



"The fact remains that, almost alone among the writers of his time, P. G. Wodehouse is blessed with the beneficent gift of putting fun in his ink."Cosmo Hamilton.

Our masthead carries a proposed TWS symbol, based on a Rex Whistler drawing, modified by Pauline Blanc, TWS. Your comments, favorable or unfavorable, are solicited. Let us know how it strikes you....

We were fortunate to receive an excellent essay from Col. N.T.P. Murphy, TWS, which we publish as our supplement to this issue of PLUM LINES. If you don't have Col. Murphy's excellent little book, In Search of Blandings, you should send for it. Published for and sold only by the author, it is a must for Wodehouse collectors. Send 5.20 pounds (this typewriter lacks a symbol for pounds, doggone it!) and a little extra for postage, to Col. N.T.P. Murphy, TWS, Gill Cottage, Gosforth, Cumbria CA20 1AJ, UK.

Richard Osborne, TWS, tells us that The Sunday Times (London) recently ran a PGW Quiz, and that eleven contestants made perfect scores, among them...of course...being Richard. Half-a-case of champagne was awarded to the winners, though the exact division of six bots to eleven winners will forever remain one of those Great Insoluble Mysteries which one hears of now and then.....

Lady Ethel Wodehouse, TWS (our only honorary member) has endowed a P. G. Wodehouse Scholarship at Dulwich College, Plums alma mater. Eligibility in each case is to be determined by the Headmaster.

"Jeeves Takes Charge" did close at The Space, City Center Theater, New York City...then re-opened a few weeks later at the Roundabout/Haft Theater. On September 4th, it closed there. It is, however, headed for the road, Boston, Washington (DC), Los Angeles, and San Francisco being future billings. Keep a sharp eye out for it! Excellent review of JTC in the 22 August NEWSWEEK...your local library has back issues...

We have it straight from Joseph Dind, TWS, that the Toronto bookseller, L. A. Wallrich (About Books, 280-355 Queen Street) is one place where you may expect to find Wodehouse books. Jos. places his seal of approval on Mr. Wallrich's establishment.

An interesting essay about Plum may be found in Cosmo Hamilton's People Worth Talking About, McBride & Co., (date unknown) reprinted by Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, NY. OM found a copy in the Three Rivers, Michigan, public library...your public library may have it...

While on a recent field expedition to the wilds of Michigan to study the customs and mores of the natives, as well as to visit a beloved granddaughter, M/M OM inflicted a visitation on Christina and Bob Griffin, Edward Galligan, and Gary and Duaine Pamment at the book-filled home of the Griffins. In spite of his admission that he is not even a respectable duffer, OM was allowed to join the assembled company in a delightful tea, complete with blueberry trifle, served by Christina. On to the home of Ella and Charles Palmer, at Brampton, Ontario, where Alex Telfer and the Ortons (Valerie and Desmond) were gathered. A fine afternoon drooling over Ella's Wodehouse collection, and an excellent dinner, are fond memories. Then to Hamilton, Ontario, to enjoy the hospitality of Maire and Berners Jackson (Berners revealed all in a Brief Bio, PLUM LINES, Vol. III, No 2, 15 March 1982), with a fine dinner and a pleasant evening of conversation.

Plans for the Second International Convention of The Woodhouse Society are zipping right along. A greater attendance is expected this year than last, when we had to downgrade the convention to the status of a mere gathering. In addition to the Convention, Doylestown, Lahaska, and New Hope offer much of visitor interest. Doylestown's Mercer Museum, Fonthill, and Moravian Tile Works are "one-of-a-kind" attractions; Lahaska, a village -turned-shopping-mall, with one of the finest restaurants in the country, is an antiquers paradise. New Hope is a small gem of 19th Century homes and shops. A day could easily be spent in each town.



OUTLINE GUIDE TO WODEHOUSE'S ENGLAND..... Lt. COL. N.T.P. MURPHY

Although Wodehouse set many of his finest books in New York, Hollywood and Long Island, his heart remained in the England of his Victorian youth. Set out below is a brief guide to some Wodehouse locations. For seven years I traced the places he lived and their appearances in his novels and I found, at last, the three Stately Homes that became Blandings Castle.

I hope the notes will be of interest to enthusiasts visiting England and that, if they know their Wodehouse well enough, they will get the same delighted shock of recognition I did. In the small compass of a few pages, I have been unable to give all the proofs, but I set these out fully in In Search of Blandings, and nobody's proved me wrong yet!

LONDON - Flower of Cities All

Buy the small street guide called "London A to Z" and start at Piccadilly Circus by marking off three areas. Mayfair, that's the bit of London that lies between Piccadilly (the street) and Oxford Street; Trafalgar Square and the Strand; and for the third section look for the map with Sloane Square on it and mark off an oblong to the west, along the King's Road. We'll take Mayfair first.

Walk west along Piccadilly until you come to Dover Street on your right. This was the home, in the novels, of the Drones' Club and Wodehouse based much of it on the Bath Club that stood at 34 Dover Street. Gone now, I'm afraid - it was bombed in the war. Pay your respects, then continue up Dover Street. At No. 18, pause again. This is Buck's Club, very discreet, very smart, the other major source of the Drones' and still going strong. (Read The Inimitable Jeeves again.)

From Clifford Street make your way west again to cross Berkley Square and arrive in Hay's Mews. Wodehouse used it as Halsey Court, the home of many old friends, and at the end of it the door facing you is 47 Charles Street. This is the address specifically given to Aunt Dahlia in The Code of the Woosters and Wodehouse used it as a private joke with his friend and fellow writer Ian Hay who was living there when Wodehouse wrote his book.

From Hay's Mews, make your way west to Hyde Park. When you reach the Park, turn right up Park Lane. As you pass Grosvenor House, remember Wodehouse used it as Bloxham Mansions, the home of Oofy Prosser, Horace Pendlebury-Davenport and others. Soon after Grosvenor House, turn right into Green Street and right again into Dunraven Street. Go down to No. 17 and pay your respects. This was Wodehouse's London home for about ten years from 1927, and he used it as Lord Emsworth's London home in Summer Lightning.

You'll need a drink by now and where better to take it than in Wodehouse's famous Barribault's Hotel. This is Claridge's in Brook Street, about 400 yards east of Dunraven Street, and it is still as expensive and grand as it was when Wodehouse knew it.

CHELSEA

This is the London of Wodehouse's impecunious young men, the artists, writers, and poets that he lived amongst as a young man himself. Take the Underground to Sloane Square Station and walk west along the King's Road. On the right you will come to Markham Square. Wodehouse lived here when he first came to London to work in the bank. He loathed the place and soon left, although he gave it as Ukridge's address some time later. From Markham Square, cross over the King's Road and go down Walpole Street. Look at No. 23: Wodehouse moved here, used it in a couple of his novels and came to visit another writer, Denis Mackail, here in the 1920's. Mackail was followed by the author of Mrs. Miniver (Jan Struther). Not a bad record for one house.

If you've got time, continue down to the Embankment and cross over Battersea Bridge. On the right side, you will find Prince of Wales Mansions, a large Victorian block of flats. Wodehouse stayed here just before the First War and used it as an appropriate address for Bill West in Bill the Conqueror, Jerry Vail in Pigs Have Wings and Leila Yorke in Ice in the Bedroom.

TRAFALGAR SQUARE/STRAND

From Piccadilly Circus, turn east through Leicester Square and go down to Trafalgar Square. Take the bottom left-hand street, Northumberland Avenue. Walk along the left-hand side for about a hundred yards and you will pass a large modern bank. Up to 1963 the building on this site was an enormous Victorian edifice called the Constitutional Club. Wodehouse was a member for forty years and he drew it as the 'Senior Conservative' with such famous members as Psmith and Lord Emsworth. A pity it's gone. Walk on and you'll come to the Sherlock Holmes pub (well worth a visit). Just beside the pub is a small alley. Walk up, and twenty yards on the right you'll find an exotic Moorish doorway. This is the last trace of the Turkish Baths that stood on the site, which Wodehouse used and where the famous denouement took place in Psmith in the City.

Nothing much more to look at specifically, but if you want to look at a bit of London that hasn't changed for a hundred years, walk down to the Embankment just some fifty yards from the Sherlock Holmes and walk east. You'll pass some superb old buildings including the Temple where Shakespeare's Twelfth Night was first performed in the hall that still stands. Turn left up Temple Avenue and a few yards up on a corner you'll see Northcliffe House. Wodehouse made it the HQ of his Lord Tilbury, and his heroes often went there in the novels. Continue up Fleet Street and walk back westwards to Trafalgar Square. Fleet Street and the Strand aren't everybody's idea of beauty but they are still amongst the most interesting streets in London and buildings of the 1600s still rub shoulders with 20th Century neighbors - besides, Wodehouse (as well as all his young heroes) walked this way every day for nearly ten years. The famous Romano's, the real source of so many Wodehouse stories, has gone now but you can still get a drink in the Bodega at the corner of Bedford Street which Wodehouse knew and where Ukridge persuaded his friends into so many adventures.

DULWICH - "VALLEY FIELDS"

If you are in London, you can't really count yourself a Wodehouse enthusiast if you don't visit Dulwich. It's a London suburb only about five or six miles from Piccadilly Circus and it's the place where Wodehouse went to school and which he visited whenever he was in London to see how the school football team were playing.

If you're a real traditionalist, do what the Wodehouse characters do in the books and take the No. 3 bus from Piccadilly Circus and ask for a ticket to West Dulwich Station. Or you can take a train to the station itself as Lord Hoddesdon and Jane Martyn plus other characters did. As you come out of the station, note immediately beside you the bookstall where Wodehouse used to wait, so many years ago, for the next copy of the Strand magazine.

Then, with the station entrance behind you, turn left and then, after a couple of yards, left again into Croxted Road. This turns up dozens of times in the novels under various names; and Sam the Sudden is set in the house Wodehouse lived in for some months in 1895, No. 62 Croxted Road. It's gone now, alas; but there's still something for us. Read your copy of Big Money carefully and do what Lord Biskerton did. Walk right down Croxted Road till you come to the traffic lights at Park Hall Road. It's all a bit scruffy now but there's still an estates agent at the corner, as Wodehouse described. Turn left, and you'll see a pub about fifty yards along on your left. It's called the Alleyn Arms. Do what Lord Biskerton did, sample the beer; then cross the road and walk up a small road with the railway embankment immediately on your left. This is Acacia Grove. Follow it round to the left till you start approaching Croxted Road again. At the last house on the left, stop and look at it carefully: "Those yellow bricks, like a slow recovery from a recent attack of jaundice;" and in front of the door, two sphinxes. Yes, this is Peace Haven, the setting for so many stories. You are standing in the fabled Mulberry Grove.

One last tribute to be paid. Wodehouse loved Dulwich and in one of the few sad passages he wrote he describes the homesick Mike Jackson in Psmith in the City taking awful lodgings in Acacia Grove (the real name). He describes Mike walking from Acacia Grove, under the railway bridge, through the little gate into the school grounds and sitting on the seat under the chestnut tree, looking across at the school. Do as he did, and as Wodehouse often did, back the way you came, turn left under the bridge and immediately in front of you you'll see a small gate. Go through and sit on the seat and admire a typical English Public School, and one which Wodehouse loved till

the end of his long life. They have a Wodehouse section in their library now, with his desk and many of his books.

OUTSIDE LONDON - HAMPSHIRE

If you are visiting Hampshire, on the south coast, go and see Emsworth. Wodehouse had a cottage here in the early 1900s and he used all the local names to give to the dramatis personae at Blandings.

Emsworth itself gave its name to the Earl. The family name, Threepwood, comes from the cottage Wodehouse lived in. Find Record Road and about five houses down on the left you'll see a red-brick house on the left, with the name "Threepwood" over the door. Yes, it's the same one, and when Wodehouse lived here, Record Road was called Beach Road (the Blandings butler). For other local names, see Chapter 20, In Search of Blandings.

NORFOLK

Norfolk is on the east coast of England but, if you are visiting relatives in the U. S. Air Force, they're probably quite near Norfolk. There's one main place to see: Hunstanton Hall, just outside the town of Hunstanton up in the north corner of the county. Think of Wodehouse's big country houses. One thing divides them into two classes, those with a moat and those without. All his moated houses are based on Hunstanton Hall, and you can go out and see it. If you have a copy of Money for Nothing, you can trace the entire action of the plot in the grounds, although the famous moat and lake are shadows of their former selves. But do you remember the time Jeeves thwarted the angry swan who'd forced Bertie up on a roof in the rain? The roof was on The Octagon, on an island, near a country house, and you'll find it in the lake at Hunstanton. Wodehouse stayed here often with the L'Estrange family who held the Hall for hundreds of years, indeed nearly back to the Conquest (1066).

THE WODEHOUSE TRIANGLE and BLANDINGS CASTLE

The Thames and the Severn are the two great English rivers. If you draw a line from London to Bath, and another from London to Chester, and then join up Bath and Chester, you have the "Wodehouse Triangle." When Wodehouse was a boy, his parents were in Hong Kong, and he spent the first fifteen years of his life with uncles and aunts (he had 20 aunts and 15 uncles!), most of whom seemed to live along the banks of the river Severn. It is here that we shall find Blandings.

Drive west to Wiltshire and find a small town called Corsham. There is a splendid old house called Corsham Court, open to the public. Walk down to the lake and look back at the house. In the evening, or in bad weather, it seems (from the lake) to loom over the entire horizon as Blandings did when young lovers wandered disconsolately through the grounds. This is the first, 'background' Blandings. Wodehouse knew it as a seven-year-old when he stayed with his grandmother and four aunts at Cheyne Court in Box, just a few miles further west. It's still there, a lovely Jacobean house, and his stays there gave him the setting for The Mating Season.

Drive west again to Cheltenham and go to Winchcombe, a small town a few miles northeast of Cheltenham. Just south of Winchcombe, you'll find Sudely Castle. Yes, it's the same shape, the right size, it's Blandings: But only the building is right. For the Blandings parkland, the estate, and the 'real' Blandings, in my view at least, you must drive north. Travel up the Severn, but make sure you stop at Hanley Castle. At one side of this small village, you'll see the grammar school and, looking at the school, on your left is the Vicarage. About 600 yards left of that is a fine old house called Severn End where the same family has lived for hundreds of years. This is, in the novels, Market Snodsbury. The school in front of you is the scene of Gussie Fink-Nottle's famous prize-giving. Severn End was the house Wodehouse gave to Aunt Dahlia, 'Brinkley Manor/Court.' And the reason? An uncle was the vicar there, and Wodehouse knew both Severn End and the grammar school well.

We are nearing the end of our tour and approaching the climax. Keep driving north till you come to a small town called Bridgnorth. If you want to see the house of Sir Gregory Parsloe, go and look at Aldenham Park, to the west of Bridgnorth. But if you stick to the main trail, go to Bridgnorth and then, using a large-scale map, find Stable-

ford, a small hamlet about five miles northeast of Bridgnorth. Ask directions for the Old House, find it and admire it. This is where Wodehouse said he spent the happiest years of his childhood, and he made it the birthplace, under various names of several of his characters. If you have the Wodehouse 'school stories,' look at the map carefully. Every village and place-name around Stableford occurs in his books somewhere.

And now, drive northeast for about five miles till you hit the main A5 road. On this road you'll see a place called Weston Park. It's open to the public and is the home of the Earl of Bradford. Drive slowly in and notice that you drive along a track that goes straight till the house comes in sight, then swings right and left again. Sounds familiar? It ought to. Read Something Fresh again. And, in front of the house, stop and look around. There is the lake, there is the Grecian boat-house, there are the woods, there are the stables. You are looking at the main source of Blandings.

If you have been sensible enough to read Sunset at Blandings, you'll remember the picture Ionicus drew. He was given every detail known of Blandings and the result is superb. If you want proof, look at Sudely Castle from the air, then imagine it in the grounds of Weston Park. It is a perfect mirror image. And the reason why I know I'm right? Wodehouse said, "Blandings was a sort of mixture of places I remembered." And the three sources of Blandings (Corsham, Sudely, and Weston Park) were the three nearest 'great houses' to where he lived as a child. If you want all the proof, borrow (or better still, buy) In Search of Blandings. (Ed. note: PLUM LINES is happy to give just a little advertising space in return for such an interesting essay.) All the questions and problems are solved by these three splendid buildings. But don't just believe me, go to Weston Park on a sunny day and see for yourself.

I apologize for the brevity of this paper, but the Oldest Member asked for a guide, not a treatise. There are hundreds of other proofs for the claims above, but if you come to England, just follow these directions. You'll see Wodehouse's England.