



"The gallery of characters [in *Big Money*] is a full one...All play their parts with the cheerful addiction to ill-calculated and hazardous schemes which is the form that human activity takes, to our pleasure, in the Wodehouse world." [London] Times Lit Suppl 1931

This issue of PLUM LINES is a few days late...or perhaps I shouldn't've mentioned it... EXPLANATION: Rather than cause those members who couldn't attend the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY to wait three long and harrowing months for the NOV PLUM LINES to learn of the enspiriting events and momentous decisions which befell us there, our editorial staff decided to hold this issue until a Convention Report could be included. Such monumental decisions are constantly being made in editorial sanctum sanctorum throughout the civilized world. # # #

BOOKLISTS/CATALOGS RECEIVED: Spring Booklist, 1987, Charles E. Gould, Jr., TWS, Kent School, Kent, CT 06757; all PGW Items. Catalog #6, July 1987, Bertle Books, P. O. Box 8874, Lowell, MA 01853 (Sean Harmon, TWS/David Landman, TWS); all PGW Items. # # #

FROM THE CHARIVARI COLUMN of PUNCH , 10 June 1987, an item by Rosemary Burton: 'A Journey into Deepest Woostershire.' As Plum was granted the privilege of carving his initials in PUNCH'S Round Table, we presume that PUNCH won't really mind that we've reprinted this:

Heart of England Tours, Limited, [Ms. Burton writes] have secured the services of PUNCH'S own Lt. Col. N. T. P. Murphy [TWS], author of that seminal work *In Search of Blandings*, to lead Wodehouse enthusiasts to the actual scenes of Wooster's adventures. Blandings Castle, Brinkley Court, and Market Snodsbury Grammar School all exist, merely masquerading under other names, and participants in a Wooster weekend can enjoy coffee, croquet, and a dinner party at Blandings itself. The first two tours (we suspect there will be demands for more) are scheduled for September 4 to 6 and October 9 to 11. Based at the Queen's Hotel, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire [England], these tours cost £155 per person, including room and most meals. # # #

A rare Opportunity, indeed. # # #

PGW COMIC STRIPS!!! Rob [for Robin] Kooy, TWS, has provided us with an entirely new aspect of Wodehouse Ephemera. Check our Supplement... # # #

PLUM LINES - 15 August 1987

A Prawn at Ascot, or A Pawn in Aspice, by Charles E. Gould, Jr., [TWS] North Adams, Massachusetts, 1987. Illustrated with a drawing of Galahad Threepwood, otherwise unpublished, by Peter van Straaten, cameo front cover, full-length with background on back cover. 7 pages. Wrappers. ISBN 0-9618531-0-7. (Pastiche) Limited to 200 signed copies. \$9.50 (Postage \$1.00 for first copy, 25¢ for each additional copy. Connecticut residents add sales tax).

CORRECTION: The publication date of the paper-cover reprint of P. G. Wodehouse, by Joseph Connolly, TWS, listed in the May PLUM LINES as June, should have read October. Published by Thames & Hudson, 30-40 Bloomsbury St., London WC1, UK, @ £5.95 (plus 15% S/H). _____ # # #

The most important piece of luggage is and remains a joyful heart. Hermann Löns

REMINDER: UNDER OUR VERY GENEROUS SPOUSE/SPOUSESS POLICY, SPOUSES AND/OR SPOUSESS OF MEMBERS MAY BECOME MEMBERS AT NO ADDITIONAL COST! THIS INCREASES OUR MEMBERSHIP WITHOUT APPRECIABLY INCREASING OUR ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD. JUST SEND HIS OR HER NAME.....


THE OLDEST MEMBER

In the autumn of 1974 there (that is: here, in the Netherlands) was an exposition surveying the phenomenon of Dutch Comic-Strips. This exposition eventually, ten years later, led to the rediscovery of what, lacking further evidence, has to be considered the only newspaper comic-strip after a P.G. Wodehouse novel.

The catalogue to match this exposition was a fine piece of a reference work, not only summarizing the careers of not lesser than 172 of the most important Dutch stripmakers, but also showing fragments of each one's work (or, should I have said: 'art'?).

So, for many years I had this catalogue stored safe on a bookshelf until, in 1984, I became engaged in writing the "Dutch Wodehouse Bibliography." Then I remembered that one of the fragments had been, as early as in 1974, pretty familiar to me, though I was certain I never saw it before. I looked it up and, as you can see for yourselves (provided O.M. can make a passable reproduction), it obviously is a scene from 'Leave it to Psmith,' chapter I; the scene where Lord Emsworth has the news that he must go to London to give lunch to a Mr McTodd at his club.



You will easily recognize the characters, after PGW's own description as he gave us during the present scene: The Efficient Rupert Baxter, 'thick-set and handicapped by that vaguely grubby appearance which is presented by swarthy young men of bad complexion,' Lord Emsworth, 'tall and lean and scraggy,' and the latter's sister Lady Constance Keeble, 'a strikingly handsome woman in the middle forties'; having 'a fair, broad brow, teeth of a perfect even whiteness, and the carriage of an express'.

Since I am an addict of both Mr Wodehouse and comic-strips, I could not be content, you'll understand, by just noticing that someone matched my two lines of interest. The least thing I wanted was a complete set of this strips, for my private collection. So I started bothering all relevant persons and resorts with my inquiries. I guess no one in the history of mankind ever met such a long line of disillusionments, though my starting point seemed to be not bad at all. Here's what I knew:

The comic-strip fragment shown was made by Georges MAZURE. I knew his home address, as it was in 1974. I also knew that he worked most of his life for "Toonder Studio's." Georges Mazure also made the cover illustrations for three Wodehouse book editions in 1960-61, and the inside illustrations in the 1960 edition of 'Dokter Sally.' I did not know the title of the comic-strip, but I could make a good guess at it. I might expect that the comic-strip was made in the early sixties, at about the same time Mazure was doing the other 'Wodehouse things'. As a member of 'Het Stripschap' (The organization of Dutch comic-strip addicts) I had admission to files kept close for anyone but 'Stripschap'-members and other (professional) researchers.

I can hear you murmur: "What the heck he is complaining about? If ever somebody had a flying start!" Indeed I had, but I tripped over the very first hurdle. All that the 'Stripschap' Documentation Centre could tell me, was: "Yes the fragment shown is in our files. No, this fragment is all we have from the strip concerned. No, we don't know where or when it was published". That was the first dead end.

I just told you I knew Mazure's address in 1974, but soon enough I found out that he moved to France since, died there in 1980, with no living relatives known. Which was the second dead end.

Mazure's former employer, Toonder Studio's, told me, as I already knew from the Documentation Centre: "Yes indeed, almost everything Mazure made, was distributed through us, but he also made several 'free productions', and this must be one of those". So, my next try was 'Swan Features Syndicate,' an agency buying, distributing, and selling comic-strips (Dutch as well as foreign) world-wide. By now, you will be able to make a good guess to the answer: "Yes, we sold several of Mazure's free productions alright, but this one we've never seen". That made a grand total of four dead ends.

Fortune seemed to have turned its face, but then there suddenly was a phone call from the Documentation Centre: "We've found somebody who seems to know more about it. He told us that he thinks this strip was one of a series of at least three stories, published about 1960 in the 'Algemeen Dagblad' newspaper". During my subsequent search in the 'Algemeen Dagblad' files, however, I found no trace whatsoever of a Mazure comic-strip. "But," they said to me, "if you want to be certain, you could go to the 'Royal Library' in The Hague, where a complete set of our paper is kept".

So, the wife and I spent a full day in the 'Royal Library,' wrestling ourselves through some 2,000 kilo's of paper. That is, the 'Algemeen Dagblad' issues from 1954 till 1968. Results zero point zero, dead end number five. If the strips ever were published, no doubt it must have been in another paper.

Before the story gets monotonous, let me tell you that, finally, my perseverance was rewarded, by a mere fluke. A strip-collector contacted me with a newspaperman who could tell me that this particular strip was published in 'Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad'. So, I went to the 'Royal Library' once more, where I finally found the long-wanted strips, and could make photocopies of it.

"All's well that ends well", one is assumed to think. But, no sir! Almost every newspaper that ever appeared in the Netherlands is kept in the 'Royal Library'. But the 1962 copies of 'Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad' are missing. The 'Leave it to Psmith' strips ended in October 1961! So I still could not ascertain if this one story was followed by another one, or more. For, as a matter of course, there were absolutely no records about it in the 'Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad' own files. All they could tell me, was that 'Laat 't daar aan Psmith over' (the Dutch title of the strips) probably was bought from an English agency. Which might be true, or not. Still, not a bad idea after all. Mazure could have made the strips with the balloons 'in English' in the first instance, in order to make the stuff easier to sell.

Now, at long last, we're coming to the core of the matter. In every instalment of the strips there is a mark: *T.T.D. within a rectangle*. Most certainly a copyright mark. Of course I first tried 'Swan Features Syndicate' once more. They stated they'd never seen it before. But also in Britain, nobody concerned with the metropolitan or national newspapers, not even the Patent Office, could tell me what 'T.T.D.' stands for. "Most probably an obscure agency, which has disappeared since", was all I got.

No doubt, this comic strip deserves a place in the list of Wodehouse ephemera, by James H. Heineman, TWS. But, there's more to be wanted. If only the copyright owner can be found, a reprint of the strips may be considered (Nowadays everyone is reprinting old comic-strips, even comic-strips of a much lesser quality). And, what's even more important: We need T.T.D. to tell us if Mazure made more than this only one story, since nobody else seems to know.

So, I hereby do an urgent appeal, especially to my British fellow Wodehouseans: Please help me to find out about the what- and whereabouts of T.T.D.

P.G.WODEHOUSE Laat 't maar aan Psmith over **GEORGES MAZURE**



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REMEMBER.....

Stop for a moment on October Fifteenth to remember Plum. Leigh Hunt's arguments in favor of observing Shakespeare's birthday apply with equal force to Plum:

"The birthdays of such men ought to be kept, in common gratitude and affection, like those of relatives whom we love....The busiest finds time to eat his dinner, and may pitch one considerate glass of wine down his throat. The poorest may call him to mind, and drink his memory in honest water."

We can all accord him thanks for the treasure of fine humor he bequeathed to us. Wherever you may be on that day, whatever you are doing, remember Plum and thank him in your own way.