



"Indeed, happy is probably the best adjective to use when describing the gaiety that is Wodehouse in print. His gentle humor and effervescent faith in human beings have enriched the literature of the world." ....Mary Jane Kneen, The English Journal.

Beginning 15 February 1985 WCY + 4, PLUM LINES will become a QUARTERLY periodical. Just when you've got used to reading this nifty bundle of joy six times a year! However, exhaustive studies by our Research Department show that nearly all prestigious societies issue quarterly...NOT bi-monthly...periodicals. Therefore..... # # #

NOTE THE DEARTH OF NEW MEMBERS in the past few months. VERY slow growth period. Of course OM is aware that Rome wasn't built in a day; but we're trying to build the Wodehouse Society, not Rome. How about telling a friend about Plum's stories, and about us?

Our Original Organization Plan, as some of the older hands may remember, called for the formation of chapters (two or more Plummies), national groups (two or more chapters), and an international co-ordinating group. It still does. Considering that we had no chapters four years ago, we have made great strides; we now have TWO chapters! They are obliged only to take our constitution as a guide. They may meet whenever or wherever it suits their convenience and mutual desires. It does take SOME initiative, of course. One member must talk with another member in his area to get the ball rolling. YOU COULD BE THAT MEMBER! # # #

The bookmarks which we are sending were copied from the back page of the Hutchinson/Barrie & Jenkins' Stocklist 1980, a listing of PGW in print. Their address: 3 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 6JD, U. K. NOTE: If these Bookmarks are used in books other than those written by (or about) Plum, they will turn a vivid scarlet with rage and gradually deteriorate.... # # #

The musical play, "The Three Musketeers," for which R. Friml wrote the music, originally opened at the Lyric Theatre, New York, on May 13th, 1928. Plum had written two of its lyrics, "The March of the Musketeers," and "Your Eyes." It ran for 318 performances, had some road life, and became a popular movie. The play has been revived. It opened at the Broadway Theater, 53d at Broadway, New York, last November 4th. We are hoping that our members in NYC and environs will tell us about it, for our PL drama critic is on vacation at the moment. In the meantime, we must rely on the NYTimes drama critic, who reports that the play has been updated, with saber play in the aisles, musketeers carousing from balconies, and riders onstage mounted on real, live quadrupeds! Promises to be fine entertainment for an autumn's evening. # # #

#### Q/A DEPARTMENT:

Q: Is there an actual stately home somewhere in Merry England which we can truly say is the prototype of Blandings Castle? ...Curious

A: Dear Curious: Ann Wood says there is (p.84, P.G. Wodehouse - A Centennial Celebration, 1881-1981, NY/London, 1981), and Col. Norman Murphy, TWS, said there is, taking bits here and there (In Search of Blandings, privately printed, 1981). OM opines, evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, that the real Blandings Castle exists only in our minds, constructed there stone by stone, story by story, by Plum himself, using imagination for mortar. Attempts to find an actual structure identifiable as Blandings Castle is like seeking the rabbit hole...the very one...through which Alice entered Wonderland. # # #

OUR FINANCIAL STATEMENT for 1984 will be sent with the February issue of PLUM LINES. Dues statements for 1985 will accompany the same issue. Those who joined us between 30 June and 1 November will be billed for half-dues (\$5 in US and Canada, \$6.25 overseas...US dollars, please); those joining after 1 November are paid through 1985. # #

IT ISN'T TOO EARLY to plan the coming year so that you can attend the 1985 International Convention of The Wodehouse Society to be held at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, on 19 October. Our president, Bob Hall, has arranged with Cornell's Conference Center to take care of our basic arrangements. As planning proceeds...and these things DO take planning...you will be informed in PLUM LINES. But NOW is the time to do some planning of your own. # # #

Graced by the Reise illustration from the dust wrapper of Nothing But Wodehouse, the 103d Birthday Catalog has been issued by Charles E. Gould, Jr., TWS. HBks from reprints to firsts at an attractive range of prices provide a wide latitude of choice for all. Also rec'd Cat. 23 from Waves Press and Bookshop, 4040 MacArthur, Richmond, VA 23227, listing 14 PGW books (a goodly number for any bookshop not specializing in Wodehouse). # # #

READERS' FORUM:

"Next to Plum, one of my great loves is Gilbert & Sullivan. We have five (G&S) societies in and around Montreal....What we need is some of Plum's efforts produced on a regular basis by such groups." ...Mary Rolland, TWS  
Ed. Note: We fully agree.

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By this time, most of you will have learned that our only honorary member, Ethel, Lady Wodehouse, died last October Sixth. Flowers were sent on behalf of all members of the Wodehouse Society. Our condolences are offered to her grandchildren, Edward Cazalet and Sharan Hornby.

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om  
The Oldest Member

NB -  
New Member:  
Scott Meredith, 845 Third Avenue,  
New York, NY 10022

IN MEMORIAM

Ethel, Lady Wodehouse, for over 62 years the beloved wife of Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse, died on October 6th, 1984, five months after her 99th birthday. Since the initiation of The Wodehouse Society in 1980, she had been our only honorary member.

Ethel May Newton was born on May 23d, 1885, at King's Lynn, Norfolk, England. When she met Plum in 1914 she was the 29-year-old widow of Leonard Rowley who had died in India. After Mr. Rowley's death she began a stage career to support herself and her daughter Leonora. She and Plum were introduced while she was visiting friends in New York.

From their first meeting Plum was enchanted, David Jasen has reported in his excellent biography, P.G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of A Master, NY 1974. "Our visits to Long Beach must have been during the month of August and the first half of September," Plum said of their courtship. "We used to go down to the Pennsylvania Railroad Station. We'd ride out to Long Beach to have a swim, then come back on the train. Of course there were hardly any motors then. Anyway, I couldn't have afforded that."

Strange as it may sound to those who suppose that Plum sold his stories as fast as they were pulled from his typewriter, he was having difficulty finding a market at that time. The Man with Two Left Feet, with its collection of unfunny stories, gives evidence of his familiarity with boarding houses and their denizens.

After their whirlwind courtship, with \$125. between them, they were married in The Little Church Around the Corner on September 30th, 1914.

That their marriage was a turning point in Plum's career is evident. Whatever the catalyst may have been, Ethel obviously provided inspiration, companionship, and good business acumen. He switched literary agents and, in 1915, sold the serial rights to Something New to the Saturday Evening Post for \$3500, a princely sum at that time. In a letter to William Townend (Author! Author! NY 1962) he said, "So now I could afford an occasional meat meal, not only for myself but for

wife and resident kitten and bulldog, all of whom can do with a cut off the joint."

Edward Cazalet, QC, TWS, spoke of his grandmother at the funeral service in the Community Church at Remsenburg. "An outward, gregarious person, she made great sacrifices in her life," he said. "She realized that what mattered above all for PGW was that he had peace and quiet, and she made sure that he was always protected."

Her interest in our Society was enthusiastic. She enjoyed learning of our progress, and appreciated the cards and flowers sent by our members after a chapter meeting or convention. We can't seem to improve on our previous tribute to Ethel: "She shared his life completely, hoisting many of his responsibilities onto her own shoulders to free him for his literary work. She shared his aspirations and successes, the anxious waiting to learn of the success or failure of a new musical comedy, and the dismal uncertainties of internment."

Phil Ayres, TWS, summed it up best with this: "No couple united at the end of a Wodehouse novel could have done better at the marriage game than they."

We will miss Ethel, as we have missed Plum.

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