



Plum Lines

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Happy Birthday, TWS!

BY ELIN WOODGER

I'm not absolutely certain of my facts, but I rather fancy it's Shakespeare—or, if not, it's some equally brainy bird—who says that it's always just when a fellow is feeling particularly braced with things in general that Fate sneaks up behind him with the bit of lead piping.

“Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest”

WELL, NOT ALWAYS. Sometimes Fate can be bracingly serendipitous, as was the case in 1979 or 1980—the exact date is unknown—when a woman named Edna Axe met a chap named Bill Blood in the books section of an auction house somewhere near Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Both were browsing for Wodehouse titles, Edna for her husband, Bill for himself. A few days following their conversation, Bill met Edna's husband, Frank, and the two men subsequently enjoyed getting together and sharing their mutual enthusiasm for the Master. Finally, they had a light-bulb moment: Why not form a society for fans of P. G. Wodehouse?

Bill—more properly Captain William Blood (U.S. Army, Retired)—thereupon took it upon himself to get The Wodehouse Society off the ground, initially using letters and advertisements, both regionally and nationally. And wherever he and his wife, Mary, traveled, they recruited new members with Baxter-like efficiency. By August 1980, the fledgling society had 26 members, as well as one honorary member: Plum's widow, Lady Wodehouse. At the end of that same month, Bill sent out the society's very first newsletter, entitled *Comments in Passing*.

Expansion was rapid. The membership roster of October 24, 1980, listed 41 devotees, some from as far away as California, where Pauline Blanc was organizing

Captain William (Bill) Blood, who got the whole thing started in the early 1980s from a chance meeting with Edna Axe



a new chapter. By February 1981, our membership totaled 72 and included Wodehouse biographer David Jasen and the renowned illustrator Ionicus (Jos Armitage). By September 1981—little more than a year after the society was formed—the membership list topped 120 and boasted recruits from all over the North American continent as well as some illustrious members from England, including Sir Edward Cazalet and Wodehouse scholar Richard Osborne. Over the years to come, other well-known members would join: to name just a few, authors Isaac Asimov and Joseph Connolly; Wodehouse publisher James Heineman; eminent scholars Norman Murphy and Tony Ring; and, in 1988, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, who became an honorary member.

But it was the basic, not-so-ordinary Wodehouse enthusiasts who would become TWS's backbone and who would form the local chapters that became an important part of the society's success. The first chapter was Bill Blood's own: the Bucks-Montgomery-

Philadelphia Chapter, later changed to the Delaware Valley Chapter. Their first meeting, with seven people present, was held on June 15, 1980, at the home of Bill and Mary Blood in Doylestown, Pennsylvania; by October the chapter had twenty members enrolled. This chapter would eventually disappear, alas, though it was effectively revived in 1997 with the formation of Chapter One.

Our longest-existing chapter is the San Francisco-based Blandings Castle, which held its first meeting in February 1981. It wasn't until after the New York convention in 1991 that other chapters began to proliferate, starting with the New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS) in January 1992. The NEWTS started a fashion for creating whimsical names that reflected the chapter's geographical location or Wodehousean inclinations. Later that same year, Capital! Capital!—the Washington, D.C., chapter—was founded, and since then the society has seen many chapters formed, some failing but most thriving, their activities documented in “Chapters Corner” in *Plum Lines*. Today the society boasts 29 chapters.



An early TWS convention:
Ithaca 1985

Ratcliffe. He remained a devoted TWS member until his death in October 1991, shortly before the society's sixth convention in New York.

Speaking of the newsletter, its name was changed from *Comments in Passing* to *Plum Lines* in September 1981, following a members' naming contest earlier in the year. At that time, a newsletter was all it was: just a few sheets of paper stapled together at the corner. It became an actual journal under

TWS blossomed under the leadership of Bill Blood, who served as its official president for the first three years and as unofficial president for much longer. Giving himself the moniker of the Oldest Member (always shortened to OM), Bill edited the society's newsletter for the first seven years before passing the reins—and the title of OM—over to Ed

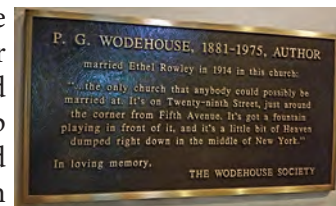


Missy and Ed Ratcliffe

Ed Ratcliffe (OM 1988–2003), who refined the layout, turned it into a booklet stapled down the center, and created our well-known masthead using the famous David Low caricature of Plum. In 2003, Dan Cohen took over as *Plum Lines* editor; he was succeeded in 2007 by Gary Hall, who continues to be our much-loved and highly valued OM (in title, not in fact).

Meanwhile, since our founding, the society has seen a succession of volunteer officers come and go, some for short terms, others for long ones. Our current president, Bill Scrivener, is our twentieth; all presidents serve for two years, passing the baton to the next (who is the current VP) at each convention. Our treasurer, Indu Ravi, has been taking care of finances since 2015; she is the tenth person in that post. Impressively, we have had only six membership secretaries; Lynn Vesley-Gross has only just taken over from Ian Michaud, who had been in the post since 2007. Then there are the volunteers who have labored behind the scenes, including those who have helped with *Plum Lines* and looked after the society's database. Of these we take special note of Neil Midkiff, who has not only helped out editorially and managed the database since the early 2000s, but also hand-stuffed and mailed *Plum Lines* four times a year—for seventeen years!—before that task was taken over by the Pickering Motor Club chapter in 2019.

Other volunteers took on initiatives aimed at honoring Wodehouse's life and work while also promoting the society. These include Florence Cunningham, the brains behind a members' pilgrimage to England in 1989 as well as the plaque to Plum and Ethel installed in the Little Church Around the Corner in 1994 (accomplished with the invaluable help of John Graham and Frits Menschaar); Jean Tillson, who arranged for a stamp and first-day cover to celebrate Plum's 130th birthday in 2011; and Bob Rains and Andrea Jacobsen, who saw to the erection of an historical marker to Plum in Remsenburg. Then there's Shamim Mohamed, who set up our first website, oversaw the design and production of the society's Drones Club tie in 1993, and, with



Above, the Little Church Around the Corner plaque (photo by Karen Shotting); below, the Remsenburg marker (photo by Barbara Saari Combs)



Alekh Bhurke, formed the TWS Cricket Club in 1997. There are numerous other heroes who have contributed to the society's success and wellbeing over the years—especially the all-important Plummies who have planned and carried out our biennial conventions.

Plum Lines is the heart and soul of The Wodehouse Society, but its conventions are its flesh and blood. The first was held on July 16, 1982, two years after the society's founding. Thirteen members and three guests gathered together at Delaware Valley College in Pennsylvania. Led by Bill Blood, eight of them attended a daytime business meeting at which a new constitution was approved and general policies were discussed. Then, in the evening, all sixteen assembled at a local inn to engage in some convivial browsing and sluicing. This wild binge was followed the next year by a smaller gathering in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, at which it was decided that future gatherings would be held biennially—hence our holding conventions in odd-numbered years despite our founding in an even-numbered one. (This makes celebrating significant anniversaries jolly difficult, I can tell you.)

Since then, we have held conventions in Ithaca, New York (1983); San Francisco (1987 and 1993); Kalamazoo, Michigan (1989); New York City (1991); Boston (1995); Chicago (1997 and 2013); Houston (1999); Philadelphia (2001); Toronto, Canada (2003); Los Angeles (2005); Providence, Rhode Island (2007); St. Paul, Minnesota (2009); Dearborn, Michigan (2011); Seattle (2015); Washington, D.C. (2017); and Cincinnati (2019). That's twenty conventions so far, most held in October but some held at other times, depending on the location and whims of the hosting chapter. (Note: future conventions will be organized by a committee led by Elliott Milstein.) It is impossible to summarize all our conventions adequately in this short piece (but see the note at the end); suffice to say, they have all been highly enjoyable binges, and we look forward to our 21st, to be held in San Diego in October 2021.

TWS's membership reached its apex—almost 1,000 members—in the mid-1990s, thanks to the popularity



The banquet at the Pseattle convention in 2015

of the TV series *Jeeves and Wooster*. Thereafter the ranks declined slowly, finally leveling out at around the 500 mark for the past several years. With members from all over the globe, TWS has the happy distinction of being the world's oldest continuously running society devoted to Wodehouse. All the more reason to celebrate!

IT ALL started with a chance encounter in an auction house—and now here we are at forty! It's a remarkable achievement and a well-deserved tribute to P. G. Wodehouse, the Master, who binds us all together through the sweetness and light of his writing.

Join me, please, in raising your glass. Ready? Here's to Plum—and here's to our next forty years!

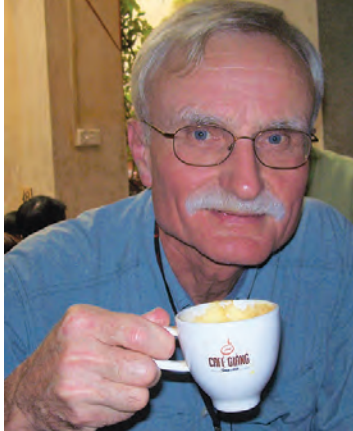
Members who attended the Cincinnati convention last October were fortunate enough to receive a 24-page booklet containing a full history of The Wodehouse Society, including descriptions of all its conventions. There may be some left for those unable to attend the convention; contact Bill Scrivener to see if there are any copies remaining.



Here's a costume collage from multiple conventions. Clockwise from upper left you'll find Tamaki Morimura, Christine Hewitt, Edward and Barbara Jacobitti, Susan Bellamore, Andrea Jacobsen and Bob Rains, Ian Michaud. Do we have fun or what? (All photos this page by Barbara Saari Combs)

The Valet and the Heretic

BY MICHAEL ECKMAN



Mike Eckman, pictured here on a recent trip to southeast Asia, gave this most excellent talk at the recent TWS convention, where he plumbed (or should it be plummed?) the depths of Spinoza to help us understand why the philosopher appealed to Jeeves.

A READER of the December 1965 issue of *Playboy* magazine would have had the opportunity to read of Bertie Wooster asking the following of Jeeves in P. G. Wodehouse's "Jeeves and the Greasy Bird":

"I hope I'm not interrupting you when you were curled up with your Spinoza's *Ethics* or whatever it is, but I wonder if you could spare me a moment of your valuable time?"

Wodehouse, Jeeves, Spinoza, in *Playboy*? Maybe people did buy the magazine to read the articles. But as we are aware, this was not the first or last reference to the Jeeves–Spinoza connection in the Jeeves canon.

In *Joy in the Morning*, Bertie asks Jeeves if there is "any little thing I can do for you while I'm out" as atonement for keeping Jeeves from his beloved fishing. Jeeves asks for "a new and authoritatively annotated edition of the works of the philosopher Spinoza." At the bookstore, Bertie meets Florence Craye, who is impressed with Bertie's purchase of Spinoza, and adventures ensue.

In *The Mating Season*, Bertie cannot leave the House of Haddock and dispatches Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright to confer with Jeeves in London. Catsmeat reports back: "I found him in the kitchen at your flat, sipping a cup of tea and reading Spinoza."

In *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*, Bertie remembers that he "had promised Jeeves to buy him the works of a cove of the name of Spinoza—some kind of philosopher or something, I gathered."

In *Jeeves in the Offing*, Bertie leaves Jeeves in the car while he goes into the Fox and Goose to talk with Bobbie Wickham. When Bertie returns, he apologizes for keeping Jeeves waiting, but Jeeves responds, "Oh, no, sir, thank you. I was quite happy with my Spinoza."

In *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, Bertie approaches Jeeves with a problem but thinks it prudent to break off the discussion after a while so that Jeeves could "get back to his Spinoza. No doubt I had interrupted him just as Spinoza was on the point of solving the mystery of the headless body on the library floor."

But what led Jeeves to want to read Spinoza? And why does he never quote this favored philosopher? Unlike his caustic comment concerning Nietzsche in "Jeeves Takes Charge"—"You would not enjoy Nietzsche, sir. He is fundamentally unsound."—Jeeves never quotes from Spinoza or gives an opinion of Spinoza or of his philosophy.

In this talk, I will present some information about Spinoza, his philosophy, and how he and his philosophy were received. I think that Jeeves would have enjoyed the intellectual challenge of reading and studying him and may have even had some empathy for his way of life. Jeeves's interest persisted all the way through *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, the last of the Jeeves novels. Assuming Jeeves owned an older copy of *Ethics* before the one given to him by Bertie, his interest appears to have lasted most of his professional life.

My interest in the Jeeves/Spinoza connection was piqued a few years ago when I read *The Courtier and the Heretic*. This book by Matthew Stewart, who retired to a life of contemplation, presents biographies of both Leibniz (the courtier) and Spinoza (the heretic). The book also presents fact and conjecture about a meeting that the two had in November 1676. I, of course, thought of Jeeves's interest in Spinoza and of the title for this paper.

Baruch Spinoza was born on November 24, 1632, to a family of Portuguese Jews whose ancestors had emigrated to Holland toward the end of the sixteenth century. His name, Baruch, means "blessed." As a boy and young man, he was known as Bento, and in later life his name was Latinized to Benedict, both meaning "blessed." "Spinoza" derives from the Spanish word for "thorny," and we will see just how thorny Spinoza's life was. Despite living in Holland, his native language was Spanish. He was raised as a Jew and attended the local Jewish school to learn the Bible, Hebrew, and Jewish customs. He had a tutor for other subjects and later studied Latin, mathematics, and Cartesian philosophy under Frans van den Enden, a Christian.

The seventeenth century was a time of transition between the theocratic order of the Middle Ages and the secular order of modernity. In Amsterdam, the residents enjoyed freedom of speculation and inquiry, and the Jews were not confined to a ghetto. This relatively kindly treatment of Jews did not just reflect the city's



Baruch Spinoza: "The world would be much happier if men were as fully able to keep silence as they are to speak."

love of liberty but also its enlightened self-interest: Jews accounted for fifteen percent of Amsterdam's foreign trade.¹ The historian Paul Zumthor observed that "the religious equilibrium which gradually established itself in the country seemed to be a victory for tolerance, but it was just as much the fruit of a desire for enrichment which, in its turn, demanded a peaceful atmosphere."² The peaceful atmosphere did attract immigrants, and "in 1685 a Frenchman calculated that the number of foreigners or descendants of foreigners . . . in the province of Holland amounted to half the total population."²

Spinoza's family had a comfortable life from a business trading in dried fruits and nuts, but fortune turned against the family. By the age of 21, Spinoza had lost both parents, an older brother, and an older sister, and with a younger brother he had inherited a business that was approaching bankruptcy because of the plunder of its cargoes by the British, pirates, and Moors. Spinoza appears not to have been a very shrewd businessman, did not have much of a taste for the life of commerce, and was not attracted to financial success.

In his early twenties, Spinoza moved in with Frans van den Enden, who was a bookseller, Latinist, medical doctor, champion of radical democracy, amateur thespian, advocate of free love, and author of the banned play *Lusty Heart*.¹ He had been convicted of "sowing seeds of atheism"¹ among youth and was a defrocked Jesuit. Nevertheless, he attracted students to a school he ran. In 1671, van den Enden moved to Paris with the intent of inciting a rebellion. There he was captured and hanged because as a foreigner and commoner, he was deemed unfit for the ax.

Spinoza decided that his future lay in philosophy—the search for knowledge and true happiness—not the importing of dried fruit. One indication of this was his reaction to his sister's suit to get full control of the estate after their parents were dead. Spinoza fought the suit and won but chose to give the estate to his sister anyway, keeping only a bed. As a philosopher Spinoza

had to win the argument, but as a man he did not want the money.

Having been introduced to Descartes, he now had a method and terminology with which to pursue his philosophical studies. He also agreed with Descartes "that nothing ought to be admitted as True, but that which has been proved by good and solid reasons."¹ Spinoza spent time around the synagogue and found contradictions and improbabilities in the Bible. Reading Maimonides did not allay his doubts, and the more he studied, the more he doubted.

Although the diversity of religions in Dutch society presented an image of tolerance, "the ecclesiastical authorities in each religious community were quick to act against those they considered to be lost sheep. For living as a husband with his maid-servant when he was a widower, Rembrandt was summoned before the Church Council; and his mistress was barred from communion. . . . In 1642, Francis van den Meurs was thrown into prison for denying the immortality of the soul and Christ's divinity."²

It appears the rabbis were interested in what Spinoza was thinking, and Lucas, an early biographer, reports that two of Spinoza's friends were asked to ascertain his beliefs. Asked by them whether God has a body and whether the soul is immortal, Spinoza replied that "since nothing is to be found in the Bible about the immaterial or incorporeal, there is nothing objectionable in believing that God is a body. All the more so since, as the Prophet says, God is great, and it is impossible to comprehend greatness without extension and, therefore, without body."³ Spinoza also said that "whenever Scripture speaks of it, the word 'soul' is used simply to express life, or anything that is living. It would be useless to search for any passage in support of its immortality."³

Since these ideas struck at Christian doctrine as much as at Judaism, there was a great fear of what the Dutch might do if the Jewish community was known to harbor a heretic. Was this any way to repay the protection and toleration provided by the Dutch? In 1656, Spinoza was offered an annuity to maintain at least external loyalty to the synagogue and faith. He refused and was excommunicated with a severe edict:

By decree of the angels and by the command of the holy men, we excommunicate, expel, curse, and damn Baruch de Espinoza, with the consent of God, Blessed be He, and with the consent of the entire holy congregation, and in front of these holy scrolls with the 613 precepts which are written therein; cursing him with the

excommunication with which Joshua banned Jericho and with the curse which Elisha cursed the boys and with all the castigations which are written in the Book of the Law. Cursed be he by day and cursed be he by night; cursed be he when he lies down and cursed be he when he rises up. Cursed be he when he goes out and cursed be he when he comes in. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law.³

Definitions:

- I. By that which is *self-caused*, I mean that of which the essence involves existence, or that of which the nature is only conceivable as existent.
- II. A thing is called *finite after its kind*, when it can be limited by another thing of the same nature; for instance, a body is called finite because we always conceive another greater body. So, also, a thought is limited by another thought, but a body is not limited by thought, nor a thought by body.
- III. By *substance*, I mean that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself: in other words, that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception.⁵

Definitely without the option, what? Spinoza was now without family or community as all Jews were ordered to shun him. He understood why the action was taken and said, "For these men know that once ignorance is put aside, that wonderment would be taken away which is the only means by which their authority is preserved."⁴ Taken in by a Mennonite couple who gave him a room in their garret, Spinoza did some tutoring and began his career as a lens grinder. Despite his excommunication, it appears he took to heart Rabbi Gamaliel's advice that work keeps one virtuous and "every learned man who fails to learn a trade will at last turn out a rogue."⁴

For the remaining 21 years of his life, Spinoza ground lenses by day for a living and spent his nights and free time on his philosophy. He had a modest lifestyle, did retain some friendships, and had an ability to talk to people. His life was neither impoverished nor secluded. He published *Descartes' Principles of Philosophy* in 1663 under his own name and the *Theologico-Political Treatise* in 1670 anonymously. His *Ethics* and *Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding* were published posthumously. Bertie might have been disappointed to hear Anatole France's opinion that "if Napoleon had been as intelligent as Spinoza, he would have lived in a garret and written four books."⁴

But what was this philosophy that provoked so much anger and debate and caused Spinoza to choose to not publish the *Ethics* during his lifetime? *Ethics* is considered to be the sum of his work. I will focus on it.

Let's begin with Jeeves sitting down at the end of the day and beginning to read *Ethics*. He would first read:

Part I
Concerning God

What Spinoza has done is put his thoughts down in a mathematical format. He will define each term, state axioms, and prove propositions and corollaries. This seems like a peculiar way to write an ethics text, but it was Spinoza's desire to provide a rigorous proof for his system of thought. Jumping ahead to the end of the book, we find that Part V, Proposition LXII refers to virtue:

Proposition XLII. Blessedness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself; neither do we rejoice therein, because we control our lusts, but, contrariwise, because we rejoice therein, we are able to control our lusts.⁵

The proof for this proposition references four previous propositions, one previous definition, and the corollaries of two other proofs. But, in effect, it references all that came before it. The intellectual love of God allows us to participate in the divine nature and acquire a measure of freedom.

Since, during this talk, we do not have time to explore these topics and, unlike Jeeves, I have not spent years reading and rereading Spinoza, I will not be able to delve deeply into his philosophy. I will give a summary of key points and my ideas as to why Jeeves would want to study Spinoza. I will also look at Jeeves's life for evidence that his study had some impact. As I worked on this paper, I realized why so little has been written about Jeeves and Spinoza. The topic, like a child, may be easy to conceive but difficult to deliver.

Spinoza is concerned with the nature of being and defines substance as something that does not depend on something else. What an intellect perceives of a substance is called an attribute. Spinoza argues that

there can be only one substance with infinite attributes and he calls this substance God: “By *God*, I mean a being absolutely infinite—that is, a substance consisting in infinite attributes, of which each expresses eternal and infinite essentiality.”⁶ This God, however, is not the Judeo-Christian God but creative power. Spinoza goes on to prove that there can be but one God. All nature (the universe) is an expression of God’s nature and God is its immanent cause. Also, God is identical with nature, not someone or something outside of nature.

The rest of nature is modes: “Individual things are nothing but modifications of the attributes of God, or modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a fixed and definite manner.”⁵ As humans, we can only recognize two attributes of God: thought and extension, and ideas and physical manifestations. Spinoza sees himself as solving the mind/body problem by recognizing that the mind is the idea of the body and our mental processes are certain bodily states viewed under the attribute of thought.

Please trust me that this brief description does not mean that Spinoza is a pantheist or believes in determinism. *Ethics* presents the case that if we attain the intellectual love of God, we will obtain a measure of freedom and immortality. According to Spinoza, we will participate in the divine nature and will act naturally in accordance with the necessary laws of nature (that the unenlightened see as external constraints) and not act in accordance with our passions.

From this brief introduction you might conclude that Spinoza is difficult—and he is. The first reason Jeeves may have been attracted to Spinoza is because he is so difficult. It is clear that Jeeves spent several years reading Spinoza. At the end of *Ethics*, Spinoza notes that “if the way which I have pointed out as leading to this result seems exceedingly hard, it may nevertheless be discovered. Needs must it be hard, since it is so seldom found. How would it be possible, if salvation were ready to our hand, and could without great labor be found, that it should be by almost all men neglected? But all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.”⁵

Second, Jeeves might have been attracted by Spinoza’s life itself. Spinoza toiled as a lens grinder by day and wrote improving books by night. Jeeves toiled as a valet by day and read improving books by night. Jeeves might have been inspired by Spinoza’s life, and I would like to think that Jeeves wrote by night also, annotating his copy of Spinoza. Jeeves may have shared one other characteristic with Spinoza: “Spinoza’s life, in sum, was of the sort where all the drama takes place in the mind, where the lifting of an eyebrow counts as a major twist in the plot.”¹

Third, Jeeves would have been attracted to Spinoza’s argument that a free person is one who gains control over his passions and becomes a self-governing individual. This individual could then do what is truly useful for himself and others in pursuit of perfection.

Fourth, Jeeves appears to have agreed with Spinoza’s opinions regarding romantic love. In *Betraying Spinoza*, Rebecca Goldstein describes teaching *Ethics* and how “in its ruthless high-mindedness, it asks us to renounce so many passions” including romantic love.⁷ The Note to Part V, Proposition XX warns, “Again, it must be observed, that spiritual unhealthiness and misfortunes can generally be traced to excessive love for something which is subject to many variations, and which we can never become masters of. For no one is solicitous or anxious about anything, unless he loves it; neither do wrongs, suspicions, enmities, etc., arise, except in regard to things whereof no one can be really master.”⁵ Of course, one can never be master of another person.

So, in extracting Bertie from his engagements, Jeeves was not just being selfish and trying to maintain his employment. He had a philosophical basis for his actions, although he never actually quotes Spinoza.

In regard to other philosophers, Jeeves does criticize Friedrich Nietzsche as being “fundamentally unsound.” This might be considered surprising as Nietzsche himself wrote:

I am completely surprised, elated! I have a *predecessor*, and what a predecessor at that! I hardly knew Spinoza at all: that I was driven to him *now* was an “instinctual act.” It’s not only that his general tendencies are the same as mine—to make insight the *most powerful emotion*—in five main points of his teachings I recognize myself.⁷

Jeeves, having read Spinoza, might take exception to Nietzsche’s interpretation. Interestingly, there is no evidence that the German philosopher actually read Spinoza. Eventually, he found “ways to highlight the difference between him and Spinoza everywhere.”⁷ Perhaps he desired to differentiate himself so that he could take full credit for some of Spinoza’s ideas. Because of Nietzsche’s misuse, misinterpretation, and treatment of Spinoza, and because of the fact that there was no proof that Nietzsche had read Spinoza, Jeeves would feel quite justified in criticizing him.

Researching why Jeeves would find Spinoza to be of interest was certainly a bit of work but informative and enjoyable in the end, and was part of what we Wodehouseans do, to explore the tangents. But was it

necessary? No, it was not necessary if the simple answer is that Wodehouse needed an excuse for Bertie to be in a bookstore to meet Florence Craye. Any author would have done, but a writer whose name was close to “Spindrift” was handy. Because of the meeting in the bookstore, an engagement ensued and Jeeves came to the rescue. Having brought up Spinoza, perhaps Wodehouse made references in later adventures to give the appearance that Jeeves was really interested—or perhaps Wodehouse just liked the name.

I hope I have shown that there were good reasons why Jeeves would have read Spinoza and provided evidence that Jeeves absorbed and reflected some of his philosophy. I would also like to think that, if I do have the opportunity of meeting Wodehouse and Jeeves in the great beyond, they would take the time to listen to my theory. I would also like to think that the reaction would be a smile and a simple “Rem acu tetigisti.”

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He conducted rehearsals with a vigor which occasionally almost welded the rabble he was coaching into a something approaching coherency. He painted scenery and left it about—wet—and people sat on it; he nailed up horseshoes for luck, and they fell on people. But nothing daunted him; he never rested.

A Gentleman of Leisure (1910)

Bertie Wooster at Oxford: Magdalen or Christ Church?

BY DAVID L. LEAL, PHD



*Professor David Leal
of the Department of Government at UT-Austin*

TOUCHING ON THIS business of Bertie at Oxford, the cognoscenti dispute whether he attended Magdalen College or Christ Church College. While some might ask whether colleges matter at a time like this, there is no time when setting the historical record straight does not matter.

In Chapter 33 of *A Wodehouse Handbook* (“In Arcady: Wodehouse and Oxford”), Norman Murphy made the case for Bertie attending Christ Church instead of Magdalen. He acknowledged that Bertie twice states that he went to Magdalen (in *The Code of the Woosters* and *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*), but claimed that “those who know Oxford have their doubts.” Should we question Bertie’s testimony about his own life? Is there any reason he (or Wodehouse) would want to deceive us?

Murphy advanced arguments based on Oxford architecture and Wodehouse’s writing and life. He noted two passages that associate Bertie with a college fountain and claims that only Christ Church has a fountain, which may well be true. However, J. H. C. Morris, in *Thank You, Wodehouse*, pointed out that Bertie himself

never says his own college has one, and Murphy acknowledged the counter-argument that Bertie might have been at Christ Church as a guest. Morris observed that when a college has a “bump supper” (to celebrate a specific type of rowing victory that involves bumping slower boats), it invites a representative from each of the boats bumped. He points to evidence that Bertie rowed at his college, and in the first eight, so that Bertie could have been one of those guests. Murphy finds this argument persuasive, although he believes other evidence points to Christ Church.

His first point was that “Christ Church “was the college many, if not most, Etonians went to. It . . . had, in the early twentieth century, more Etonians than the rest of Oxford put together.” Be that as it may, we cannot overlook the long-standing historical links between Eton and Magdalen. Magdalen was founded by the first provost of Eton, William Waynflete, and three lilies appear on the coats of arms of Eton, Waynflete himself (added by him after his appointment at Eton), and Magdalen. While Eton was officially linked with King’s College, Cambridge, Magdalen is a completely plausible destination for young Bertie, even if many of his contemporaries did go to Christ Church.

Murphy’s second point was that when Plum visited his brother Armine at Corpus Christi College, the latter likely showed him Christ Church, as it is nearby. He also noted that the college Plum hoped to attend (Oriel) is close to Christ Church—although it is Christ Church’s back door that is closest to these smaller colleges, not the imposing front entrance. If so, Plum would have seen the fountain, but I am not sure how that means that Bertie went to Christ Church, as noted above. And Wodehouse may have thought that many colleges had fountains and so gave one to Magdalen, or he just thought that fountains were a nice collegiate detail. Murphy argued that Wodehouse liked to get his details right, but I think we can allow him some artistic license—as he used when telling stories of his own life in books like *Bring On the Girls*.

Third, Murphy noted that Wodehouse refers to Christ Church as “the House” in a story, a nickname he thought that only an Oxford insider would know. This may be true today, but I doubt it would have been esoteric to members of the English upper class a century ago. Even so, Plum may likely have heard it from his brother: “Let’s go see the House.” “What’s ‘the House?’” “It’s Christ Church, don’t you know?”

Fourth, Murphy said that Magdalen may have been on Wodehouse’s mind because “if you drive into Oxford from London, Magdalen Tower is the first ‘landmark’ when you reach the city. It is dramatic, it is

unmistakable.” True, although Wodehouse’s first visits to Oxford would likely have been by train, and the station is on the opposite side of Oxford. Plum’s first view of Oxford likely would not have been Magdalen Tower. He may have visited by automobile later, perhaps in the 1930s, but I am not sure why it would have made such an impression at that late date.

Fifth, Murphy suggested that, because the vice chancellor of Oxford (sort of like an American university president, but with much less power back then) was the president of Magdalen in 1938, some correspondence about his 1939 honorary degree may have taken place that year, and Plum might have put Bertie at Magdalen in gratitude. This is plausible, but it proves to be an example of a marvelous theory killed by an annoying fact. Specifically, the timing does not work. *The Code of the Woosters* was serialized from July to September of 1938, which is before George Stuart Gordon of Magdalen became vice chancellor in the Michaelmas (Fall) term of 1938. The prior vice chancellor was from Balliol College.

Murphy concluded that Plum must have had a reason for putting Bertie at Magdalen, and until that reason is found, he believed that Bertie went to Christ Church. He argued that “Wodehouse may have used the name Magdalen in 1938, but had in mind the enormous quadrangle and fountain of Christ Church.” This sounds backward to me: Bertie’s own testimony, in combination with the historic connection between Eton and Magdalen, indicates that he went to Magdalen unless someone finds a good reason why we should place him at Christ Church.

As Murphy’s arguments seem to me like a bit of a stretch (although who am I to say such a thing about any part of his magisterial book!), I wonder what his concern against Magdalen was. Maybe a good old-fashioned college rivalry? He read law at University



Magdalen Tower at Oxford University

College, which he loyally described as “the oldest—and best—Oxford college.” It is just down the High from Magdalen. Could he have thought hard thoughts about all those Magdalen students haughtily bicycling past Univ from their grander, richer, and more famous college? In “The Wire-Pullers” (*Strand*, 1905), Joan Romney says that her brother “is a Freshman at Magdalen, so, naturally, he is much more conceited than any three men have any right to be.” While Christ Church is hardly humble, it was too far away from Univ for any thoughts of rivalry.

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Smelly Plums

WHILE SEARCHING for references to our scented animal friends in Wodehouse, for reasons unspecified here, I found several, including from *Jill the Reckless*, “The Crime Wave at Blandings,” and *Psmith, Journalist*. This, combined with the Nash article in our Spring issue, triggered permission in my mind to print one of the OM’s own little ditties. After all, if the editor can’t indulge from time to time, to what is the world coming? It is best sung in an Irish accent in waltz time.

Eau du Pole

My nostrils enraged, by a foul scent engaged,
 In the sticky fall air overpowered.
 O rancid assault, some poor driver’s fault,
 That this unpleasant blossom has flowered.

Fifty-seven dead squirrels, or some possum-
 shaped twirls
 On the road never haunt their destroyer.
 But one little black cat, white stripe down its back,
 Can wreak vengeance exceedingly sour.

I’ll always take care, and swerve if I dare,
 If the curbs and the trees will allow.
 My sorrow is nil, no, it’s fear of the ill
 Rising stench that so quickly will follow.

To think, when he dies, of the smell that can rise,
 Like political cheating discovered.
 And cleansing’s been tried, but the odor won’t hide,
 Till with time, wind, or distance it’s smothered.

TWS 2021 San Diego Convention Update!

BY JOHN KAREORES



WODEHOUSIANS ONE AND ALL: I hope this missive finds you and your families healthy, safe, and upbeat. I’m sure that you’re passing the hours of isolation immersed in Wodehouse in written and recorded form. And don’t forget to sneak in a reference to Plum and The Wodehouse Society as you Zoom and Skype for business or pleasure.

On October 15–17, 2021, with luck and science, we will all be meeting in sunny and COVID-free San Diego, California. Think of all the fun we’ll have browsing and sluicing, playing village-fête games, and dressing up after months of lockdown. I’m sure that witty banter will abound, old friends will meet in person and knock elbows, and a good time will be had by all. Save the date because it is truly something for us to look forward to, and we all need that right now—a bit of hope for the future.

So, is October a good time to visit San Diego? Well, in most years, San Diego averages a daily maximum temperature for October that’s between 70° and 75° Fahrenheit. The minimum temperature usually falls between 59° and 62°. Sound good so far?

Local attractions? You bet! And many of them are quite close to our host hotel (details forthcoming). There’s Balboa Park, which has a number of historical houses, art museums, gardens, and restaurants. It would be a very nice day (or half-day) of sightseeing. The USS *Midway* aircraft carrier is now the USS *Midway* Museum. It’s less than a mile from the hotel and includes a museum, harbor park with Bob Hope USO sculpture, and a World War II memorial.

The Hotel del Coronado is an amazing vintage resort where *Some Like It Hot* was filmed, and the hotel has numerous dining options. The Gaslamp District is filled with numerous Victorian-era buildings. The San Diego Library is a striking modern library with a good Wodehouse collection. Tours are offered; note that the

art gallery doesn't open till noon on Friday. The famous world-class San Diego Zoo is so huge so that you need to take a full day to visit, so plan accordingly if you go.

Do they have food and drink in San Diego? Why, yes, they do! Nothing caps a day at the beach quite like a glass of California wine or a cold brew, paired with an exceptional meal. And, thanks to award-winning chefs, an explosion of world-class breweries, and a thriving local wine region, San Diego delivers on the culinary and quaffing fronts. San Diego is hailed as one of the Best New Foodie Cities in America by the folks at Thrillist Travel, who tout that the region is surrounded by farms and ocean. Restaurateurs produce fantastic, environmentally responsible dishes. Called one of "America's best cities for foodies" by *Travel & Leisure* magazine, San Diego has a culinary scene that is a burgeoning, vibrant mix of locally inspired flavors, from delightfully simple to sophisticated and artful. The city's proximity to Mexico has also greatly influenced the local cuisine and culture.

San Diego's craft-beer scene has garnered respect from around the globe. With more than 140 breweries and a collection of distinctive distilleries throughout the county, along with a wealth of local talent, San Diego has earned accolades as "one of the world's top beer cities," according to *Beer Connoisseur*. Pioneering brewers like Karl Strauss Brewing, Ballast Point, and Stone Brewing put San Diego on the craft-beer map.

Wine drinkers also have cause to rejoice, with more than one hundred dynamic wineries located in all corners of the county and ample opportunities to sip local varieties at restaurants, wine bars, and urban tasting rooms in the city. In San Diego's wine region, you won't find busloads of tourists or over-the-top estates but rather small owner-driven boutique wineries that offer friendly tours and tastings in intimate settings that reflect the laid-back San Diego lifestyle.

It behooves me to remind attendees that San Diego is a large and busy city; traffic is inevitable. Remember this if you are taking any sort of ground transportation.



Try to plan a couple of extra days before and/or after the convention so you can really enjoy the city.

It's still early, but the San Diego Tourism Board at <https://www.sandiego.org/> is a treasure trove of information, discount offers, mobile apps, and planning guides, including one for international travelers. Check it out when you get a chance and be sure to bookmark the website.

The Convention Committee is working diligently on the details. This will be a truly memorable experience for all attendees and a source of wistful envy for those who don't make the trip. Nothing is yet written in stone regarding outside activities, but many good ideas are being bandied about, including a possible cruise—and cruises, you regulars know, have been quite popular activities at other conventions.

Now, a little ditty of my own to send you off. My apologies to Messrs. George Cory, Douglass Cross, and Tony Bennett, and to the city of San Francisco where so many hearts have been left:

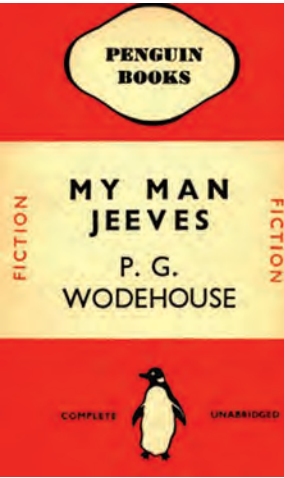
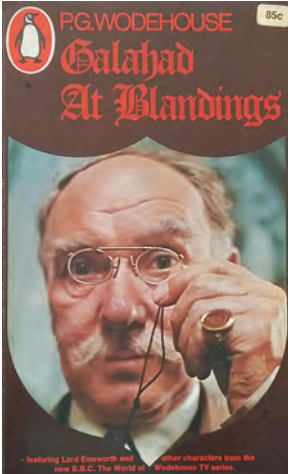
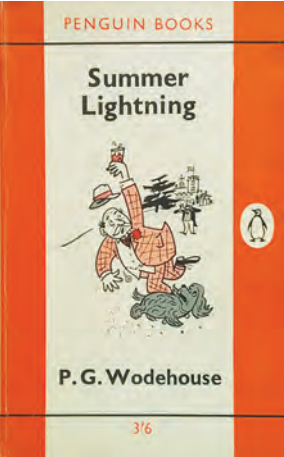
I'll meet my friends in San Diego.
There in the bar, they'll call to me.
To be where little trolley cars
Roll onward to the stars!
And the champagne will be chilled to a "T" . . .

That's all for now, but remember those important dates of October 15–17, 2021. Each of the next few issues of *Plum Lines* will bring the developing and exciting details. We'll fill you in about the host hotel, give you hints about the always sparkling speakers and their scintillating topics, provide registration forms and fees, and more. Until next time, please stay safe, healthy, and socially distant as required by the local constabulary so that we can all meet with enthusiasm in lovely San Diego!



The P. G. Wodehouse Collection at Vanderbilt University

BY ANITA AVERY



A variety of Penguin publications and novelties that can now be found in the P. G. Wodehouse Collection at Vanderbilt University

IN THE EARLY YEARS of paperbacks, Penguin was the most prolific publisher of Wodehouse. Among collectors, the cover designs and illustrations are iconic. *My Man Jeeves* was the 27th book published by Penguin in the U.K., issued in January 1936. In 1939, Betty and Ian Ballantine launched Penguin USA, starting with *The Invisible Man* by H. G. Wells and *My Man Jeeves*.

With the goal of acquiring the earliest Penguin printings of Wodehouse titles, television tie-ins, and a full set of the Ionicus-illustrated covers, the collection's Section AA holds 77 Penguin paperbacks, including eight in the earliest cover design, six television tie-ins, 34 first Penguin printings, 21 Salter-illustrated covers, 37 Ionicus-illustrated covers, and six omnibus titles.

Of particular interest are *My Man Jeeves* with dust wrapper, a wide array of Geoffrey Salter covers, and 12 *Plum Lines* Vol. 41 No. 2 Summer 2020

television tie-in covers featuring scenes from BBC's *The World of Wodehouse* series. Section U ephemera and collectibles include: *The Crime Wave at Blandings* (2011), one of fifty Penguin Modern Classics celebrating "the very best short fiction"; a Penguin poster of Wodehouse at his typewriter with the banner wording "I am writing musical comedy without the music"; a Penguin-licensed *My Man Jeeves* mug; and a *Carry On, Jeeves* tea towel in the familiar orange-and-white cover design.

We welcome donations of Penguin titles still needed and upgrades of titles to first Penguin printings or to better condition. Please consult Section AA of the online database to view current holdings.

As of press time, additional donations to the collection include 162 items across many formats plus 45 documents and ephemera related to the founding, organization, and early years of The Wodehouse Society, bringing the collection holdings to 761. The online database is updated throughout the year and may be seen at <http://www.wodehouse.org/PGWCVU>. Click on the gold navigation bar for links to all sections.



OM Reflections

WHILE THE WORLD goes through this process of covidization, it's good to see that humor still abounds. I've seen a great amount of humor in regard to the world crisis: YouTube, cartoons, memes, and more. Fortunately, the members of TWS are some of the best keepers of the flame. And that's a good thing—if we lose our humor, hopelessness abounds.

The fortieth anniversary of The Wodehouse Society seems a bit of a theme in 2020, the year of hindsight: Linda Adam-Hall and I tied the knot forty years ago this May. As much humor as we have in our marriage, it's no surprise that it parallels TWS.

I continue to relish the opportunity, granted by all of you, to put together this little journal four times a year, with humor and academia and whatnot sharing the pages. Be safe, be well, and smile every day.

—OM

Postwar Britain Deals with Three Erring Sons

BY BOB RAINS

Bob gratefully acknowledges the contribution of his colleague Professor William E. Butler in providing information on Thomas Baty.

MOST READERS of *Plum Lines* will already be generally familiar with P. G. Wodehouse's travails during and after World War II. Far better known to the general public, if perhaps fading from memory, is the case of William Joyce, nicknamed Lord Haw-Haw. Recent information has come to light concerning a third Brit gone astray during the war, international legal scholar Thomas Baty. While the real or supposed transgressions of these three individuals vary enormously, there are certain parallels, as well as stark contrasts, among them.

Wodehouse was living as a tax exile in Le Touquet, France, in May 1940, when German troops captured the town. He and Ethel had twice tried to flee in advance of the troops, but their efforts had ended in failure. The Germans imprisoned him as a male civilian noncombatant under the age of sixty, and he ended up at a former lunatic asylum in Tost, Upper Silesia, of which he famously quipped, "If this is Upper Silesia, what on earth must Lower Silesia be like?" While an internee, he kept a camp diary, portions of which he read aloud to his fellow inmates to keep their spirits up.

Shortly before his sixtieth birthday, Wodehouse was taken out of the camp and put on a train to Berlin, where he foolishly agreed to read from his diary in five broadcasts that, he was told, were to go to the U.S., which was then still ostensibly neutral. Although there was nothing even remotely defeatist, pro-Nazi, or anti-Semitic in the talks, when they were rebroadcast by the Germans to the U.K., they created a firestorm of condemnation stoked by the British government and the BBC. One British library removed all of Wodehouse's books from its shelves and made plans to destroy them. Fortunately, the order was overturned, and the books were preserved. (The texts of the broadcasts are available at the website of the U.K. Wodehouse society: <https://www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk>)

P. G. and Ethel were subsequently allowed by the Germans to relocate to Paris where, after its liberation, he was extensively questioned by British authorities to determine whether he had committed treason and should be hung by the neck until dead. Although the U.K. government ultimately determined that Wodehouse had committed no crime for which he might be successfully prosecuted, he was never publicly exonerated, and a shadow hung over his reputation for



the rest of his life and beyond. [On a related personal note, I am proud to say that, courtesy of Sir Edward Cazalet, I am in possession of a book from Wodehouse's personal library, *The Final Deduction* by Rex Stout. There is one and only one passage marked in that book. It reads, "When you once get a reputation, or it gets you, you're stuck with it for good."]

Wodehouse never returned to England after the war, but rather settled in the USA in 1947 in semi-self-imposed exile. He became a U.S. citizen in 1955. Just six weeks before his death, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in the New Year's Honours of 1975, a long overdue act of recognition and perhaps of forgiveness and even apology.

At the other end of the spectrum of Brits who erred during the War was the utterly despicable William Brooke Joyce. Joyce was born in the U.S. in 1906 to British parents who then moved the family to Galway, Ireland (then part of the U.K.) in 1909. He was educated at a Jesuit school in Galway. A Loyalist during the Irish War for Independence, Joyce possibly aided the British Army's security service. He was mustered into the Worcester Regiment and left Ireland with the regiment in December 1921. But he had lied about his age and falsely claimed that he had been born in Galway. He was mustered out when it was discovered that he was only fifteen. Joyce remained in England, where he obtained a first-class honours degree in English at Birkbeck College, University of London. In 1932 he joined the British Union of Fascists (BUF) under the leadership of Sir Oswald Mosley (skewered by Wodehouse as



The infamous William Joyce, aka Lord Haw-Haw

Roderick Spode, leader of the Black Shorts, the black shirts having already been taken by real fascists). Joyce rose through the ranks of the BUF, becoming its director of propaganda and then deputy leader. Mosley fired Joyce in 1937 as part of cost-cutting measures, so Joyce formed his own National Socialist League.

In late August 1939, on the eve of World War II in Europe, Joyce fled England to Germany along with his wife Margaret to avoid being arrested under the U.K.'s Emergency Powers Act, thereby following the lead of other prominent British fascists. Within days he started broadcasting propaganda on German radio. Goebbels soon realized that Joyce had great potential. Even the Führer praised Joyce's work. By April 1941, Joyce was identifying himself on the radio as "Lord Haw-Haw." In addition to his radio propaganda, Joyce wrote scripts and even a book, *Twilight Over England*, for the Nazis. The nature of Joyce's broadcasts to England morphed as the war progressed. During the period of the "Phony War," after the fall of Poland and before the actual conflict had come to England, many British listeners considered Lord Haw-Haw to be harmless, even amusing. But after the fall of France, he was telling his British listeners that they would soon face the same fate. By September 1940, as England was being bombarded from the air and thousands of civilians were being killed, he blamed "those (British citizens) who drove their nation into a senseless war . . . just in order to save the interests of a small group of Jewish financiers and inveterate warmongers with Winston Churchill at their head."

In his final recorded message, made in April 1945 as Russian troops were storming Berlin, Joyce was rambling and apparently intoxicated. He explained that the German people were not imperialists. All they had sought in 1939 was the rightful return of their own Danzig Corridor and to live their lives undisturbed. It



From "Tokio Jokio," an animated cartoon made by the Warner Bros. studio in 1943.

was the Britain government's lack of common sense which had forced Germany to sacrifice its resources and blood to protect Europe from the "Menace from the East." He signed off with "Heil Hitler and farewell." (An audio recording of this talk and snippets of earlier ones are included on a CD with the book *Hitler's Airwaves*, by Horst J. P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz.)

As soon as the Allies arrived in Paris, Wodehouse had asked an American colonel to inform the British authorities of his whereabouts. Not surprisingly, Joyce took the opposite approach, trying to avoid apprehension and interrogation. He obtained a German passport under the name Wilhelm Hansen, a teacher born in Galway but later a resident of Hamburg. He tried to get to neutral Sweden but was blocked. He fled to Kupfermühle, where he was apprehended by two British officers on May 28, 1945. When he reached for his fake passport, the officers feared he had a weapon and one shot him through the buttocks. He was brought back to England on June 16, and on September 17 he was charged with treason.

But there was a problem. A chronic liar, Joyce had repeatedly claimed to be a British citizen born in Galway when it was still part of Britain, although he was actually born in Brooklyn. Despite the fact that he had lived in England practically his entire adult life, he had never applied for British citizenship. His defense counsel asserted that a person who was not a British citizen could not be charged with treason for acts he had committed overseas.

Unfortunately for Joyce, his lying caught up with him. He had applied for and been granted a British passport in 1933, stating falsely that he was a British subject by birth. He obtained a one-year renewal on September 24, 1938, and another renewal on August 24, 1939, as he was in the process of fleeing to Germany. The 1939 passport expired on July 2, 1940. This enabled the prosecutors to argue that a non-citizen alien living abroad who is holding a British passport enjoys the protection of the Crown even if he got that protection under false pretences. That person owes the Crown a duty of loyalty during the time his British passport remains in effect. If he is adherent to the King's enemies, he is guilty of treason, so long as he has not renounced that protection. Joyce had become a naturalized German citizen on September 26, 1940, presumably thereby renouncing the protection of the British Crown. But, at least between August 24, 1939, and July 2, 1940, he owed a duty of loyalty to Britain which he had manifestly breached. As a result, he was found guilty of high treason, and that verdict was affirmed by the House of Lords.

On January 3, 1946, at Wandsworth Prison, Joyce was hung by the neck until dead. An unrepentant Nazi, he wrote on the eve of his execution: "In death as in life, I defy the Jews who caused this last war, and I defy the powers of darkness which they represent." Reportedly his last words were, "May the swastika be raised from the dust." His remains were buried in an unmarked grave at the prison.

Somewhere between the naïve Wodehouse and the odious Joyce falls the case of the enigmatic Thomas Baty. Born in 1869 in England, Baty was an Oxford-educated legal scholar and barrister. He became a preeminent specialist in admiralty and prize law. He was the author of many books and articles on international law, as well as two novels. He was also what would best be described in today's terminology as a transgender person. In a privately published pamphlet entitled "A Letter on Love and Marriage," which he distributed to his friends, he wrote, "From my earliest years I hated sex. The reason was that I wanted to be a girl. I saw that ladies, while admittedly more graceful and sweet than men, were also just as determined and noble. I could not bear to be relegated to the ranks of rough and stern men."

In 1915, Baty accepted an appointment from the government of Japan to serve as the legal adviser to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He arrived in 1916 with his mother and sister Anne. After Japan staged the Manchurian Incident in 1931 as a pretext for invading that area, Baty defended Japan before the League of Nations. On December 8, 1941, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed Baty that a state of war had been declared between Japan and Great Britain. Baty tendered his resignation to the ministry. Unlike Wodehouse, Baty had the opportunity to extricate himself from his perilous situation. The Japanese government offered to let Baty and his sister (his mother by then being deceased) leave with the British diplomatic corps in December 1941, but Baty and his sister elected to stay in Japan. What happened next remains in some doubt.

After the war, Baty wrote that "from 8 December 1941, the cases for opinion and the requests for drafts entirely and very properly ceased. Gross infractions of International Law took place during the war. Of these I knew nothing, and could only have been horrified by them, had I known anything." But, as Joyce was undone by his lies to obtain British passports, Baty was undone by a letter his sister Anne wrote to a British relative in March 1943, in which she stated, "Thomas goes every day to the office." That letter fell into the hands of the British Foreign Office and confirmed the view of its Chief Legal Adviser, Sir William Eric Beckett, that "there is no doubt that Dr. Baty has committed treason."

Beckett doubted, however, that the Crown would want to prosecute Baty given his age and doubted that Baty would want to return to England anyway.

Later, the British Home Secretary wrote that Baty had worked for and been paid by the Japanese government during the war and had published articles "highly inimical to the allied interests" in the journal *Contemporary Japan*. Baty himself considered those articles to be "innocent and academic." In a letter to a friend, he also asserted, "I neither broadcast for nor collaborated with the Japanese government during the war—nor was my advice offered or asked for."

Because of Baty's advanced age and academic and pacifist outlook, the Home Secretary decided that he should be allowed to remain in Japan despite his treasonous conduct. Nevertheless, he would be deemed to have abandoned his British connection and would be denied a British passport and other British protections. Still later, in 1951, in response to a letter from a friend of Baty's, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden relented and wrote that Baty, then over 80 years old, might return home at any time. But when Baty applied for a British passport to visit a cousin in Bombay and showed the Eden letter to the passport official, the official refused to issue the passport on the grounds that Baty was an unprotected subject. When Baty died in 1954, the British Embassy in Tokyo did not bother to respond to the official notification of his death.

Wodehouse, Joyce, and Baty each erred during World War II, Wodehouse quite innocently, Joyce egregiously, and Baty perhaps somewhere between. All were punished to varying degrees, Joyce to the ultimate degree. But each received some measure of leniency or forgiveness. In Baty's case, he was allowed to remain in Japan and not be returned to England for prosecution for treason. In Joyce's case, in 1976 the British government allowed his remains to be reinterred in Galway, where he was given a Roman Catholic Tridentine Mass. Wodehouse, of course, was knighted by the Queen in 1975. And, to the great joy of all Wodehouseans, he finally received long overdue recognition this past fall with the dedication of a memorial stone honoring him in Westminster Abbey near Poets' Corner. But, as Rex Stout wrote, "When you once get a reputation, or it gets you, you're stuck with it for good." There were those who tried to block the Westminster honor on the grounds that Wodehouse was a Nazi collaborator and anti-Semite. Fortunately, decency, the truth, and common sense prevailed at last.

Postscript: Nazi Germany started broadcasting English-language propaganda into Britain in April

1939 before the outbreak of war and before Joyce's arrival in Germany. Initially, the Nazi English-speaking broadcasters did not identify themselves by name or pseudonym. The broadcasts normally began with some variation of "Germany calling." Joyce followed that tradition when he began his propaganda broadcasts in September 1939. It was Englishman Cyril Carr Dalmaine, writing as Jonah Barrington, who first dubbed the anonymous propagandist(s) Lord Haw-Haw on September 18, 1939, in an article in the *Daily Express*. Unfortunately, he added that "from his accent, I imagine him as having a receding chin, a questing nose, thin yellow hair brushed back, a monocle, a vacant eye, a gardenia in his buttonhole. Rather like P. G. Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster."

The identification of Haw-Haw with Bertie Wooster was carried forward in the 1940 novel *The Death of Lord Haw Haw*, written by the American Elliot Paul under the pseudonym Brett Rutledge, which contains this passage:

Bertie Wooster, one of the finest literary creations of this age, had a habit of coming out on top. . . . One could easily picture Bertie at the Drones Club giving a rollicking imitation of a German radio announcer or news interpreter after several rather stiffish Scotch and sodas. Not only did the British public begin to listen each time Haw Haw's voice sailed out on the air, but secretly the English began to like the fellow. And the affection Haw Haw / Bertie gained for himself as a comedian held over when it appeared that Jeeves, or someone socially minded, had been putting fleas in the young aristocrat's ear.

In a bizarre case of art meeting life, the American radio journalist William Shirer (later the author of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*) presented Joyce with a copy of *The Death of Lord Haw Haw* while both were in Berlin, this according to a 2005 biography of Joyce by Nigel Farndale. Reportedly, Joyce was pleased that on the jacket blurb Haw Haw was described as the "No 1 Personality of World War No 2."

Beach sat in his pantry, sipping brandy. And if ever a butler was entitled to a glass of brandy, that butler, he felt, was himself. He rolled the stuff round his tongue, finding a certain comfort in the fiery sting of it.

Heavy Weather (1933)

Letters to the Editor

AFTER THE publication of my article about Ogden Nash in the Spring 2020 *Plum Lines*, I now find myself in an uncomfortable position similar to that which once befell Ogden Nash. He had written his famous poem, "The Lama," which ended with "And I will bet / A silk pajama / There isn't any / Three-l llama." An observant reader then called to his attention a type of conflagration known as a three-alarmer. Nash acknowledged his oversight in a footnote when the poem was republished in a book collection, and simply added "Pooh." My alert reader Elliott Milstein, to whom I must be grateful, has pointed out that I failed to note Bertie's edification of Jeeves at the start of *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* about a poet named Ogden Nash, who had written, "I'm greatly attached to Barbara Frietchie. / I'll bet she scratched when she was itchy." To which, I can only say, "Pooh!"

—Bob Rains

LIKE MANY, I have been TV bingeing while sheltering in place, in my case finally plumbing the depths of Amazon Prime. While watching *St. Elsewhere* recently—a wonderful hospital show from back in the *Hill Street Blues* era—I was delighted to note that a respected doctor character early in the series was honored to be a medical candidate for a distinguished "Wodehouse Fellowship." Obviously someone on the *St. Elsewhere* writing staff was a fan of the Master. It shows, too; the show is often riotously funny.

—Jeff Porteous

IN REGARD TO the mention of the Dornford Yates stories in the Spring 2020 *Plum Lines*, Richard Osborne's 1953 book *Clubland Heroes* was a study of the stories of Yates, John Buchan (*The Thirty Nine Steps*) and Sapper (*Bulldog Drummond*). I've read somewhere something to the effect that it was Wodehouse's liking for this book that led him to suggest (or agree to) Osborne's *Wodehouse at Work*.

—Nick Townsend

"Well, if Stoker is not going to buy the Hall, aren't you rather by way of being back in the position you were in before, when you would not tell your love, but let the thought of Wotwotleigh like a worm i' the bud feed on your damask cheek?"

Thank You, Jeeves (1934)

A Fresh Old Interview

Mary McDonald found a Wodehouse interview that we don't believe has been referenced in these pages before. The book is *Conversations* by Roy Newquist from 1967. Newquist had conversations with around sixty famous people; he would ask questions and transcribe the replies in the person's own words. While the book is apparently available at 300 libraries, we'll print a few excerpts here. There are no revelations here, but hearing Wodehouse's own words is refreshing.

I WENT INTO a bank, a Hong Kong-Shanghai bank, for two years. Then one of the masters at Dulwich, who had left the school and gone to work for an evening paper called *The Globe*, came across me, and I asked him if he could get me any work in the writing field. Every now and then he'd take a day or two off and I'd substitute for him. . . . I've always thought of it as excellent training. If you can write a set of verses every day between half past ten in the morning and twelve noon you can do anything.

In 1904, I took my holiday . . . in America. I had always been very keen on coming here. I wanted to see the fair in St. Louis, so I came. I never got any farther than New York; I stayed there for three weeks, then had to go back to work on *The Globe*. . . . I worked on at *The Globe* until 1909. Then I came to New York again, thinking I was going to spend another three-week holiday, but I brought two short stories with me. I sold one to *Collier's* and the other to *Cosmopolitan*, both on the same day and at rather good prices. I was getting about £10 for a short story in England, and *Collier's* paid me \$300. I thought this was very much worth looking into, so I resigned from *The Globe* and stayed on.

The years that followed were sometimes rather glorious, sometimes not so good, as far as income was concerned. I wrote a lot for the pulps, *Munsey's Magazine* and *Argosy*. . . .

Then I ran into an old friend I'd worked with in England on a little show in 1906—Jerome Kern. I had done lyrics for some of his music, and I met him again on the first night of a very good show titled *Very Good, Eddie* that he had written with Guy Bolton. We decided to team up. . . . I'd do lyrics, Guy would do the vocal arrangements and Jerry would do the music. So we started what became known as the Princess Shows, very popular in their day. . . .

Writing musical comedy was a much simpler thing in those days. One didn't have to wait for years

for a production, getting together a million dollars or whatever. Costs were quite low. . . .

I suppose the turning point in my career was when I sold a serial to *The Saturday Evening Post*. That was in 1914, a thing titled *Something New*. [I'd] never dreamed of getting into *The Post*; it just seemed impossible. But they took the story, and I wrote for them for the next twenty-five years. . . .

I've been writing for *Playboy* for about four years, now. That magazine seems to have taken the place of the old *Saturday Evening Post*. It's open to all sorts of stuff, you know, as long as the material is original and interesting. It isn't like the other magazines. . . .

I don't think [that Jeeves or Bertie or any of the characters in the Blandings Castle books are taken from persons known or incidents recorded]. I never consciously draw a character from real life. I suppose there are echoes of characters I've met. Certainly one character, Ukridge, I've used in two or three books. Oddly enough, he is drawn from two people. He's drawn first from a man I never met, but who was very elaborately described to me by a friend, and I drew the original character on that. Shortly afterward I met a man who became a great friend who was exactly like Ukridge. . . . Certainly Lord Emsworth isn't drawn from anybody.

Jeeves, of course, is rather like all the stage butlers and valets. He's like Lane, in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. But I think the thing that differentiates him is the fact that he really does something. Stage butlers seldom do anything. They come in and say, "The carriage waits," or that sort of thing, but Jeeves goes out and solves problems. . . .

I think my books are more or less like historical novels now. . . . I always picture my stories taking place, oh, say, in the 1920s, between the wars. Life was much freer then. . . .

I've practically always been an American. . . . I don't think I've been in England since about 1934. During the war, of course, we had this house in France and it never occurred to us to leave, and the Germans overran us and we were interned.

[In regard to my own favorite works,] I'm very fond of *Leave It to Jane* and the Princess Shows. I like the Jeeves series and the Blandings Castle books. I'd say that *Quick Service* is the favorite of all the books I've written, though I'm not so sure but what my last book won't replace it. I read it again last night and I think it came out exactly as I wanted it to. That is so satisfying, you know. Even if one lives forever—which I'm threatening to do, it seems—there aren't too many things in life that come out exactly as one wants.

Letter from England

BY ELIN WOODGER

YOUNG TOM PAINE certainly knew what he was talking about when he wrote, “These are the times that try men’s souls.” They’re a bit trying for us women, too. Of course, Paine was referring to a far different sort of crisis than the one we are facing now, but the sentiment is still apt, what?

One wonders how Wodehouse might have responded to the coronavirus pandemic, or whether it would have merited only a passing mention, as was the case for the Spanish flu in *The Adventures of Sally*. Illness and death were not really his thing, unless he could make light of them somehow. But his penchant for silliness is surely a good thing for those who need some sunshine in the midst of all the clouds—and let’s face it, Plum provides sunshine in abundance.

It is no surprise, therefore, that many journalists and celebrities have been recommending solid doses of PGW early and often as a panacea for our rattled nerves. Since the beginning of lockdown, newspaper articles and posts on social media have included Jeeves and Wooster, Lord Emsworth, Mr. Mulliner, and more in lists of reading aimed at coping with quarantine. This is true not just here in the U.K. but around the world. See the next issue of *Wooster Sauce* if you don’t believe me, for I have compiled a long list of references to Wodehouse in the press that clearly demonstrate he is the author to turn to when the beleaguered soul is in need of some comfort.

Speaking of *Wooster Sauce*, I should share the news that I am no longer editor of that esteemed journal. After thirteen fun-filled years at the helm, I felt it was time to pass the torch, though it is now two torches. A delightful chap (and good friend) named Andrew Bishop oversees all the content, ably assisted by Bruce Allan, who has taken on layout and production responsibilities. Together they make an excellent team, and I feel I have left the journal in capable and caring hands. All the same, it was quite a wrench—or should I say a spanner—to give up a task that had brought me a considerable amount of satisfaction over the years (and, I hope, gave pleasure to those who read the journal).

Personal news aside, there is little to report on this side of the ocean with regard to the U.K. society’s activities. As is the case for organizations large and small everywhere, planned events have had to be cancelled or postponed; check the society’s website (pgwodehousesociety.org.uk) for the latest news.

Who can say when or how we will get back to normal? It is all in the lap of the gods, but no matter what happens, we will continue to rely on Wodehouse for solace. He was well aware of how often people turned to his stories in time of sickness or stress. Witness his essay “My Gentle Readers” (*Louder and Funnier*), wherein he muses as follows:

My popularity with invalids puts me in something of a quandary. Naturally, I like my stories to be read as widely as possible; but, kind-hearted by nature, I do not feel altogether happy when I think some form of wasting sickness is an essential preliminary to their perusal. And such seems to be the case.

He goes on to quote a letter from a fan: “I [recently] became covered with pink spots and my brain-power was temporarily affected. A friend lent me your latest story, and I read it with great enjoyment.” This does not necessarily please our Plum:

You see the dilemma this places me in? On the one hand, I am rejoiced that the sufferer is now convalescent. On the other, I feel that until he contracts some other ailment I have lost a reader. If you want to see a mind in a ferment of doubt and indecision, take a look at mine when the papers announce that another epidemic has broken out and hundreds collapsing daily.

We’re in the midst of an epidemic now, but there is no quandary for anybody who reads Wodehouse, for he will see us through it. Indeed, he himself knew what it was like to be socially isolated, as journalist Nancy Banks-Smith pointed out in the *Guardian* on March 28: “The writer P. G. Wodehouse, interned in a lunatic asylum in Upper Silesia, rose buoyantly to the situation and wrote *Joy in the Morning*.” And he continues to bring us joy throughout the year, so what can be better than that?



Chapters Corner

WHAT IS YOUR chapter up to these days? Please send all news to Gary Hall (see back page). Note that webmaster Noel Merrill keeps chapter items posted on the society website. It's good to send advance info about upcoming events to Noel; his contact information is on the last page of this issue.

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: Bill Franklin



TWO FOR TEA, and Tea for Zoom: TWS chapters during the pandemic! Having missed the deadline for the last two publications of *Plum Lines*, I felt it was time to bring the larger society up to date on the happenings of the Blandings Castle Chapter.

In 2018, I relocated to the Lake Tahoe/Donner Pass area, where my son attends high school at a ski academy. So Blandings had a bit of a break until my summer return to San Francisco last June. But over the Christmas holiday, we had a cocktail reception in San Francisco, where Jack and Olivia Harman, Ian and Rose Stewart, Tom and Dominique Wainwright, Ninad Wagle, Deb Marko, Rowena Southard, and a host of others came to toast the Master. We had hoped to make it a celebratory event for Neil Midkiff's Norman Murphy award in Cincinnati, but alas Neil's schedule did not permit his onsite attendance.

This spring, as my thoughts turned from ski racing back to Wodehouse and the preparations of the Marin Cricket Club's annual August pitch, well, San Francisco and then all of California shut down in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. And there, as of this writing, we remain. So on May 3, we held a Zoom chapter meeting at teatime. Stories of our pandemic quarantine-coping

mechanisms were shared: NT Live (U.K.'s Royal National Theatre), Metropolitan Opera's nightly performances, Opera San José, Lyric Theatre of San José, John Sandoe Books Podcast, BBC Sounds, and various YouTube channels. Neil shared some of the changes at the digital library site archive.org and spoke of the work he has been doing with other Wodehouse scholars. And, of course, we lifted our tea mugs in congratulations to Neil's Norman Murphy Award, which Neil proudly held up to his webcam.



Neil Midkiff proudly showing his Norman Murphy medal, TWS's highest award for distinguished service, which he received at the 2019 TWS convention.

Rowena Southard, from the College of Marin, kindly offered to host the next meeting with her Zoom license that does not silence the gleeful banter of the chapter after forty minutes. Given the low cost of virtual internet travel, she thought we could extend the invitation to other society members (not just Blandings members). If any of you would like to join in or even present something, that would be marvelous. We generally meet on the last Sundays of the month at 1 PM Pacific Time.

—Bill Franklin

The Broadway Special

(New York City and vicinity)

Contact: Amy Plofker



Capital! Capital!

(Washington, D.C., and vicinity)

Contact: Scott Daniels



Chapter One

(Greater Philadelphia area)

Contact: Mark Reber



ON APRIL 13, Chapter One ventured into the brave new world of videoconferencing (Zoom). Our goal was to reach out across the ether—if that’s the word I want—in order to check in on each other and take our minds off, well, just about everything. We planned to do a joint reading of Wodehouse’s essay “A Word About Amusement Parks,” collected in *Louder and Funnier*.



The Chaps of Chapter One move into the exciting and virus-free world of videoconferencing.

Did it work? Sort of. The result was a somewhat bizarre mash-up of 1984 meets *The Illustrated Man* in *The Twilight Zone*. Or, maybe just a nerdy version of *The Hollywood Squares*, as seen in the screenshot. But we had fun enough and are planning, per the old Gershwin/DeSylva song, to “Do It Again.”

—Ram Gopalan

Chicago Accident Syndicate
(Chicago and thereabouts)
Contact: Daniel & Tina Garrison



The Clients of Adrian Mulliner
(For enthusiasts of both PGW and Sherlock Holmes) Contact: Elaine Coppola



The Den(ver) of the Secret Nine
(Denver and vicinity)
Contact: Jennifer Petkus



The Drone Rangers
(Houston and vicinity) Contact: Carey Tynan



The Flying Pigs
(Cincinnati area and elsewhere)
Contact: Susan Pace or Bill Scrivener



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

A Little More Bertie Than Jeeves
(Waynesville/Sylva, North Carolina) Contact: Beth Baxley

The Melonsquashville (TN) Literary Society
(Tennessee)
Contact: Ken Clevenger



OUT OF AN abundance of caution, we decided to cancel our planned May 23 get-together. Even though Wodehouse is good medicine, it seemed an unnecessary risk, and we will reschedule the event as promptly as we can when they sound the all-clear.

Some of us have been enjoying the P. G. Wodehouse Book Club, a Facebook group started by the redoubtable Honoria Glossop. In a virtual forum of Wodehouse readers from around the world, one gets a wide range of opinions about Plum and what he wrote. But it is all very interesting. Kudos to Jen Scheppers aka Honoria!

We also shared a Wodehouse quiz sent out by Christian Kelly on the PGWnet group. I suspect it was a snip for some and a quest for others. Either way, it was diverting and educational, or “pleasant and instructive” as F. A. C. Twistleton might say.

Our plans, much like our lives, seem to be on hold for the nonce, so we read our favorite authors, while away the hours, garden, worry, and return to Plum for the solace which never fails to take us to a serene and magical and innocent world.

—Ken Clevenger

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



The New England Wodehouse Th ingummy So ciety (NEWTS)

(Boston and New England)

Contact: Lynn Vesley-Gross



or Roberta Towner

THE NEWTS, undoubtedly like many other chapters, recently ran their first-ever meeting (“nottle”) by remote video conference. Many friendly tail wags were sent to each other in e-space. Attendees seemed to be in all sorts of environments: several intellectuals in front of very attractive bookshelves, one with a painting of a tiger, one with a lion image, and John and Elise Fahey were under an unexplained palm tree. The group discussed some plans for outreach into the community to advertise PGW books through local libraries and such. Stay tuned for further news on that project. The group reading was the story “Ukridge’s Accident Syndicate,” presented by many mellifluous voices in series. The atmosphere was respectful and appreciative and less raucous as is often the case at our in-person nottles. The NEWTS next swarm in August.

—Lynn Vesley-Gross

The Northwodes

(St. Paul, Minneapolis, and vicinity)

Contact: Mike Eckman



ON FEBRUARY 22, 2020, before the world changed, the sturdy folks of the Northwodes met to discuss *Sam the Sudden*, published in 1925. This is the story of a boy, a photo of a girl, the actual girl, a hidden treasure, and the triumph of love over lies. It also includes greed, the wrong mate, three bald-faced scoundrels, a manipulative publisher, and the finger of fate.

Our discussion was wide-ranging: social media’s impact on Garrison Keillor’s ability to perform, who was/is the best James Bond, etc. International spies brought up the issue of foreign languages, the incredible difficulties of translating texts (like Plum’s) into Japanese, and the desire of a few of the ’Wodes to obtain Wodehouse manga by Bun Katsuta. This led, somehow, to Wodehouse in the media.

Plum had been mentioned as preferred reading for a couple of famous people lately. Bruce Willey mentioned that Craig Ferguson more than once discussed Plum on the air. Bruce proposed inviting Mr. Ferguson to one of our salons, or having one anytime he’s in town, and inviting the celebrity.

Finally, we discussed the book. We liked it. We liked the characters and the cunning references to poetry, literature, and art, but we were a little concerned about the validity of the legal claim to the finder’s fee of the hidden bonds. We enjoyed and discussed the poetry, literature, Latin quotes, and citations of classical and biblical stories that Plum peppers on every page.

Thanks to all who attended: Mike Engstrom, Bruce Willey, Joan Rabe, Diane Madlon-Kay, Kris Fowler, Gail Toussaint, Maria Jette, Nell Slater, Richard Rames, Holly Windle, Joel Langenfeld, and Mike Eckman. We hope to be together again in the late spring to discuss “The Clicking of Cuthbert.”

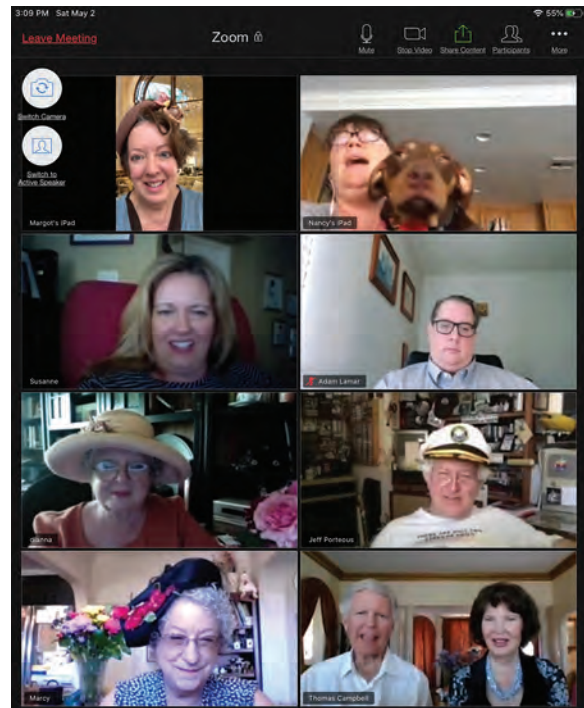
—Mike Engstrom

The Orange Plums

(Orange County, California)

Contact: Lia Hansen

or Diana Van Horn



HOY! ADMIRAL Fruity Biffen here with a brief update on the doings of the Orange Plums. Like so many groups since the onslaught of the pandemic, we have shifted our monthly meetings to the web via Zoom (see photo above). Though admittedly far from matching the pleasures of gathering in person, these crazy conclaves are still fun, with many laughs shared. We definitely advise other chapters to give this newfangled methodology a whirl or two.

Having recently finished reading and discussing *Big Money*, we have now moved on to *Jeeves and the Tie That Binds* and discovered it be an absolute pippin. It’s

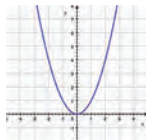
always a joy to find the Master in such especially fine fettle.

To correct an unfortunate but understandable editorial oversight in the prior *Plum Lines*, a photo of our perennial mascot cow creamer, The Duchess, dressed to the nines for the glad New Year, was mislabeled as being the trophy for winning our chapter's annual aquatic-themed trivia contest, Boat Race Night. The real trophy is shown below, an outrageously ostentatious four-foot horror. One can see why the true competition is to avoid taking home this eyesore, which is why it actually goes to the second-place finisher (in this case the lovely Miss Postlethwaite, our own Diana Van Horn). This allows the skilled contestant taking top prize to remain quite socially distant from this hazard to pedestrians and traffic.



Till next time, I remain your faithful servant,
—Admiral George J. “Fruity” Biffen (Jeff Porteous)

The Pale Parabolites
(Toronto and vicinity)
Contact: George Vanderburgh



The PeliKans
(Kansas City and vicinity)
Contact: Bob Clark



The Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corporation
(Los Angeles and vicinity)

Contact: Doug Kendrick



The Pickering Motor Company
(Detroit and vicinity)
Contact: Elliott Milstein



The Pittsburgh Millionaires Club
(Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) Contact: Allison Thompson



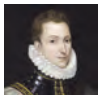
The Plum Crazyes
(Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and vicinity)
Contact: Betty Hooker

THE PLUM CRAZIES hope to meet early this summer for food, fun, and a fantastic program. Details to be announced. For information, please reach out to Betty Hooker (contact information above).

The Plum Street Plummiess
(Olympia, Washington and vicinity)
Contact: Thomas L. R. Smith



The Right Honorable Knights of Sir Philip Sidney
(Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
Contact: Peter Nieuwenhuizen



<https://wodehouse-society.nl>

THE REGULAR MEETING venue at the Schmulewicz Restaurant isn't available for some months because of construction work, so the Knights had to find a temporary home. We found it at the Pilsener Club in Amsterdam. In this lovely brown pub (brown because of the cigarette smoke accumulated in previous years), the Dutch Wodehouse fans heard a review from Vikas Sonak of the U.S. society convention in Cincinnati. Frits Smulders and Peter Nieuwenhuizen also attended

the convention and enjoyed the activities, lectures, and, most of all, the amiable ambiance of fellow Plummiess.

We talked about the year 2021, when the Dutch Wodehouse Society will celebrate its fortieth anniversary. Maybe a European Wodehouse Tour? A dinner? A special Wodehouse translation in Dutch? The ideas were enthusiastically received.

Our patron the Duchess of Cornwall had sent her Christmas greetings, and in return we sent her a copy of the new Wodehouse book by Paul Kent.

The Dutch Wodehouse 2020 stamp was presented to the society board. Creator Donald Duk (son of our late Oldest Member Wim Duk) showed us his design, "A Wink at the Postman." It was the tenth Wodehouse stamp in a row, and we're quite proud of that.



Donald Duk receives a bottle of wine to celebrate his design of the first 2020 Dutch Wodehouse stamp.

The annual cock-and-bull story contest was held to honor Mr. Mulliner. The winner was Donald Duk's story about the costs and efforts of the stamp. He was offered the choice between a cigar and coconut (common prizes mentioned at least a dozen times in Wodehouse).

The knights were delighted to see some new Wodehouse-themed books: the aforementioned *Pelham Grenville Wodehouse Volume 1—This is jolly old Fame* by Paul Kent, and essays by Tamaki Morimura in *The World of Jeeves*. Finally, we were presented with a quiz: 36 questions about the works of Wodehouse. Some examples: Who said "Krai yuti ma py"? Whose method is "Grab—waggle—murmur: my mate"? Who isn't a sister of Lord Emsworth: Constance, Julia, Charlotte, Emmeline? Recent new member Tense Bilgoe was the winner, and she received the book *Basham on Wodehouse* for her efforts and knowledge. All members then received a copy of an article from *Arion* titled "Latin Woostered and Hard-Boiled." The author was Kathleen Riley, and the topic was the classical style of P. G. Wodehouse and Raymond Chandler.



Tense Bilgoe happily accepts the prize for her superior performance in winning the Wodehouse quiz.

Because of the COVID-19 virus, our April 28 book-club meeting couldn't take place, but we've organized a digital book club and will first read and discuss *Something New*. Also, Peter recently held a corona-proof digital lecture for the Drones Club in Belgium about P. G. Wodehouse and his cricket stories and the Dutch P. G. Wodehouse Cricket Club. We are weathering the pandemic and not letting it stop the flow of fun.

The next meeting of the Knights will be on June 13, 2020, at 1 PM at the Pilsener Club in Amsterdam.

Oh, if you were wondering, the correct answers to the questions above are, respectively, Captain Brabazon-Biggar, the Ickenham system, and Emmeline.

—Peter Nieuwenhuizen

Rugby In All Its Niceties
(Rugby, Tennessee Region) Contact:
Donna Heffner



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



The West Texas Wooster
(West Texas)
Contact: Troy Gregory



"Eccentric be blowed. He's potty to the core. Look at the way he talks about that pig of his. Anyone with half an eye can see it's much too fat, and he insists it's supposed to be fat. Says it's been given medals for being fat, from which you will get a rough idea how far the malady has spread. What would a pig do with medals?"

—A Pelican at Blandings (1969)

You Might Have Noticed . . .

. . . that we ran a bit late on the Spring 2020 issue. This was an anomaly, not a new normal. We've moved various volunteer tasks that go into the production of *Plum Lines*. After all the collecting and placement of articles, InDesigning, Photoshopping, and proofing and ultra-proofing, *PL* finally arrives at the printshop. We have a new printing firm that is in the neighborhood of the Pickering chapter. This is because Elliott Milstein and his troops are now heroically prepping the mailing. With Wodehousean vim and vigor, they stuff and stamp envelopes and wrestle with the USPS.

We're also in the process of moving the membership duties (including the magical member spreadsheet created by wizard Neil Midkiff) across the county, and that adds a little more to the bit of roller-coaster-ishness that the process has been through recently.

Suffice to say that this will all settle soon and we hope to have high predictability in the the production and mailing process, to which you've grown accustomed over the last dozen years or more.

I'm very grateful for all of those around the country (and the world) who give selflessly of their time to put our journal together each quarter. No tips required.

—OM



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Bill Scrivener



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Maria Jette



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Indu Ravi



Membership Secretary (new-member inquiries, contact information changes):
Lynn Vesley-Gross



You may also contact Lynn electronically at <http://www.wodehouse.org>; click on the Membership tab for contact forms.

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Quick Ones (unless otherwise credited) courtesy of
John Baesch and Evelyn Herzog.

We appreciate your articles, research, Quick Ones, 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.

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