



Plum Lines

The quarterly journal of The Wodehouse Society

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TWS 2022
convention
articles on pages
2, 3, and 7!

Letter from England

BY ELIN WOODGER

A YEAR AND A HALF has passed since my last letter, and what a time it has been for all of us! One effect the pandemic has had on both the U.S. and U.K. societies is that our respective biennial celebrations have now switched years. TWS, founded in an even-numbered year (1980), has, since 1983, always held its conventions in odd-numbered years; meanwhile, the U.K. society, founded in 1997, has always held its formal dinners in even-numbered years. When last year's lockdowns forced the postponement of the 2020 dinner, the powers that be in both groups discussed the matter and agreed to swap years. Permanently.

Therefore the 2021 TWS convention will be moved to 2022, while The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) held its dinner at Gray's Inn, London, on October 7 this year, with close to 140 Wodehouseans attending. Perhaps not surprisingly, most of those who came were British-born or -based, though we were fortunate to see some members of the Dutch society, including Peter Nieuwenhuizen, also a well-regarded TWS member. It was a smashingly enjoyable, very relaxed affair in the swanky surroundings of Gray's Inn—and what fun we had when it was time for the entertainment, whose theme this year was “Wodehouse at Sea.”

Some two years ago, the Cheltenham Literary Festival took to the waves, staging some of its festivities aboard the RMS *Queen Mary 2*. Tony Ring, learning of this, offered to provide a Wodehouse-themed entertainment during the ship's crossing from New York to England. The resulting hour-long show—performed by Plum's great-grandchildren Hal & Lara Cazalet, the author Sebastian Faulks, and the well-known British broadcaster James Naughtie—commemorated PGW's



Contented diners in the sumptuous hall at Gray's Inn

own numerous transatlantic crossings between 1904 and 1947. And it was a rip-roaring success—the shipboard audience loved it.

So it was the work of a moment for Tony to create an edited version of the show for October's dinner, again featuring Hal, Lara, and James Naughtie, with our president, Alexander Armstrong, filling in for Sebastian Faulks. They were joined by *Wooster Sauce* editor Andrew Bishop, reading appropriate Wodehouse quotations, and by the popular and talented singer-actress Janie Dee (who rendered a hysterical version of “Cleopatterer”). The Cazalets' songs were performed as punctuation in an “interview” with PGW (played by Armstrong) wherein Naughtie reviewed Plum's life and work during the 43 years he worked on both sides of the ocean. The Duke of Kent received probably the biggest laugh of the night as he read the magnificent PGW line: “The Captain was on the bridge, pretty sure that he knew the way to New York but, just to be on the safe side, murmuring to himself, ‘Turn right at Cherbourg and then straight on.’” (“Life with Freddie,” 1966)

All in all, the evening was a triumph, not just for the entertainment but for the wonderfully funny and

touching toast given by David Cazalet. And—oh! How good it felt to be back at Gray's Inn in the company of fellow Wodehouseans!

Mind you, some of us had already gathered together earlier in the week for our first meeting at the Savile Club in almost two years. That, too, was well-attended, not just by those who came to the Savile in person but also by those who tuned in via Zoom. This was the night of the society's annual general meeting, following which the guest speaker was—well, yours truly. After other possibilities had fallen by the wayside, I was asked to deliver the talk I had given at TWS's 2015 convention in Pseattle, "P. G. Wodehouse, Feminist." It seemed to go over well, and after I was done, Tim Andrew, the U.K. society's chairman, brought blushes to my cheeks by saying some very kind things about me. (Thanks so much, Tim.)

Why, you ask, did the chairman feel compelled to utter words of praise at that time? Well, the fact is, I had just stepped down as a member of the U.K. Society's committee because of my imminent departure from these shores, which makes this my very last Letter from England.

It was Norman Murphy who brought me to England in October 2001. I enjoyed fifteen years of happy marriage with that wonderful man, and in the five years since I lost him, I have continued to be happy living in London. I love it here—but it is time for me to go home, and I hope to be back in the USA around the time you receive this copy of *Plum Lines*. There is nothing more to say. All good things come to an end—you can quote me on that—and that is the case with my time in England.

So it's tinkerty-tonk from jolly old Blighty, and I look forward to seeing old friends and new in San Diego next year, when we TWSers can once again gather together and have a high old time browsing, sluicing, and lauding Plum—a consummation devoutly to be wished, what?

"I know, I know!" he shouted. "I know you didn't. You thought me a fearful fool. I tell you, I'm sick of it. And always trying to make me marry money! Dashed humiliating. If she hadn't been a jolly sensible girl, you'd have spoiled Miss McEachern's life as well as mine. You came very near it. I tell you, I've had enough of it. I'm in love. I'm in love with the rippingest girl in England. You've seen her, Pitt, old top. Isn't she a ripper?"

The Intrusion of Jimmy (1910)

Chapter Rummage Sales: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?

BY JEAN TILLSON



A tea bell from the 1924 Wembley Exhibition, which Norman Murphy bought at a rummage sale. He presented it to TWS at the 1995 convention, and it is now part of the presidential regalia.

A RUMMAGE SALE has been held at each TWS convention since Providence (2007) to aid the TWS Convention Reserve Fund (CRF). The tradition will be carried on in San Diego in 2022. The purposes of the CRF are to cover unexpected convention expenses, to underwrite the cost of special events, and to keep fees as low as possible. The rummage sale is stocked with items connected to the works, life, or world of Wodehouse, all donated by our generous TWS members. Convention attendees are encouraged to bring along books, period clothing and jewelry, statuettes of the Infant Samuel, and even cow creamers (modern Dutch or otherwise) and hand them over to the rummage sale wrangler upon arrival.

"But what if I'm not going to the convention?" I hear you cry. Or possibly it was, "But what if I don't wish to lug all that stuff along with me?" Well, in the past, someone who lived near the venue would have volunteered to house and transport any donations mailed to them, but have you noted the price of postage lately? It has got so the cost of mailing items to the convention would almost certainly exceed the amount that could be made by selling them. Shall we, then, ask members to simply send us a check for the cost of postage and keep the bally items? There has got to be a better way, and I believe I may have hit upon it.

Recently, I filled a couple of boxes with Wodehouse books I was ready to let someone else enjoy owning. I thought of the rummage sale, of course, but could find no economical or practical way to get them to San Diego. Luckily, a NEWTS nottle was imminent, so I brought them to the meeting along with a few other Wodehousean trinkets and baubles I had acquired with the rummage sale in mind. I asked my fellow NEWTS to take whatever they fancied in return for a

donation to the TWS Convention Reserve Fund (I left the amount up to them). Well, you could have knocked me over with a luminous rabbit when I counted the oof and found it totaled \$103! I concluded that this “chapter rummage sale” wheeze had potential.

I want to stress that what I’m proposing is in addition to the convention rummage sale, not a replacement for it. Convention attendees are still urged (indeed, begged!) to bring along donations for that. However, if you’re not able to make it to the convention, or have large objects or lots of little things to re-home, why not consider a chapter rummage sale? It can be as formal or as relaxed as you please. The NEWTS have agreed that anyone may bring sale items to any nottle they choose, but your chapter may want to make it an annual event with rummaging allowed at that particular meeting only. You could do auctions, raffles, grab bags, or bake sales—whatever feels right for your chapter. Then simply send a check with the proceeds to our esteemed treasurer, Indu Ravi (address on last page), letting her know it’s a donation to the CRF from your chapter.

I hope you will agree that this is a topping way for chapters to support our conventions, as well as for individual members to prune and/or add to their collections. And there’s no telling what one may find at these binges. For example, at a rummage sale in 1988, Norman Murphy paid fifteen pence for a souvenir tea bell from the 1924 Wembley Exhibition (at which, as you no doubt remember, a grateful Bertie Wooster discovered the Green Swizzle). That bell is now part of the Wodehouse Society presidential regalia. So, who knows what treasure is waiting for you at your chapter’s rummage sale?

“Oh, you are going to the Fête?”

“Yes, sir, thank you, sir.”

For the first time, Lord Emsworth found himself regarding that grisly social event with something approaching favour.

“We must look out for one another there,” he said cordially. “You will remember me again? I shall be wearing”—he gulped—“a top hat.”

“Ern’s going to wear a stror penamaw that’s been give ’im.”

Lord Emsworth regarded the lucky young devil with frank envy. He rather fancied he knew that panama. It had been his constant companion for some six years and then had been torn from him by his sister Constance and handed over to the vicar’s wife for her rummage-sale.

“Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend” (1928)

CRICKET RETURNS

BY JOHN G. KAREORES

The sun in the heavens was beaming,
The breeze bore an odour of hay,
My flannels were spotless and gleaming,
My heart was unclouded and gay;
The ladies, all gaily apparelled,
Sat round looking on at the match,
In the tree-tops the dicky-birds carolled,
All was peace—till I bungled that catch.

*First stanza of the Wodehouse poem “Missed!,”
from the August 1908 edition of Pearson’s Magazine*



WE ARE ALL familiar with Plum’s love for the game of cricket, starting in childhood and continuing throughout his life. He was a batsman of some note at Dulwich and continued his passion for the game by being (it is rumored) the first secretary of the Hollywood Cricket Club. There were reports that the “highest paid screenwriter in Hollywood” actually took the meeting notes of their first get-together. The Hollywood Cricket Club lasted for 25 years and was the place to be seen for any British actor or actress during that time. It was a small patch of jolly old England in Southern California. The club initially spent over \$30,000 on their surroundings and had English grass seed imported for the pitch. Everyone from Boris Karloff to Errol Flynn to Laurence Olivier turned up to play for them. Meanwhile, Olivia de Havilland and other actresses were in the pavilion preparing the cream teas. Very nice indeed.

This brings us, fellow Wodehouseans, to a brief history of TWS conventions and the game of cricket. Although many of our members have read about the game and some even attempted to play at various conventions, the gist of it is basically lost to mere mortals. Back in the Autumn 1994 *Plum Lines*, the famous Wodehouse historian (and cricket umpire) Tony Ring teased us with the following explanation of the game and rules:

Cricket (as explained to a foreign visitor): You have two sides, one out in the field and one in. Each man that’s in the side that’s in goes out and when he’s out he comes in and the next

man goes in until he's out. When they are all out the side that's out comes in and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in out. Sometimes you get men still in and not out. When both sides have been in and out, including the not outs, that's the end of the game!

He followed up with a rousing riveting talk at the 1995 Boston convention that sparked an even greater interest in cricket and resulted in a match at the 1997 Chicago convention. This continued in following conventions up to Detroit (Dearborn) in 2011. Along the way, The Wodehouse Society Cricket Club was established, with its own charter. The society's motto is *Risus, Vestimenta, Convivia*: Laughter, Clothing, Conviviality. More information is available at <http://wodehouse.org/twsccInfo.html> for the curious. Shamim "Pongo" Mohamed, one of the founding members of TWSCC, made this poignant observation after watching a "match": "TWS members playing cricket are something like dancing pigs. The wonder is not how well they dance, but that they dance at all."



TWS members enjoy the convention cricket ambience while overcoming cricket dummy status.

This brings us to the present and near-future state of our cricketeering. We should all know by now that the next TWS convention, entitled *Where in the World Is Pelham? San Diego!*, is being held at the US Grant Hotel on October 20–22, 2022. Besides riveting talks, a harbor cruise, and browsing and sluicing, we'll welcome the return of cricket. Thanks to the tireless effort of our own Max Pokrivchak, a game of cricket will be included in next year's convention activities after a long hiatus. If you plan to play, please remember to pack some white clothing—slacks, shirts/blouses, the ever-popular white v-neck sweater, etc. Let's see a great showing for the return of this beloved event, whether you play or cheer on the sidelines.

The game will be on Friday, October 20, 2022, between 10 AM and noon at the baseball field of the Golden Hill Recreation Center, which is located in Balboa Park. The address is 2600 Golf Course Drive, approximately two miles from the US Grant Hotel. Please remember that the hotel has no shuttle bus or courtesy car, so if walking is not feasible, you should make arrangements for an Uber/taxi/carpool/etc., in time for the game.

Related to the cricket theme, it's worthwhile to remind all where Jeeves got his name. For the answer, here's Wodehouse himself, from his collaboration with Guy Bolton, *Bring on the Girls!: The Improbable Story of Our Life in Musical Comedy, With Pictures to Prove It*:

For a long time I was stumped for a name, then I remembered a cricketer in the years before the war called Jeeves. Played for Gloucestershire, I think. [Note: It was actually Warwickshire.] Calling a character after a county cricketer is lucky. Sherlock and Holmes were both county cricketers. I believe Doyle had decided on Sherrinford Holmes, when he suddenly thought of Mordecai Sherlock [sic], who used to keep wicket for Yorkshire. Jeeves seemed to me just right for the sort of bloke I wanted.

So the fan favorite is named after an actual county cricketer whom Plum saw play in 1913. The player was Percy Jeeves, and he played for the Warwickshire County Cricket Club from 1912 to 1914.

So, batter up!—if that's the right phrase. Until next time, I wish you a cricket century!



The mighty Percy Jeeves at bat. He died in action at High Wood in World War I, at the age of 28. During the 2016 Cheltenham Cricket Festival, The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) planted a tree on the Cheltenham College Ground where Jeeves once played and was watched by Wodehouse. A memorial in the shape of a book sits alongside the tree to commemorate Percy Jeeves.

Chris Dueker, M.D., 1938–2021

BY GARY HALL



*Dr. Chris Dueker
presents his fish research
at the 2005
TWS convention
in Los Angeles.*

DR. CHRISTOPHER WAYNE DUEKER passed away on July 24, 2021. His wife, Joyce, sent me a letter about Chris and referred to his Wodehousean relationships: “[Issues of *Plum Lines*] were opened when they came and he looked forward to your correspondence. I can say that he had great delight in preparing his talks for the groups and did *tons* of research. Please send my regards to these who gather at the next convention. . . . P.S. *Stiff Upper Lip*, *Jeeves* was on his night table the last months.”

I enjoyed receiving letters and emails from Dr. Dueker. His quirky humor and questioning mind always competed for space in his letters. The humor always won. He very much enjoyed the fact that my wife, Linda, had taken the nom de Plum “The Parrot,” and referred to her often. I was very pleased to know from Joyce’s letter that Chris “considered us friends.”

Chris was 82 when he died. He was in the Arcadia [California] High School class of 1957. He went to medical school at the University of Southern California, completing his degrees in 1965. For many years, he worked in Palo Alto, California, and specialized in anesthesiology. He and Joyce lived in Eagle, Idaho, in recent years.

Chris had intense interest in many things, including palm trees, sport diving, and scuba diving, and he was considered an authority on sport-diving medicine. In fact, he published *Scuba Diving in Safety and Health* (1985), which gives advice on when a diver should or should not dive, and who should not dive at all. He would sometimes debate related issues in trade magazines, including a reply he made to an article on journal.chestnet.org, wherein he first quoted Aristotle: “One swallow does not make a summer.”

I mention this only because it hints at Chris’s humor in the midst of medical research: an out-of-context quote from Aristotle in an article about scuba diving.

Chris displayed much of this same humor in his TWS convention talks and resultant articles in this journal, including “Remembrance of Fish Past” at the 2005 L.A. convention, “Of Mumps and Men” at the 2013 Chicago convention, and “The Times of P. G. Wodehouse” at the 2017 convention in Washington, D.C. Chris was meticulous—and frequently hilarious in his gentle and deadpan delivery.

We will miss Chris at our conventions and I’ll personally miss his always entertaining missives. Our great sympathy goes out to Joyce and the Dueker family.



*In addition to his
varied interests and
his professional career,
Chris was known to
have great style in the
sock department.*

Paul Kent’s Volume 3: Soon!

BY GARY HALL

THERE IS A rumor afoot that the third volume of Paul Kent’s masterful *Pelham Grenville Wodehouse* is close to publication time. By the time you read this, you might want to start checking Amazon and other shopping sites to see what you can find.

You may recall seeing reviews of the first two volumes of Paul’s work in prior issues of *Plum Lines*. We published comments in Winter 2019 and Winter 2020 of *Volume 1*: “*This is jolly old Fame*” and *Volume 2*: “*Mid-Season Form*,” respectively. Given that both of those reviews were a bit on the glowing end of the spectrum, we are certainly looking forward with great anticipation to the third volume. In fact, it wouldn’t hurt our feelings at all if Paul decides to continue the quest past the soon-to-be Volume 3.

Our inside sources tell us that this will be subtitled “*The Happiness of the World*”—and indeed, that’s what we’ve found is accessible upon reading these incisive, humorous, and Wodehousean works. (I say “Wodehousean” not only because they are about Wodehouse but also because Paul’s work has those two qualities of Wodehouse’s work itself—lightness and high literary quality.)

So, stay tuned. We also expect to print a review of this work. Hopefully you’ll be perusing the third volume soon: if not for the upcoming holidays, certainly shortly thereafter.

Heading South with Wodehouse

BY TIM RICHARDS

You might remember Tim from several articles in prior issues of Plum Lines. As with all contributors, you can find Tim's past articles via the Plum Lines Index (wonderfully maintained by Elin Woodger) on the TWS website, at <http://wodehouse.org/extra/INDEX2020.pdf>.

WHAT HO! In the midst of this gloomy pandemic era, I have something to celebrate: the launch of my round-Australia rail-travel memoir *Heading South*, relating a very long and entertaining train journey I took around the continent in 2018.

In addition to meeting many quirky characters whom Plum would have appreciated as source material, I smuggled several mentions of his works into the text, along with gaining permission to include a quotation from *Cocktail Time*.

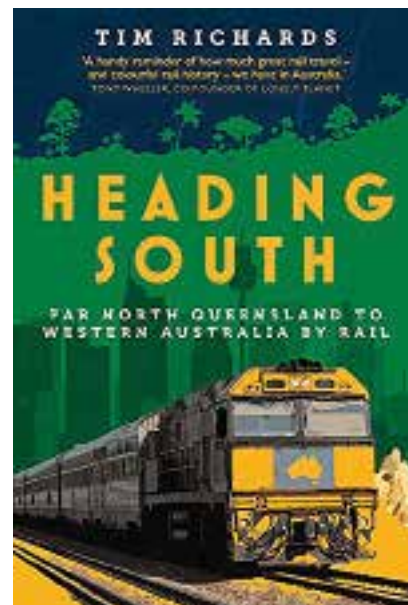
Please enjoy the short extracts below. The book should be available by the time you read this. You can search for it on Amazon and other such outlets in the U.S. and U.K., and the ebook version is available now via your favorite ebookseller.

A hymn that my favorite author, P. G. Wodehouse, was fond of quoting to comic effect, ends with the lines:

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle;
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.

I thought of it now in relation to the serene, unpeopled landscape we were moving through, via the noisiest train I had ever ridden in: the intrusion of man-made chaos into the peaceful wilderness. There was the constant low growl of the engine beneath us, and a loud scissoring sound of vibrating metal which seemed focused just above us. Add to this the nonstop rattling of the rail motor as it passed above the slightly uneven sleepers, and it was far too noisy to talk to my fellow passengers. So apart from shouting the odd question to Ken, who had the advantage of wielding a microphone in reply, I sat back on my padded vinyl bench and took in the view.

I walked along a gravel road toward my goal: the Grandchester railway station. The original



terminus of Queensland's first railway line, this was the oldest station still standing in the state, and included rare features such as the stationmaster's living quarters.

The station had been standing since 1865, when the rails had first reached the town. Grandchester was then known as Bigge's Camp; urban legend has it the town's name was eventually changed to avoid people calling it "Big Scamp." Once the track was completed, excursion trains ran on Sundays to test out the line, carrying members of the public. These Sunday outings were condemned by some churches, which was no doubt excellent publicity for the new form of transport. As Wodehouse says in his novel *Cocktail Time*:

Just as all American publishers hope that if they are good and lead upright lives, their books will be banned in Boston, so do all English publishers pray that theirs will be denounced from the pulpit by a bishop.

I imagine railway ministers and engineers felt the same.

As we rounded Bennelong Point, the golden-brown glass on the front of the Opera House glinted in the morning sunlight. There were kayaks to starboard, sailboats ahead, and a

seaplane turning lazily to the north. The ferry passed Fort Denison, looking itself like a stone boat, then pulled in at the compact Garden Island landing. I was the only passenger to disembark, and the ferry quickly churned away in the direction of Double Bay. It was very quiet as I stepped ashore. I was still technically standing on the mainland, but I felt a touch like Robinson Crusoe washing up on his desert island.

Suddenly, a security guard appeared and gave me what I could only call a briefing, explaining where I could go, where I couldn't, what was open and closed today, and when the last ferry left. He indicated the limits of the publicly accessible area to the west, beyond which a hefty grey naval supply ship was anchored, but conveyed the impression that he'd rather I didn't go that way at all. Then he disappeared. He had mastered that trick that Bertie Wooster had noticed of his valet, Jeeves, of moving from place to place so silently that it appeared he was part phantom. I almost wondered if I'd imagined him.

St. George's was the residential college I'd lived at when studying at the University of Western Australia in the 1980s. The oldest of the university's residences, it was modelled after Selwyn College at Cambridge and had opened in 1931. It was another example of Perth looking to the U.K. for inspiration, but had been in place long enough to have acquired a patina of its own.

Snapping a photo of its central tower flying the St. George's flag in the light of the setting sun, framed by trees, I texted it to Narrelle with the caption "Childe Roland to the dark tower came." This line was from an 1855 Robert Browning poem, itself borrowing a line from *King Lear*, which told the story of a medieval man undergoing hardships along the path of his gloomy quest. Wodehouse had used the line to comic effect when Bertie Wooster arrived at Totleigh Towers in my favorite of his novels, *The Code of the Woosters*. Comedy value aside, I did feel as though I was nearing the end of my quest. I had just one more train trip to undertake, and this tower to conquer before I did so.

For more details, see the website of Heading South's publisher, Fremantle Press: www.fremantlepress.com.au.

Riveting Talks: We Need You!

BY MARIA JETTE

Q: What is a "Riveting Talk"?

A: In TWS convention history thus far, it is not an examination of rivets and their uses in construction.

WHILE SOME of us are Wodehouse generalists, others develop particular interests (or "obsessions" may be the *mot juste*) and are bursting to share their discoveries, analyses, and theories via mini-lectures on the morning and afternoon of a TWS convention's Saturday. Ranging from lighthearted looks at the fashions of Bertie's set to swine husbandry to comics to hipsters to Spinoza to Hollywood—the sky has (thus far) been the limit!

Most talks are delivered from a podium, and PowerPoint presentations are welcome. Are your thoughts best expressed via the dramatic arts? Perhaps your riveting talk will get across best as a dramatic recitation, playlet, or skit, as long as it doesn't require livestock, a swimming pool, or open flames.

The hard rule is time: twenty minutes per talk, tops.

Here are a few titles from past years—you'll recognize many from their appearances in *Plum Lines*:

Of Mumps and Men

Romantic Plots in Wodehouse: The Greek

Comedy Formula

The Old School Tie That Binds

The Supercilious Sisters of Galahad

Threepwood and a Long, Lingering Look
at the Best of Them

Wodehouse and the Stuffed Eelskin of Fate

Limp Lavender Leather

P. G. Wodehouse, Feminist

To see the complete list of articles and talks that have been published in forty years of *Plum Lines*, go to our index at <http://www.wodehouse.org/extra/INDEX2020.pdf> and do a search for "Convention Talks."

A tidy number of (fascinating) proposals have been chucked into the bucket for consideration thus far, but more are welcome. The final decision will be made by the end of February. And don't despair if 2022 isn't your year for a live presentation—your proposal may be a perfect fit for a future convention or publication in *Plum Lines*.

Ready to toss your hat into the riveting ring? Contact me!

The P. G. Wodehouse Collection at Vanderbilt University

BY ANITA AVERY

The collection, which we believe to be the premier American accumulation of Wodehouse's works and Wodehouse-related items, came into existence in 2019. Thanks to the vision of several members of TWS, and to Anita's tireless oversight, the collection continues to grow and prosper.

IT HAS BEEN two years from the establishment of The P. G. Wodehouse collection at Vanderbilt University—a mere snippet of time in literary circles. Some of you might recall Bill Blood's comment from the early days of The Wodehouse Society: "Just give us another year or so!" We can report steady progress in growth and quality in our two years.

Through the generosity of members of The Wodehouse Society, The P G Wodehouse Society (UK), and the Dutch Wodehouse Society, and the supportive commitments of the TWS board of directors and the Special Collections and University Archives Department of Vanderbilt University Library, the collection has reached well over a thousand excellent and varied items.

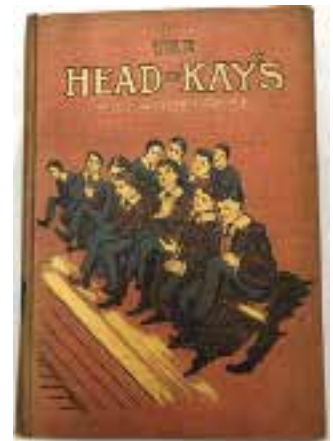
With that foundation firmly in place, interested parties will be chuffed to learn the cornerstone of the collection has now been laid in the form of significant donations of the first dozen published books, spanning the years 1902–1909, as documented in McIlvaine's comprehensive bibliography.

The collection's first editions of the seven public-school stories were generously donated by Elliott Milstein: *The Pothunters* (1902), *A Prefect's Uncle* (1903), *Tales of St. Austin's* (1903), *The Gold Bat* (1904), *The Head of Kay's* (1905), *The White Feather* (1907) and *Mike* (1909). All were published by Adam & Charles Black, London.

For these important volumes, as well as *The Swoop* (1908), Vanderbilt's Special Collections curator commissioned the fabrication of a set of very handsome tan archive-quality boxes with plum accents.



Plum-accented archival boxes, commissioned for the PGW collection at Vanderbilt University



Several of the school stories donated by Elliott Milstein to the collection

Souvenir Press, London, which published reprints of the first six school stories in 1972 and 1974, appropriately described Wodehouse as "the inventor of the school story laced with humour" who gave "his readers a glimpse of the world through the wide eyes of young schoolboys" and that his "school stories laid the

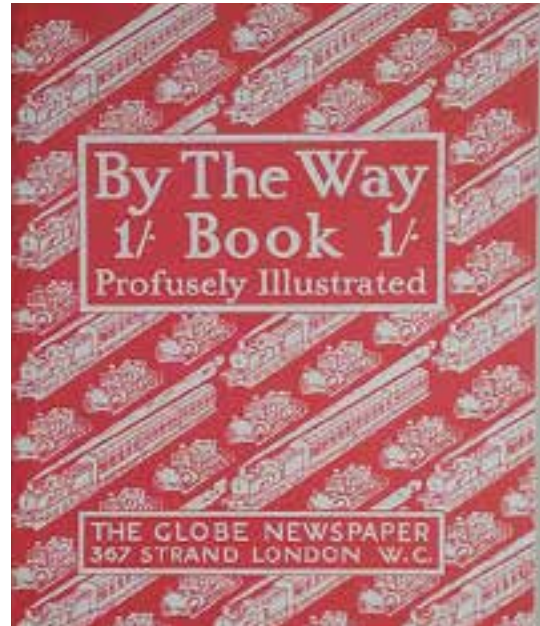
foundation for all that was to come.” We certainly affirm that it was these stories that first established Wodehouse as an author.

Rounding out the stellar cornerstone dozen are equally important titles that evidence his versatility in writing in other genres. Also from Elliott’s collection, and among the rarest Wodehouseana, is a first edition of *The Swoop, or, How Clarence Saved England*, Alston Rivers, Limited, London (1908), a story about England being saved by a Boy Scout from a German invasion, written for the bookstall trade.

The collection’s *William Tell Told Again*, a version of the familiar legend told in pictures, verse, and prose (the latter by Wodehouse) is an early reprint, not listed in McIlvaine, of the 1904 Adam & Charles Black publication. This treasure, rebound in marbled boards, with the original front board and spine preserved and bound in, is from the collection of Arthur Robinson, as is a first American edition of PGW’s first novel for adults, *Love Among the Chickens*, published in 1909 by the Circle Publishing Co., New York. This novel is notable for having introduced Ukridge, who David A. Jasen said was to become Plum’s favorite character.



Highlighting Wodehouse’s journalistic career during this period is *The Globe By the Way Book*. The collection’s copy of this title, published nearly eight decades after the *Globe* Publishing Company’s first edition of 1908, is a first American publication of the title—a mint-condition facsimile edition in an attractive blue slipcase, published by James H. Heineman and Sceptre Press, New York (1985).



Not George Washington, an entry in the semi-autobiographical genre that PGW would often revisit later in his career, first published by Cassell and Company, Limited, London (1907), is a fictionalized account of his early career as a writer and journalist. Our copy, a first American publication of the title, edited and introduced by David A. Jasen, was published over seventy years later by Continuum, New York (1980).

The acquisition of these formative and defining dozen titles is a milestone worthy of a celebratory toast to our generous donors, in appreciative acknowledgement of how it all began. It’s not surprising that Plum’s earliest published volumes would reflect the life he knew—the public boarding school for boys. As a fledgling journalist from 1894 to 1900, he contributed many articles on sports and school events, as well as some verse, and became one of the editors of the *Alleynian*, the school magazine of his beloved Dulwich College. From 1907 into the 1930s he continued to submit accounts of Dulwich cricket and football matches, and the *Occasional Notes* column announced many of his books and theatrical or film releases. The crowning honor bestowed upon Wodehouse by Dulwich College was the dedication of the Wodehouse Library in 1982.

A first American edition of *William Tell Told Again*, from the collection of Arthur Robinson



A very important treasure for the collection: *The Potheaters*, generously donated by Elliott Milstein, along with the other public-school stories

His contributions to the *Alleynian*, the early short stories and verse published in various periodicals, and the school-story novels formed the genesis of his career as an author and journalist. To delve more deeply into the world that inspired and nurtured this path, it would be well to read later volumes in the collection's holdings, such as *The Millennium Wodehouse Concordance: Wodehouse Goes to School*, by Tony Ring and Geoffrey Jaggard; *A Wodehouse Handbook, Volume 1: The World of Wodehouse* by N. T. P. Murphy; and *Wodehouse's School Days: Dulwich College and the School Stories*, by Jan Piggott.

An important facet of the collection's development beyond the initial TWS online database (begun in 2019) is the entry of the items in a separate, more detailed Vanderbilt University Library catalog system. The curating staff at VU has recently made great progress in cataloguing the backlog of donated items into their database. This has increased the collection's visibility internationally, as Vanderbilt's catalogue records are fed into WorldCat, a comprehensive worldwide database of library collections, with over 10,000 participating libraries in 107 countries.

If you would like to view the webpages of Vanderbilt University's detailed catalogue records for the collection, please send a request to Anita Avery for the link. The more streamlined TWS online database may be viewed at <http://www.wodehouse.org/PGWCVU>. Click on the gold navigation bar for links to all sections.

To round out the collection's holdings related to Wodehouse's formative years as an author, we would very much welcome additional donations of early periodicals containing stories, poems, and articles by Wodehouse, early plays, and sheet music containing his lyrics. Many thanks to all who have encouraged and helped the collection come this far this soon. Just give us another year or so!



Found on PGWnet

PGWnet (<http://wodehouse.org/pgwNetInfo.html>) is a wonderful e-gathering place of Wodehousean discussion, themes, and wisdom—especially in these telecommuting and videoconferencing times. A while back, Neil Midkiff weighed in with what I found to be one of the best comments I think I've ever heard about the power of the humor and the joyful outlook on life that we share with our fellow lovers of the canon:

In this time of multiple crises, it seems to me that we need Wodehouse's kindly spirit more than ever. As Evelyn Waugh stated (in a BBC broadcast widely quoted on the back covers of Penguin paperbacks), Wodehouse "will continue to release future generations from captivity that may be more irksome than our own."

Even if anarchy seems to be temporarily in the ascendant in some of our cities, let's continue to get together to celebrate the virtues of humor in the face of fascism, love in the face of human foolishness, joy in the face of narrow-mindedness and stupidity.

Even when all is not well, we need Wodehouse more than ever today. Let's not let the easily assumed pessimism of the moment get in the way of our celebrating an author who kept his smile throughout the hardest times he could have imagined.

Here's a recent posting by Ole van Luyn, from the October 23, 2021, *Guardian*:

The Booker Prize may be the most illustrious prize in the world of literature in the English language. This year, the panel of judges had to read 158 books, which meant reading about one per day. When shortlisting has been done the shortlisted books will be re-read, and probably several of those will be re-reread. This year the respected academician and emeritus Archbishop of the Church of England, Rowan Williams, was one of the panel members. When it was all over and done with he said: "There are moments when you never want to read anything but P. G. Wodehouse again."

This, of course, prompted much discourse, a lot of which was quite humorous, including some commentary on the Booker Prize winners. But our conclusion is—perhaps His Grace should join TWS?

F. R. Gruger: Something New, Something Old

BY GRAEME W. I. DAVIDSON

THIS ARTICLE results from recent work in preparing notes for a piece of Wodehouse-related artwork acquired a couple of years or so ago by a collector at an auction in the USA.

As sometimes happens when investigating artwork for such a purpose, the work proved more interesting and important than was initially apparent from the item's appearance and the information provided with its sale. I shall highlight two major themes, one being that Wodehouse was not alone in extracting value from work through plural deployment of the work, and the other being that collecting should not just be about acquiring but also about researching.

The piece in question comprises original graphite/charcoal artwork by Frederic Rodrigo Gruger (American, 1871–1953), which illustrated the July 31, 1915, installment of the serialization of Wodehouse's first Blandings novel, *Something New*, in the *Saturday Evening Post*. The item's entry in the auction catalog added (not, in my view, entirely accurately) that the piece depicts "two servants, who spend much of the book ridiculing their 'betters.'" That, essentially, was the full extent of the information provided in the auction catalog. What follows is information assembled for the inventory notes.



F. R. Gruger's illustration for the *Saturday Evening Post* serialization of *Something New*

The illustration, appearing on page 19 of the July 31 issue, shows Joan Valentine and Ashe Marson in earnest discussion in front of a gated Blandings archway, in a scene from chapter 9 of the book. It is captioned with Ashe Marson's question, "Do You Seriously Expect Me to Lie in Bed While You Do All the Work, and Then to Take a Half Share in the Reward?"

The 1915 *Saturday Evening Post* serialization of *Something New* was the first publication of a Blandings novel in any format in any country in the world.

Accordingly, its illustrations are the very first ones of those characters published anywhere in the world.

The artwork shows Joan Valentine and Ashe Marson, the first impostors recorded in the Blandings saga. It is also the first published illustration of a second iconic motif of Blandings novels, a pair of star-crossed lovers, and of a third familiar motif, characters who infest Blandings Castle almost as frequently as impostors and star-crossed lovers: persons who aim to purloin a valued or valuable item, be the object of the larceny a piece of jewelry, a porker, an antiquity, a set of memoirs, or other piece of desiderata. These three motifs predate that later emblem of the Blandings novels for which they are perhaps most celebrated: the Empress.

Gruger was the first artist to illustrate a Wodehouse serial in the *Saturday Evening Post*, the magazine with which Wodehouse had his longest and arguably closest and most successful connection. Ultimately, the *Post* published 21 serials by him.

Four of Gruger's illustrations from the magazine were used in the U.S. book of *Something New* (D. Appleton & Co., 1915), and Gruger also illustrated the *Post* serialization of *Sam in the Suburbs* in 1925.

In a letter to Don Bensen, dated 20 November 1969, Wodehouse declared Gruger to be his favorite *Saturday Evening Post* illustrator. Wodehouse probably had a particular soft spot for Gruger due to a combination of sentiment and commercialism, as the artist was so involved in a book that represented the real launch of Wodehouse's career as a successful transatlantic novelist.

The 1915 serialization of *Something New* was the one for which Wodehouse famously trousered \$3,500 from the *Post*, his first substantial paycheck from a U.S. magazine, and one that gave him the confidence and wherewithal to press ahead with his chosen profession. He had earlier had his first adult novel, *Love Among the Chickens*, serialized in 1908 in the USA in *Circle* magazine, but it wasn't until the *Post* serialization of *Something New* that his reputation as a writer really took off.

Rightly, the first Blandings novel has been described by Wodehouse biographer Robert McCrum, in *Wodehouse: A Life*, as "the novel that would transform his career." With *Something New* we also see early deployment of a canny approach by Wodehouse whereby he endeavored to squeeze extended value from his writing through magazine serialization and through

publication in book form, typically on both sides of the Atlantic, and on occasion through novelizing a dramatic work.

I was pleased to discover that Gruger's artwork was put to further use many years after it first served as the illustration for that initial *Saturday Evening Post* serialization of *Something New*. There was something strangely familiar to me about it. An inspection of the front cover of the paperback published in 1988 by Pennyfarthing of *A Pelican at Blandings* revealed something important. It was clear that the Gruger artwork was the basis of the image used on the front cover of this 1988 publication. A few minor adjustments were evidently made prior to the latter use, including reworking the maid's outfit, which the Gruger artwork shows Joan Valentine wearing, so that it becomes more of a gown.

Given that both novels are in the Blandings saga, there is a certain logic or symmetry in the later use of Gruger's illustration, though the characters shown in the Gruger illustration for *Something New* are not, of course, the same as are featured in *A Pelican at Blandings*. Still, there is a fitting "bookends" quality to use of the same illustration for the first USA publication



Front cover of the
Pennyfarthing edition of
A Pelican at Blandings

of a Wodehouse Blandings novel and the first U.S. publication of Wodehouse's last Blandings novel under its original title. (*Pelican* had appeared in the U.S. under the title *No Nudes Is Good News*, published in 1970 by Simon and Schuster.)

The fact that Gruger's artwork was used to illustrate not just the original serialization of *Something New* but also the front cover of the Pennyfarthing edition of *A Pelican at Blandings* lifts the work into a far higher league in terms of interest, appeal, and collectibility. This discovery meant that, in one fell swoop, the time expended on the research was spent not only enjoyably but valuably, by effectively adding substantially to the artwork's importance. Fun *and* value creation, a real win-win.

Was Wodehouse a Partisan?

BY DAVID L. LEAL, PhD

WE ALL KNOW that Wodehouse knew nothing about politics. He had no partisan allegiances. He held no political opinions. We search his books in vain for political lessons. He escaped from such unpleasantness into his literary worlds, where the shenanigans of politicians and parties do not intrude.

This is the conventional wisdom, and his readers would not have it any other way. In this essay, I will reconsider this perspective in light of Wodehouse's fictional references to the political parties of his day. The meaning of these mentions is not always clear, as the political context of Victorian and Edwardian Britain has receded into the mists of time. We are also tempted to glide over them, as our focus is on his clever language, historic settings, and unique characters.

As a political scientist reading his work, I could not help but notice that references to the parties are casually but regularly interspersed. It is easy to miss as we are charmed by the deceptive ease of his writing and the seemingly effortless humor on every page. Wodehouse is now recognized as England's greatest comic writer, and his new memorial at Westminster Abbey reads "Humourist, Novelist, Playwright, Lyricist"—not "Pundit." As I will show, this does not mean he was unaware of the political parties, or that they played no role in his stories.

Even if the party system makes a regular appearance in his writing, did Wodehouse express any opinions? We may not find any overt endorsement of parties or ideologies, but a curious pattern emerges. As I will discuss, Wodehouse gratuitously criticizes one side of the political spectrum across multiple decades: the Conservatives. This may not quite constitute a sustained attack, but for a writer with a reputation for no interest in politics, it is remarkable.

Wodehouse and The Globe

WHILE PLUM hoped to attend Oriel College at Oxford, his plans were derailed by a rupee devaluation. His father's disposable income was reduced, and he decided that one son at the 'Varsity was enough. Rather than matriculate at Oxford, Plum reluctantly entered the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank in 1900. This was a rather depressing time in his life, as we know from the thinly fictionalized *Psmith in the City*. Is there any more spirit-crushing scene in the Wodehouse canon than Mike's search for furnished lodgings in Dulwich?

But Wodehouse did not resign himself to that fate. Norman Murphy (*A Wodehouse Handbook*) observed that Wodehouse began “writing for his life—the life he wanted to lead.” It was a race against time. He knew that new bank employees received an overseas posting after two years in London; exile would dash his literary dreams. His big break came when a former Dulwich master, William Beach Thomas, offered him a temporary job on the *Globe*. Plum’s work was already starting to appear in print, so he took a risk and quit his bank job, eventually receiving Thomas’s position.

He worked on the *By the Way* column, which appeared on the front page and included political commentary. The *Globe* was a paper with definite partisan views, and Wodehouse had to support the party line. According to Murphy, “The column normally began with some satirical comment on speeches made by Liberal politicians (the *Globe* was a Conservative paper).”

Wodehouse would therefore “read the newspapers of the day before, see what was ‘in the news’—and write a funny column about it by twelve noon.” As he looked for ammunition to criticize the Liberals, he learned about late Victorian and Edwardian politics. This knowledge eventually found its way into his stories, as did many items from his real life.

Nevertheless, he almost certainly disliked writing partisan twaddle, and he got a lighthearted revenge by criticizing in his subsequent fiction the Tories and Unionists he had been required to support.

The Party Context

A BRIEF BUT HOPELESSLY inadequate overview of the political parties in Wodehouse’s time might be in order.

During the years when Wodehouse lived in England, the state of party politics was in unusual flux. One party, the Conservatives, was also known as the Tories. Another had taken shape by the mid-nineteenth century (the Liberal Party), and a third was emerging in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Labour). In addition, a party alliance developed in the late nineteenth century that was not technically a party but was treated in everyday commentary as one: the Unionists. Also, Ireland sent dozens of representatives to Parliament until the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922.

In the early and mid-nineteenth century, parties were not the same creatures as those of today. They were more like factions within the upper class, often based around political personalities and without any of the organizational structure we know today. After an

election, the meaning of the results was not necessarily clear until the winners showed up at Parliament and the factional balance of power became more evident.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the parties would become the organized and institutionalized entities we know today. This development was accelerated by the 1872 Reform Act, which expanded the electorate to such a degree that the parties needed better organization in order to mobilize potential voters.

The Liberals favored free trade, expansion of voting rights, parliamentary reform, and social reform. They coalesced around several factions: Whigs, Radicals, and free-trade Tories (Peelites). They would become associated in the public mind with industrial cities like Manchester, but its MPs (Members of Parliament) were from the aristocracy as well as from the new class of manufacturers and merchants. It also found supporters among religious dissenters and in the territory called the “Celtic fringe.”

The Tories were almost a time-immemorial faction; the name “Conservative” was a later and more official label. They were instinctively against change and supported the pillars of traditional England: the landed gentry, the Church of England, and the monarchy. The heart of the party was in the shires and southeast England. During the nineteenth century, the party would become less reactionary and more willing to support gradual change, a position associated with the philosophy of Edmund Burke.

Victorian politics were characterized by a clash of the titans, the epic battle between Liberal William Gladstone and Tory Benjamin Disraeli. Competing for power over several decades, control of Parliament would flip between these two extraordinary and very different characters. While the Liberal Party was the dominant force by mid-century, it would eventually become a victim of its own success. As free-trade doctrine and the entrepreneurial spirit became adopted across the British ruling classes, it lost its previous distinctiveness and became associated more with social reform, thereby losing much of its business support. In addition, Disraeli had no problem pinching Liberal ideas in order to win elections, so ideological lines could be fuzzy.

The Labour Party grew from labor union and socialist movements, and it benefited from the gradual enfranchisement of the working classes. It operated initially through electoral agreements with the Liberal Party but became an independent party by the twentieth century. It eventually displaced the Liberals, but that came after Wodehouse’s early life in London. The first Labour Prime Minister took office in 1924.

The Unionists came about because of Britain's troubled relationship with Ireland. They represented a partisan alliance between the Liberal Unionist Party (1886 to 1912) and the Conservative Party. The Liberal Unionists consisted of former Liberal Party politicians, largely Whig aristocrats but also some Radicals, who broke away over the issue of Irish Home Rule, which they strongly opposed. They did not necessarily agree with the Conservatives on other issues, and many continued to share the policy views of their erstwhile colleagues in the Liberal Party.

The Conservatives and the Liberal Unionist Party ultimately merged in 1912 to form what is still officially called the Conservative and Unionist Party (currently led by Boris Johnson). Before the merger, this party alliance was commonly referred to as the Unionists.

A well-known Liberal Unionist was Wodehouse's friend and cricket teammate Arthur Conan Doyle. He twice ran for Parliament under its banner, albeit unsuccessfully, because of the Irish Home Rule question. Conan Doyle wrote in his *Memories and Adventures*, "I was what was called a Liberal-Unionist, that is, a man whose general position was Liberal, but who could not see his way to support Gladstone's Irish Policy. Perhaps we were wrong. However, that was my view at the time."

According to Wesley Ferris, "Candidates came to be identified in the press as 'Unionists' alone" and "many modern sources simply conflate the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives when it comes to electoral statistics." When Wodehouse uses the word "Unionist," he is therefore using a standard but vague journalistic term of the day, which undoubtedly followed from his work on a newspaper.

By the time Wodehouse reached adulthood, Ireland was sending 103 members to the House of Commons. In the 1900 parliamentary elections, the pro-independence Irish Parliamentary Party won the large majority, followed by the anti-Home Rule Irish Unionist Party (eighteen members, all from Ulster). This large grouping of Irish parliamentarians, primarily focused on Home Rule (Irish independence), created challenging dynamics for the two main parties in the House of Commons. They held the balance of parliamentary power when neither the Tories nor the Liberals held a majority. For instance, Irish M.P.s were responsible for the collapse of Lord Salisbury's Conservative government in 1886 after Gladstone announced his support for Home Rule.

Unionists and Conservatives

WE MEET multiple Unionist and Conservative political candidates and politicians in Wodehouse

stories, and almost all are unpleasant people. They could have been identified by Wodehouse as members of any party, or no party, so these attributions are notable and potentially meaningful.

In *Psmith in the City* (1910), we encounter Mr. Bickersdyke, an altogether unsympathetic character who is a Unionist candidate for Parliament. Psmith denounces him as "a bargee of the most pronounced type" while Mr. Waller more discreetly describes him as "not popular in the office. A little inclined, perhaps, to be hard on mistakes."

We also learn that he had previously run for office as a Radical, an effort which he hopes is long forgotten. But Psmith discovers it, and when Mike and Psmith read his prior speeches, they note that he "lets himself go a bit" and is "simply cursing the Government" and calls the royal family "blood suckers."

Now that he has moved up in the world, he has thrown overboard his youthful ideals and is running as a Unionist, and a nativist and jingoist to boot. He says "some nasty things about Free Trade and the Alien Immigrant," and because Liberalism was closely associated with free trade, he is therefore more likely a Conservative than a Liberal Unionist.

Benny Green calls Bickersdyke "not just a Tory, not just a Tory apostate, but something much nastier, a Tory apostate who has arrived at his position through worldly advancement" and abandoned his youthful ideals. This may be a trifle harsh, as our hero Psmith does acknowledge that a person with more taxable income may be forgiven for supporting the party that promises to soften the bite. It is called voting for your interests, something the working class at the time was trying hard to be allowed to do.

[Incidentally, Mr. Bickersdyke has the distinction of being the great-great-grandfather of former Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron. In the Madame Eulalie online annotations of the Wodehouse canon, we read that "Bickersdyke must be modelled on Sir Ewen Cameron, manager of the London Branch of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank when Wodehouse worked there." Norman Murphy noted that "Ewen's great-great-grandson is also a senior Conservative; he is David Cameron, MP."]

In *Summer Lightning* (1929), Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe is described as "on the eve of being accepted by the local Unionist Committee as their accredited candidate for the forthcoming by-election in the Bridgeford and Shifley Parliamentary Division of Shropshire." This is the neighbor who lured away the Earl of Emsworth's stellar pig man and is suspected by the earl of plotting to noble Empress of Blandings.

In *Heavy Weather* (1933), Sir Gregory is still hoping to be the Unionists' nominee for that same by-election. He fears the publication of the Hon. Galahad's scandalous reminiscences because "no one knew better than himself that Unionist committees look askance at men with pasts." He also plots with Lady Constance to steal and destroy the manuscript.

We see an oblique reference to the parties in "The Long Arm of Looney Coote" (1923), when Ukridge takes it upon himself to help old school friend "Boko" Lawlor in his run for Parliament. While we do not know the partisan order of battle, various clues suggest that this friend is the Liberal Party candidate while his opponent is the Conservative candidate. This campaign also corresponds to the real-life parliamentary elections of 1922 and 1923.

In "Jeeves and the Impending Doom," we meet another unlikable character who must be a Conservative. The Right Honourable A. B. Filmer is a cabinet minister who is a guest of Aunt Agatha at her country house. We later learn that she is trying to induce this politician to ask Bertie to be his private secretary, but with the help of a revenge-minded boy and an enraged swan, Bertie manages to avoid the trap.

The minister is described thusly by Aunt Agatha: "Mr. Filmer is a serious-minded man of high character and purpose, and you are just the type of vapid and frivolous wastrel against which he is most likely to be prejudiced." And the following exchange takes place between Aunt Agatha and Bertie:

"In the first place, you will give up smoking during your visit."

"Oh, I say!"

"Mr. Filmer is president of the Anti-Tobacco League. Nor will you drink alcoholic stimulants."

"Oh, dash it!"

"And you will kindly exclude from your conversation all that is suggestive of the bar, the billiard-room, and the stage-door."

Bertie later refers to him as a "superfatted bore."

As the story was published in 1926, this rather stiff killjoy must have been a Conservative M.P. and member of Stanley Baldwin's cabinet.

By the 1950s, Wodehouse was referring specifically to the Conservative Party. I am not the first to observe that this is a little late, historically speaking, as the Conservative/Unionist merger took place in 1912, but it does speak to his fundamental lack of interest in politics.

In *Cocktail Time* (1958), Sir Raymond Bastable is expecting to run as a Conservative Party candidate in an anticipated by-election. Uncle Fred refers to him as a "stinker," an "overbearing dishpot," and "pompous, arrogant, and far too pleased with himself"—and therefore knocks off his hat with a Brazil nut fired from a slingshot. Sir Raymond is at first deterred from identifying and revenging himself upon the miscreant because he is worried that the voters will lose confidence in a man who gets his topper knocked off. He also decides not to publish his subsequent novel of reckless youth, *Cocktail Time*, under his own name because "a man who is hoping for the Conservative nomination at Bottleton East has to be cautious."

Does anyone actually like the Rev. Aubrey Upjohn? Maybe the Conservative Party does. Also known as "Aubrey Gawd-help-us Upjohn," he once administered "six of the juiciest on the old spot with a cane" to Bertie. In *Jeeves in the Offing* (1960), we learn that "the hot tip is that the boys in the back room are going to run him as the Conservative candidate in the Market Snodsbury division at the next by-election." Again, when Wodehouse gives a disliked character a party identification—and few characters could be more disliked than the Rev. Aubrey Upjohn—he chooses the Tories.

We see the Conservatives getting it right in the neck in one of his last novels. In *Much Obligated, Jeeves*, published in 1971 when Wodehouse was ninety, the plot involves a parliamentary by-election. The Conservative candidate is a Drones Club type, Ginger Winship, who is more concerned with changing fiancées than being elected to the mother of parliaments. When a former butler attempts to blackmail him, Ginger tries to get the local newspaper to print the charges in order to sabotage his own campaign.

More importantly, Wodehouse has Roderick Spode, the thinly veiled Oswald Mosley, giving speeches on Ginger's behalf. Spode is now Lord Sidcup of the House of Lords, and clearly on the Tory bench. Wodehouse therefore ties the former fascist leader to the Conservative Party, a remarkable plot point that is easy for readers to ignore if they are focusing on the human relations rather than the politics.

In *The White Feather* (1907), we find a rare positive portrayal of a Conservative. In this early story, Sir William Bruce is not an important character, but his parliamentary by-election campaign is the excuse for the fight that the hero evades. He is described as follows: "The Conservative candidate, Sir William Bruce, was one of themselves—an Old Wrykynian, a governor of the school, a man who always watched school-matches,

and the donor of the Bruce Challenge Cup for the school mile. In fine, one of the best.” A cynic might note that Wodehouse was still working for the *Globe* when the story was published, so perhaps he knew on which side his bread was buttered

What About the Senior Conservative Club?

ONE MIGHT POINT out that the Earl of Emsworth was a member of the Senior Conservative Club (as were four other members of the canon). This is a lightly disguised Constitutional Club, which was affiliated with the Conservative Party. As Norman Murphy noted, it was one of the six London clubs to which Wodehouse belonged at some point, and he was a member there for quite a bit more time than anywhere else, possibly joining as early as 1903/4. Does this membership suggest he had some sympathy with the Conservatives after all?

To answer this, we need to know why Wodehouse joined. He may have liked the food and anonymity, which is consistent with the club’s description in *Leave It to Psmith* (1923), but he may have initially joined two decades earlier for reasons of career expediency. As noted above, Wodehouse’s first real writing job started when he left the bank to accept a temporary position on the *By the Way* column of the *Globe*, a newspaper that supported the Tories.

Maybe Wodehouse joined the club in the year after he started writing the column because it was the least political way to signal an affiliation with the Conservative Party. The newspaper may not have wanted him to run for Parliament as a Tory, but it might have been reassured by some indication that he was part of the Conservative world.

We might not therefore interpret his membership, and the club’s appearance in his fiction, as indicative of his political views. It may just represent a club that he joined for expediency but came to appreciate for its food and privacy.

What About the Liberal and Labour Parties?

IN CONTRAST to the Conservatives and Unionists, few characters represent the Liberal and Labour parties.

In *The White Feather* (1907), one of the political candidates is Mr. Pedder, “an energetic Radical,” which undoubtedly means Liberal Party candidate. As noted above, Radicals were one of the political factions that constituted the Liberals, so the word did not necessarily have the negative connotation it might have today.

In *The Intrusion of Jimmy* (1910), we see a joking reference to a living politician. The narrator complains how wagering has declined from the “spacious days

of the Regency” due to Liberal Party Prime Minister Asquith. The narrator continues, “When Mr. Asquith is dethroned, it is improbable that any Briton will allow his beard to remain unshaved until the Liberal party returns to office.”

In “Leave It to Jeeves” (1916), we read of a Mr. Digby Thistleton, who did so well by selling a hair-growth tonic that he was “shortly afterward elevated to the peerage for services to the Liberal party.” This is undoubtedly a knowing reference to the not-yet-illegal and time-honored practice of selling honors for cash, which would reach something of an apogee under Lloyd George. As a side note, the tonic was undoubtedly as genuine a medicinal product as the “Peppo” and “Buck-U-Uppo” from other stories, which were apparently filled with alcohol and sent everyone from parrots to curates into a frenzy.

The Labour Party makes a brief appearance in *Love Among the Chickens* (1906/1921) when the narrator Jeremy Garnett encounters a small boy named Albert on the train to the Ukridge chicken farm. Albert annoys our hero by showing “a skill in logomachy that marked him out as a future Labour Member.” This description is not in the 1909 USA edition, where Albert is less creatively described as “the rudest boy on earth—a proud title, honestly won.”

What About the Devonshire Club?

AS INDICATED ABOVE, Wodehouse typically disguised his clubs with false names, even if they are not difficult to identify. For example, Norman Murphy discussed how “Brown’s” is obviously “White’s.”

An exception is the Devonshire Club, which is identified both by name and location. It makes an appearance as the club of Lord Bittlesham in “The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace” (1922) and “Comrade Bingo” (1922). The Madame Eulalie annotations describe it thusly: “A Liberal political club, at 50 St. James’s St. It was founded in 1875, and in 1909 the annual subscription was 10 guineas. Bittlesham must have received his peerage from Lloyd George, who was the Liberal leader who was Prime Minister until 1922.”

While the club was originally affiliated with the Liberal Party, it became less political over time. By the time these two delightful stories were published, it was largely a social club. It carries on in amalgamated form as the “East India, Devonshire, Sports and Public Schools’ Club,” which still resides in St. James’s Square.

The club is superfluous to the plot, so why did Wodehouse mention it? A young Wodehouse would have associated it with politics, and as he did not always

update his political information, he may have continued to see it as a Liberal Party bastion in 1922.

The club was not of the aristocratic elite, like Boodle's or Brooks's. By assigning Lord Bittlesham to the club, he places him among the upper classes but not quite at the tip-top level.

Lord Bittlesham may not have our complete sympathy, but he is not the sort of man Wodehouse would have made a Conservative. His only fault is to have married and neglected to support his sponging nephew in the manner to which said sponging nephew would have liked to become accustomed.

What About All the Socialism?

SOcialism makes regular appearances in the canon, so often that we might wonder if Wodehouse should be addressed as Comrade Wodehouse. The most prominent advocate is Psmith, who expresses socialist views over several decades that are not essential to the plots nor to his character development. Was Wodehouse giving this ideology a boost by assigning it to so sympathetic a character as Psmith?

In another *Plum Lines* essay, I argue that Psmith's ideas and actions suggest he was not a leftist revolutionary but a traditionalist reactionary. In addition, the other socialists and communists we meet are not in the same league. These include Mr. Waller, the Heralds of the Red Dawn, Archibald Mulliner (temporarily), Keggs the butler, George Wellbeloved, and Lavender Briggs. While Mr. Waller has our sympathy, the others do not command our affection.

Conclusion

OVER MANY DECADES, Wodehouse repeatedly hit one of the major U.K. political parties with an axe. Contrary to those who see Wodehouse as a "small-c" conservative who revered the class system and the country house set, his target was not the Labour or Liberal party. Instead, he battered the Unionists and Conservatives, which later merged to form the Tories we know today. In addition, he regularly sprinkled unnecessary references to socialism into his writing, an odd but persistent pattern that we cannot overlook.

Why did Plum introduce partisanship into his Garden of Eden? I doubt the explanation is that Wodehouse yearned for the revolution. Is it likely that he looked forward to the day when "the blood of Lord Bittlesham and his kind flows in rivers down the gutters of Park Lane" and hoped to advance it by making Aubrey Upjohn a Conservative and Psmith a socialist? Instead, he was probably "getting his own back" at the

Globe for making him write partisan drivel in support of the Tories.

While he undoubtedly appreciated this big break in the world of journalism, which allowed him to leave the bank, he likely chafed at the political writing. When he was free to write what he wished, he mined his real life and introduced a humorous but pointed political dimension that persisted for decades.

That the object of this humor was the Unionists and Conservatives was just an accident of history. If his first job was for a newspaper on the left and he was required to mock the Tories, Wodehouse might have made fun of Labour and the Liberals in his subsequent fiction. If so, he might have been viewed (fairly or not) as being on the Right in the 1920s and 1930s, and this would have had serious implications for the Berlin radio broadcast controversy. Imagine Roderick Spode and the Saviours of Britain as heroes, not the objects of mockery. It would have been easy for critics to connect the dots from such characters to the Nazi regime, and Wodehouse's career and legacy might have suffered an irrecoverable blow.

So let us raise a glass and toast the *Globe* and its conservative world view. You can still read its successor today. The *Globe* merged into the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which in turn merged into the *Evening Standard*. Those living in the U.K. may know it as the paper that is handed out for free during the London evening rush hour, so take a copy and thank it for saving Plum from the bank in 1902—and perhaps from himself in 1941.

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OM Reflections

AS THE Wicked Witch of the West said in such poignant fashion (though in a different context): “What a world, what a world!” Not very predictable, is it? Between Mother Nature, Father Time, and those wacky seven billion children of the Earth, who knows what happens next?

In Asimov’s *Foundation* trilogy, the physicists and mathematicians predict the future with formulas—kind of a scientific predestination. Ha! I think we’d break their computers nowadays.

So, what will 2022 bring? In the Wodehouse world, hurrah, a convention in San Diego—barring any new or escalating crises that take everything in a different direction. There are other events in store in our sister societies, and you can find out about them through <https://wodehouse-society.nl/> (The Netherlands) and <https://www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk/> (U.K.), and others. Our website at wodehouse.org is a wealth of information—including the archives of *Plum Lines* and the ever-growing index of articles that makes finding past published works easy.

You’ll read this during or after the holidays, but I’m writing before Thanksgiving. With that holiday upcoming, I want to give thanks for my amazing global team: Elliott Milstein for his steady solid work in handling the mailing of this journal; Neil Midkiff for the most incredible eagle eye when it comes to references and fonts and participles and all; Tad Boehmer for his wonderful and growing work as our associate editor; the delightful TWS board (Indu, Bill, Maria, Lynn) for their support always; and Noel Merrill for his timely maintenance on our website. And thanks to all of you for your interest and humor and memberships, since without you, the society would founder.

Let’s see, is that it? Well, no. My mentor and teacher across the waves for most of the last two decades, the lady who helped guide me into my editorship and OM-ness, the grande dame of this society who is moving back to “the States” but will still be in my e-team across the continent, my partner in this joyous crime (it’s so much fun it must be a crime): Elin Woodger. Through thick and thin, she’s found my misplaced commas and style bloopers and much more. Hear, hear! A toast to Elin and all who keep the society journal rolling.

After the trials and tribulations of the last year, I hope we can keep this ship cruising for you for another year and beyond. Damn the torpedoes and pandemics! Keep the joy in the morning, noon, and evening, I say.

—OM

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



Blandings Castle Chapter

(Greater San Francisco Bay area)

Contact: Bill Franklin



The Broadway Special

(New York City and vicinity)

Contact: Amy Plofker



Capital! Capital!

(Washington, D.C., and vicinity)

Contact: Susan Parsons



THE CAP! CAPS! gathered in the ether on November 13 to perform Ed Powell’s adaptation of “Ukridge’s Accident Syndicate.” Ed, our dramaturg, naturally played the role of Ukridge. Narration duties were shared by Susan Parsons and Andrea Jacobsen. Gary Buck was Teddy Weeks, a character of moral quality quite as dubious as that of Ukridge himself. The roles of Freddy Lunt, Robert Dunhill, and Victor Beamish were supplied by Arthur LaRue, Jeff Peterson, and Bob Rains respectively. The Prickman family—Greg, Rachel, and youngsters Ava and Theodore—all got into the act as, respectively, James “Corky” Corcoran, the Doctor, a Disheveled Man, and the Cameraman. Lurking in the background was Ed’s silent partner, Sharon Straight-Powell. It is fair to say that we amused ourselves.

It is always a great time. What could be better than hanging out with fellow Wodehouseans to read one of

the master's stories? We welcome anyone who'd like to join us.

—Susan Parsons

Chapter One

(Greater Philadelphia area)

Contact: Mark Reber



ON SEPT. 28, 2021, a widely distributed Chapter One crowd Zoomed together. We took a deep dive into Giovannini Guareschi's fictional "little world" of Don Camillo and Peppone, respectively the village priest and the Communist mayor of a small town in the Po Valley of Italy, set in the years after World War II. In preparation for this event, we read the article on Guareschi in the Summer 2017 issue of *Plum Lines*, along with four stories: "A Confession" (in which the crucified Christ forbids Don Camillo from clobbering Peppone with his hands, but looks the other way with regard to the priest's feet); "The Defeat" (in which both Don Camillo and Peppone try to bribe the referee of a soccer game); "Men and Beasts" (in which the Communists declare a strike against a local dairy farmer and forbid everyone from tending to the cows, but Don Camillo and Peppone sneak into the barn at night and work together to save the animals); and "Technique of the Coup d'État" (in which the Communists, believing that they have won an election, have assembled a hit list of reactionaries, with Don Camillo at the head of the list—but one-by-one, Peppone and his Communist henchmen warn Don Camillo and urge him to flee).

We enjoyed a brief photo gallery of Brescello, the tiny town where five quite wonderful movies based on the stories were filmed, starring Fernandel as Don Camillo and Gino Cervi as Peppone. Statues of the two men stare across the town square at each other. This was followed by a short clip from one of the movies and a lively discussion. We ended with Guareschi's stated philosophy: "I never regretted doing tomorrow what I could have done yesterday or a month before."

—Bob Rains

ON TUESDAY, October 26, Chapter One met yet again by Zoom. Our typically wide-ranging preliminary discussion included topics such as vacationing in Cape May, cat allergies, favorite movie venues (e.g. the Prince Theater in Philadelphia), films adapted from novels (Graham Greene and Nero Wolfe, for example), and Thanksgiving adventures with cooking from scratch (live turkeys and homegrown cranberries featured in these accounts).

The official topic for our meeting was the discussion of two connected stories: "Rallying Round Clarence" (1914), which was reworked into "Jeeves Makes an Omelette" (1958). We recognized that the later Jeeves story was much better written, had better plot clarity, and was more sophisticated.

To facilitate our discussion, Mark Reber spoke briefly from his prior presentation on Reggie Pepper, whose stories were narrated by Reggie himself in a modest and chatty fashion. He was an Oxonian and member of London clubs, he came from family wealth, and he favored trying to help friends with romantic problems. As Mark explained, Reggie is clearly a prototype for the much more famous and more developed Bertie Wooster. Two of the Reggie Pepper stories from *My Man Jeeves* (1919) were later rewritten as Bertie-Jeeves stories: besides the pair we discussed, "Helping Freddie" (1911) was adapted as "Fixing It for Freddie" in *Carry On, Jeeves!* (1925).

The Sherlock Holmes references prompted a dramatic reading by chapter members Mark and Michael Ladenson of a humorous Wodehouse poem from 1903, "Back to His Native Strand." This verse is about the return of Holmes from his presumed death at the end of the story "The Final Problem."

From there, we moved through topics that included Gilbert and Sullivan and *The Pirates of Penzance*, favorite adaptations (such as *Dracula*), film noir and noir novels, and the distinctions among American, Continental, and Nordic noir styles in films and novels.

Realizing that our discussion had strayed far from Wodehouse business, we brought it to a conclusion.

—Bob Sloan

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



ALTHOUGH DETAILS are still pending, the Clients will hold a Junior Bloodstain in January 2022 either before or during the Baker Street Irregulars weekend in New York City.

—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



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



The New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS)

(Boston and New England)
Contact: Lynn Vesley-Gross,



or Roberta Towner,



NEWTS nottling in the late summer

IN AUGUST, the NEWTS swarmed to a nottle, as they call their meetings, at their favorite summer gathering spot and watering hole: the Ravi estate in Bedford, Massachusetts. They came from Boston, New York, New Hampshire, England, and (via Zoom) Chico, California. They came bearing luscious treats to be enjoyed under the trees. Browsing and sluicing both were up to the usual high standard of our New England fare. Roberta Towner's pies are a highlight that always shines at a garden party. Dessert critics raved over Stef Adams's elegant pavlova of meringue, whipped cream, and fresh blueberries. "Sublime" was the common theme in their review.

After a nearly two-year COVID hiatus, little had changed. The garden continues in splendor. The dozen reunited NEWTS wagged tails, danced, and chattered cheerfully of various matters. Novels, biographies, magazines, and Wodehouse paraphernalia were displayed on outdoor tables, taken for walks and exchanged and discussed by the serious thinkers. Cricket games—current, future, and at Dulwich in 1905—were analyzed. Preliminary notions of the potential NEWTS influence on San Diego events at the October 2022 convention, serious and otherwise, were kicked around. Newts swarm next for a winter holiday celebration in Waltham, Massachusetts.

—Lynn Vesley-Gross

The Northwodes
(St. Paul, Minneapolis, and vicinity)
Contact: Mike Eckman



THE NORTHWODES continue to Zoom through the Wodehouse canon. Sixteen of us met on September

2, 2021, to discuss *Summer Moonshine*. Joan Rabe liked the well-defined cast of characters. Bruce Willey found Heloise, Princess von und zu Dwornitzchek, to be the most malevolent character in Wodehouse's stable. Janna Kysilko authoritatively gave the pronunciation of the Princess's name as "D'vorn-a-check," while Mike Engstrom favored "D'vorn-it-z-check." Mike Eckman noted how Wodehouse took publishers, the movie business, and play producers to task in this book. Janna suggested that Adrian's fiancés dominate him and maneuver him; he's a little bit helpless without their influence. Joan thought that it was psychologically satisfying for readers that the two least likable characters ended up with each other.

On October 14, 2021, thirteen Northwodes met to discuss *The Little Nugget* (1913). The book has a lot of gunfire; *Nugget* is more of an adventure-romance with a bit of comedy. Peter Burns is like Bertie Wooster, and Cynthia Drassilis leads him into misadventures by asking him to do "one simple task": kidnap young, rich Ogden Ford. Cynthia is amoral, manipulative, unscrupulous, beautiful, cunning, and self-described as "one of the get-rich-quick Wallingfords." (Wallingford was a con man created by George Randolph Chester.) Holly Windle noted how the change in narrative voice from the omniscient narrator to Peter is necessary to introduce Cynthia's means and motive for her ultimate betrayal of Peter, of which he must be unaware until the finale. Is this the only Wodehouse book in which this narrative shift occurs? [Note: Neil Midkiff tells us that this also occurred in early editions of *Love Among the Chickens*, where the first five chapters are narrated omnisciently, and switch to Jeremy Garnet's narration in chapter 6.] Peter's narrative voice resembles Bertie's: they are both honest reporters and sensitive observers. Peter is possibly smarter than Bertie, and perhaps this is why the book is missing the usual Plum humor. Dick Sveum found that Steve Brodie gained renown for his claim to have jumped from the Brooklyn Bridge in 1886, resulting in the phrase "doing a Steve Brodie," which Wodehouse uses. "Smooth" Sam Fisher has great insight into human behavior, accurately predicting the actions of all the major players. He uses these skills to reunite the Ford family at the end of the book for a happy ending.

—Mike Engstrom

The Orange Plums
(Orange County, California)
Contact: Lia Hansen, or
Diana Van Horn



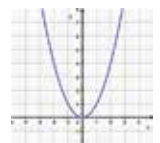
AHOY THERE, shipmates! Admiral Biffen here, once more checking in over the maritime wireless with the briefest of updates on the doings of the O. Plumies.

The most auspicious occasion usually celebrated by the wide-ranging members of our societal crew in October is, of course, the Master's birthday. But there was also another important anniversary to mark when the Orange Plums last met at the beginning of said month: the actual bronze anniversary of the official forming of our beloved little happy chapter! Yes, between discussions of our latest reading (*Ice in the Bedroom*) and enjoying the festive south-of-the-border cuisine of Acapulco, we raised our glasses to eight years of celebrating Wodehouse—and each other. Standing in for a bronze *objet d'art* was our much-admired mascot, the Duchess (our "silver" cow creamer), who deigned to join in the fun by festooning the glorious cake Diana (Miss Postlethwaite) had baked for us for the occasion.



I have the honor to be your obedient servant,
Admiral George J. "Fruity" Biffen (Jeff Porteous)

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



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



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



The Plum Crazyies

(Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and vicinity)

Contact: Betty Hooker



ON October 23, the Crazyies met at Fiddler's Bar and Grill near Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Andrea Jacobsen, Bob Rains, Uttam Paudel, Lisa and Russ Vriezen, Henriett and David Evans, and Betty and Tom Hooker enjoyed spirited conversation.

A trip to nearby Keystone's Theatrics (formerly the Allenberry Theater) followed. *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* by favorite TWS playwright Ken Ludwig was a tour de force. Five actors play at least forty parts between them. At times, the actors were playing two different characters in the same scene. The cast met the challenges of costume changes, appropriate accents, wigs, and character changes with amazing energy and enthusiasm. (The hound, however, was a dummy.) The cast and audience alike had a grand and lively time.

—Betty Hooker

The Plum Street Plummiess

(Olympia, Washington and vicinity)

Contact: Thomas L. R. Smith



THE PLUM STREET PLUMMIESS hosted the fifth (or sixth) annual Wodehouse Open Mini Golf Tournament on September 11 at Parkland Putters, near Tacoma, Washington. The weather was clement, a perfect day for gawf. Seven golphers showed up. The course was a bit run down, as were many of the golfers, but it was adequate and fun for all. The highest score was achieved by your correspondent, who was ecstatic until someone reminded me that it is the low score that wins in golf. The winner of this year's tournament was newcomer Ann-Marie Wehrer, who received the Wodehouse Cup from the previous winner Susan Spatola-Knoll.

—Thomas Smith

The Right Honorable Knights of Sir Philip Sidney

(Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Contact: Peter Nieuwenhuizen



<https://wodehouse-society.nl>

THE DUTCH P. G. Wodehouse Society celebrated its fortieth anniversary on November 27; Wodehouse himself gave his permission on May 30, 1973, for the Plummiess in The Netherlands to start a society.

Earlier this year, a new bibliography of Dutch translations was published, and we also made a large contribution to the Vanderbilt collection.



Leonard and Fiona Bueger perform at the Wodehouse in the Woods event

On October 3, the Knights enjoyed Wodehouse in the Woods. It occurred on the Frankendael Estate in Amsterdam and included songs, skits, and contests in the best Wodehouse tradition. Members of the society and professional singers together presented a mix of lovely Wodehouse musical pieces. "Sonny Boy" was performed on banjo and guitar, and by a singer portraying Bertie Wooster. This song led to bread rolls being thrown. You can watch the tossing festivities at <https://youtu.be/PjOXgmmeqfY>.

Tenor Rein Kolpa and soprano Merel van Geest sang nine songs from various musicals, including "My Castle in the Air" (*Miss Springtime*), "Will You Forget" (*The Riviera Girl*), and "That Ticking Taxi's Waiting at the Door" (*Kissing Time*).

On October 7, some members attended the U.K. Wodehouse Society's dinner at Gray's Inn in London, with lovely songs by Hal and Lara Cazalet and a great evening programme by Tony Ring.

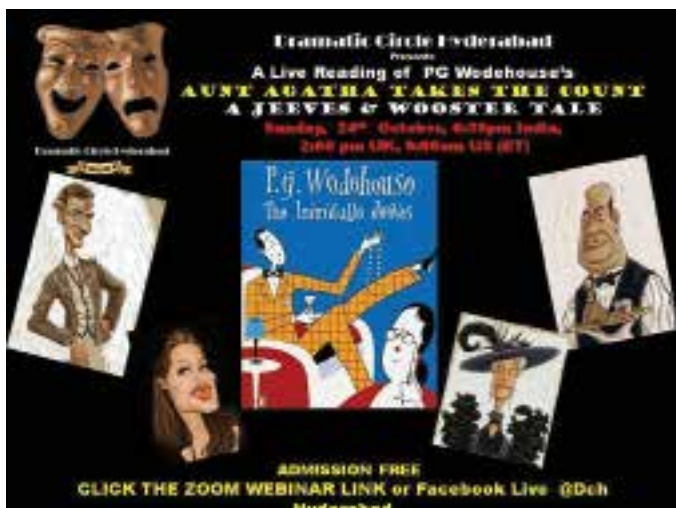
The regular meeting on October 9 had some surprises in store. Leonard Bueger presented a new translation of *A Damsel in Distress*. (This Wodehouse novel was the first book to be translated into Dutch back in 1927.)



Old and new Dutch translations of *A Damsel in Distress*. The new translation is by translator extraordinaire Leonard Bueger

Some members had tried to make another Anatole recipe (*bombe Néro* from *The Code of the Woosters*) and found it to be a laborious task. A Wodehouse quiz by longtime member Ronald Brennert tested our Wodehouse knowledge. Johan Buiskool Toxopeus read his favorite fragment from *Right Ho, Jeeves*. All members received a present: a copy of the article “The Very Irreverent P. G. Wodehouse” (1978) by Michael Sharwood Smith, who had worked at Utrecht University in The Netherlands from 1975 to 1999.

On October 24, the Knights watched a performance via Zoom of “Aunt Agatha Takes the Count,” a live reading by eight players of the Dramatic Circle Hyderabad (DCH) in India.



—Peter Nieuwenhuizen

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



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



Mike nodded. A sombre nod. The nod Napoleon might have given if somebody had met him in 1812, and said, “So you’re back from Moscow, eh?”

“The Lost Lambs” (1908)



Around the World in 80 Books

DAVID DAMROSCH, Bernbaum Professor of Literature at Harvard University, heads a project called “Around the World in 80 Books: A Literary Journey.” Bob Rains found a reference in *Harvard Magazine* that described the project:

Housebound during the pandemic, the chair of comp lit channeled not Phileas Fogg but his creator, Jules Verne, in a delightful global guide to literature, as he has expansively interpreted it. . . . Be prepared, visiting London, to encounter both Virginia Woolf and P. G. Wodehouse; in Congo-Nigeria, Joseph Conrad and Wole Soyinka; and in Bar Harbor . . . and New York, everyone from Robert McCloskey and Doctor Doolittle to Saul Steinberg and James Baldwin. A year of isolation very well spent.

As we grow older and realize more clearly the limitations of human happiness, we come to see that the only real and abiding pleasure in life is to give pleasure to other people.

Something Fresh (1915)

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! *Plum Lines* Spring 2022 Schedule Change

SOMEHOW, despite the challenges of living on a tilted planet (in some relative plane, at least), we manage most of the time to keep to fairly predictable schedule. We aim for delivery of your *PL* in the months of March, June, September, December.

However, in the course of the affairs of humans (which includes this merry band of Plummies), some circumstances might be known enough in advance to allow us to predict something a bit out of kilter with that Wodehousean plane.

Let it be known, then, that the Spring issue (normally delivered in March) is expected to deliver instead in April 2022. However, we expect to be right back on schedule with the Summer, Autumn, and Winter issues next year. (And the Winter publication will be a collector's issue, since it will include the reports and photographs from the 2022 TWS convention.)

And that, friends, is all the news that's printably fit.



Dutch Honorable Knight Frank de Ruyter who, in addition to portraying Jeeves providing throwing rolls to the masses, was the mastermind behind the Wodehouse in the Woods event. (See page 22.)

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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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