



"...Wodehouse...can be compared to no other novelist, living or dead. His literary ancestor, instead, is the Roman dramatist Plautus and, like Plautus, he is the manufacturer of a thousand comically crossed connections." ...Gerald Clarke, Time, 25 Oct 1971.

A positive chunk of biographic datum has been skewered by no less an authority than Dr. Robert A. Hall, Jr., TWS, professor-emeritus of Cornell University: PLUM'S GODFATHER'S NAME WAS NOT REPEAT NOT PELHAM GRENVILLE VON DONOP!!! It was PELHAM GEORGE VON DONOP!!!!!! Bob gives us this further biographic sketch of this worthy: "Pelham George von Donop was born on April 28th, 1851, the son of Vice Admiral E. P. von Donop. He was educated at Somerset College, Bath, and joined the Royal Engineers in 1871. He rose to the rank of captain in 1888, of major in 1890, and of Lt. Colonel in 1894. From 1889 to 1894 von Donop was Inspector of Submarine Defense, India; from 1899 to 1913, Inspecting Officer of Railways for the Board of Trade. In the last-mentioned position it was his duty to inspect and approve new railway lines, and to investigate, report, and make recommendations concerning accidents. Lt. Colonel von Donop died on November 7th, 1921."

It is finally official: Edward Duke's fine "ONE-MAN TWO-ACT 12-CHARACTER TOUR-DE-FORCE" (and all this time OM has been calling it a one-man show!) JEEVES TAKES CHARGE will open Tuesday, May 17th, at The Space at City Center Theater, 55th Street (between 6th and 7th Avenues), New York, NY. Those of you who live in or near New York City, or who plan to visit there, are advised to see this show.

A review by Maureen Peterson in the Montreal Gazette, when Duke's show opened there in May, 1981, led off with this plaudit: "The West End hit, 'Jeeves Takes Charge,' is every bit as good as that man in the London Times said it was and, I might add, we too left the Centaur Theatre with 'idiot grins on our faces.'" Maureen's reference to "The West End hit" concerns the long run the show had in London before its Canadian and Australian tours. An abbreviated performance was given at the Pierpont Morgan Library's Wodehouse Centenary Celebration on October 15th, 1981, and proved to be a fine piece of stagecraft, of which Plum would surely have approved.

Word has reached the editorial offices of PLUM LINES, our informant being Ms. Judith Axe, a guest at the Delaware Valley Chapter dinner/dance on 23 April, that the Wodehouse Playhouse is being shown on the Washington DC Public Broadcasting System TV channel. Check local schedules. Ask your local PBS station (next time you make a substantial contribution) when they plan to reshow it in your area.

Two or three Plumies have protested that they don't see why FIRST EDITIONS are so all-fired important to book collectors; why, in other words, you can't have a very nice and satisfying collection of Plum's books without owning a single 1st edition. Did OM say that you can't have a very nice and satisfying collection of Plum's books without owning a single first edition?

Harking back in the files to PLUM LINES Vol. III, No. 3, 15 May 1982, OM is on record as having sagely counseled: "How about a few firsts, filling in with later editions and reading copies? In this day of small apartments and mobile homes, you may decide on a collection of quality paperbacks. You, and you alone, can set your collecting goals." Of course, if you feel like most collectors of Wodehouse, you'll replace your later edition or reading copy with a bon fide first edition if and when such an opportunity arises. Our two bookseller members, Charles E. Gould, Jr., and Barrie Phelps, sell reading copies and later editions at reasonable prices. David Jasen sells ONLY first editions. Jeremy Thompson's last issue of the PGW BOOKMART listed a number of reading copies, later editions, and first editions, along with a collection of 80 US and English first editions for any one who wants to collect in a hurry.

AND NOW FOR SOME GOOD NEWS! We are pleased to report that fully 82% of our members have paid 1983 dues!! This is encouraging, for at this time last

Note: This autobio sketch sent in by our latest member, Elizabeth (Betty) Ganns, 301 Lytle Lane, Lytle Creek, CA 92358, qualifies as an essay; therefore it is presented as a supplement.

Who introduced me to our beloved Plum? My father, conscientious mentor that he was, read Jeeves and Mr. Mulliner stories to my mother, sisters and me when we were stationed in North China during the early 1930's. I can still hear his delighted laugh ring out as he reached a particular spot in "The Reverent Wooing of Archibald:"

There was a long silence. Then she spoke.
"Do it again," she said.

In 1977, being now retired from the Army, my husband Rudy and I made our long-fantasized Wodehouse pilgrimage to England. A highlight was our visit to Corsham Court. One could easily imagine Harold, the page boy, sprinting down the celebrated Yew Alley - Jeeves dealing with swans on the island in the lake - and Connie severely sipping tea under the spreading cedar. We also paid a call on Madame Tussaud and were pleased to find Plum, pipe in hand, seated companionably opposite Dame Agatha.

In 1968, upon being advised of our project, Plum wrote, "I hope Dulwich is still the oasis it used to be, but I am afraid the builders will have spoiled it. I read in the paper that a large block of flats was to be erected in my old haunt, Croxted Road) (this is the one in which Algy Martin was interested in Paperweight)."

The Wodehouse display at Dulwich was not yet ready, so we returned in 1979. Tho the school was closed for the Christmas holiday, we were graciously allowed to admire and take pictures as long as we wished. The privilege of viewing this lighted stage-set of Plum's study, complete with loaded bookshelves, desk, famous typewriter, and Lady Ethel's picture, proved a delightful reward for making the return trip.

In 1979 we also "discovered" the fascinating bookshop of Joseph Connolly, author of P. G. Wodehouse: an Illustrated Biography. Mr. Connolly not only filled one of two remaining gaps in my collection (My Man Jeeves), but he told us how to find the museum where Richard (Wodehouse at Work and Wodehouse at Work to the End) Usborne holds sway. We were disappointed to learn that he was on holiday - another incentive to return.

During the same visit we also enjoyed televiewing several episodes of the Wodehouse Playhouse - each introduced by the Genius himself, no less! Later, at home, we were enabled to watch the entire series on PBS, thanks to a timely word from Lady Ethel and Ann Smith. Pauline and John may have achieved public identities as Upstairs/Downstairs characters, but to me they will always be pure Mulliner!

One thing we missed. Does any one know of a prototype of the Drones - which would permit women to view the august interior?

About my collection - not too many first editions, but the great thing is to be able to read and reread. Still yearning to get my hands on a copy of The Globe By-the Way Book.

Several Plummiess have told OM of their English trips and the Wodehouse literary shrines they visited. An essay listing the places a Plummy should visit seems to be needed for the guidance of future travelers. It would be a welcome supplement to PLUM LINES.

THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY

Membership List - Supplement No. 2
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Reportable activity in the New Member and Change of Address categories seems to be in short supply for this reporting period. It is to be hoped that this is a temporary situation. Studies are afoot in the Delaware Valley Chapter to determine whether or not an Apple computer owned by members Linda and Jim Rodenbach can reduce some of the routine work involved in TWS administration. If this is successful, recruitment efforts may be increased.

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. PLUM (Something New)

Editorial Ruminatiion: Our PLUM LINES items tend toward verbosity in this issue, an undesirable trait in a newsletter which aims at the light-hearted, breezy tone. There has been a dearth of input from the membership, resulting in the harried quality of this issue. Surely some among you can contribute a few sparkling tidbits, juicy info, observations of interest to other Plummies, ideas that may be useful to TWS.....