

The quarterly journal of The Wodehouse Society

Volume 35 Number 4 Winter 2014

Psmith in Pseattle: The 18th International TWS Convention It's going to be Psensational!

THE 18TH BIENNIAL TWS convention is less than a year away! That means there are a lot of things for you to think about. While some of you avoid such strenuous activity, we will endeavor to give you the information you need to make thinking as painless as possible. Perhaps, before going on, you should take a moment to pour a stiff one. We'll wait . . .

First, clear the dates on your calendar: Friday, October 30, through Sunday, November 1, 2015. Of course, feel free to come a few days early or stay a few days later. Anglers' Rest (the hosting TWS chapter) does have a few activities planned on the preceding Thursday, November 29, for those who arrive early. There are many things you will want to see and do in Seattle.

Second, make your hotel reservations. The convention is at the historic Fairmont Olympic Hotel, 411 University Street, Seattle, Washington. Room reservations must be made directly with the hotel. Phone 1-800-441-1414 and ask for a room in the block for the Wodehouse Convention at the Seattle Fairmont Olympic. You can also book online through our direct reservation link: <https://aws.passkey.com/event/11974149/owner/12809/home>. If you have special requests or need an ADA-compliant room, you may want to use the 800 number.

Convention room rates are \$199 for single or double occupancy, plus a 15.6% room tax and a \$2 per night Seattle Tourism Assessment fee. Maximum occupancy per room is three people; there is a \$30 per



night charge for a third person, but children under eighteen are free. Reservations must be made before October 8, 2015. We feel obligated to point out that these are excellent rates both for this particular hotel and Seattle hotels in general. The special convention rate is available for people arriving as early as Monday, October 26, and staying through Wednesday, November 4.

Third, peruse, fill out, and send in the registration form (with the appropriate oof), which is conveniently provided with this edition of *Plum Lines*. Of course, this will require more thought. Pour another stiff one. You will have to decide which events you want to participate in, whether you want to slip off to Seattle alone or bring that significant other, and whether to risk travelling with your mother-in-law or shuffle her off to Buffalo while you enjoy Seattle. Follow the directions on the form but if you have questions, send them to twsregistration@tws2015seattle.org. Note that the prices for various events increase after June 15, 2015, so get your form in early.

Psie Trips

SO NOW YOU'VE made your hotel reservation, and you've filled out your convention registration form, written the check, and mailed it in. What now, you ask? Well, Anglers' Rest has prepared several activities that will give conventioners the opportunity to see what Pseattle has to offer.

On Thursday, October 29, and Friday, October 30, we will offer guided tours on **Washington State Ferries' Bainbridge Island** run. Your tour guide will take you from the hotel to the Coleman Docks, where you will board a ferry, ride to Bainbridge Island, wander around, and then catch a ferry back to Seattle. Be sure to bring sufficient funds to pay your passage. Because fares are seasonal and subject to change, we will post rates and a link to the Washington State Ferry website at tws2015seattle.org at a time nearer to the convention. Sustenance is available on board and at the ferry terminal. Other than your passage, anything you spend on food and drink, and the purchase of souvenirs, there is no charge for this activity. Tour groups will depart from the Fairmont Olympic lobby at 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM on Thursday and Friday.

Also on Thursday and Friday, there will be guided tours to the **Seattle Center**, site of the 1962 World's Fair, where you will be able to visit the **Space Needle**, the **Pacific Science Center**, the **Chihuly Exhibit**, and the **Experience Music Project (EMP)** and **Science Fiction Museum**. Departures will take place at 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM from the Fairmont Olympic lobby, going to the University Light Rail Station. From there you will board a train that will take you to the Westlake Station, thence to the Monorail Station at Westlake Mall, and on to the Seattle Center via the Monorail. Your guide will give you a quick orientation, showing you where to find the Space Needle, EMP, and Science Center. You will then be on your own to visit these sights and later make your way back to the hotel.

There is no cost for this tour; however, bring sufficient oof to cover light rail and Monorail tickets, plus admission to the various attractions. There are souvenirs and food available in Center House and in the Seattle Center. It's too early to post fares and rates, because all are subject to change, but check our website closer to the convention for more information.

On Saturday, if you are not planning to attend the Riveting Talks, consider joining former Seattle resident, oenophile, and bon vivant Jennifer Psmith as she takes you on a trip to the Seattle Wine Outlet, where one of the city's premier wine experts will preside over a tasting of local wines. The tour will leave the Fairmont Olympic lobby at an early afternoon time to be determined; it will return, with any luck, in time for cocktails and dinner. Your trip may take you to the famous Gum Wall.

The cost of this outing is \$25 per person, and reservations are required. We need a minimum of seventeen people to commit, so there are no refunds (unless we don't reach the minimum). You may find someone to go in your place if you can't make it.

The Fairmont Olympic: Our Host Hotel

LISTED ON the National Register of Historic Places, our host hotel for the Psmith in Pseattle convention in 2015 is the Fairmont Olympic. The hotel lies in the heart of downtown Seattle and features Italian Renaissance architecture.

The Olympic opened in the midst of the Roaring Twenties, so it seems quite appropriate for our festivities. It's very popular with the locals for all manner of events, and many Seattle residents have been there for their senior proms, debutante balls, engagement parties, wedding receptions, anniversary celebrations, and civic galas.

The site was part of the original first campus of the University of Washington, and the hotel was fully restored in the mid-1980s. The original rate in 1924 was \$3.50 a night. Ours is a bit higher, but the luxurious accommodations make it more than worth the price.



The front facade of the Fairmont Olympic



It appears that this potential hot spot for conventioners at the Seattle Fairmont Olympic is well-stocked.

Letter from England

BY ELIN WOODGER

ALL YEAR I have been writing about the flow of overseas visitors to London, and when I last wrote, Norman and I were preparing for the arrival of Tamaki Morimura from Japan. She came in late August, and on the 29th she and I headed off to the Duke of York's Theatre to see—what else?—*Perfect Nonsense*, then in its last weeks in the West End. I'm happy (but not at all surprised) to report that Tamaki enjoyed the show thoroughly. By this time the production (officially called *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*) had a new cast: James Lance as Bertie Wooster, John Gordon Sinclair as Jeeves, and Robert Goodale (one of the show's writers) as Seppings. Goodale was not as good as Mark Hadfield had been in that multifaceted part, nor was the excellent Sinclair quite as good as the show's original Jeeves, Matthew Macfadyen. But I have to say that James Lance was and is the goods as Bertie. He absolutely inhabits the role and makes a very convincing Wooster in every way, far better than Mark Webb or Stephen Mangan.

I use the present tense because, even though the show has now left the West End, it is currently touring the country with Lance, Sinclair, and Goodale and will be continuing to play for several months yet. If you're coming to England at any time and wish to know where and when the show will be appearing, write to me at editorwsauce@btinternet.com.

On September 21 Norman and I ambled on down to Newbury in Berkshire, there to attend the Royal County of Berkshire Show. Specifically, we were there with Tony and Elaine Ring to witness the judging of the Berkshire Breed Champion of Champions, sponsored by the U.K. Society and featuring (as the name implies) Berkshire champion pigs from around the country. Wodehouse enthusiasts may pooh-pooh the size of some of these pigs, and indeed Lord Emsworth would have snorted with derision, comparing them unfavorably with the Empress, and rightly so. However, apparently pigs are no longer judged on their size but on other characteristics such as shape, markings, and gait when they walk. They are made to plod about the show ring by means of canes and boards wielded by their handlers, and it is a sight

to behold a sea of black pigs being guided around this way by men and women in white coats who must surely end up with the worst backaches possible as they are continually bending over while navigating their porcine charges.

In Hilary Bruce's absence, Norman presented the Society's award to this year's Champion of Champions, a jolly impressive boar named Buster. It was a lovely day, but there was one bit of sadness: We learned that Truffle, the prize-winning Berkshire sow who had put in an appearance at Newbury ever since 2006, the year she herself was crowned Champion of Champions, had died a few months before. It was Truffle whom we had visited during the Society's Week With Wodehouse in 2007, and Truffle who had graciously allowed Norman to guide her about the ring in 2008 when he placed third in the Novice Handlers competition. She had a special place in our hearts: a sow Lord Emsworth would have loved.

Visits from overseas Wodehouseans picked up in October, of course, due to those who came for the U.K. Society's biennial formal dinner at Gray's Inn in London. California's Bill Franklin was there, as he usually is, and we were happy to welcome the playwright Dorothy Louise, last seen at the Chicago convention. TWS president Karen Shotting was also there; Norman wasted no time in introducing her to HRH The Duke of Kent, cousin to Queen Elizabeth II and a patron of the U.K. Society who has enthusiastically attended several dinners. Indeed, he is now an established part of the after-dinner entertainment, which this year consisted of a celebration of P. G. and Ethel Wodehouse's marriage 100 years ago, on September 30, 1914.

This time around the duke read the citation presented to Wodehouse by Oxford University in 1939, when PGW was given an honorary doctorate. Other participants in the entertainment included Sir Michael Gambon and Lucy Tregear, playing Plum and Ethel as they reflected on their marriage and the early years of his career. There were also readings from Wodehouse's works that were quite a treat, especially when his great-



TWS president Karen Shotting (left) with HRH The Duke of Kent and Baroness Reinheld von Bodenhausen (photo by Katy Rugeris)

grandson David Cazalet humorously rendered the poem "Printer's Error" to thunderous applause. The author Sebastian Faulks read a passage from *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells*, in perfect keeping with the night's theme.

As ever, however, the highlight of the evening was the songs, beautifully sung by Hal and Lara Cazalet. These included "Bungalow in Quogue," "I Never Knew About You," and—of course—"The Church 'Round the Corner." It does the heart so much good to see Plum's talented great-grandchildren interpret his lyrics with such warmth, wit, and brio. He and Ethel must be bursting with pride in the heavenly spot from where they are watching.

And, as ever, Tony Ring deserves a barrel-load of kudos for the job he does in creating these biennial entertainments. It was certainly one of his best, and an entirely fitting celebration of a special Wodehouse centenary. I should add that the printed program featured a photograph of the plaque installed by The Wodehouse Society at New York's Church of the Transfiguration (aka the Little Church Around the Corner) in 1994.

The U.K. Society's dinners are always hugely enjoyable occasions, but it's impossible to have a casual tête-à-tête with anybody. For that reason, Karen suggested a meet-up prior to the dinner, and so Norman and I had lunch with her the day before. Not surprisingly, we had a whale of a good time, thus confirming our view that Wodehouseans are the best folks in the world. This was confirmed again the week after the dinner, when we got together for a meal with Elliott Milstein and Lily Armstrong (daughter of the actor and Wodehouse fan Curtis Armstrong). Never do we seem to have so much fun as we do when we convene with fellow Plummiess, which is why I can't wait for next year's convention in Seattle!

Cuppy's Hermitage

KAREN SHOTTING WRITES: I recently finished reading Will Cuppy's *How to Be a Hermit*, and at the very end he's trying to come up with a name for his hermitage. After considering a few like Joyous Gard (in honor of his neighbors, the Coast Guard) and Just An Idea, he says, "In more literary moments I think of it as one of those P. G. Wodehouse places, but I never can decide between East Wobsley, Little-Wigmarsh-in-the-Dell, Lower-Briskett-in-the-Midden, and Higgleford-cum-Wortlebury-beneath-the-Hill."

A Prairie Home Plum

MARIA JETTE WRITES: Earlier this year, Dan Chouinard and I exhibited our latest Wodehouse CD on *A Prairie Home Companion*. The online interview from that show recently become "live" at <http://prairiehome.org/features/guest-interviews/maria-jette/>. There's lots of Wodehouse content in the interview. While I wouldn't have necessarily connected Garrison Keillor fans with PGW a few months ago, our experience on the *APHC* cruise of the Baltic proved that there's a significant crossover. We'd sprinkled Wodehouse numbers through several of our performances for the first week and it suddenly struck me that an all-Wodehouse program might attract its own crowd. The staff did a little feature promoting it in the ship newsletter (yes, everything operates much as it did in the days of Monty Bodkin's trans-Atlantic experiences, including the daily "newspapers") and we had a standing-room-only crowd. You'll note that both of our Wodehouse-themed CDs (*The Siren's Song* and *Wodehouse & Kern on Broadway*) are for sale at the www.prettygoodgoods.com site, where they benefit public radio. I love public radio, but must point out that they're also available on my site (www.mariajette.com), where the shipping's a bit cheaper (in the U.S., at least) and there's a discount for purchasing more than one.

Keillor's Heroes

CAROL KINNAIRD found an interview with Garrison Keillor in the August 10 *New York Times* "By The Book" column. When asked, "Who are your literary heroes?" Keillor cited P. G. Wodehouse "for sheer elegance and invention."



I remember reading in one of those historical novels once about a chap . . . who, when people said the wrong thing, merely laughed down from lazy eyelids and flicked a speck of dust from the irreproachable Mechlin lace at his wrists. This was practically what I did now. At least, I straightened my tie and smiled one of those inscrutable smiles of mine.

Right Ho, Jeeves (1934)

The Best Medicine for Global Ills

TOM THOMAS found an article in the October 10 *New York Times* that quoted from a 1919 review of Wodehouse's novel *Their Mutual Child* (aka *The Coming of Bill*). The article ("Weary of War and Ready to Laugh," by Mary Jo Murphy) included reference to a play by W. Somerset Maugham from the same time. Of Wodehouse's novel, reviewer Gertrude Atherton said that it "is not serious about anything . . . and is a blessed kind of book to come upon in these disturbed days." Wodehouse's story, with its references to eugenics and the problems of germs, went a bit gently on the former, according to Ms. Atherton, "perhaps because its share in the satire is closely intertwined with a really tender and fine little love story." Which, of course, is good to have at any time.

Seattle's Taproot Theatre Does It Again

IN 2012, Seattle's Taproot Theatre company produced *Jeeves in Bloom*, Margaret Raether's play based on the plot of *Right Ho, Jeeves*. **Ian Michaud** tells us that play did so well that Raether and Jeeves are back on the company's 2015 season schedule with a production of *Jeeves Intervenes*, which apparently is loosely based on the short story "Jeeves and the Hard-Boiled Egg."

Unfortunately the dates don't coincide with next October's Seattle convention of The Wodehouse Society. But if you're in Seattle next spring—specifically between May 13 and June 13—make plans now to attend! The website is at <http://tinyurl.com/lv5vfr0>.



Wodehouse Prize for Lost for Words

IN THE MAY 25 *Washington Post*, Jonathan Yardley reviewed Edward St. Aubyn's *Lost for Words*, which won the 2014 Wodehouse Prize for comic fiction. Mr. Yardley said that the novel is "deliciously irreverent" and that it is "a withering satire of the vicious, backstabbing process out of which literary prize winners emerged." It seems somehow appropriate, then, that it should win a literary prize!

Spies and Gardens

BETH CARROLL read Michael Dirda's review of E. Phillips Oppenheim's *The Spy Paramount* and *The Great Impersonation* in the October 4–5 *Wall Street Journal*. In the review, Dirda writes, "But like his rival Edgar Wallace . . . or his friend P. G. Wodehouse, 'Oppy' wasn't just a writer; he was a phenomenon, producing more than 100 novels in his career."

Beth also found an item in a more surprising spot: *Gardens: Quotations on the Perennial Pleasures of Soil, Seed, and Sun*, compiled by Holly Hughes. From that collection: "We encountered Aunt Dahlia, who, wearing that hat of hers that looks like one of those baskets you carry fish in, was messing about in the herbaceous border by the tennis lawn."

"It is never difficult to distinguish between a Scotsman with a grievance and a ray of sunshine."
The Custody of the Pumpkin

Norman Murphy does it again! His latest work will be published in the U.K. in February and in the U.S. in May. You may preorder it on Amazon even now!

THE
P.G. Wodehouse
MISCELLANY

N.T.P. MURPHY
FOREWORD BY STEPHEN FRY

A Wodehouse Miscellany

WITH GREAT PLEASURE we announce the impending publication of a new book by Norman Murphy. *The P. G. Wodehouse Miscellany*, which is to be published in the U.K. by the History Press on February 2, 2015, will contain everything you ever wanted to know about Wodehouse in short, concise chapters covering a mere 192 pages. This small, hardcover, user-friendly book has a foreword by Stephen Fry, and comprises a potted biography of Our Hero; an introduction to his works and characters, including a complete list of his books grouped according to Wodehousean genre (Blandings, Jeeves & Wooster, etc.); and other useful information pertaining to his continued popularity today, including a list of recommended Wodehouse-related websites. With a list price of £9.99, the book will be available in the U.K. in February, and in the U.S. in May. It can be pre-ordered now through online retailers.

A Few Quick Ones

Credit to John Baesch and Evelyn Herzog for providing a wealth of Quick Ones. This whole batch comes from those astute watchers of the world of Wodehouse news.

The February 13 *New York Times* ran an article entitled “Today’s Jeeves Needs an M.B.A.” The article’s author, Penelope Green, said that “the copious amounts of money now being amassed by the richest of the rich . . . require ever more oversight from human capital with skill beyond what you would accrue in old-fashioned butler school.” Apparently, though, the latter skills are also still prized: butlering, care of fine art and antiques, wine service, chauffeuring, etc. The pay can be quite good, although some who perform these duties might be told, “You’re always going to be the help.” To which Donna (an estate manager for a wealthy couple in Florida) replied, “Unless you own your own business, you will always be the help.”

In *Country Life* on April 23, Rupert Uloth and Emma Hughes posed the question: “Are You a Modern-Day Gentleman?” Jeeves was in a list of “top 10 fictional gentlemen” (which also included Phileas Fogg, Dr. Watson, and Paddington Bear), and the authors attempted to identify the key qualities that make a gentleman a gentleman. They pointed out that gentlemen can come from any walk of life and that one doesn’t have to attend British public schools or Eton or Harrow to be a gentleman: “Self-deprecation, generosity, tolerance, thoughtfulness, and a sense of humor: either you’ve been blessed with these gentlemanly qualities or you haven’t.”

An interesting study of Georges Simenon (Julian Barnes’s “Simenon Returns” in the May 9 *Times Literary Supplement*) was triggered by some new translations of his novels. As an extremely prolific author “first of pulp fiction, then of detective novels and *romans durs*,” Simenon poured out hundreds of novels with a limited vocabulary (2,000 words, by his estimation), with the 75 Maigret detective novels being the best known. According to Barnes, the similarity to Wodehouse is that in Maigret’s world it doesn’t matter “where the larger, outer world has been, is, and may be heading . . . any more than it does in, say, the world of Jeeves and Wooster.” Barnes said that, in Maigretland, we can be “confident that the weather will be extreme, the Inspector will solve a seemingly insoluble crime, and that we shall not need to Google anything.” There are certainties in the world of Wodehouse, of course (Plum’s

default weather would certainly be sunshine!), though your editor does find the need to occasionally consult Google for some of PGW’s quotes from great literature and biblical sources.

Michael Dirda wrote a very entertaining article about “reader’s block” (like writer’s block, only different) in *Freelance*. Michael, a columnist for the *Washington Post*, has found that he suffers “qualms and hesitations about certain books . . . that [he knows he] should read and will almost certainly like.” His belief is that he feels that way because of fiction’s “power to upset a reader’s equanimity.” His contention is that reader’s block arises when people are “faced with a book that they know, or at least strongly suspect, is going to upset them.” Michael suggested that the reader’s unconscious starts asking questions: “Are you nuts or something? . . . Do you really want to send your old heart through the wringer again? Isn’t a restful, soothing P. G. Wodehouse novel really what you’d prefer?”

Even the outspoken and sometimes inflammatory radical writer Alexander Cockburn crossed paths with the Wodehouse canon. In a review of the collected writings of Cockburn (*A Colossal Wreck*), D. D. Guttenplan said that the writer had “plenty of literary ability,” and that “Young Cockburn’s anatomy of P. G. Wodehouse’s diction—and the debt it owed to Oscar Wilde—shows a first-rate critical intelligence at work.”

Crossword puzzles turned one hundred years old last December, according to the December 11, 2013 *Country Life*. The article that discussed this historic event also quoted Wodehouse: “The crossword puzzle craze is now at such a pitch, my paper informs me, that a Pittsburgh pastor is handing out crossword slips which, when solved, give the text of his sermon.”

It was an eye that, like a thermos flask, could be alternately extremely hot and intensely cold. When George met it during the soup course he had the feeling of having encountered a simoom while journeying across an African desert. When, on the other hand, it sniped him as he toyed with his fish, his sensations were those of a searcher for the Pole who unexpectedly bumps into a blizzard. . . . It was the kind of look which Sisera might have surprised in the eye of Jael, the wife of Heber, had he chanced to catch it immediately before she began operations with the spike.

The Small Bachelor (1927)

Chapters Corner

WHAT IS YOUR chapter up to these days? We welcome you to use this column to tell the Wodehouse world about your chapter's activities. Chapter representatives, 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, please get in touch with the contact person listed.

Anglers' Rest
(Seattle and vicinity)
Contact: Susan Collicott



Birmingham Banjolele Band
(Birmingham, Alabama, and vicinity)
Contact: Caralyn McDaniel



Blandings Castle Chapter
(Greater San Francisco Bay area)
Contact: Ed and Missy Ratcliffe



The Broadway Special
(New York City and vicinity)
Contact: Amy Plofker



THE BROADWAY SPECIAL continued its summer tradition of heading up to Central Park's watery pleasure spots on August 9, having first taken lunch overlooking the Sheep Meadow—which was suspiciously devoid of sheep. The hostelry was *en plein air* with the suspiciously non-Anatolean nom "Le Pain Quotidian." We managed to nibble and quaff in sunny splendor with the gentlemen carbo-loading for their forthcoming exertions and the ladies in fetching bonnets anticipating the joys of messing about in

the gondola. Indeed, we had two boatloads of ladies intent on gondoliering and thus we booked two full hours of bliss, while the gents feathered their oars and reportedly conversed on such high-minded topics as transcendentalism, dark matter, and *mignonette de poulet roti petit duc*.



Gondoliering off-Broadway

On October 17 the Special convened in Gramercy Park at The Players, where we welcomed several newcomers as well as old-timers for our traditional Plum birthday party. It may sound as if Broadway Specialists are rather hidebound in our traditions, but, as most of 'em involve repasts of one sort or another, we're also eager to show up for the browsing and sluicing. In addition to celebrating Wodehouse's birthday, we saluted the centenary of the Wodehouses' September 30 wedding anniversary. Miss Postlethwaite provided *les petits gâteaux de brownie aux nuts*, while members provided appropriately Plummy quotes on the nature of love, marriage, birthdays, heartbreak, misalliances, and infatuation.

We were to meet again on December 12 for some solstice frolicking at The Players, where the merry Broadway Special will certainly find the Yuletide spirit in full force. We wish you much feasting and frolicking in the glad New Year. Ring out, wild bells!

Capital! Capital!
(Washington, D.C., and vicinity)
Contact: Scott Daniels



THE WASHINGTON, D.C., chapter met on October 19 to commune with Plum. Each member recited her or his favorite passages from the canon to the delight of all the other members. What could have been better?



The CapCappers gather for good Plum cheer.

Chapter One

(Greater Philadelphia area)

Contact: Herb Moskowitz



MARK REBER delivered an inspired lecture on *Something Fresh*, the 1915 Wodehouse novel that introduced Lord Emsworth and other well-known characters of Blandings Castle. Mark analyzed the plot and structure of the novel in the context of pulp fiction and classic literature, finding examples of each to advance the plot. For example, the use of a MacGuffin (i.e., “an object that is desired by the characters and which they do all sorts of things to acquire”), in the form of the purloined scarab, provided the *raison d’être* for various subplots. Mark likened the novel’s three sections to the three acts of a classic play. He also discussed the distinct voice of the narrator, who evinces an attitude of “someone in the know, wiser—and considerably older—than his twenty-something characters.” The characters, too numerous to name here, provide the expected blend of humor and complicated romance one expects of a Wodehouse novel. Afterward, members shared favorite passages from the novel.

THE CHAPS met on November 9 at Cavanaugh’s Headhouse Tavern in Old City, Philadelphia. After a fine repast and much talk of crime and politics (together and separately), the meeting was moderated by Bob Nissenbaum (Earl of Droitwich), who had issued a challenge to find the funniest name of a person, place, or thing in Wodehouse. A Blandings novel was to be the winner’s prize. The inspiration for the challenge came from Uncle Fred: “I am not very well up in the Peerage. I seldom read it except to get a laugh out of the names.”

All attendees (present and virtual) came up with lengthy lists. We had an absolute embarrassment of riches from multiple members. The village of Lower

Smattering-on-the-Wissel, the drink Lizard’s Breath, Claude Cattermole “Catsmeat” Potter-Pirbright, Bottleton East Palace of Varieties, the Generals Vodkakoff (Russian) and Sir Hector Bloodenough (British), Sir Cuthbert Beazley-Beazley, and many more humorous names were bandied about. The name that was on most lists was the woman with two nobiliary particles, Princess Heloise von und zu Dwornitzchek, the wicked stepmother of *Summer Moonshine*.

With so many great entries, it was hard to choose a winner. It was finally decided to award the prize (*Galahad at Blandings*) to Janet Nickerson. She nominated the character from whom she got her nom de Plum, Zenobia “Nobby” Hopwood but also gained extra credit by finding a map of the possible inspiration for Dwornitzchek: Wornitz, Germany.

The next meeting will be held on January 18, 2015, same locale. See you there—toodle pip!

Chicago Accident Syndicate

(Chicago and thereabouts)

Contact: Daniel & Tina Garrison



SEPTEMBER 20 marked the first gathering of the Syndicate since the passing of our long-time president, Kathy Lewis. The energy Kathy brought to her post was witnessed by the fact that that post will now be managed by a triumvirate: Susan Diamond and the two Tinas (Garrison and Woelke).

The browsing and sluicing took place at the digs of Tina Woelke, in the gardens of Cachur Manor. Lord of the Manor Bob Cachur joined us in sharing a tissue restorer. Someone in attendance is rumored to have remarked that Lady Constance would have found much to approve of in our environs.

Tissues restored, the assemblage moved on to things Wodehouse. Todd Morning shared with us some of the backstory to the marvelous articles he’s penned for *Plum Lines*. He also shared with us a teaser about an upcoming piece on the banning of Plum’s works from the libraries of his native land (see page 21).

Dan Garrison performed a delightful reading of the Mulliner story “Cats Will Be Cats.” Mary Lou Mockus made us aware of a review of Sophie Ratcliffe’s book of Wodehouse letters that appeared last year in the *Claremont Review*.

The gatherings of the Chicago Accident Syndicate are informal, sometimes bordering on chaotic, and if you are passing through when we’re in session you’re encouraged to drop in for a tissue restorer. The next

gathering will be December 13. For details contact Dan Garrison at the email above.

The Clients of Adrian Mulliner

(For enthusiasts of both PGW and Sherlock Holmes)
Contact: Elaine Coppola



A JUNIOR BLOODSTAIN will be held on Saturday, January 10, 2015, at 11:15 PM in the Roosevelt Hotel's York Suite, during the Baker Street Irregulars weekend in New York City. It will feature the premiere performance of *The Riddle of the Refurbished Room*.

The Den(ver) of the Secret Nine

(Denver and vicinity)
Contact: Jennifer Petkus



Secret Niners attempt to decipher a cricket bat.

THE DEN(VER) of the Secret Nine has been busy with extra events this summer and fall. In August, members of the Den(ver) of the Secret Nine, Doctor Watson's Neglected Patients (DWNP), the Denver-Boulder region of the Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA), and the English-Speaking Union watched the Littleton Cricket Club defeat the Colorado Springs C.C. at Cornerstone Park in Littleton, Colorado.

It was a glorious summer day and was not appreciably marred by a light shower and strong winds which played havoc with our tent and patio umbrella. Anglophiles of every stripe watched the game, with varying levels of comprehension.

We pitched our tent on the east side of the cricket field and were warned we might have our tea interrupted by a fly ball. Fortunately, no lives were lost although we did interrupt game play once to chase airborne food

packaging. The game began at 2 PM but we gathered early so member Mike could explain the rules of cricket. Later, we were met by Dan Ruperal with the Colorado Cricket League, who spoke about the history of cricket in America and told us about Twenty20 cricket, the "quick" form of cricket that is played in about three and a half hours.

We planned our tea sandwiches and dessert break to more or less coincide with the inning break of the game, and we enjoyed Branston pickle (surprisingly good, I thought), sandwiches, scones, chocolate madeleines, and other delectables provided by the Serendipi-Tea Shoppe in Olde Towne Littleton. Many thanks to Jean Labo and her hardworking staff.

Member Mike gave this description of the game: "Littleton won rather handily. They batted first and were all out after 19.4 overs (just 2 balls short of the 20 overs) for about 123 runs. Colorado Springs were all out for about 70 runs after something like 15 overs."

Many thanks to Secret Nine member Larry for getting so many Sherlockians to attend. And thanks to Mike, who's a member of all four groups. This may well become an annual event, and next year we hope to attract people from even more groups.

Our Wodehouse birthday tea was at Wildflowers Tearoom in Broomfield, Colorado, on October 18. Although we had no formal agenda, I offered a review of *Jeeves and the Wedding Bells*. (The general consensus was that I took one for the cabal, though I am glad that I read it.) We toyed with the thought of going to monthly meetings but decided to continue our agenda of frequent extra skullduggery.

We also decided to combine our regular meeting on November 9 with a movie day. We met at original member Mike's home (and not at Pints Pub, our usual haunt). If you're new to our group and would like to attend, please drop me (Jennifer Petkus) a line so we can discuss the necessary initiation rites.

The Drone Rangers

(Houston and vicinity)
Contact: Carey Tynan



THE DRONE RANGERS meet monthly for a book discussion, dinner, or some other activity. At our monthly meeting in September, we met at member John Moore's house for a movie party. We enjoyed watching David Niven as Bertie Wooster and Arthur Treacher as Jeeves, even if it was in a 1935 not-even-close version of *Thank You, Jeeves*. This movie was the first film

portrayal of Bertie Wooster. Wikipedia reminds us that “on one occasion when Bertie grows a moustache that Jeeves disapproves of, Bertie cites Niven’s moustache as a justification; Jeeves coldly remarks that Bertie is not David Niven.” We also watched Terry Wogan’s program about Wodehouse, originally aired on the BBC in 2011.

Member Sylvia Bernicchi came across the following reference to Plum in Nancy Mitford’s book *Highland Fling*:

“Shut up, darling. You know quite well who it was that begged and implored me to leave, now don’t you? Sally’s father,” explained Walter, “got me a job in a bank. I can’t tell you what I suffered for three whole days. It was like a P. G. Wodehouse novel, only not funny at all, or perhaps I’ve no sense of humor.”

Member Susan Pierce heard the following in an episode of *Columbo*, called “Forgotten Lady” (S5/E1): Book seller to Columbo discussing the author of a book found at the crime scene: “You have to read it to appreciate the woody concept of romance and comedy. You know, I think that author could very well be the next P. G. Wodehouse. That’ll be \$7.95 plus tax.”

The Flying Pigs
(Cincinnati area and elsewhere)
Contact: Susan Brokaw



Friends of the Fifth Earl of Ickenham
(Buffalo, New York, and vicinity)
Contact: Laura Loehr



The Melonsquashville (TN) Literary Society
(Tennessee)
Contact: Ken Clevenger
E-mail: plumbeak@gmail.com



ON SEPTEMBER 27, the Melonsquashville (TN) Literary Society enjoyed the musical stylings of Jerome Kern, with P. G. Wodehouse’s lyrics, from the piano of Charles Goan, assisted by Joyce Hall and Allen Johnson and the superb voices of Harry Hall, Lucy and Noel Merrill, and Linda Walsh, a special guest who was given a presentation copy of *Just Enough Jeeves* as a way to entice her to love all of Wodehouse, not just his lyrics.

We enjoyed a delicious buffet contributed by the more than two dozen attendees in Charles Goan’s home, which features a choice of pianos as well as Rudy, a dog Plum would love. The eight songs were all rousing, but two favorites were “We’re Crooks” and “Peaches.” The introduction of the songs put each into the context of their shows (*Oh, Boy!*; *Leave It to Jane*; *Miss 1917*; and *Have a Heart*) and included retelling the Plum pun from *Oh, Boy!* about the female character Jackie, having too much “honor” to tell a lie. (As reported in Lee Davis’s book about the musical comedy collaboration of Wodehouse, Bolton, and Kern, a cop hearing about her “honor” said that “if she had any less on her she would be pinched.”)

Our next meeting will be on December 13 at the home of Joan and Ken Clevenger for a BBQ lunch and dessert buffet. The food motif will be accompanied by a talk on the subject of “Fish in Plum Sauce.”

Then, at some time to be determined in 2015, we will have a winter get-together to do a dramatic reading with eight voices of “Monkey Business.” In the spring, Ralph and Linda Norman will lead us in reading some excerpts from *A Damsel in Distress*.

The Mottled Oyster Club / Jellied Eels
(San Antonio and South Texas)
Contact: Lynette Poss



The New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS)
(Boston and New England)
Contact: John Fahey



IT’S ALL about pies! Newts as a rule are a quiet lot. Not reserved, surely not reticent, just quiet. Possessing a vivid and wild inner life, externally they appear calm and demure. However, get some libatious spirits flowing, throw in some mastication, and the joie de vivre breaks out. A more riotous crowd is not to be found.

A Nettle was hosted September 27 by Roberta Towner and Larry (P)smith. Roberta has a reputation for many things, which my preux chevalier tendencies prevent me from discussing. But above all, Roberta is known for her pies. A driving incentive for attending Nettles is the hope that Roberta will be there, for pies are then sure to follow.

Anticipating the Nettle, Newts internally were fantasizing an orgy of pies, while on the exterior all was calm and quiet. To the point, they weren’t telling

Roberta whether they were coming or not. It was at this point that a clever idea hatched in my brain.

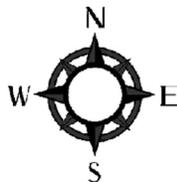
Roberta was wondering if she should lay out a modest spread for a small crowd or pile it on for the unannounced. As the day approached, anxiety increased. When anxiety increases, Roberta bakes pies. Therefore, the operable rule seems to be: Don't tell Roberta you're coming and pie output will be maximized. When you then arrive unannounced, there will be a bounty of pies. Brilliant! I quickly spread the word and a surprising number of Newts rose to the challenge.

The High Newtess (that would be my wife, Elise) and I arrived on the appointed hour and were not greeted with a jolly hallo. Instead, we got the look of a stern Presbyterian minister and cold words, "You didn't say you were coming." I laughed off the comment and breezed into the house. A house swimming in pies. It took but a moment before I was seriously tucking them in. Newts arriving later quickly caught up. An excellent bottle of champagne and a fine Amontillado vaporized. Eventually we settled into making secret plots for the Seattle convention and had many laughs while reading through "The Amazing Hat Mystery."

A holiday Nottle was agreed upon for December 13, to be hosted by Ellen Donovan and Bob Norberg. New plots must be hatched.

The Northwodes

(St. Paul, Minneapolis, and vicinity)
Contact: Kristine Fowler



The Orange Plums

(Orange County, California)
Contact: Lia Hansen



THE ORANGE PLUMS celebrated their first anniversary as a chapter of TWS on October 18 with a luncheon and a discussion that ranged far afield from the original topic, as usual. During this past year, while browsing and sluicing in various pubs, coffeehouses, and eating establishments, we discovered we have similar tastes in literature, television, film, food, and beverages. We also discovered we have very dissimilar tastes in literature, television, film, food, and beverages. For example, some of us really enjoy the performances of Laurie and Fry (however misguided these opinions might be), others claim there's nothing like Richard Briers and Paul Eddington. Whether we read Wodehouse from a well-

loved old volume or from an electronic device, or listen to the stories on tape while driving the vast freeway system of Southern California, we share a love for the antics of Bertie, Bingo, Galahad, Baxter, and Psmith, and look forward to meeting once a month to share our favorite characters, plot devices, historical references, and general zaniness from the body of work that Plum left us.



A dashed fine-looking group of Orange Plums

The Pale Parabolites

(Toronto and vicinity)
Contact: George Vanderburgh



The Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corporation

(Los Angeles and vicinity)
Contact: Karen Shotting



PZMPCO HAS fallen into the habit this year of selecting works that relate to the seasons. Thus, we enjoyed *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* (in the spring) and *Summer Lightning* (in the—OK, you get it). In October, ghosts seemed to be in order, and we had a pleasant discussion of some early Wodehouse humorous articles in *Punch* magazine, "Mr. Punch's Spectral Analyses." We were to have pumpkins in November ("The Custody of the Pumpkin"), followed by the perennial favorite for December, "Jeeves and the Yule-Tide Spirit."

We continue to prosper in the virtual world and to cross-pollinate our sister chapters to the north and south (the Orange Plums in Orange County and the Medulla-Oblongata-Glutz Motion Picture Corporation in Santa Clarita.) Our Facebook page has forty members, including friends from Sweden, Japan, England, and Oz

(although our Australian member has now emigrated to England). Our Yahoo! group has 66 members, even though it is generally a rotating core group of about ten who regularly attend the monthly meetings in Pasadena.

Our newest member is the Riverside Dickens Festival, which is having an interesting Wodehouse/Dickens event in Riverside, California. On November 14–15, the Festival was to have welcomed Gerald Dickens, the great-great-grandson of literary master Charles Dickens, performing *Top Hole!*, based on the Wodehouse golf stories. This is the United States premiere of this a two-act play, and it was performed with the full permission of the Wodehouse estate. We will file a report to *Plum Lines* regarding this show.

We generally meet on the second Sunday of each month at 12:30 PM at Book Alley, 1252 East Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, California. Join our Yahoo! and/or Facebook groups at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PZMPCo/> and/or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/373160529399825/> for information and occasional changes of schedule and venue.

The Pickering Motor Company

(Detroit and vicinity)
Contact: Elliott Milstein



The Pittsburgh Millionaires Club

(Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)



MEMBERS OF the Pittsburgh Millionaires Club, when not busy stuffing our jeans with thousand-dollar notes or leaping merrily from blond(e) to blond(e) like the chamois on the craggy Alps, convene every two months or so to read aloud a short story, most recently “The Juice of an Orange.”

This summer we were graced with the presence of TWS President Karen Shotting and Oily Carlisle (VP Robert Rains). They brought us a PGW poem that celebrated the kerfuffle the fair denizens of “Pittsburg” had in those couple of decades where we lost our “h” and when the local Carnegie Museum of Art acquired some Greek statues that had rather less clothing on than desired—scarcely enough represented to make a canary a pair of camiknickers.

We have a Facebook page now, so please “like” us! On November 23, we’ll convene to read “The Smile That Wins”—good training for future millionaires.

The Plum Crazies

(Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and vicinity)

Contact: Betty Hooker

ON SEPTEMBER 14, the Plum Crazies met at the home of Plum Crazies President Betty “Aunt Jane” Hooker and Tom “The Reverend Aubrey Upjohn” Hooker for an elegant brunch.

Members participated in a shared reading of “Rodney Fails to Qualify,” originally published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1924 and later included in *The Heart of a Goof*. The Oldest Member tells the story of Jane Packard and William Bates, who are bonded by their mutual love of golf, though complications ensue. Fortunately, Bates’s competition (poet Rodney Spelvin) slices his chance for romance out of bounds by his untimely exclamations while golfing (“his light humming, musical though it was, militated against accuracy on the green”).

In other business, the Plum Crazies’ in-house consiglieri, Hooker and Rains, suggested that souping up the chapter brochure with graphics pinched from the internet would be unwise for a variety of reasons (habeas corpus, due process of law, etc.).

The Plum Crazies will meet next on November 30 at 1 PM at the home of Diane and Ed Hain for tea and to view the video and discuss “Jeeves Takes Charge” (from *Carry On, Jeeves*), the premiere episode of the British series *Jeeves & Wooster*.

The Portland Greater Wodehouse Society (PGWs)

(Portland, Oregon, and vicinity)

Contact: Carol James



The Right Honourable Knights of Sir Philip Sidney

(Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Contact: Jelle Otten



OCTOBER 18 was a beautiful sunny day in Amsterdam. The temperature was in the seventies for the meeting of the Honourable Knights.

First on the schedule was a presentation of a new Dutch translation by our amazing Leonard Beuger of one of the Wodehouse classics. The title of *The Code of the Woosters* in Dutch is *Jeeves: Een Man van Eer* (*Jeeves: A Man of Honor*). Willem Desmense, publisher

at Ijzer Uitgeverij (a Dutch publishing house), gave the first copy to the translator to thunderous applause by the Knights. Laura Beuger, one of Leonard's daughters,



Leonard Beuger sings the Paolo Conte song "Jeeves," accompanied by Fiora Beuger.

designed the cover drawing. Leonard read his favorite passage from the book. As an encore he sang the lyric "Jeeves," written by Italian folk singer Paolo Conte. (You can listen to Paolo's version by searching for "Paolo Conte Jeeves" on YouTube.) Leonard's daughter Fiora accompanied him on the accordion.

Rob Sander showed us five translations of Wodehouse novels in the Catalan language, which he discovered in Barcelona, Spain. Jelle Caro gave us a report about his visit to the Little Church Around the Corner in New York. (Wodehouse married Ethel a century ago in this church.)

Jelle Otten drew attention to the publication of a new Wodehouse biography—*P. G. Wodehouse: Gentleman de Literatur*—written in German by Martin Breit. Martin gives much attention to the literary heritage of Wodehouse.

After so much culture, it was time for one of our regular outdoor sporting events. This afternoon it was the Constable Oates Newts-Handling Challenge. Given the title, everyone was quite curious what Master of Ceremonies Tony Roodnat had in mind for this game. He explained that participants would have to throw newts into a terrarium. (Fortunately, the newts were plastic.) In addition, you had to wear a real constable's helmet. Every person taking part in the challenge got three tosses. In the event of a tie the winner would be based on the aesthetic qualities of their throws. The result was, indeed, a tie. Herman van Riel and Naně Lagerweij each threw two newts into the terrarium. Herman's tosses were certainly aesthetic enough to win, but he was given the prize anyway because Naně happened to be a member of the jury. Herman got the winner's certificate and Naně's prize for second place was a sweet little (candy) newt.



Herman van Riel, the winner of the challenge

The meetings of the Knights in 2015 are scheduled for February 14, June 6, and October 17. We will meet at Mulliner's Wijnlokaal, Lijnbaansgracht 266-267, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The next meeting will be on Saturday, February 14, at 1 PM.



No real living newts were harmed during the Constable Oates Challenge.

The Size 14 Hat Club
(Halifax, Nova Scotia)
Contact: Jill Robinson



Bill got up. He was glowing now with that fervor which comes upon men in their hour of clear vision. He felt in his pocket for his pipe—the situation was distinctly one that demanded a series of thoughtfully smoked pipes—and found that he had left it in the flat. It being obviously impossible to think coherently without it, he returned home.

Bill the Conqueror (1924)

Treasurer's Report for 2013

BY KRIS FOWLER

Balance as of December 31, 2012	\$17,382.41
Income:	
Membership dues	\$12,938.61
2013 Convention registration income	\$44,156.07
2013 raffle, auction, and rummage sale proceeds	\$2,896.78
Historical Marker	\$433.17
Drones Club ties	\$45.00
Interest	\$3.43
Total Income	\$60,473.06
Expenses:	
<i>Plum Lines</i> production and mailing	\$12,588.80
2013 convention deposit, expenses ¹	\$32,415.27
Historical Marker ²	\$0.00
Correspondence, supplies, other	\$47.00
Total Expenses	\$45,051.07
TWS Convention Reserve Fund ³ :	
Balance as of December 31, 2012	\$11,302.51
Convention registration excess income	\$6,591.33
Raffle, auction, and rummage sale proceeds	\$2,896.78
Balance as of December 31, 2013	\$20,790.62
Total Balance as of December 31, 2013	\$32,804.40

¹ *Counting 2013 convention income and expenses from prior years, income exceeded expenses by \$9,866.33. About a third of this (\$3,275) will give a one-year membership dues holiday to 2013 convention registrants; the remainder is added to the Convention Reserve Fund to reduce prices for future conventions.*

² *Correction from 2012*

³ *Included in the Total Balance*

The quiet, sun-bathed garden was hushed and warm and heavy with the fragrant scent of J. B. Attwater's roses and wallflowers. Winged things hummed and flitted. From somewhere out of sight came the liquid murmurings of fowls. A dog of nondescript breed snored gently in the shade of the hollyhocks. It was an environment that made for dreamy contentment, and nobody could have been more dreamily contented than Joe. He was in the frame of mind when a weaker man would have started writing poetry.

Summer Moonshine (1937)



Mt. Rainier from Seattle

Plunks and Ooks on PGWnet

THE PGWNET online email forum continues to be a fine place for virtual hobnobbing. Every month topics of many varieties are raised, shared, and debated. There is much to be learned and much good humor shared. You can find information about how to join this forum on our website at www.wodehouse.org; click the PGWnet tab.

Here's a sampling from a recent post by the multitalented Neil Midkiff:

In the process of annotating the first of the Kid Brady stories for Madame Eulalie (www.madameeulalie.org), I was puzzled by the reference to "four-spot wafers" in the next-to-last sentence. A search turned up a nifty article by Herman Spencer called "Language in the Making: A Defense of Slang" in *The Booklover's Magazine*, volume 2, number 6 (December 1903), page 658. It lists the following terms for money as "current slang within the last five years: the coin, the scads, the long green, the dough, the dust, the shekels, the stamps, the beans, the wafers, the simoleons, the price, the spondulics, the needful, the tin, the collateral, cartwheels, plunks, balls (the last three limited, strictly, to dollars), the rocks, the stuff, the necessary, the boodle, and the ooks."

"Long green" also is used in the Kid Brady story, and "plunks" is used by Spike Mullins in *A Gentleman of Leisure/The Intrusion of Jimmy*. Others in this list are also familiar to us from Wodehouse's use of them, such as "haven't a bean".

Later in the article the once-common but even-then-outworn expression "look like thirty cents at a swell ball," later abbreviated to "look like thirty cents," is cited. This gives at least a little background to the phrase which Norman Murphy (at least in the first edition of his *Handbook*) found obscure.

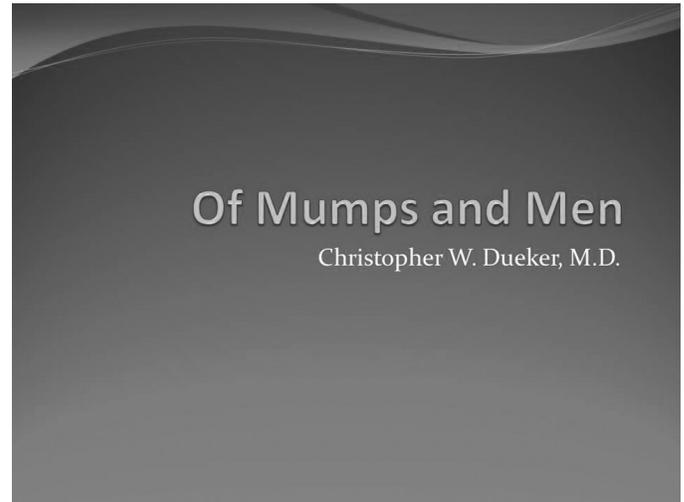
A sharp cry escaped Sir Gregory. His face had turned a deep magenta. In these affluent days of his middle age, he always looked rather like a Regency buck who has done himself well for years among the fleshpots. He now resembled a Regency buck who, in addition to being on the verge of apoplexy, has been stung in the leg by a hornet.

Fish Preferred (1929)

Of Mumps and Men

BY CHRIS DUEKER

This is the last of the talks that we'll publish from the 2013 Chicago convention. Chris Dueker entertained us as he studied the Wodehouse mumps problem. His presentation was humorously erudite and his conclusion put our concerns to rest.



ANATOLE ENJOYED having The Wodehouse Society's convention in Chicago because he could visit Les Nomades for their excellent duck dishes. Unlike his naïve fellow diner, Anatole did not ask to meet the duck who had prepared the exquisite liver terrine. Anatole later told me that he was more interested in the duck's production than his individual psychology and life story. I countered that that fowl's way of life affected his work. Anatole was quick to realize how similar this is to the appreciation of literature versus the relentless probing of an author's life.

The thoughtful reader wants to know how an author's life affects his writing. The ambitious scholar often seems to be seeking self-aggrandizement through invasion of an author's personal life. Undocumented assertions are then strung together to fit the scholar's individual literary theory.

No one doubts that Wodehouse's writing was influenced by his time at Dulwich. Consequently, the pleasantly informative talk on his school days, which was presented at the Providence Convention in 2007, was relevant. However, my inner peace was suddenly disrupted when the lecturer asserted that Wodehouse

"...the myths and misinformation that had hardened into 'fact' over the years..."

had had mumps twice. I had learned from my mother and in medical school that one mumps infection conferred immunity against another attack. I delayed lunch to speak privately with the lecturer, who assured me that mumps often repeats itself. I fretted and then acted.

Two handy biographies (Phelps's *P. G. Wodehouse: Man and Myth* and McCrum's *Wodehouse: A Life*) concurred that Wodehouse had had mumps. Neither mentioned two attacks. Each book made shocking claims about mumps and its influence on Wodehouse. I obviously needed to refresh my knowledge of mumps.

Mumps is one of the thousands of fascinating infectious diseases. These diseases, ancient and contemporary, change and survive despite mankind's best efforts. They range in severity from athlete's foot to AIDS. Most of them are communicable diseases, though some (rabies, for example) are not transmitted among humans except by unusual methods (organ transplantation, for example). The causes of infectious diseases are more numerous than the writings of Wodehouse with a range from protozoa to worms. Generally, they result from infection by living organisms, but bovine spongiform encephalitis, for example, is caused by a malformed protein.

Mumps is caused by a single-stranded RNA virus, a Paramyxovirus. Viruses are incomplete organisms; they require a plant or animal host. There are no specific treatments for most viral illnesses, including mumps. Mumps, like its relative measles, spreads by respiratory contact: close breathing, coughing, sneezing.

Most commonly, mumps involves the salivary glands of digestion, particularly the parotid. The parotid glands are behind the ears just above the angle of the jaw. Swollen parotids are the disease's hallmark. Mumps may occur without glandular swelling. Other organs may be involved; these include the central nervous system, kidneys, and genital organs.

Mumps is usually a benign disease, but complications are not rare. There may be meningitis or encephalitis. These may occur without parotid involvement, which makes diagnosis difficult. Most nervous system complications resolve as the disease passes. Hearing impairment develops less often and is usually transitory. The eyes are not involved. Kidney infection may be serious. Deaths do occur from kidney failure or encephalitis. Death from mumps is less common than from measles.

Mumps is typically better tolerated by children than adolescents and adults. Gonadal infection is the most publicized and feared problem in post-pubescent patients. It may inhibit or destroy the ability to form

sperm or eggs. The incidence in males has been as high as 30 percent, though it usually involves just one testicle and may be transitory. Women are affected far less often. Mumps in pregnancy may cause fetal death.

Authors and others often confuse male sterility with impotence. Sterility results from low or absent sperm production. Impotence refers to impaired erectile function, which impedes sperm delivery. Mumps does not affect potency. Erectile function is complex and may be affected in men who worry that they are sterile from having had mumps (personal communication, Dr. J. Dorman, Stanford Student Health).

One case of mumps almost always provides complete protection against future infections. Mumps is not chronic. It does not lurk; there are no Mumps Marys. Reinfection may rarely develop. Its occurrence is too unusual to permit quantification in the medical literature.

Wodehouse used the infectious diseases in many of his stories. They are not in the category of major themes such as the twisted path of love, the dangers from imposters, and the importance of fish. He wrote of spots, mumps, and bad rabbit pies. Botts and glanders are infectious diseases. Wodehouse was well above average in medical accuracy despite a slip regarding visual problems during recovery from influenza.

Mumps is treated with respect and without an emphasis on its unpleasantness. The Russian tales of life's despairs do not mention mumps.

A single sentence in chapter 25 of *Mike and Psmith* says much about mumps and Wodehouse. Mumps at Ripton causes the cancellation of their cricket match with Wrykyn. Wrykyn substitutes lowly Sedleigh on the schedule and everything changes. We are not told if mumps has infected the team or if the school is under quarantine. This was the second mumps outbreak in two terms at Ripton, which is appropriate for such a malady in a closed population. Natural immunity would be high until the arrival of a new group of young students.

Wodehouse deftly employs the concept of "secondary gain" from illness. Ripton students suffered the misery of mumps while folks at Sedleigh prospered.

Another example of secondary gain is seen in *The Girl on the Boat*. This convoluted, confusing tale has a fairly extensive relationship with mumps. Eustace Hignett gets mumps and in sickness discovers his heart. The charming Jane Hubbard finds love through restorative service rather than big-game hunting. Mr. Bennett has a great fear of mumps. This might be a veiled reference to mumps in adult men. On the other hand, Mr. Bennett has a fear of many things.

How did mumps affect Wodehouse's personal life? He probably did have mumps since it was quite common, especially within schools. We do not know when it occurred. The Providence lecturer claimed that he was bemumped while at Dulwich. That seems reasonable, but the existence of records is highly unlikely. Both Phelps and McCrum state that Wodehouse had mumps in 1901, after leaving school. Phelps provides no documentation. McCrum may refer to a writing diary, but this diary is not supportive, according to some personal communication that I received from Norman Murphy. Timing is important for the claims of these authors.

Mr. Phelps has a rather fanciful understanding of mumps. He ascribed Wodehouse's visual problems to mumps (page 67). Mumps does not cause visual defects, especially not refractive disorders. Furthermore, Wodehouse had visual impairment earlier in the biography, well before Phelps's dating of mumps.

Wodehouse was unlikely to have had mumps twice. One attack almost always confers immunity. He might have had parotid swelling twice since other infectious diseases can cause it. Mumps is usually diagnosed by clinical findings rather than laboratory tests. The mumps virus was not identified in Wodehouse's youth, so testing was not possible. Errors in clinical diagnosis are not rare. Agatha Christie neatly illustrated this by having Mrs. Rivington say, "Our doctor said the other day that my little girl had measles and it turned out to be a sort of heat rash" (*Why Didn't They Ask Evans*, chapter 17).

Educators are taught to be wary of criticizing erroneous statements lest the erroneous statements are remembered instead of the criticism. An exception to this sensible policy must be made where Phelps used a Wodehouse letter to support an outlandish claim

that solitary sleeping resulted from mumps (page 109). Phelps uses a letter of November 24, 1920. Fortunately, this letter to Leonora Wodehouse is included in *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters* (S. Ratcliffe, ed., page 132). The letter discusses mice in the bed of Mrs. Wodehouse. The letter has nothing to do with mumps. The illustration below shows some of the reasons for solitary sleeping in marriage. Only "acute illness" relates to mumps since a considerate spouse may not want to spread the disease.

SOLO SLEEPING IN MARRIAGE

- Culture
- Small Bed
- Acute Illness
- Chronic Illness
- Sleep Disorders
- Psycho-Social Incompatibility
- None of Your Business

Source: Survey in "Daily Washboarder"
September 2013

John le Carré's Dr. Conrad states: "I shall not decorate, I shall not speculate." (*Single & Single*, page 249) This would be good advice for biographers. Anatole was correct in opining that we should just enjoy the writing of Wodehouse without concocting tales of why he wrote as he did. We do not need to meet the duck. The study of diseases can be amusing, but it should be a nonfiction endeavor.

The millstone of truth grinds slowly, but it grinds exceedingly fine.

"The Ripton match, fortunately, was off, owing to an outbreak of mumps at that shrine of learning and athletics-the second outbreak of that malady in two terms."

P. G. Wodehouse
Mike and Psmith
Chapter 25

To join the ladies, he had reasoned, would be to subject himself to the searing torture of having to sit and gaze at the woman he worshipped, a process which would simply rub in the fact of how unattainable she was. He recognized himself as being in the unfortunate position of the moth in Shelley's well-known poem that allowed itself to become attracted by a star, and it seemed to him that the smartest move a level-headed moth could make would be to minimize the anguish by shunning the adored object's society. It was, he felt, what Shelley would have advised.

Ring for Jeeves (1953)

P. G. Wodehouse, Revenge Novelist?

BY BOB RAINS

THE IMAGE MOST of us share of the Master is that of a gentle gentleman, capable of forgiving those who wronged him to an unbelievable extent. In July 1941, William Connor, using the pseudonym “Cassandra,” wrote a piece denouncing Wodehouse which was so vituperative that the BBC originally refused to broadcast it and only did so under extreme pressure from the British government. The ensuing controversy, fueled by others as well as Cassandra, led to Wodehouse’s interrogation by MI5, his arrest by French inspectors, his placement in “preventive detention,” and his effective exile from the England he had loved for the rest of his life. Yet, in 1953, Wodehouse invited Connor to lunch and reported later in a letter to Bill Townend that “we got along together like a couple of sailors on shore leave.”

Connor became one of Wodehouse’s many correspondents, and in 1961 Wodehouse wrote to him apologizing that Evelyn Waugh was to make a TV appearance in his (Plum’s) defense in which Waugh would be attacking Connor. Wodehouse added, “Well, dash it, you and I are buddies, and if the above is correct, I don’t want you thinking that I had anything to do with this. I value our friendship too much.”

But was Wodehouse always this forgiving, or were some experiences in his life so much more traumatic than his mistreatment during and after World War II that even he could not turn the other cheek?

Yes! I give you Exhibit A: *Psmith in the City*. This novel, published in 1910, is not the usual Wodehousean lark of witless upper-crust chaps getting engaged to the entirely wrong sort of female or lifting a police constable’s helmet on Boat Race Night. No, it is a revenge story written by a man who thought he was going to follow his brother (Armine) to Oxford University, only to be told by his father (Ernest) that the family coffers would not allow such extravagance and that instead he (Ernest) had arranged for a career for his third son (PGW) at the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank (now known as HSBC).

Less than a decade after his 1902 escape from the bank, Wodehouse produced his tale of Mike Jackson and Psmith in “the City,” i.e., banking London. In what may have been an almost verbatim recounting of his own life story, Wodehouse relates how Mike’s father tells Mike that he cannot afford to send him to Cambridge as expected, but rather has arranged for him a position at the thinly disguised “New Asiatic Bank.”

But Mr. Jackson, Sr., is not the primary target of this tour de farce. That honor is shared by the various bank higher-ups and especially the manager, as well as the bank itself. We first meet Mr. Bickersdyke (the name says a lot), manager of the London branch of the New Asiatic, when he pulls a bloomer and walks across the bowling-screen (whatever that may be) when Mike is bowling in a cricket match. Obviously Bickersdyke is not a man who should be put in charge of anything.

On his first day at the bank, Mike is assigned to work in the postage department headed by Mr. Rossiter, described by a fellow worker as “a fussy little brute.” Hardly a kind description.

Shortly after Mike’s arrival at the bank, he is joined by Psmith, whose father has also arranged with Bickersdyke to hire him. Bickersdyke does not have altruistic motives for this personnel decision. Rather, says Psmith, “It is an undoubted fact that Comrade Bickersdyke will have a jolly good try at making life a nuisance to us.” Of course, it becomes Psmith’s mission to turn the tables on Bickersdyke, and he does so brilliantly.

Psmith starts haunting Bickersdyke at the Senior Conservative Club where both are members, much to Bickersdyke’s chagrin. On one occasion Psmith stares at Bickersdyke during the deciding game of a rubber of bridge, causing the latter to revoke and blow the match.

We learn that Bickersdyke is running for Parliament, standing for Kenningford as a unionist. Psmith attends a Kenningford Town Hall meeting where Bickersdyke is to address a crowd that he hopes will become his future constituents. Bickersdyke relates how the government reminds him of an experience he had while fishing one summer in the Lake District. He went into a riverside inn where he saw a very large trout in a glass case. Several men each assured him that they caught the specimen, only to have it turn out to be made of plaster of Paris. Psmith rises and, in front of the crowd, warns Bickersdyke that a man named Jerome (i.e., Jerome K. Jerome) had pinched his story and printed it as his own years earlier in 1889 in a book entitled *Three Men in a Boat*. The next day, the papers report “Amusing Heckling” and “Disgraceful Scene at Kenningford.” Bickersdyke is not amused.

Then Mike is transferred to the Cash Department, headed by the likeable Mr. Waller, who, it turns out, is heart and soul for the revolution. Waller invites Mike and Psmith to a Sunday supper where they meet

similarly minded members of the movement. Comrade Waller lends Psmith a tome containing the records of the long-ago meetings of a group of socialists known as the Tulse Hill Parliament and—what ho!—none other than Bickersdyke appears therein complete with speeches denouncing the British government and referring to the royal family as “blood-suckers.” This reviewer would never wish to use the word “blackmail” nor to act as a spoiler. Suffice it to say that Psmith later uses these old speeches to bend Bickersdyke to his will.

And, what of the Hongkong and Shanghai (oops, I meant New Asiatic) Bank itself? Unburdening himself, Wodehouse opines, “Nobody can be proud of the achievements of a bank,” and later, “There is a cold impersonality about a bank.” Mike, we are informed, “did not like being in the bank, considered in the light of a career. But he bore no grudge against the inmates of the bank. . . . His fellow workers in the bank he regarded as companions in misfortune.” You get the picture.

Deep questions remain. Was there a real Mr. Bickersdyke at the HSBC, albeit with another name, on whom Psmith’s foil was modeled? Did Wodehouse himself make it his business to be a thorn in the side of HSBC’s management? Was the manager of HSBC a pinko or, in any event, a reformed pinko? Were/are banks in the city filled with fellow travelers yearning for the revolution? The mind reels.

But one thing is clear. As Hollywood moguls would learn to their sorrow decades later, any entity which employed the gentlemanly Mr. Wodehouse might very well be repaid with cold, if not outright cruel, literary revenge.



Hermione was staring. Had she been a less beautiful girl, it might have been said that she goggled. This revelation of a passion which she had never so much as suspected had come as a complete surprise. Looking on Bill as a sort of brother, she had always supposed that he looked on her as a sort of sister. It was as if she had lived for years beside some gentle English hill and suddenly discovered over morning that it was a volcano full to the brim with molten lava.

Uncle Dynamite (1948)

As Time Goes By

BY NEIL MIDKIFF



JILL COOPER-ROBINSON, in her original article “Wodehouse for the Ages” in the Spring 2014 *Plum Lines*, proposes a framework for thinking about the characters in the Wodehouse stories and how they age over time, and creates a theory of “PG years.” I do agree with her basic premise that Wodehouse’s world is on a different time scale than our own. However, though Jill proposed her ratio “all in fun,” I’ve found other clues that suggest that, ultimately, Wodehouse’s timeline is so unrelated to our “real” time that no formula will fit it.

We can’t get anywhere by assuming that the stories take place just prior to their publication dates. The best illustration of that is in the Blandings Castle saga, where *Heavy Weather* (1933) takes place some ten days later than *Summer Lightning* (1929) [see ch. 6 and 16 of *HW*] but was published four years later. Similarly, we’re told that the Empress of Blandings has won the Fat Pigs medal in three successive years; the first was “last year” in *Summer Lightning* [ch. 1]; in *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* (1939) [ch. 2] and *Full Moon* (1947) [ch. 1] she has won twice in successive years; her third medal is won in *Pigs Have Wings* (1952) [ch. 11]. So it seems clear that at least from the point of view of the characters at Blandings, the action of these stories is compressed into a much shorter era than the publication dates would suggest, even with Jill’s 1:3 ratio applied. In fact, we are told that Lord Emsworth is 60 in *Heavy Weather* and 61 in *Service With a Smile* (1961). J. H. C. Morris, in *Thank You, Wodehouse*, attempts to date the Blandings stories quite specifically to the calendar, with *Something Fresh* occurring in Spring 1914, *Leave It to Psmith* in early July 1921, and so forth until *Sunset at Blandings* in July 1926, but he realizes that the evidence is “irreconcilable: some of it must be rejected.” While this approach does make use of many of the clues in the stories, I think it attempts to tie the stories too closely to our calendar. For instance, he places “Pig-hoo-o-o-o-ey!” in late July of 1922, three years before Hammerstein and Kern wrote “Who . . . stole my heart away?”—a song which becomes an essential element of the plot.

Wodehouse gives us some quite specific clues in Bertie Wooster’s case as well. “Jeeves Takes Charge” (published 1916 in the *Saturday Evening Post*) is narrated “about half a dozen years” after the events it describes; Bertie tells us that he was fifteen when caught smoking one of Lord Worpleston’s cigars in the stables, and that was nine years before the events in the story. So Jeeves took charge when Bertie was 24; thus we can

deduce that Bertie is about 30 in 1916 as he tells us the story. Indeed, Morris proposes [*Thank You, Wodehouse*, ch. 1] that *all* the stories and novels take place while Bertie ranges in age from 24 to 29, though his evidence merely imposes a *minimum* span of five years for the saga.

I don't think we are required to compress it quite so far as that, but we do get some clues that the time span of the novels is rather shorter than many of us have realized. For instance, in *Joy in the Morning* (1946) Bertie must be no older than 30, since "Man and boy, I had known this old buzzard [Lord Worplesdon] a matter of fifteen years" [ch. 22]. In the same book, Florence Craye has just published *Spindrifft*; in *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit/Bertie Wooster Sees It Through* (1954) she wrote it "about a year ago" [ch. 1]. In *Jeeves in the Offing/How Right You Are, Jeeves* (1960), Gussie's prize-giving at Market Snodsbury Grammar School, from *Right Ho, Jeeves* (1934), is still "the previous summer" [ch. 9].

I haven't attempted in this brief note to construct a chronology of all the Jeeves stories, but there is some sense that a slightly longer gap separates the events of the short stories from those related in the later novels. The cats-in-the-bedroom episode of "Sir Roderick Comes to Lunch" and the swan attack in "Jeeves and the Impending Doom" are described as "some years ago" or "several years previously" in the 1960 and 1971 novels. And the banjolele and cottage fire of the first novel, *Thank You, Jeeves* (1934), happened "some years previously" to the 1971 book [ch. 1 in each case]. Still, the internal time frame must be several years at most; Edwin Craye remains a Boy Scout in *Joy in the Morning*, and young Thos was still in school "a year or two ago" in *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*. I conclude that Bertie can be no older than in his very early thirties in any of the stories in which he appears, and indeed may never be older than 30.

How, then, do we reconcile these internal calendars with the one we live by? As Jill Cooper-Robinson points out, we get references to bikinis and bomb protests in the later stories, as well as citations of celebrities like David Niven (whose first major roles were in 1936, fifty years after Bertie's computed birthdate of 1886) and Dr. Joyce Brothers (whose television show began in 1958). If we merely try to slow the characters' aging by some fixed factor to take this into account, we lose the internal clues that Wodehouse provides to link the stories, and we lose the sense of immediacy and even urgency that is so central to Bertie's various excursions into the soup. In other words, even though Wodehouse's original readers might have waited several years between books, we need to realize that Bertie gets only very short

respites, if any, between the complications described in them.

The only way I can find to deal with the situation is to realize that Wodehouse's characters live in a sort of parallel universe to our own, touching on ours at intervals, but not synchronized to the calendar of the world we are forced to live in. (It's similar to, but not quite so extreme as, the village in *Brigadoon* which is in a sort of suspended animation for all but one day of each of our centuries.) So our own world can lurch forward with television, nuclear bombs, and the like; Wodehouse's characters stay on their own time frame, looking in on us from time to time to remind us of the benefits of a more relaxed approach and a less earnest attitude toward life. While Lord Emsworth's sisters, secretaries, nephews, and neighbors may work just as hard at disrupting his equilibrium as Bertie's aunts, school friends, and fiancées do, both major characters share the same goals of a tranquil life, and when Gally, Uncle Fred, or Jeeves resolve the complications at the end of the book, we readers get to enjoy that same sense of tranquility until the next book—perhaps for longer than the characters themselves can enjoy it. Maybe that's the compensation we get for having to live in our world rather than in theirs.

"Indeed? Flannery knows a man named Carlisle. You've probably heard him speak of him. A most interesting life he has had, Flannery says, with curious things constantly happening to him. He was once bitten by a rabbit."

"You don't say?"

"So Flannery assures me. An angora. It turned on him and sank its teeth in his wrist while he was offering it a carrot."

"Probably on a diet," said Lord Ickenham, and Mr. Saxby agreed that this might have been so.

Cocktail Time (1958)



Welcome to the Seattle Fairmont Olympic!

(See pages 1–2 for details.)

Jeeves Banished: The Reaction of British Public Libraries to the Berlin Broadcasts

BY TODD MORNING

IN 1941, following the Berlin broadcasts, P. G. Wodehouse's books were removed from a few public libraries in the United Kingdom. This is noted in several Wodehouse biographies. For example, from Robert McCrum's *Wodehouse: A Life*: "In an extreme case, the Southport Public Library withdrew some ninety Wodehouse volumes and destroyed them. In Portadown, Northern Ireland, his books were banned outright, while other public libraries announced a ban on future acquisitions." Probably because it makes for a more sensational story, the banning of Wodehouse in libraries has often been exaggerated. In just one example, an article in the *Telegraph* on August 27, 2011, by William Langley entitled "P. G. Wodehouse: Filthy Traitor or Frightful Ass," gives the impression that Wodehouse's books were censored in all U.K. public libraries: "His books were removed from public libraries, his works banned by the BBC, and his name ranked alongside the nation's most reviled traitors."

In truth, the reaction by U.K. public libraries to the Berlin broadcasts is more complicated than Wodehouse biographical sources suggest. Some parts of the story recounted by these sources are simply not accurate. For instance, the Wodehouse books at the Southport Public Library were removed but not destroyed. (More on this later.) There were about 500 public libraries in the United Kingdom in 1941; at some libraries, the possibility of banning Wodehouse's books was discussed and then dismissed, while at the vast majority the issue never came up. Also, the censorship of Wodehouse's books was condemned by newspapers, many members of the public, and professional librarians. And at those libraries which did ban his books, the decision was rarely unanimous and certainly not permanent.

When I first became interested in this subject, I knew I would be able to find newspaper reports and articles in U.K. professional library journals from the 1940s, but I thought it would be impossible to explore other sources from my perch in Chicago. I assumed that the libraries would have archived the minutes of meetings, but I knew that it was unlikely that these would be available online. Fortunately, I came across a chapter called "The P. G. Wodehouse Affair: 1940–1947" in the book *Censorship in Public Libraries in the United Kingdom During the 20th Century*, written by Anthony Hugh Thompson and published in 1975. Mr. Thompson reviewed the minutes of the town councils

and library committees of the municipalities involved. He also discovered when the Wodehouse ban was lifted at many of the libraries.

Of the handful of public libraries that in some ways censored Wodehouse's works during the war, the decision by the Southport Library to remove Wodehouse's books attracted the most attention. I should point out, however, that even though the action of the Southport Council was reported widely in British newspapers, it was never front-page news; the articles were invariably short and buried inside the papers. Yet the removal of Wodehouse's works from the Southport Library was even the subject of a few sentences in the *New York Times* on August 6, 1941.

Southport is a city in northwest England with a population of 91,240 in 1939. In his Wodehouse biography, Robert McCrum makes the point that the British public's anger over the Berlin broadcasts didn't truly start until after newspaper columnist William Connor's inaccurate and "breathtakingly intemperate" attack on Wodehouse aired on the BBC on July 15, 1941. (Most members of the British public never heard the Berlin broadcasts.) At Southport, the first step in the censorship of Wodehouse's books came a few days after Connor's attack when the library acquisitions subcommittee was given a list of books recommended by the librarian for purchase. The subcommittee decided not to approve the purchase of Wodehouse's *Quick Service*. On July 21, the entire Library Committee decided to remove all of Wodehouse's books, and on August 5, the Town Council reviewed the Library Committee's decision. Speaking against the decision, Councillor Haig said, "I think to move these books would show the stupidity the Nazis have shown in burning Bolshevik books." Mrs. Haig's amendment to restore the books was voted down. The Council then accepted an amendment put forward by Councillor R. A. C. Graves that Wodehouse's works be disposed of as surplus paper for pulping. The amendment was approved by nine votes to four. Thirty-six members of the Southport Council abstained from voting on the amendment. My guess is that many of these local politicians felt uncomfortable with the censorship of Wodehouse's works, but didn't want to appear unpatriotic—thus, the many abstentions.

Despite what is frequently written about this event, Wodehouse's books were removed from the Southport

library's shelves but not destroyed. They remained in storage and were eventually reinstated. Wodehouse's books were saved by the town clerk, who listened to legal advice and decided that the town council had no right to authorize the destruction of public property. The legal opinion was conveyed to the library committee, and they directed the chief librarian to preserve the books. The decision that the books could not be destroyed received far less press than the decision to pulp them, which is undoubtedly why this myth persists.

Other libraries that withdrew all of Wodehouse's books were Blackpool, Pontefract, and Yorkshire, and also Portadown in Northern Ireland. (At the Belfast Public Library—by far Northern Ireland's largest public library—the issue of banning Wodehouse's books never seems to have arisen.) The Colne, Lancashire, Public Library Committee also voted to remove and destroy Wodehouse's books. But in a scenario similar to Southport, the destruction of the books was never carried out because it entailed the illegal destruction of public property. The Sheffield and Oldham Public Libraries decided not to buy new copies of Wodehouse's books but did not remove the works that were already present in their collections.

I found that the removal of Wodehouse's works was discussed and rejected by the library districts of Hampstead, London; Thurrock, Essex; Compton, Lancashire; Chertsey, Surrey; Llandudno, Wales; Haltemprice, Yorkshire; and by the cities of Blackburn, Lincoln, Leicester, Dundee, and Edinburgh. The removal of his books may have been rejected at other libraries that I wasn't able to discover in my research; yet it is clear that most libraries in the United Kingdom never considered removing Wodehouse's books.

I was struck by the following discussion by the General Committee of the Edinburgh Public Libraries as reported in the *Scotsman* on July 29, 1941. In this exchange, Wodehouse is not reviled and the issue is treated with a reasonableness and absence of hysteria that is rarely brought up in accounts of the British public's reaction to the Berlin broadcasts:

Councillor Will Y. Darling said he had read in the Press that a member of the Town Council had indicated his intention to withdraw the books of a certain writer who had been making speeches outside the country. Councillor Darling said he was strongly opposed to the suppression of any books, including those of which he did not approve. He asked the Librarian if he received any intimation on the subject. Mr. Ernest A. Savage replied that no letter had

been received by him and no action taken on the matter. Sir William W. McKenchnie said he had sent a number of novels of Wodehouse to the Forces, and they were much appreciated. To his mind, the idea of banning the writer's works was ridiculous. A member remarked that if an approach was made to the Libraries Committee to ban the books, the answer should be in the negative, and there were indications of approval.

Newspaper editorials and letters to the editor generally weighed in against the banning, although I found a few letters from people who supported their library's decision. Typical of the anti-banning editorials was this from the *Burnley Express*:

All that remains for the Colne Library Committee to do is to rid the shelves of the works of all other authors who have been suspected of moral turpitude—and then close the library doors.

Typical of letters in support of Wodehouse was this to the *Dundee Courier*, printed on July 19, 1941:

Sir, I hope the citizens of Dundee will let their charity and common sense guide them, and will not ask for a ban on Wodehouse's books in the public library. The recent outburst over the wireless is surely to be deplored; let us not follow that hysterical lead. We do not know Wodehouse's side of the story. Till we do, let us withhold our censure.

In a letter that appeared on July 18 in the *Northern Whig and Belfast Post*, G. R. Lloyd of Belfast wrote:

For a long time now a possible Nazi invasion of Britain has been in the news, and we are told that Britain is prepared. What is not generally realized is that there is a more subtle form of invasion which has already taken place. No Nazi paratroops have landed in Britain, yet there are many signs that a spiritual penetration by Nazi ideas and methods is in progress. The most recent symptom is the Portadown Urban Council's ban on Wodehouse's books from the Public Library. This may seem a small thing, but it is symptomatic of an attitude of mind which is far more dangerous to our country than a Panzer division.

Anthony Hugh Thompson wrote: “Surprisingly little comment appeared in the professional library journals.” This is a baffling statement because I found that the two leading journals devoted a great deal of space to the controversy. In the official journal of the British Library Association, R. L. W. Collison wrote in October 1941:

Some time ago Southport banished the works of Wodehouse from its libraries at a council meeting in which no less than thirty-six members abstained from voting. The proceedings and most of the statements were sober and reasonable but the decision, coupled with an inexorable determination to have the ninety copies of the great man’s works pulped, has raised an astonishing hornet’s nest. Vituperative letters have appeared all over the country, booksellers and private individuals have offered to buy the offending volumes, and anonymous soldiers have requested them for the military hospitals.

Mr. Collison continued to write about the Wodehouse banning in his monthly column throughout the autumn of 1941. The other leading U.K. library journal (*Library World*) also covered the banning extensively. The August 1941 issue featured a page-length attack on the banning by a regular contributor who went by the pen name Eratosthenes. The writer asked, “How can my reading about the Earl of Blandings and his pig reduce my love for England—or yours?” About those who banned Wodehouse he wrote:

They are the same breed that burned *Tom Jones* and even *Jane Eyre*, banished *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and scoriated *Jude the Obscure*; they have existed in all ages and will exist until common sense becomes an attribute of the human race.

All of Wodehouse’s works were restored to the libraries in the years after the war. Southport discussed the continuation of the ban on February 5, 1947. Mr. Thompson wrote that the Council “carried an amendment to defer consideration of the library committee’s recommendation until a special committee had reported on the reasons why the original decision to destroy the books had not been implemented.” Apparently, the members of the council had short memories. In October 1941, a local newspaper highlighted the town clerk’s decision that the books

could not be legally destroyed. Wodehouse’s books were returned to the shelves on February 6, 1947; the special committee met briefly only once and exonerated the librarian for not destroying the books. Mr. Thompson discovered that at most of the censoring libraries the staff members had quietly restored Wodehouse’s works and no one had protested. At Sheffield, however, the ban on buying new books by Wodehouse was not lifted until 1954.

I’ll end with this brief report (quoted here in its entirety) from the July 26, 1941, issue of the *Evening Telegraph and Post*, which (despite what many Wodehouse chroniclers would have us believe) best sums up the attitude of the governing bodies of most British public libraries to the censorship of Wodehouse’s works: “Question at the Hampstead Council Meeting: Have steps been taken to remove the works P. G. Wodehouse from the public library? Answer: No.”

The injustice of the thing stung Lord Emsworth. This park was his own private park. What right had people to come and blow squeakers in it? How would Mrs. Rossiter like it if one afternoon he suddenly invaded her neat little garden in the High Street and rushed about over her lawn, blowing a squeaker?
“Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend” (1928)

At the End with Hitchens

IN RESPONSE to our article “What to Read at the End?” in the Autumn 2013 *Plum Lines*, Marty Wacksman sent us an excerpt from Christopher Buckley’s review of Sophie Ratcliffe’s *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*:

I visited Christopher Hitchens in the hospital just after he’d been given a diagnosis of mortal illness. By his bed I noticed a dog-eared Jeeves and Wooster paperback. . . .

Christopher looked at the novel. His face clouded. “I worried about bringing it,” he said, “because I thought, what if it doesn’t work?” The prospect of a Jeeves novel failing to work its magic was the only time in our 30-year friendship that I saw him register something close to genuine alarm. The last time I saw Hitch, three days before he died, in another hospital, after an 18-month battle with cancer, he had on his lap an early English edition of . . . Sophie Ratcliffe’s *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*.

Seattle Hotel Alert!

STOP THE PRESSES! This just in! Rooms at the 2015 TWS convention hotel are being reserved at an unprecedented pace. See details on page 1-2 and book yours NOW! If the website says all the rooms in our convention block are taken, call 1-800-441-1414 and give them the old oil. If that doesn't work, e-mail twregistration@tws2015seattle.org. Details on alternative hotels will be forthcoming.



Seattle's Space Needle

Contents

- 1 Psmith in Pseattle: The 18th International TWS Convention
- 2 The Fairmont Olympic: Our Host Hotel
- 3 Letter from England
- 4 Cuppy's Hermitage
- 4 A Prairie Home Plum
- 4 Keillor's Heroes
- 5 The Best Medicine for Global Ills
- 5 Wodehouse Prize for *Lost for Words*
- 5 Seattle's Taproot Theatre Does It Again
- 5 Spies and Gardens
- 5 A Wodehouse Miscellany
- 6 A Few Quick Ones
- 7 Chapters Corner
- 14 Treasurer's Report for 2013
- 15 Plunks and Ooks on PGWnet
- 15 Of Mumps and Men
- 18 P. G. Wodehouse, Revenge Novelist?
- 19 As Time Goes By
- 21 Jeeves Banished: The Reaction of British Public Libraries to the Berlin Broadcasts
- 23 At the End with Hitchens

- 24 *Plum Lines* Vol. 35 No. 4 Winter 2014

Officers & Volunteers

President
Karen Shotting

Vice President
Bob Rains

Treasurer (dues payments):
Kris Fowler

Editor in Chief
and AOM (Apprentice Oldest Member):
Gary Hall

Editor Emeritus: Ed Ratcliffe

Membership Secretary (new-member inquiries,
contact information changes):
Ian Michaud

Proofing Editor: Elin Woodger

Final Proofreading & Technical Assistance, Printer/
Mailer Liaison, Rosters, Dues Sheets: Neil Midkiff

Website address: www.wodehouse.org
Webmaster: Noel Merrill

We appreciate your articles, research, Quick Ones, tales of My First Time, and other observations. Send them to Gary Hall via e-mail or snail mail at the addresses above. Deadlines are February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1. If you have something that might miss the deadline, let me know and we'll work something out.

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