



"...Mr. Wodehouse could give Freud cards and spades when it comes to understanding inhibitions....He is what used to be called a lord of language. He can play by ear, transpose at sight and accompany anybody. This is no superficial trick or sleight of hand; it means that he has probed the depths of human nature." ...Isabel Patterson

IN SEARCH OF BLANDINGS, by N. T. P.

Murphy, TWS, published privately in 1981 as a paperback, has been revised and enlarged and is being published in hard cover by Martin, Secker and Warburg, 54 Poland St., London W1V 3DF, England, at £12.95. It is available in the U. S. from Salem House Press, Box 1097, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632 (write for price). Col. Norman Murphy, who has provided us with PL supplements in the past, has another which is scheduled to appear in November. # # #

TWO NEW MEMBERS, the Kendalls, own and operate the Limestone Hills Book Shop, P. O. Box 1125, Glen Rose, TX 76043 (817)897-4991. They are long-time PGW addicts and will send booklists (some by Plum) upon request. AND David Landman and Sean Harmon, also PGW buffs, co-own and operate Bertie Books, P. O. Box 8874, Lowell, MA 01853. Likewise, booklists for the asking. DON'T OVERLOOK Charles Gould and Barry Phelps, of course...our veteran specialists in PGW books and ephemera. And David Jasen has a list of first edns for serious collectors. # # # # # # # #

JEEVES A BUTLER?

Let us be subtler: no true Wodehousean believes a butler ever could be Jeeves. See p. S-3. # # # # # # # # #

Remember October Fifteenth...the anniversary of the birth of Pelham Grenville Wodehouse. Wherever you are on that day, whatever you may be doing, take time to thank him, in your own way, for the wonderful legacy of fine humor he left for us. # #

You are reminded of our generous Spouse/Spousess Policy whereby the spouse (i.e., husband or wife, or vice versa) of any member may become a member at no additional charge. # # # #

SHADES OF LORD EMSWORTH! It has recently been reported that the Duke of Devonshire, listening to a speech in the House of Lords about personal pride, confided to his neighbor, "The

PLUM LINES - Continued

proudest day of my life was when my pig won first prize at Skipton
Fair." # # # # # # # # # # # # # # #

A WHOLE YEAR (but only ONE) to plan for your trip to the 1987
Wodehouse Society Convention in San Francisco. Plan NOW....

The Oldest Member

GALAHAD THREEPWOOD'S PARADISE

Robert A. Hall, Jr.

In *Summer Lightning* (Am.: *Fish Preferred*), Galahad Threepwood is introduced in Chapter I:2 as having been

[...] a notable lad about town. A *beau sabreur* of Romano's. A Pink 'Un. A crony of Hughie Drummond and Fatty Coleman, a brother-in-arms of the Shifter, the Pitcher, Peter Blobbs, and the rest of an interesting but not strait-laced circle.

As Norman Murphy has pointed out in his *In Search of Blandings*, the back-grounds of Wodehouse's stories almost always had a firm foundation, at most only slightly disguised, in real-life places and persons. In the passage quoted, the place (Romano's restaurant) and all the persons mentioned had a real existence. They are very fully described in Guy D ghy's *Paradise in the Strand*, a "biography" of Romano's restaurant and of many of its most colourful habitu s.

The restaurant itself was started by one Angelo Nicolino Romano in 1874, and its hey-day was in the 1880's and 1890's. It was patronized very largely by Bohemians, bookies, and generally eccentric types, especially gamblers on horses and boxers. Although its owner was actually of Neapolitan origin, he was universally known as "the Roman." The name of his restaurant was pronounced in several ways, differing in the position of the main accent and in the quality of the stressed vowel. The two chief contending pronunciations were the Italian-style *Rom hno* and the British-style *R mano*. The latter was based on the wide-spread British pattern of humorous word-formation by adding a final *-o* to a word, as in *boy-o*, *good-oh* (as an exclamation), and nonce-formations like *the old busto* (*Uncle Dynamite*, ch. VII:2), and is widely regarded as the most "authentic."

"The Pink 'Un" was a news-paper, *The Sporting Times*, so called because it was printed on pink paper. Founded in 1864, it lasted until 1914. In addition to the latest information regarding sports (especially boxing and horse-racing), it contained largely humorous pieces. These latter were often in what would today be considered very poor taste, with crude jokes directed against the middle and lower classes, the coloured races, Jews, and foreigners. Its staff of reporters (in general, a very eccentric bunch) were known as "Pink 'Uns," and were regular habitu s of Romano's. Gally would hardly have been one of the paper's professional staff, since he says, soon after he is introduced in *Summer Lightning*, "I had no notion writing was so easy. The stuff just pours out." Perhaps he just contributed a "par." (paragraph), an anecdote, or a joke from time to time.

The Pelicans were one of the numerous clubs founded in London in the latter part of the century, and (like most of them) was relatively short-lived. From D ghy's *Noble and Manly*, a history of boxing in nineteenth- and twentieth-century England, we learn that it lasted from 1887 to 1892. The "Pelicans" were devoted to boxing, betting, and general eccentricities.

Galahad's five cronies mentioned by name were all real-life people. Hugh ("Hughie") Drummond — all the Pelicans and Pink 'Uns were known chiefly by their nick-names — was a practical joker and a skillful driver of coaches. On one occasion, he drove a four-wheeler filled with his friends into the common-room of the Pelican Club and then conducted a twenty-minute choral rendering of the club's anthem. On another occasion, some jovial soul hurled a glazed boar's head at Hughie and just missed laying him out cold. Wodehouse devotees will remember two passages in which Gally describes similar events. In *Heavy Weather* (ch. VII), he tells how "Plug" Basham concussed George "Stinker" Pyke (later Lord Tilbury) with a side of beef at Romano's. In *A Pelican at Blandings* (Am.: *No Nudes Is Good Nudes*), ch. XI, he tells of two similar exploits on the part of "Stiffy" Halliday, "a man never more to be feared than when with cold turkey in hand," who laid Alaric, Duke of Dunstable, out as flat as a crêpe suzette, and also a fellow named Percy Pound, using the same blunt instrument.

Stephen "Fatty" Coleman was, as his nick-name suggests, renowned for his immense weight (twenty-four stone, or three hundred and thirty-four pounds). Like Nero Wolfe, whose "seventh of a ton" (as Archie Goodwin is always calling it) he rivalled, "Fatty" had to have a special chair, which is illustrated in Déghy's *Noble and Manly* (facing p. 81).

"The Shifter" was William Farn Goldberg, whose weekly column "The Office Boy's Diary" was widely regarded as the funniest part of the paper. His nick-name was undoubtedly derived from his enormous consumption of champagne and other alcoholic liquors, which sent him to the grave twenty-five years before his time. Such excessive consumption of alcohol was known as "shifting" the stuff or "mopping it up" (both of which expressions are used by Bertie Wooster, much to his Aunt Agatha's disgust, in "The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace"). The Shifter is described as having been small and dapper; for a photograph, see *Noble and Manly*, facing p. 49.

To "pitch" a tale was to tell it effectively, and, by all accounts, Arthur Binstead, "the Tale-Pitcher" or simply "the Pitcher," was a master *raconteur*. He could out-smart any-one at telling tall tales, and even when they were not exaggerated, his stories and his writing were exceptionally interesting. (He has left several volumes of memoirs.) The character of Galahad Threepwood seems to have been a combination of "Shifter" Goldberg and "Pitcher" Binstead, with the story-telling ability of the latter and the physical appearance of the former (plus his appetite for liquor). To these features, Wodehouse added an element of wish-fulfillment, in Gally's (of course utterly impossible) immunity to the normal real-life consequences of "mopping up" the stuff as the Shifter did.

"Peter Blobbs," also, was a real-life person, Reginald Shirley Brooks, one of the chief lieutenants of John Corlett, the "Master" of the *Sporting Times*. There were, as Wodehouse indicates, a number of other interesting but far from strait-laced characters among the Pelicans and the Pink 'Uns, each with his nick-name and his eccentricities, such as Ernest ("Swears") Wells — as his sobriquet indicates, a master of profanity — and Arthur ("Swish") Broadwood.

In Wodehouse's days at Dulwich (1894-1900) and immediately thereafter, the eccentricities of the Pelicans and the Pink 'Uns, and their exploits at Romano's and elsewhere, were the talk of London. As recollected by him and others in later years, they formed the perfect background for Gally Threepwood's reminiscences and anecdotes of a colourful, if not exactly sober, youth.

REFERENCES

Since this is hardly a scholarly paper, I have in general refrained from giving detailed page-references. Most of my information has been drawn from two books by Guy Dēghy:

Noble and Manly: the history of the National Sporting Club, incorporating the posthumous papers of the Pelican Club.
London: Hutchinson, 1956; pp. 240.

Paradise in the Strand: the story of Romano's, with twenty-three illustrations. London: The Richards Press, 1958; pp. 256.

Both of these books are undoubtedly out of print, but are well worth watching for in second-hand book-stores.

See also N. T. P. Murphy: *In Search of Blandings* (Carshalton Beeches: N. T. P. Murphy, 1981), especially Chapter 2 ("Pelicans and Pink 'Uns," pp. 9-28).

THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 1986

What Separates a Jeeves From a Butler *

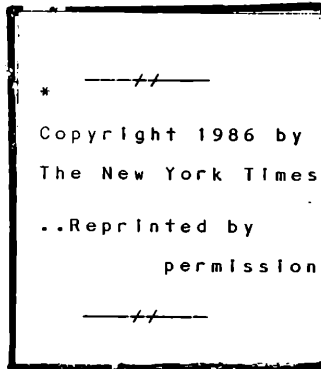
To the Editor:

As a P. G. Wodehouse purist, I was dismayed to read your headline reference to "Jeeveses" on a news story about a school for butlers in England that exports its products mainly to the United States (Living Section, May 28). Jeeves is not a butler. Never has been a butler.

Sebastian Beach, Albert Peas-march, Augustus Keggs and an army of lesser men were butlers, who butled in a castle or a manor and who were responsible only to be its major domo.

To imply that Jeeves, a distinguished fictional character for whom real people are training to be living counterparts, is merely a butler is an affront to his name.

Jeeves's fields of greatest expertise lay in sorting out the romantic entanglements of young ladies and gentlemen, neckties, socks and Nietzsche, whom he considered un-



sound. Jeeves lives as a "gentleman's personal gentleman." Never a butler.

JAMES H. HEINEMAN
New York, May 29, 1986

SIR PELHAM GRENVILLE WODEHOUSE, LL.D., HISTORIAN

"THE WRITER OF HISTORY, I BELIEVE," WROTE BARBARA TUCHMAN, "HAS A NUMBER OF DUTIES VIS-A-VIS THE READER IF HE WANTS TO KEEP HIM READING."¹ SHE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE HISTORIAN MUST DO THE PRELIMINARY WORK FOR THE READER, ASSEMBLE INFORMATION, MAKE SENSE OF IT, SELECT THE ESSENTIAL, DISCARD THE IRRELEVANT AND PUT THE REST TOGETHER SO THAT IT FORMS A DEVELOPING DRAMATIC NARRATIVE. SIR PLUM CONFIRMS THAT "THE CHRONICLER WHO WISHES TO GRIP MUST SUPPLY THE [BACKGROUND] INFORMATION AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT."²

*So well has the historian Wodehouse done these elementary tasks that his works read as persuasively as novels or fictional narratives. We tend to lose sight of Sir Plum, the raconteur of historical events and actually think of him as a fictionist. One well-meaning scholar recently went so far as to label him a farceur, a writer of farce! "The chronicler," wrote Sir Plum, obviously referring to the rule set by Tuchman, "feels that he runs no risk of losing his grip on the reader."*³

*With careful study and analysis one recognizes that Sir Plum wrote about genuine people in genuine places who involved themselves in genuinely sticky situations. Others have undertaken extensive research to establish the authenticity of persons⁴ and places⁵ mentioned in the Wodehouse canon. Such diligent studies would not have been pursued on behalf of fictitious characters and places. Many of Sir Plum's people virtually exude personality, character and personal integrity. "One great advantage to being a historian to a man like Jeeves," wrote Wodehouse, "is that his mere personality prevents one selling his artistic soul for gold."*⁶

Sir Plum was far too modest to claim to be in the same class of historians as Herodotus, Thucydides or Mason Locke Weems; rather, he spoke of himself in humbler terms as chronicler, one who records events, or as a reporter of these events, assuming the title of historian only infrequently. To protect the very real persons of whom he wrote from harassment by bookies and creditors, or from unkindly aspersions by fellow club members, he cleverly altered names and

places to create the appearance of fiction. "It is not my place to criticise the little group of people whose annals I am relating," he has written; "my position is merely that of a reporter."⁷

REALIZING THAT HIS STATUS AS A HISTORIAN MIGHT BE QUESTIONED, AND THAT HE MIGHT BE REMEMBERED AS A MERE FICTIONIST, PLUM WAS WILLING TO COMPROMISE FOR A LESSER CATEGORY. "MINE," HE ONCE SAID, "ARE HISTORICAL NOVELS. NOBODY OBJECTS WHEN AN AUTHOR WRITES THE SORT OF THINGS THAT BEGIN, 'MORE SKILLED THAN I AM AT WIELDING THE BROADSWORD THAN THE QUILL, I WILL SET DOWN FOR ALL TO READ THE TALE OF HOW I, PLAIN JOHN BLUNT, DID FOLLOW MY DEAR LIEGE TO THE WARS WHEN HARRY, Y-CLEFT THE FIFTH, SAT ON OUR ENGLISH THRONE.' THEN WHY AM I NOT ALLOWED TO SET DOWN FOR ALL TO READ OF HOW THE HON. J. BLUNT GOT FINED FIVE POUNDS BY THE MAGISTRATE AT BOSHER STREET POLICE COURT FOR DISORDERLY CONDUCT ON BOAT RACE NIGHT?"⁸ WHY, INDEED, NOT?

REFERENCES:

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2. WODEHOUSE, CRIME WAVE AT BLANDINGS (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN, NY 1937).
3. IBID.
4. C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON, JEEVES, A GENTLEMAN'S PERSONAL GENTLEMAN (ST. MARTINS PRESS, NY 1979).
GEOFFREY JAGGARD, BLANDINGS THE BLEST (MACDONALD, LONDON, 1968).
JAGGARD, WOOSTER'S WORLD (MACDONALD, LONDON, 1967).
5. N.T.P. MURPHY, IN SEARCH OF BLANDINGS (PRIVATELY PRINTED, 1981).
ANN WOOD, "WHERE IS BLANDINGS CASTLE?" (AN ESSAY IN HEINEMAN & BENSON'S P. G. WODEHOUSE, A CENTENARY CELEBRATION, 1881-1981, OXFORD UNIV. PRESS/PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY, LONDON/NY 1981).
6. WODEHOUSE, INTRODUCTION TO JEEVES OMNIBUS (GARDEN CITY PUBL. CO., NY 1940).
7. WODEHOUSE, THREE MEN AND A MAID (GEORGE H. DORAN, NY 1940).
8. HORIZON MAGAZINE, JANUARY 1959.

[Ed. note: This disturbing essay was submitted by a member who asked that his name not be used. Inasmuch as its conclusions differ radically from those of many authorities, we were at first reluctant to publish it. A dash of controversy, however, may be the spice we need to enliven PLUM LINES. Your reaction to it will be relayed to its writer.]

This issue of Plum Lines looks a bit...at's the word I want, Jeeves?"
"Higglety-pigglety, sir?" Precisely, Jeeves."

Wodehouse on the Waterfront

[From our very active San Francisco Chapter (Carl Wells, President pro tem) comes this account of Wodehouse's.]

Recently several San Francisco Chapter members set out on a Friday evening to visit Fort Mason, a former Army base on the shoreline of San Francisco Bay. There, in a converted wooden firehouse, a group of some 80 to 100 Plum fans gathered for a Wodehouse reading.

James Donald Walters, author, linguist, and songwriter, entertained the audience from an armchair on a small stage. Walters, who was an English school lad of 12 when he discovered Wodehouse's work, received an enthusiastic response for his readings of two stories.

The crowd first heard "Gala Night," one of the tales of Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo: "It is not often administered to human beings, having been designed primarily to encourage elephants in India to conduct themselves with an easy nonchalance during the tiger-hunts which are so popular in that country. But occasionally human beings do partake of it, with impressive results."

Then it was on to "The Clicking of Cuthbert," where the hero encounters a bearded Russian writer: "Down in the forest something stirred. It was Vladimir Brusiloff's mouth opening, as he prepared to speak. He was not a man who prattled readily, especially in a foreign tongue. He gave the impression that each word was excavated from his interior by some up-to-date process of mining."

There's nothing like a dash of Plum to start the weekend right.

[Mr. Walters narrates the cassette-recorded PGW stories sold by Joyous Arts Production Assn., 14618 Tyler Foote Rd., Nevada City, CA 95959]

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It is worthier of man to rise in laughter above life than to bewail it. He is more worthy of the human race who laughs at it than he who sheds tears over it.
.....Seneca

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Meet your fellow members: JIM DYSON was born in England at the end of the last century, and educated at English schools. In the 1930s he was transferred temporarily by the company he worked for to their New York office and he married Jerry, who was born in Montclair, NJ. He has now been happily retired for nearly 13 years.

FATHER DUAINE H. PAMMENT, a 52-year-old Catholic priest; pastor of a small rural parish where plenty of time could be given over to reading if only the Bishop would not give him so many other jobs; an avid reader of PGW since 1951 and devoted collector of his riotous volumes only within the last few years, and a golfer of no excellence whatever. [His own words!]