oeuf arménien ultime*. The book under discussion was *Blandings Castle and Elsewhere*, but everyone was so anxious to get to the convention agenda item that the discussion lasted less than a minute (prompting new member Monique to inquire if this really was a book club).

This reporter would love to inform one and all of the new ideas and exciting venues that came under review, but an ironclad Confidentiality Agreement is in place, and so the information must wait we can issue a carefully vetted press release in the first quarter of 2010.

The Pickering Motor Company is always looking for new members—especially those who actually read Wodehouse—but anyone who likes to eat and drink is welcome. Our winter meeting was February 28, 2010, and the story that we likely did not discuss was "The Clicking of Cuthbert."

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:



AT LONG LAST the meaning of the words “across the pale parabola of joy” has been revealed. It is a quiet arc of happiness stretched above the two lucky Canadian libraries who each received a very generous three dozen brand new and very handsome copies of the Master’s greatest works. They came courtesy of a bequest of Fergus J. Brown, literary connoisseur and businessman of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

(What a good idea! More of us should do this. I think I will leave enough bucks when I peg out to ensure the harmless and happy oblivion of hundreds, even thousands, of citizens for years to come!)

The money had to be spent in Canadian libraries and as Chief Goof of the first Canadian chapter of The Wodehouse Society (the Size 14 Hat Club), I, Jill Robinson, was designated Spender in Chief and chose, naturally, my own library first. My second choice was the hometown library of that Singer of Saskatoon, our very own Canadian Wodehouse character, Ralston McTodd, who, as you recall, pitted himself so innocently and helplessly against Psmith in *Leave It to Psmith*.

That was the easy part—who wouldn’t take a ready-made collection of Wodehouse? The heavy lifting on the other hand was done by Ken Clevenger, your hardworking VP in spats, who toiled endlessly through the ether for weeks to keep the various involved parties aligned: publisher, printer, bookplate artist, couriers, librarians Kristina Parlee and Gwen Thomson, and, not least, Canadian Customs and Excise.

But that’s not all! This March, the Size 14 Hat Club joins the Halifax Public Library—which has completely entered into the spirit of the thing—and are offering a spring program on Wodehouse to be conducted by a local university professor. Weighty report to follow!

The Soup & Fish Club
(Northern Virginia area)
Contact: Deborah Dillard
Phone:
E-mail:



Dutch Discovery Becomes Northwodes’ Windfall

BY KRIS FOWLER

PETER NIEUWENHUIZEN followed up his amazing discovery of a Wodehouse story in the St. Paul Pioneer Press by giving that newspaper issue to the Northwodes! **Jelle Otten**, a member of the Dutch Wodehouse Society of which Mr. Nieuwenhuizen is the president, presented it during the convention festivities

Jelle Otten of the Dutch Wodehouse Society presents the antique St. Paul Pioneer Press issue to Kris Fowler and the Northwodes chapter.
(Photo by Ian Michaud)



on June 12, which the Mayor had proclaimed P. G. Wodehouse Day in St. Paul. Convention-goers were able to admire the 1926 newspaper version of “First Aid for Dora” throughout the weekend, and it then became the star attraction of the University of Minnesota Libraries’ summer exhibit, “P. G. Wodehouse: Master of Magazine Fiction.” The text is cut slightly compared with the story collected in *Ukridge*, but it’s worth giving up the occasional “upon my Sam” in exchange for the evocative illustrations, right down to the ginger-beer wire supporting Ukridge’s spectacles. (See the Summer 2009 *Plum Lines* issue to view the illustrations.)

If this causes residents of other metropolises to wonder why St. Paul’s newspaper should have been more blessed than their own, hope is at hand—the Sunday magazine was a syndicated feature! According to a list at www.enchantmentink.com/sunday.php, the same story would have appeared on the same date in the Sunday magazine of “the *Boston Sunday Herald*, *Buffalo Sunday Times*, *Cleveland Leader*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, *Milwaukee Sunday Sentinel*, *Minneapolis Tribune*, *New Orleans Daily Picayune* (and later, *Times Democrat*), *Philadelphia Record*, *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, *Providence Sunday Tribune*, *Rochester Democrat*, and *Worcester Sunday Telegram*.” As he reported in last summer’s *Plum Lines*, the relevant dates for the three stories Mr. Nieuwenhuizen has found so far are October 10, 1926 (he also confirmed its New Orleans appearance), February 27, 1927, and August 18, 1935. There may well be other stories awaiting discovery, thanks to the Wodehouse Machine’s efficient placing of second serial rights, so we’ll wish Wodehouseans in Boston, Buffalo, Cleveland, etc., happy hunting and trust they’ll let the rest of us know of any additional finds.

The difficulty finding such stories makes the discovery of St. Paul’s just before the convention even more serendipitous! The Northwodes are eternally grateful to Peter Nieuwenhuizen for his revelation and also for his very generous gift of the hallowed relic. Plans are afoot to construct a museum, small but tasteful, to house it properly; failing that, a permanent arrangement may perhaps be arranged with a cooperating library.



Our friends in The Netherlands have fun with their society and journal (Nothing Serious). Edited by Josepha Olsthoorn, with help from Jelle Caro and Peter Nieuwenhuizen, they cover such important topics as three-legged races (see picture below), a curtsy contest, banjoleles, and, of course, the Little Wodehouse on the Prairie convention. Unfortunately, your AOM has forgotten who kindly sent this along, so thanks to all until the actual provider 'fesses up!

DE ACHTERPAGINA



Zinderende finale van de Three-Legged Race, links het winnende duo Wil & Elsbeth, rechts Marleen en Peter N. (foto Peter N.)

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Wodehouse and Einstein: Parallel Lives, Different Universes BY KEN CLEVINGER

YOU PAUSE, perhaps pursing your lips, at the temerity of comparing Wodehouse to Einstein. But hear me out as we seek the parallels of and differences between these two remarkable men.

Both were born in the late 19th century. One was a prize-winning, acknowledged genius, famous the world over, whose 20th-century work yet influences the world in the 21st century. His work illumined, nay, created, a new world with new forces and new rules of behavior. Still, to be fair, Einstein, too, had his moments.

That Einstein was a genius few would dispute. I admit that comparing him to Wodehouse might generate some tut-tutting among theoretical physicists. Plum, for all his inimitable style and literary invention, has rarely received much serious critical acclaim. The nasty 1941 crack that he was "English literature's performing flea" sums up the detractors' viewpoint. George Mikes, in his 1954 book *Eight Humorists*, is equally dismissive: "Mr. P. G. Wodehouse is the court jester to the upper classes." I fear Mikes lets his politics lead his analysis of humor astray. Even when he tries to be fair, he falls foul: "... [conceding Wodehouse's] great literary skill and a wonderful sense of farcical humour . . . is the elementary explanation of his success and (now declining) popularity." (Ha! Try to find a George Mikes book on the shelves of a Barnes & Nobles or Foyles!) Standing in argument against these views are Wodehouse's 1936 Mark Twain Prize and 1939 honorary D.Litt. from Oxford University, Hilaire Belloc's opinion that Plum was the "best writer of English now alive," and the respect of many successful authors of several generations. Few readers would doubt the fairness of "genius" in connection with Wodehouse.

Einstein was the elder, born in southern Germany in 1879. Plum, the funnier, came into the world in southern England in 1881. Einstein's parents and extended family were close and involved in his childhood in Swabia and Bavaria. Jewish by ancestry, they were a secular, nonobservant family for the most part, and Einstein inherited that disregard for the technical forms of religious observation that does not absolutely reject the comfort of a faith.

As a boy, Einstein actually attended a Catholic parochial school in Munich. Wodehouse suffered very little positive parental influence as a young child but was exposed to an extended family of relatives in which there is scant evidence of any real closeness. Widely

exposed to the established Church of England and well-schooled at Dulwich College, Plum exhibited little religious faith but still had a genial appreciation for the devoted practitioners thereof. For Wodehouse, humor about the church and its clergy was well in bounds, but shrill mocking was not.

In each case, these two young men found that their goals were not easily obtained, despite the hard work and remarkable competence, even genius, they both displayed in their respective fields. Plum's scratched 'varsity career for a bank clerk's stool is too well-known to need reciting here. However, being stymied in that field perhaps helped fuel the determination to succeed as a writer.

Einstein had to struggle to gain admittance to his university of choice, the Zurich Polytechnic School. He essentially had dropped out of his Munich gymnasium (a kind of German Dulwich College) where he was a day boy. A complex set of factors were at play: anti-Semitism, his own youthful (in fact lifelong) rebelliousness against authority, German mandatory military service requirements, and his family's economic resettlement to northern Italy. But the canard that he ever failed in any mathematics class is not true. He eventually qualified for admission to the Polytechnic and performed well. However, his highly original thinking, as is frequently the case, did not win many friends or admirers among the faculty and, upon graduation, he was not able to find suitable employment in the field of theoretical physics. A civil service technical job in the Swiss patent office in Berne was eventually arranged through the influence of personal friends. There, in 1905, he had the luxury of financial security and the time to complete his most significant theoretical work on the quanta of energy in light, the structure and motion of atomic particles, and relativity, or as Einstein says with such nonchalance, "a modification of the theory of space and time."

Einstein had, as a Polytechnic student, become enamored of a Serbian student who was also studying physics, and a year after his graduation had gotten her pregnant. A child, Lieserl, was born, but somewhere in Serbia the child disappeared at an early age. Ms. Maric, the Serbian student and mother, and Albert later married, and two more children were born of the union. But it was a troubled marriage and ended in divorce. Einstein then married a German woman, Elsa, whose children he became very close to, as Plum was close to Leonora. In this marriage Einstein found a spouse who was protective, supportive, and deferential to his professional requirements.

Einstein was a difficult man in many ways. Like Plum, it would be fair to say that his work could totally

absorb him. If Einstein was working on a physics problem, any number of hours could be devoted to its contemplation and calculations, and social and family considerations were less than secondary. Plum, the "Hermit" of *The Prince and Betty* and the inventor of the Wodehouse Glide, was also extremely dedicated to his work. However, Wodehouse was generally socially gracious and polite. Einstein was perhaps too self-aware of his own genius. Both unbent best in the company of their professional colleagues, even if Einstein did not see them as peers.

We all know that Wodehouse was one of the original "both-sides-of-the-pond" cosmopolitan celebrities. His work took him constantly back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean. He was a resident of France, largely as a tax shelter, for a significant part of his life. That later caused an enforced stay in central Europe: Silesia, eastern Germany, and Berlin. Plum eventually became an American citizen and settled on Long Island in New York. Einstein, too, was peripatetic. His professional career took him from Switzerland, to Prague, back again, and then on to Berlin. He was in demand as a lecturer and conference participant all over the world. He traveled frequently to the United States, both to New York City and to the California Institute of Technology near Hollywood. When the anti-Semitic policies of Nazi-dominated Germany made Europe unsafe for people who were of Jewish descent, Einstein fled the Third Reich for the coast of Holland, not very far north of Le Touquet, France. He then made a timely move to America well before the start of the Second World War. He settled in Princeton, New Jersey.

I am indebted to Walter Isaacson's very readable 2007 biography, *Einstein: His Life and Universe*, for my information about Albert Einstein. There is no suggestion that Einstein was a Wodehouse reader. In fact, there is little evidence he read any fiction except for a passing reference to the *Antigone* of Sophocles and Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Einstein was an accomplished violinist, however, and loved to play or listen to classical music. He had dogs and cats and, like Plum, parrots. Einstein's closest personal friends were men with whom he shared a connection from his school days at the Polytechnic or a professional connection in theoretical physics or math.

Wodehouse was, of course, aware of Einstein and recognized his genius. In *The Code of the Woosters* "Einstein" is used as a synonym for an intelligent or brainy person. In *Full Moon*, he described Gally Threepwood thusly: "There were men in London—bookmakers, skittle sharps, jellied eel sellers on race courses, and men like that—who would have been puzzled to know

whom you were referring to if you mentioned Einstein, but they all knew Gally.” Later, in *Cocktail Time*, the butler Albert Peasemarch was described thusly: “His circle of friends, while passing him over when they wanted someone to translate James Joyce into English or to explain Einstein’s Theory to them, knew that if they were in trouble, they could rely on his help.” And then there is the time at the Anglers’ Rest, related in “The Story of Webster,” wherein a discussion of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity was transitioned seamlessly by a thoughtful Pint of Bitter to “Cats are not dogs!”

These two titans certainly exhibited some similar likes and dislikes: the beneficial habit of a thoughtful walk, the malodorous tobacco habit, and a ready detachment from the affairs of ordinary life. But which was the greater genius? The world Plum imagined and described so well in his writing still lives for us today. Much of Einstein’s thought is now seen as preliminary thinking in the field of quantum mechanics that he perceived but rejected. The recent explosion of bosons, gluons, fermions, positrons, and directional quarks has put Einstein’s pet idea of a unified theory of physical reality in some doubt—but those discoveries likely could not have occurred without his theories.

Isaacson gives a short summary of Einstein’s genius in these terms: “Einstein, at age 36, had produced one of history’s most imaginative and dramatic revisions of our concepts about the universe. The general theory of relativity was not merely the interpretation of some experimental data or the discovery of a more accurate set of laws. It was a whole new way of regarding reality.”

Plum, at age 56, had produced one of English literature’s most imaginative and dramatic bodies of work with significant, timeless characters in ongoing, closely related stories, almost a saga. The worlds of Wooster and Jeeves, Blandings and Lord Emsworth, Mr. Mulliner, Ukridge, and even the lesser lights were not merely a rehash of clever and intricate plots with enticing physical settings but a universe of engaging character types and a style of telling the tale that is unique. It was a wonderfully new and ageless world of fiction that Wodehouse created.

And so both men, both geniuses, revealed new worlds: the writer from his great well of humor and with his eye for humanity, the scientist by probing more deeply than ever before the physics of the cosmos. The comparative genius of one to the other is much like the relativity of the right brain to the left. And both continue to influence our lives, albeit in different ways. Cats are, indeed, not dogs. The positive charge needs the negative charge, they are equally essential to keep it all in balance!

Wodehouse On Stage: Spring 2010

BY AMY PLOFKER

A few bits of upcoming theater to delight Wodehouse fans!

The Play’s the Thing

February 26–March 14

Actors’ NET of Bucks County

Morrisville, PA 19067

Call 215-295-3694, email actorsnet@aol.com, or visit www.actorsnetbucks.org for more info or reservations.



THE PLAY’S THE THING is a terrific play which has been performed quite often in the last few years, here and there across the United States, so stop me if you’ve heard this plot synopsis. In this hilarious farce about a play within a play, Turai and Mansky, writers of hit operettas, bring their composer, Adam, to an Italian castle as a surprise for their leading lady and Adam’s fiancée, Ilona. Adam is surprised to find Ilona in the arms of another man. Turai struggles to reunite the lovers, keep his writing team together, and finish a new play all in one day.

Food Play

May 6, 7, 8

Hunter College, City University of New York

Frederick Loewe Theatre

New York, NY 10021

Call 212-772-5148 or visit www.hunter.cuny.edu/theatre/productions-1 for more information.

IN NEW YORK CITY on May 6, 7, and 8, the theater department of Hunter College will include a Wodehouse selection in *Food Play*, a performance about food and eating in literature. The Wodehouse Society was invited to tender a suggestion of the best food-related scenes in Wodehouse—an extremely tough call. We ended up submitting Ian Michaud’s suggestion of “Jeeves and the Old School Chum” in which Bingo relates the mishap of a friend who had traveled to a rural horse-race track only to discover when he opened his luncheon basket that “the champagne had burst and, together with the salad dressing, had soaked into the ham, which in its turn had got mixed up with the gorgonzola cheese, forming a sort of paste. He had had rather a bumpy bit of road to travel over. . . . He ate the mixture. It was the only course. But he said he could still taste it sometimes, even now.”

No guarantee this story will be used, but it would be a great choice, since it also includes Rosie M. Banks’s food-crank friend whose favorite beverage consists of

raisins soaked in cold water, with lemon juice. She calls this “the fruit-liquor,” leading the unimpressed Bertie to wonder if partaking of this brew leads to an orgy and bodies being hauled away in the morning.

Oh, Boy!

May 21–June 27

City Lit Theater Company

Chicago, IL 60660

Call 773-293-3682, email info@citylit.org, or visit www.citylit.org for more info or reservations.

FINALLY, THE much-acclaimed City Lit Theater in Chicago is branching out into musical comedy with *Oh, Boy!* This 1917 musical is a classic Bolton-Wodehouse-Kern collaboration, focusing on a newlywed man who, dependent on his formidable Quaker aunt, fears telling her of his marriage. While his wife is away, he lets a girl hunted by the police hide out in his apartment. And it all goes on from there. Well-known songs include “The Land Where the Good Songs Go,” “Nesting Time in Flatbush,” “An Old-Fashioned Wife,” “Till the Clouds Roll By,” and “You Never Knew About Me.”

Basham on Wodehouse: A BOOK REVIEW

BY NORMAN MURPHY

THOMAS SMITH’S *Basham on Wodehouse* is a pleasant addition to my collection. His book is short (145 pages), comprising two theatrical reviews and eight essays. I had read several of them before in Wodehouse journals, but I am glad he has published them. He raises some interesting points, has a lightness of touch that makes him easy to read, and three of his essays are new—to me, at least. And, while two of these deal with the well-worn topic of the Berlin broadcasts, they include new material from the FBI and British Foreign Office.

Tom’s essay on *The Swoop* brilliantly describes the invasion scare that swept the country from ca. 1895 and the consequent creation of the Territorial Army, the Boy Scouts, and similar organizations, some of which I had never heard of (Lord Rodney’s Cadets and the Lads’ Drill Association). He makes the important point, also new to me, that the idea of public service by the young was so strong that, within six years of its foundation,

the Boy Scouts had enrolled over a third of all boys in the United Kingdom.

His piece on army officers in Wodehouse’s stories is good and displays a very good understanding of their place in the British social scene. It is followed by an article that I find absolutely fascinating. “P. G. Wodehouse: Master Spy” appeared in *Plum Lines* in 2002 and recounts how the FBI thought that the manuscripts of *Joy in the Morning* and *Money in the Bank* that Wodehouse sent to America might contain secret messages! They came to the conclusion that the manuscripts didn’t, but they did find out that the Germans had thought exactly the same thing. This is astonishing enough, but then we learn that J. Edgar Hoover decided that *Piccadilly Jim* was used by the Russians as a code book and set out to try and prove it! I have delved into some dark archives myself, and I am very impressed. Either freedom of information means much more in America than it does in the U.K., or Tom Smith has friends in very high places

The essay “Jeeves and Servant Leadership” is interesting, as are the theatrical reviews “Over the Moon” and “The Play IS the Thing in Seattle,” but I suppose most readers will be interested in the two final essays, which deal with the Berlin broadcasts. They do nothing to detract from Wodehouse’s basic innocence in the matter but do throw an interesting light on the political infighting behind the broadcasts. They are not written to amuse—they are scholarly papers that provide hitherto little-known information on the matter from an impressively wide range of sources.

Tom Smith has put a lot of work into these essays, and it shows—in the best sense. It is satisfying to see him supporting his statements with footnotes from a most impressive array of sources, and I have to say again that I am glad he decided to publish. And for my money “P. G. Wodehouse: Master Spy” is a sidelight on Wodehouse work that I still find almost unbelievable.

Basham on Wodehouse by Thomas Smith is currently available (new) on Amazon.com for \$15.99 plus shipping. (*This review was originally published in Wooster Sauce in September 2009.*)

A Gem of *The Spoken Word*

REVIEWER CHRISTINA HARDYMENT states that “compiler Richard Freeman has surpassed himself in the latest collection of gems from the British Library’s monumental sound archive, *The Spoken Word: British Writers*.” One of the gems is P. G. Wodehouse talking to Alistair Cooke about the origins of Bertie Wooster. You may purchase the set of three CDs from the British Library’s online shop at <http://shop.bl.uk>.

A Few Quick Ones

Thanks to all contributors; special thanks to Evelyn Herzog and John Baesch, prolific QO finders.

Diane Madlon-Kay was reading a serial novel in the *Daily Telegraph* called *The Dog Who Came In From the Cold* by Alexander McCall Smith, and in chapter 38 came across the following: “Tilly smiled at the term ‘old bean.’ In most circles it was considered archaic, belonging to a Wodehousian world that had long disappeared, but this was not true of MI6, where it was still used extensively (a fact not widely known).”

In the September 20 *Sunday Telegraph* “Life” section, several tea towels were advertised, including one that duplicates the cover of the Penguin Books edition of *Carry On, Jeeves*. In the description, the advertisement says that this “design will fit in anywhere from a student flat to a high-end bachelor pad” and that it “even offers the male folk gentle encouragement to just get on with it . . .” The towel is available from www.heals.co.uk.

In a review of *The Atheist’s Guide to Christmas* in the October 1 *Times* (London), Natalie Haynes notes that “there are some God-baiting essays in it, including a Wodehouse pastiche from Professor [Richard] Dawkins.”

Dominic Sandbrook, in a column in the August 15 *Daily Telegraph*, makes a point that the division between high and low culture is an artificial one, and to prove it he says that “genuinely populist novelists such as Stevenson, Conan Doyle, Wodehouse, Tolkien, and Fleming . . . are now recognised as the purest wholemeal” where once they would have been dismissed as the white bread of their time.

The magazine *Elle* is perhaps not the most common periodical in which to find Wodehouse references. But in last year’s March advice column, E. Jean printed a letter from “Nervous Wreck,” who won \$1,000 in a bet with her best friend and is now afraid to ask for the money. Jean replies, “Next time you want a ‘flutter,’ as P. G. Wodehouse calls it, keep the sport under \$25.”

In *Book and Magazine Collector* #305 (March 2009), Jonathon Scott, in “The Secret Collector,” describes “the time when my boss invited me into his office to tell me off for spelling P. G. Wodehouse incorrectly on the front cover, and his subsequent embarrassment on learning that it was spelt that way.”

Actor Ian Carmichael died on February 5. He is, of course, known for having played Bertie Wooster on the BBC’s *The World of Wooster*.

In the Summer 2009 issue of *Original Logic Problems British Edition*, there are several problems that use five friends from the Drones Club (Archie Fotheringay, Edward Tanqueray, etc.), and require the would-be puzzle solver to associate each with various activities or other individuals, based on several clues provided.

In his “Wild Notebook” column in the November 7 *Times* (London), Simon Barnes mentions a new conservation charity called “Amphibian and Reptile Conservation.” As he defends various reptiles and amphibians, he states that “newts are associated with the state of being falling down drunk . . .” We will corroborate this rumor with our NEWTS chapter.

In the October 16, 2009, *Telegraph*, Gill Hornby describes Stephen Fry’s Twitter campaign against a variety of global issues (shark-fins as part of the Chinese diet, a Dutch gag order on the press, etc.). She states that Stephen was “once just a Jeeves impersonator” and goes on to ask whether “cyber-space has created its very own, real-life, all-powerful and . . . terrifying Jeeves?”

The Booker Prize is an award for the author of the “best novel of the year by a citizen of the Commonwealth or the Republic of Ireland,” according to *Country Life* in their September 30, 2009, issue. Judging panel chairman James Naughtie is quoted by columnist Roderick Easdale describing the 132 novels he had to read in preparation: “Being a Booker judge is rather like being the Empress of Blandings before the Fat Pigs Class at the Shropshire Agricultural Show. The Empress has to be fed a rich diet before the show, but afterwards, she can be skittish and eat anything that takes her fancy.”

Parade’s September 27 “Parade Picks” states that “P. G. Wodehouse had no ambition other than to make us laugh” and that without him “the body of pure comic writing would be literally half the size it is.”

For more topics of interest, make sure to visit PGWnet, where many web-abled Wodehouseans keep cyberspace chuckling with lively threads and new discoveries!

Answers to A Little Crosswode Puzzle on the Prairie

ACROSS

2. *Clicking*
6. TWSCC
9. Daisy
11. Sgd
15. Sr
17. Aunt
18. Earls
19. Orlo
20. Ton
21. Oldest
22. On Pigs
24. AP
25. HR
26. Dream
28. Toss
30. Pig
32. Tottleigh
34. Peke
37. Potatoes
38. Cats
40. Sex
41. PI
42. Memoirs
44. *Lightning*
47. Spy
50. In
51. LBW
52. Fish
55. Spink
57. FO
59. Pearly
60. Taco
62. Par
63. Etonian
65. Adm
66. Harold
68. *New*
69. Ur
70. Armine
72. Lords
73. *Return*
76. Sign
78. Once
80. Hibernian

85. Pie
86. Baxter
87. Hon
88. Craye
89. Ring
91. EW
92. ER
93. Thin
96. Tees
97. Wimp
98. Tom
100. Honoria
102. TT
103. In
105. *Sally*
107. DLitt
109. Oh
111. Wrykyn
112. Sermon
114. Dance
116. Rosie M
117. Odor
118. Club
119. Elin
121. NTPM
124. St Paul
126. WB
128. Oak
130. LI
131. You
132. *Hot Water*
134. Est
136. Shoes
138. NE
139. Turf
141. Ow
142. Kafka
143. Trotter
144. Sons
145. Mabel

DOWN

1. Bread roll
2. Curse
3. In some sty
4. I quit
5. Glossop
7. Woof
8. Crumpets
9. Drop
10. Shorts
12. *Gas*
13. Dutch
14. Stokers
15. *Stag*
16. MD
23. GOP
25. *Hot*
27. AP
29. Stiffy
31. Is
32. Tax
33. Even
35. Ken
36. Exile
39. PGW
42. Mike
43. Oxon
45. Ibid
46. Garden
48. Pool
49. Fire
53. Stars
54. Hard
55. SP
56. Pantry
57. Fore
58. Laurie
59. Psmith
61. Cosh
64. Turnip
66. Ho
67. Debrett
70. Anatole
71. North
72. Leonora

74. Up
75. Newt
76. Sue
77. GB
79. Chin
81. *Ice*
82. East
83. New York
84. Army
90. Ganymede
94. Ho
95. Sidcup
98. TLS
99. Myra
101. Ale
103. Ire
104. Cyril
105. Sonny
106. Wooster
108. Tillson
110. Ho
111. Wickham
113. ND
114. Dr
115. LBW
118. Cue
120. Nine
122. Tour
123. PU
124. Set
125. True
127. Boko
129. Ask
133. One
135. TWS
137. Sue
140. FS

Crossword Meister Dick Heymann at the St. Paul convention



Remembering David Lloyd

BY CHARLES E. GOULD, JR.

DAVID LLOYD, a loving, generous, and good friend to me for nearly 30 years, died on November 10, at 75. He wrote 30 episodes of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, was one of the creators of *Cheers*, wrote for several spin-offs and other shows, and was perhaps, as the *New York Times* says, the foremost writer of television comedy. His work was witty and intelligent, light years apart from the vulgar junk now blighting the airwaves. He wrote the famous “Chuckles the Clown” episode for Mary Tyler Moore, and he wrote the hilarious *Cheers* episode featuring a first edition of Hemingway that somebody borrows and reads—and drops—in the bathtub. David’s collection of Modern Firsts is dazzling, his collection of Wodehouse U.S. and U.K. first editions in fine dust wrappers is surely the best in the world. Our numerous dealings included his getting a first edition of *The Adventures of Sally* in a fine dust wrapper from me and my getting a copy of *The Globe By The Way Book* from him. We joked that he came out on top.

“. . . I may say that the two factors in American life that have always made the profoundest impression upon me have been the lavishness of American hospitality and the charm of the American girl. . . .”
The Adventures of Sally (1922)

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

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