



Plum Lines

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The Girton Girl: Honoria Glossop and Others

BY TIMOTHY KEARLEY

HONORIA GLOSSOP looms as one of the more memorable Wodehouse women. We first meet the awe-inspiring Honoria in the 1922 *Strand* story “Scoring Off Jeeves,” where Bertie describes her as

one of those dashed, large, brainy, strenuous, dynamic girls you see so many of these days. She had been at Girton, where, in addition to enlarging her brain to the most frightful extent, she had gone in for every kind of sport and developed the physique of a middle-weight catch-as-catch-can wrestler.

Honoria’s having been at Girton seems meaningful, but many readers wouldn’t be sure of its significance and why Wodehouse made her a graduate of that particular college. American Anglophiles probably would be aware of Girton, likely having a vague sense that it was the English version of Vassar (or another of the prestigious Seven Sisters women’s colleges). In fact, many modern Britons might not be fully aware of Girton’s place in England’s educational and cultural history. The vastly informed Norman Murphy, for instance, once wrote of Girton that “for some reason, this Cambridge women’s college has always been regarded as more serious than Newnham or its Oxford counterparts.”

My principal purpose here is to explain why Girton not only was thought of as being more serious than its counterparts but also, in time, was widely believed to attract, or produce, physically fit and assertive graduates such as Miss Glossop, who Bertie claims has the look of a sergeant-major. She is said to have “a laugh like a squadron of cavalry charging over a tin bridge”; one



Tim Kearley

can see why Bertie considered her not quite the thing to have to face across the breakfast table.

There are three fundamental facts to grasp about Girton at the outset in order to understand its significance to Britons when Wodehouse wrote of that college. Most importantly, Girton was the very first British educational institution in England that we would think of as a true residential college for women. Established by Emily Davies and others in 1869, it was known initially simply as the College for

Women. The college began with five students living and working together in Benslow House in the village of Hitchin, some thirty miles from Cambridge. By way of comparison, it may help to note that, in the United States, Vassar was founded in 1865 and Wellesley in 1873. Elmira College (New York), whose first class



Girton College

graduated in 1859, claims to have been the first college to bestow on women a bachelor's degree "based on a curriculum equal to those of good men's colleges."

From the start, the intention of Girton's founders was "to create a permanent institution, and in time to secure full membership in the University of Cambridge for the college and its students." Most middle-class and upper-class girls in Victorian England were taught at home by governesses or tutors, with a few going on to attend unchallenging day schools when they reached their teens. The purpose of the College for Women was to be a girls' residential school and to be what the universities were in relation to boys' public schools, i.e. the institution of higher education towards which girls strived. A few sympathetic Cambridge dons traveled to Hitchin to tutor the college's students at the university level. When the Benslow House lease was running out three years later, the college was doing well, so its governors decided to install the institution closer to the university. So it was that in 1873 the college moved to newly built facilities in the village of Girton, about two miles from Cambridge, and it was established as Girton College.

As Britain's first college for women, Girton became the proverbial cynosure of all eyes. It received intense scrutiny—far more attention than any of its sister schools, even though they appeared shortly thereafter. Newnham College arose as Girton's sister school at Cambridge in 1871, and eight years later, Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville Hall were established as women's residential colleges associated with Oxford University.

Another reason for the intense public interest in Girton was that—in the midst of the Victorian

Age—education generally, and women's education in particular, were the subjects of heated debate in the United Kingdom. The specially formed Schools Inquiry Commission issued a lengthy review of the nation's educational policy in 1868, and Parliament passed three major education reform acts from 1868 to 1870. Emily Davies and others had wisely convinced the commission to include young women's education within its broad purview, and they were not disappointed with the outcome. The commission's review—known as the Taunton Report—generally supported secondary and higher education for girls, going so far as to suggest that their capacity to learn was roughly equal to that of boys. This was a progressive notion at the time, and the Taunton Report was published near the start of the women's rights movement in England; e.g., John Stuart Mills's work *The Subjugation of Women* was published a year later—the same year the College for Women was founded in Hitchin.

Additionally, Girton's creation coincided with the expansion of the popular press and the proliferation of light novels for young women in England. Magazines such as *The Girl's Own Paper*, *Young Woman*, *Sisters*, and *Atalanta* contributed to the discussion and speculation about women's education, as did novels. The nature of women's colleges and the lives of their students became an endless source of fascination for a significant segment of the public. Publishers even created, or perhaps picked up from popular culture, the concept of the "Girton Girl" (about this we'll say more soon). In short, as one commentator notes, "as the first university-based college for women, Girton occupied a particularly strong emblematic space." And I would add that "Girton Girl" has a certain *je ne sais quoi* lacking in "Newnham Girl." ("Newnham Nymph?" No, Her Majesty would not have been amused.)

So, here we have the building blocks of Girton's reputation for harboring hard-working, highly intelligent young women: It was the very first residential women's college in England, and it opened in the midst of national conversation about education for females and women's rights generally. Given these circumstances, Girton could accept only serious students who were truly devoted to learning and to showing themselves equal to their male counterparts at Cambridge University's other colleges. As one early Girton student put it:

We were conscious of our privilege . . . in a great forward movement for the woman's cause. . . . Two things mattered intensely: first, that we should do well in our work, . . . second, that

we should avoid giving offence or injuring the cause by any breach of conventional behavior.

Hence the Girton Girl's serious demeanor. Having established her *mens sana*, we shall soon see how she also developed a reputation for a *corpore sano* as well.

Girton Girls were deemed brainy for good reason. Although Girton students could not actually earn B.A. degrees from Cambridge University until 1948, when Girton was officially designated as one of its colleges, Girton's (and Newnham's) students were permitted unofficially to take the Cambridge Tripos examinations beginning in the early 1870s. The Tripos are "the final honors examination for the B.A. degree [at the University of Cambridge], originally in mathematics but now in any subject," but their significance extended beyond the university because, as one historian put it, the classical honors courses "played a central part in two crucial and related processes in Victorian Britain: the transmission of culture and the reproduction of social elites."

In 1880, Girton's Charlotte Scott was named 8th Wrangler (eighth-highest scorer) in the Mathematics Tripos, and in 1888 Girton's Agnata Ramsay was the only student—male or female—to earn a first-class designation in the Classical Tripos. This early success of Girton women in the Tripos provided one basis for the college's reputation for harboring big-brained women. Girton (and Newnham) students could be designated as achieving first-class honors even though they could not be granted the B.A. with which those honors were ordinarily associated. Many Girton grads went on to highly successful careers without a formal degree.



In addition, although the slightly younger Newnham College was open to some of the curricular changes that Cambridge was experimenting with at the time to give students more flexibility in their studies, Girton decidedly was not. Newnham, for example, allowed its young women to spend less time on Greek and Latin composition because girls' preparatory secondary education typically was less intense in those areas than that of boys at public schools. Girton students, however, were strongly urged by Miss Davies to meet the university's traditional curriculum requirements even though that required additional tutoring and disadvantaged them relative to the young men at Cambridge. This added to their reputation as serious, scholarly grinds.

The need for Girton students to spend many hours in study facilitated their initial characterization as skinny, sallow, and generally unattractive, not at all as the physically robust specimen we see in Honoria. In order to see how that change came about, we need to look briefly at the prevailing Victorian middle- and upper-class English ideal of womanhood. Most middle- and upper-class Victorians equated feminine daintiness and fragility with refinement and gentility, deeming robust physicality to be unladylike. Leisurely strolling with a companion, modest dancing, and perhaps a spot of croquet constituted the typical exercise, if any, for middle- and upper-class girls and women. A commonly held corollary of the Victorian belief in female physical weakness was that strenuous study was beyond them and would undermine their emotional and physical well-being. In the early 1870s, two physicians (Edward Clark of Harvard and Henry Maudsley of University College, London) alleged that science showed women had limited energy which ought to be channeled into their reproductive systems, and that doing otherwise would be a disaster for the human race—"a crime before god and humanity."

Moreover, many Victorians thought higher education not only would further weaken the typical fragile female but would turn those who managed to survive it into masculine "bluestocking" intellectuals, making them unattractive to potential husbands and unfit to be the wives and mothers God intended them to be. Ancient Greek in particular was deemed too difficult and stressful for women, and it was thought that the pride of those women who survived the learning of it would make them the worst of bluestockings. In the December 25, 1897, *Chambers's Journal*, a poet expressed this fear to his beloved, who was a sweet, "normal" girl before she went off to Girton, in "To a Girton Girl (A Rondeau)":

Your head is full of Cicero,
As leisurely to class you go.
Since you've learnt Greek you pass me by,
You are a Girton girl, and I
Am but a frail, weak man. But, oh!
I loved you once.

Girton's Emily Davies solicited a rebuttal to Clark and Maudsley from England's second licensed female doctor, Elizabeth Garrett, regarding the physical ability of women to undertake higher learning. She and her adherents argued that boys were stronger due to social expectations, rather than nature, and that if girls exercised more they would be able to study as hard as boys. Happily, the Taunton Report supported the women, concluding that "the want of systematic and well-directed physical education" was one of the main barriers to good health and academic success for young women. Garrett and the Taunton Report provided the socially and scientifically acceptable rationales that Girton and other women's colleges needed to introduce exercise and games into the culture of women's higher education. Davies and others believed physical fitness and less-restrained movement for girls was a good thing.

It isn't surprising, then, that a gymnasium and athletic fields were integral parts of the new facilities built at Girton, though funding difficulties delayed the gymnasium's construction until 1877, some four years after the college's move from Hitchin. Intracollegiate and intercollegiate athletics quickly became popular at Girton and other women's colleges as part of a nationwide surge in the popularity of sports and games during the middle and late 1800s. It's interesting to note that it was only in the mid-1800s that "games" started to become a defining characteristic of the British public-school experience. That enthusiasm for organized sports shifted both upwards into the universities, as the public-school boys graduated into them, as well as over to women's colleges. Young women soon came to desire a complete college experience similar to the whole college experience that the young men were enjoying, and athletics—especially organized team contests—were central to that experience. Since the mistresses wanted their charges to be physically strong and confident, they—sometimes reluctantly—supported the creation of sports clubs and games in their schools and colleges.

St. Andrews School for Girls, which opened in 1877 under Girton grad Louisa Lumsden, was the first residential girls' school to follow the boys' public-school attention to games. The paragon of girls' public-school

athleticism, however, was Wimbledon House, aka Roedean, where Lord Emsworth's hefty, quondam pig woman Monica Simmons was educated (as were Hilda Gudgeon in *The Mating Season* and her school friend Madeline Bassett). As Roedean and other public-school girls went on to women's colleges such as Girton, they brought their love of games and exercise with them.

At Girton, the young ladies did Swedish gymnastics as created by Pehr Henrik Ling, and they engaged in games such as field hockey with increasing vigor over the years. The first hockey club at Girton was established in 1890. The first Girton-Newnham match took place two years later, and in 1894 a united Girton-Newnham team played Oxford's combined Lady Margaret Hall–Somerville Hall hockey club. The Girton College Hockey Song created in the latter year reflects the rampant student enthusiasm:

"Play Up!" all the College cried.
"Pass out to the wing, girls!"
"That's the sort of thing, girls."
"Run! I thought I should have died."
"Knocked it through the Newnham Goal!"

The sport grew so popular at Girton that the *Girton Review* covered it more extensively than any other subject, and making the hockey first eleven was for a Girtonian as great an honor as playing for the football first eleven at a men's college. By 1900, Girton students were so keen on sports that some observers were convinced the pervasive athletic atmosphere kept Girtonians from becoming dreaded bluestockings.

Images and descriptions of the Girton Girl in books and magazine articles show how she was perceived by the public initially and how that perception changed over time. It's not clear when the first use of the term "Girton Girl" occurred, but in 1881 *Temple Bar* magazine published a serial entitled "A Girton Girl," which was issued as a novel of the same title in three parts in 1885. So the phrase probably was in popular use by 1880. The Girton Girl was earlier than, and quite different from, America's Gibson Girl, who was in vogue from the 1890s into the early 1900s. The Gibson Girl was much more an ideal of female physical attractiveness, revolving around beauty, fashion, and athleticism, and having little connection to political or intellectual matters. The Girton Girl's image, on the contrary, could not be separated from her status as a serious college student interested in the affairs of the day. The two caricatures were similar mainly in that they were phenomena of the popular culture that arose from a widespread popular press interested in the changing status of young women.

We saw earlier that the Girton Girl was at first described in negative terms: scrawny, bespectacled, unfashionable, and unattractive. At least, this was the image conveyed by the men who were writing about her and drawing her for public consumption. This Girton Girl of the 1870s and '80s seems to have been considered to be akin to the grim, pinched-faced women's rights advocate, as drawn by Tenniel in 1870 (below).



In 1876 another Tenniel drawing in *Punch* (below) showed Girton students as being more fashionable and not unattractive, but rather hard, cynical, and cigarette-smoking.



It wouldn't be surprising if there were a soupçon of truth to the "unfashionable" label, to the extent that some early Girton women probably did want to convey visually the idea that they were different from other

girls of their class who were expected to be focusing on attracting a husband. An article in *Sisters* magazine from the mid-1890s claimed that "in the early days of university education for women . . . some students seem to have thought they could best show their superiority over their more frivolous sisters, by disregarding their appearance. . . . It is a kind of error almost inseparable from the initiation of a 'movement.'"

Writing around the same time, the author of a *Cassell's Family Magazine* piece alleged that "the Girton Girl of ten years ago [mid-1880s] . . . was a sombre and spectacled person, carelessly and dowdily dressed, who gave herself up to wisdom, and despised everyone who did not know the Agamemnon by heart." (The author goes on to lament that this earlier girl also probably wasn't loveable.)

The qualities of the Girton Girl were still being disputed in the early 1880s when the general cultural concept of such a being was being embedded in the public mind, but the trend was to depict her more positively. She was becoming one of the representatives of progressive femininity and was prominently featured in periodical articles, fiction, poetry, and cartoons from the 1870s to the 1890s. Magazine articles describing Girton and other women's colleges and the details of students' habits proliferated in the 1890s to the extent that their readers could describe a "typical" woman college student's room and her daily life.

That many of the older, negative qualities still were attributed to Girton (and Newnham) students in the 1890s is evidenced by a *Strand* article of 1894 protesting that it is "quite a mistake to suppose that blue spectacles, cropped hair, and round shoulders predominate among them." The same piece goes on to decry the notion that Girton and Newnham women are "mannish blue-stockings, unfeminine in appearance, harsh and awkward in manner, rude and self-sufficient, contemptuous towards the opposite sex—in short, female prigs."

In the same year, the book *Types* referred to this ongoing struggle over the Girton Girl image: "A Girton Girl as She Is" is depicted as hatless, bespectacled, frowning, and dowdy, whereas "A Girton Girl as She Might Be" has lost the glasses and frown, and gained an attractive hat and jacket—though both carry hockey sticks (see illustration on page 7).

However, the author of the *Strand* piece asserts that Girton and Newnham students are, in fact, feminine, being "invariably gentle and diffident, graceful and courteous, and thoroughly girlish and ladylike."

At the same time, however, we see more Honorian virtues being attributed to the Girton Girl. A *Cassell's*

Family Magazine piece of 1894, for instance, reiterates her superior accomplishments in the Tripos but adds that she also plays a good game of tennis. Similarly, the *Strand* article notes that Girtonians (and Newnhamians) play as hard as they work and thus are all “remarkably healthy-looking young women, with clear, transparent complexions, forms erect, and a graceful carriage.” Writing along the same lines in 1895, E. Nesbit in *Atalanta* emphasized that the Girton Girl is “no mere book-worm, but a healthy young girl. . . . She rode, she sang, she swam, she danced, she played tennis, . . . she could construe one of the hardest bits of Æschylus, and could prune a fruit-tree with equal grace and readiness.”

This newfound female robustness and athletic prowess caused some to worry that women would take on other manly attributes. The Dean of Chichester feared higher education would cause college women to become like college men—that they would “imitate the manners, the demeanour, the phraseology of their undergraduate rivals,” and that “worst of all, they would even adopt men’s games.”

As late as 1897, though, a writer for *Windsor* magazine could still claim that “the popular impression of a Girton girl is . . . that she is a wan and pale young lady, that she wears spectacles, that she is a mere bundle of nerves, and that . . . she wanders round muttering snatches from Greek plays or cudgelling her wearied brains for solutions of mathematical problems of abstruse kind.”

However, the writer agrees with the *Strand* and *Cassell’s* opinion in asserting that “the Girtonian is little more than a big schoolgirl; when she is not working she is playing—or talking—hockey, cycling, golfing, or drinking tea.” Nevertheless, a lingering male fear of Girtonians is seen in Jerome K. Jerome’s 1903 book *Tea-Table Talk* when a character referred to simply as “The Girton Girl” is portrayed as an opinionated man-hater, expressing her belief that “woman is so immeasurably man’s superior that only by weighting him more or less heavily with worldly advantages can any semblance of balance be obtained.”

In short, although the Girton Girl’s characteristics were varied and continued to be disputed during the late 1800s into the early 1900s, the main qualities we see in Honoria Glossop were established. She is brainy, robust, and displays a lust for life: “The sort of girl who reduces you to pulp with sixteen sets of tennis and a few rounds of golf and then comes down to dinner as fresh as a daisy, expecting you to take an intelligent interest in Freud.”

What was Wodehouse’s attitude towards Honoria and other Girton Girls, I wonder? On the one hand, he

does have Bertie conclude Honoria is “simply nothing more nor less than a pot of poison,” an overwhelming force whose appearance on the scene made him “want to slide into a cellar and lie low till they blew the All-Clear.” During their brief engagement, not only did this Nietzsche-reading fiancée attempt to mold Bertie by making him “read solid literature till [his] eyes bubbled,” forcing him to endure classical concerts, and requiring him to listen to her reading Ruskin, but she went so far as to insist upon the unthinkable—that when she tied the knot with Bertie, he would have to bung out Jeeves.

On the other hand, Wodehouse’s young Bingo Little worships Honoria and views her as a tender goddess. More importantly, some of Honoria’s requirements clearly are quite reasonable and wouldn’t put off men less quiescent and leisure-loving than Bertie. Is attending a classical concert with your beloved really so uncommon and such a torment? Reading Ruskin and Nietzsche, yes, no argument there, but is consuming gents’ ordinary “solid literature” so bad? (To be fair to Mr. Ruskin, I should mention that although he was uber-intellectual and banned women from his public lectures at Oxford because the lectures would be “of no use to the female mind,” he, along with Tennyson and George Eliot, gave books to Girton to found its library.)

Additional evidence that Wodehouse was, at worst, ambivalent about the qualities of Girton Girls can be found in other of his writings and in his personal history. The first Girton Girl we meet in Wodehouse is not Honoria in 1922, but a classmate of a sister of the Babe (Robert MacArthur) in the 1902 *Captain* story “The Babe and the Dragon.” I think we can take the Babe as reflecting Wodehouse’s views, given that Wodehouse depicts him as the “safest, coolest [rugby] centre three-quarters,” who “shone in all branches of the game,” is sought after by Merevale’s and Dacre’s houses, and is an all-around, regular, good guy. This paragon has a sister at Girton—so, surely, that college can’t be a thoroughly rotten place.

Perhaps more importantly, PGW’s cousin Helen Wodehouse graduated from Girton in the same year that story was published. Helen was the eldest daughter of PGW’s uncle Philip John Wodehouse, with whose family PGW and his brothers spent much time in their childhood. (Helen later earned a PhD and returned to be Mistress of Girton from 1931 to 1942.) So, it’s far easier for me to imagine that Wodehouse had primarily positive views of Girton and thought of Helen as playing the role of the Babe’s sister than it is that he despised Girton and its grads as Bertie did. Wodehouse wrote a piece about baseball in the British *Vanity Fair* in 1904 wherein he has the Girton Girl declaim:

I feel that I could watch baseball
With interest and even passion,
If but the players wouldn't fall
In that extraordinary fashion.

There's nothing particularly amiss with this young lady; Wodehouse's baseball-watching Girton Girl here is a far more pleasant character than Jerome K. Jerome's nasty Girton Girl of a year earlier whom we met above.

On the other hand, Miss Florence Beezley, the Babe's sister's friend and fellow Girtonian, assuredly is a pot of poison. She is afflicted with one of the Girton Girl's worst alleged attributes: She "refused to let the Babe alone. She was intensely learned herself, and seemed to take a morbid delight in dissecting his ignorance, and showing everybody the pieces." Perhaps Miss Beezley was one of the brainiest women of her year at Girton, as Honoria was in hers.

However, Wodehouse was known to needle the sort of intellectual pretense displayed by Miss Beezley regardless of the age or sex of the pompous ass in question. And many of Wodehouse's heroines are smart cookies, the brains of any duo or operation they're involved in. So it's hard to claim that Wodehouse found intelligent women off-putting.

As for robustness in females, it's clear Wodehouse greatly admired athletic prowess in both genders. Elin Woodger has written about worthy Wodehouse women who were athletically inclined. Not the least of these is the estimable Dr. Sally who's proud of her fit, muscular body:

"I wonder if you've the remotest idea how happy it can make a woman feel just to be a worker and alive—with good nerves, good circulation and good muscles. Feel my arm. Like iron."

"Wonderful!"

"And my legs. Hard as a rock. Prod 'em."

"No, really!"

Wodehouse created many female characters who are vigorous, who play a good game of golf or tennis, or who are strong swimmers. Think, for example, of Margaret Goodwin, blessing the muscular development of her arms as she rescues James Orlebar Cloyster just before he goes down for the third time following his dinghy disaster in *Not George Washington*.

Reviewing the whole matter, I find it sounder to imagine Honoria as she was played by Liz Kettle in the *Jeeves & Wooster* television production. She is a comic character with admirable qualities whom we are meant

to laugh at while still liking—much like Beefy Bingham, the impressive Oxford Blood, Trial Eights man, and separator of fighting dogs, who also upsets china-filled coffee tables, smashes priceless wine glasses, and laughs hysterically without apparent reason. Rather than viewing Honoria through the eyes of Bertie—that poor soul who is frightened of being gathered in by her "like a bull pup swallowing a piece of steak" and who is "content just to exist beautifully"—we can see her as an intelligent, energetic, robust young woman with a hearty laugh, who would make the right man (or woman) an exciting life partner.



Last Call! Looking for Convention Loot!

BY BILL SCRIVENER, TWS PRESIDENT

GREETINGS, FELLOW PLUMMIES! As is the case at each convention, we will be offering items for sale or for auction throughout the festivities. This is your chance to help the cause either by bringing items to the convention or by shipping them should they be too large or cumbersome to bring. Should you wish to ship them, please let me know via email (billscrivener47@gmail.com) and I can provide you with an address.

Thanking you in advance and looking forward to seeing you all in San Diego.



Wodehouse's Hungarian Playwrights: Plum and the Rosy Peach

BY MARK REBER AND STEVE WIELAND

FOR HIS ENTIRE writing life, P. G. Wodehouse was a one-man conglomerate. Between 1900 and 1928 alone, Plum published forty volumes of short stories and novels; he also wrote columns, essays, and verses for newspapers and magazines to fill the odd hours. To fill the “even hours” in that period, Plum collaborated on about three dozen theatrical projects.

From 1904 to 1907, he worked as a co-lyricist on three musicals: *Sergeant Brue*, *The Beauty of Bath* (on which he first collaborated with Jerome Kern), and *The Gay Gordons*. With co-writers, he also adapted plays from his own novels and stories. In 1911 *A Gentleman of Leisure* appeared in New York and *After the Show* (adapted from “Ahead of Schedule”) opened in London.

His greatest success was in musical theater from 1914 to 1928, when he collaborated with Jerome Kern and Guy Bolton, whom he met in New York while reviewing one of their musicals for *Vanity Fair*. He was invited to join them as lyricist and frequently as co-writer of the libretto. During those years, Plum also worked with others, including the Gershwins and Oscar Hammerstein. His career contributions to 28 musicals, many very successful, made him well known on Broadway and a wealthy man.

In the early twentieth century, playwrights from continental Europe had started seeking broader and wealthier markets in London and New York, and immigrants to America had given these authors links to producers. Gilbert Miller, who managed the Henry Miller's Theatre on Broadway and the Lyric Theatre in London, was one of the producers and directors who were looking abroad for scripts. This European-educated, multilingual American produced three of Molnár's plays and became a business associate and a friend of both Molnár and Wodehouse.

Ferenc Molnár

THE INTRIGUING PLAYWRIGHT who pioneered the Hungarian invasion, Ferenc Molnár, was born Ferenc Neumann in 1878 in Budapest. About the same age as Plum, he studied law in Budapest and Switzerland, and adopted writing as his calling around the age of twenty. He changed his German surname to the Hungarian surname of Molnár (“Miller” in English translation), to be clearly a Hungarian writer. Like Wodehouse, Molnár became prolific in multiple forms. He worked as a newspaper journalist for nearly two

decades until the end of World War I. By 1907 Molnár had also written two volumes of short stories and three novels, including his best-known novel, *The Paul Street Boys*. He continued to write fiction and nonfiction, but his greatest successes were in theater.

Molnár's comedies expressed a critical view of the fragile morality and characters of men and women. In his first play, *The Lawyer* (1902), a thief tries to help his lawyer friend get established. In 1908 Molnár succeeded abroad when *The Devil* was produced in New York at the Belasco Theatre. The devil appears as a character on stage, but it becomes clear that he is simply saying aloud the thoughts of the human protagonists. By the mid-1920s, Molnár had contributed a dozen productions on Broadway, and dozens of plays from German, Hungarian, and French-language writers were also being adapted for American audiences.

Plum Picks a Peach

WRITING ADAPTATIONS of foreign-language scripts was another adventure for Plum. These were generally initiated by producers with whom he worked under contract, sometimes with co-writers. In September 1924 he wrote to Bill Townend that he was adapting a Hungarian play for the producer-director Gilbert Miller. However, our earliest direct evidence of Plum's raw material for a Hungarian play is a rough English translation of Molnár's *Play in the Castle* in the spring of 1926. At about the same time, Wodehouse began working on an adaptation of a play by another Hungarian, Ladislaus Fodor, for the actor/producer Ernest Truex in London; but that's a separate story.

The Sources for PGW to Adapt Molnár's Play

HOW DID the Hungarian manuscript become source material for Plum to create an adaptation? Wodehouse had little known foreign language abilities (other than reading French, which he mentions in letters to Bill Townend), so he must have had a literal English version from either the Hungarian original or the German adaptation. Months of probing archives and libraries via the internet initially failed to raise any clues on what or where such a source might be.

Wodehouse's adaptation has been the accepted English “translation” of *Játék a kastélyban*, Molnár's original Hungarian script. But how different were the Hungarian, German, and English versions of the play?

The other two were adaptations unless they were literal translations, and direct, literal English translations of either the Hungarian or the German versions didn't exist. But ever-evolving technology has made "machine translation" possible. For example, Google Translate will give a crude, though usable, translation from dozens of languages, including Italian, Polish, German, Mandarin, and, yes, Hungarian.

But can such a method handle long pages of a document; can it translate a story, as opposed to train arrivals; and would the "literal" translation be comprehensible? The answers are yes, yes, and mostly, with a bit of care.

We obtained a Hungarian paperback reprint of the 1926 Hungarian *Játék a kastélyban* script and a 1927 Viennese printing of the German adaptation, *Spiel im Schloss*. The literal translations into English were pretty usable from the start. Human context-checking was needed to tweak machine translation, but we tried to minimize subjective "smoothing." These literal translations from Hungarian and from German were compared for consistency. Our first finding was that the scripts were not substantially altered from the Budapest to the Vienna productions, other than changes in character names and geographic references specific to Budapest versus Vienna. The German adaptation was nearly a literal translation from the Hungarian.

We finally found an English translation of *Spiel im Schloss* by Melville P. Baker in the Molnár papers archive of the New York Public Library. The date written in ink on the battered cover sheet is 6/18/1926. Handwritten in pencil above the typewritten title *Spiel im Schloss* was *Play's the Thing*. The pencil is likely by Wodehouse: Molnár's first brief visit to the U.S. was a year later, after the play was performed; Molnár did not speak English; and the cursive style matches Plum's. Inside were the handwritten names of three of the actors who premiered on Broadway. We thus had an independent translation of the German adaptation to compare to the machine translations of the Hungarian and German versions! We could now compare Molnár's original to the adaptation written by Wodehouse.

The Play's the Thing

AFTER *The Play's the Thing* opened on Broadway on November 3, 1926, it ran for 326 performances. The play's popularity was no doubt due to its clever play-within-a-play theme, effective plot devices, and humor—all of which are evident in the Hungarian and German versions of *Play in the Castle*. But some of the play's appeal may also be attributed to changes that Wodehouse introduced in his English adaptation.

In all three versions, the setting is in a guest suite of an Italian castle, consisting of a large sitting room with bedrooms off to both sides. The characters are Sandor Turai, a playwright; Mansky, his longtime collaborator; Albert Adam, a young, immature, and pampered composer; Ilona Szabo, a prima donna actress who is engaged to Adam, although she is several years older than he; Almady, a formerly popular actor; Mell, the secretary to the count who owns the castle; and Dwornitschek, an omnipresent footman. Note that characters' names vary somewhat in Hungarian and German versions. Those used here are the ones that Wodehouse chose for his adaptation.

There are three acts. Act I opens with Turai, Mansky, and Adam in the large room. Turai muses about how difficult it is to start a play, when the audience knows nothing about the characters onstage. He yearns for a simple solution, saying that if the three of them were in a play, one might simply announce to the audience who and where they are, and why.

The three characters proceed to do just this. They are collaborators who have recently completed an operetta and have just arrived at a castle, where they have been invited to spend a few weeks. It is the middle of the night. Suddenly, they overhear a conversation between Ilona and a man in her adjacent bedroom. The man is Almady, who is middle-aged and married, but who had a love affair with Ilona years before. He has just walked into her room and now attempts to renew their liaison, appealing to her, sobbing, trying to kiss and caress her. He speaks of his love and her physical attributes with graphic metaphors and descriptions. For example:

Almady: You ask me to control myself—when I look at *that*—at that perfect shape. The rose flush of that skin.

Ilona: Hands off!

Almady: My God! How round it is! How smooth, how velvety—and how fragrant.

Ilona: Don't bite!

Adam is angry and distraught. Turai has Mansky escort him to their bedroom and give him a sedative. He then orders a large breakfast from the servant, Dwornitschek (whose name Turai can never remember), and goes off to the castle library to write.

Act II begins with Turai at the table in the sitting room, enjoying his breakfast. It is morning. He summons Ilona and Almady, tells them that Adam overheard their conversation, and threatens to send a telegram to Almady's wife. He then offers a solution to their predicament. During the night he wrote a two-

character, one-act play that incorporates their overheard conversation. The count is holding a concert that evening for his guest, and Turai suggests they spend the afternoon learning their roles and be ready to perform this playlet at the concert. They depart. Adam and Mansky enter, the young man in despair. He threatens to destroy the music he has written for their operetta and commit suicide. Turai dissuades him; Mansky gets him to eat breakfast. The act ends with their speculating about how they might conclude a second act if they were characters in a play.

Act III takes place at 7:30 PM the same day. It is largely devoted to a rehearsal of Turai's playlet for performance after dinner. Mell is supervising the rehearsal; he is in charge of the evening's program. This act is the high point of Molnár's comedy. Jokes abound. Almady's character is a French count with vast orchards. His speeches include long lists of barely pronounceable French aristocratic names. The dialogue between Ilona and Almady from the night before appears verbatim, but Almady's words in praise of her physical charms are directed at a perfectly shaped, rosy, and fragrant peach. Mansky and Adam are convinced that the conversation they overheard was a rehearsal for this play. Adam is relieved. He rushes to Ilona and kisses her. Mansky tells Turai that it is obvious the best playwright is life itself.

Modifications in Wodehouse's Adaptation

IF ONE COMPARES *The Play's the Thing* with the English translation we obtained of *Play at the Castle* (which Wodehouse likely used), one sees that he paid homage to Molnár's characters, setting, plot, and humor. His additions and changes are few, except for the liveliness he imparts to characters' speech. For example, in *Play at the Castle*, when Turai is discoursing on what they would be doing if they were in a play, he says: "We would have to talk unintelligibly about a lot of uninteresting things until it finally comes out who we are." In Wodehouse's version, he says: "If this were a play we would have to start jabbering about a lot of thoroughly uninteresting things—to the accompaniment of slamming seats—until the audience gradually found out who we are." This kind of verbal sparkle is just what one would expect from Wodehouse.

With regard to more substantive changes, these can be categorized as providing frequent stage directions that do not appear in Molnár's play, adding lines to Molnár's humorous dialogues and introducing new jokes. There is also some obvious toning down of certain passages—perhaps in deference to the moral sensibility of English-speaking viewers, perhaps with Britain's Lord Chamberlain in mind.

The printed texts of Wodehouse plays include extensive stage directions: not just descriptions of the setting and characters' appearance, but frequent indications as to their actions, gestures, and emotions. This is characteristic of contemporary British playwrights such as George Bernard Shaw, J. M. Barrie, and Noel Coward. For example, in Molnár, when Turai tells Ilona that he may have a solution to the problem of Adam's having overheard her conversation with Almady, she merely speaks: "Sandor, you dear. Is that possible?" Her response in Wodehouse includes an indication as to her emotions, as the stage direction says that she "runs across to Turai and throws herself on her knees, clasping him beseechingly," and says, "Sandor! Sandor darling! You really think you can?"

A few minutes later, when Almady enters, Wodehouse provides this description, which is totally absent from Molnár: "Almady, who enters, is also in a state of nervous apprehension. He is attired in elaborate, not to say loud, house pajamas. A tall and but recently handsome man, now well into middle age, Almady is first, last, and always the actor. He does not walk, he struts; he does not talk, he declaims."

Enhancing humor and adding jokes are adaptations one would expect from Wodehouse. One example of the former is in the second act, when Mansky emerges from the bedroom, just after Ilona and Almady have departed. He is upset because of the likelihood that the rift between Adam and Ilona will doom their operetta. He castigates Turai for sitting and calmly eating breakfast. In Molnár they have a brief verbal exchange:

Turai: Have you had your breakfast?

Mansky: I couldn't get anything down. I'm astonished at how much and how easily you're eating. [*Looks at him.*] You sit there and go on with your breakfast as if nothing had happened. Don't you know that we are ruined? It's made me literally sick.

This interchange sets up a joke, as Mansky—protesting all the while—gradually eats more and more, then devours nearly everything on the table.

Wodehouse sets this joke up even better.

Turai: You had breakfast yet?

Mansky: Not a mouthful. Couldn't touch it. *You* seem to have no difficulty in putting it away.

Turai: [*With mock sadness.*] One must keep up one's strength.

Mansky: I'm amazed and, if I may say so, a little shocked. Sitting there gorging as if

nothing had happened. Can't you realize we are absolutely ruined? I'm positively ill thinking about it.

Turai: [*Mysteriously.*] Shall I let you in on a secret, Mansky?

Mansky: [*With excited anticipation.*] Tell me.

Turai: [*With great deliberation.*] I am a man who weighs his words. I do not speak lightly. And I say to you solemnly, my friend—[*Dramatic pause.*—that this is the best bit of ham I've ever tasted.

Mansky: [*Furious.*] Bah!

Another example is from the end of Act II, when the three collaborators are discussing how they might conclude this act if they were actually in a play. In *Play at the Castle*, Adam suggests killing himself. Turai responds: "Very bad! Very bad indeed! Death is too much for the second act. It's only good at the end of a play. . . . Suspense—that's what you have to have."

Wodehouse repeats this sentiment, but adds a joke: "My dear young fellow. You simply can't wipe out the young love interest at the end of the second act with a bread knife. That's crude. And there are the critics. [*Cringes.*] The critics dislike bloodshed. If there is to be any slaughter, they prefer to attend to it themselves. What we need is suspense. Suspense—and a quick curtain."

Cleaning Up Molnár

THE MOST STRIKING changes in *The Play's the Thing*, however, are those that tone down or clean up the somewhat more risqué features of *Play at the Castle*. These are most evident in the first act. In Molnár there are these lines:

Ilona: Besides, you ought to be ashamed of yourself—coming into my room at this time.

Almady: I came with you.

Ilona: I didn't ask you.

Almady: You came to my room yesterday.

Ilona: Because you threatened to kill yourself again. And please understand this—it's all over. I'm engaged to be married. I've nothing more to do with you.

In Wodehouse, there is no mention of a previous night.

A little while later, Almady finds a metaphor for his passion. Molnár's version: "I love you! Madly! I love you terribly—as a skyscraper loves the sky that hangs over it." Wodehouse, however, makes this image slightly less

passionate and phallic: "I love you as the church steeple loves the cloud that settles above it and floats away with the first passing breeze."

When Ilona finally persuades Almady to leave, he says, "Give me just one more night"—another reference to the previous night when she came to his room. This line does not appear in Wodehouse's adaptation.

Later, in Act II of *Play at the Castle*, after Mansky has begun to indulge in breakfast, he tells Adam. "Come, eat something light. I can recommend cold chicken. Look at this nice white breast." To which Adam replies, "All right—but don't talk about white breast if you want me to forget." In Wodehouse's version, Mansky says, "Come on, my boy—just a mouthful. Try a little of this excellent ham." Adam demurs, but a few lines later says, "Oh, all right," and sits down.

One further difference between the two versions has to do with Adam's relationship to Turai. In Wodehouse, this is quite straightforward: Adam is Turai's nephew. In Molnár, he is an orphan, raised by his grandmother, who brought him to Turai, stating that the boy is a genius. Turai knew both the grandmother and the mother and talks to Mansky about them at length in *Play at the Castle*. In both plays Turai mentions that the mother was quiet and beautiful, but in Molnár, he wistfully recalls her: "I can still see her, just as clearly. . ." Is there an implication here that he is Adam's father? In both versions, he describes himself as over fifty, "with a certain amount of parental love to spread about" (Molnár) or "full of parental affection and nobody to lavish it on" (Wodehouse). Adam is the recipient of these feelings.

Dwornitschek

ANOTHER DIFFERENCE in *The Play's the Thing* that bears mention is his giving the footman Dwornitschek many additional lines. Molnár has Dwornitschek offer advice to Turai, and the two men exchange words of mutual admiration. He also provides the recurrent joke of Turai's never remembering the footman's name. In Wodehouse, Dwornitschek extends his giving of personal advice to both Mell and Almady. At the start of Act III, he is also actively involved in providing props for the rehearsal.

Molnár's play ends with these lines:

Mansky: You see, my friend, there are many clever authors, but the cleverest author is life itself.

Turai: That's because it doesn't write plays with you.

Dwornitschek: Dinner is served.

Wodehouse's adaptation ends with one further iteration of the name joke. The footman announces dinner, then Mansky and Turai exchange their lines. They start to leave the room. But as Turai passes Dwornitschek, he stops and looks at him.

Dwornitschek: [*Smiling.*] Dwornitschek, sir.

Turai: Now look here—that really is your name.
Isn't it?

Dwornitschek: Oh, yes, sir.

Turai: I just wondered. Thank you.

[*Turai and Mansky go out.*]

Dwornitschek: Thank you, sir.

Remembering Dwornitschek's name is a problem Wodehouse himself did not have. The name reappears in *Summer Moonshine* in the person of Heloise, Princess von und zu Dwornitzchek.

Another Side of PGW

WHAT WAS THE allure of the stage for Wodehouse? Musical theater was particularly collaborative and constrained by multiple demands—producers, directors, actors, time, and budget. This environment seems so different from his solitary work as a fiction writer, often carried out in quiet seclusion in a study or aboard a punt in the castle moat. As a lyricist, Plum delighted in writing light verse that matched the composer's melodies and rhythms. He also worked closely with Guy Bolton in writing librettos. Perhaps this different dimension—creation as a social process—is precisely what attracted him to theater. Guy Bolton became not only a long-term collaborator but a lifelong friend.

Even with his success in musical theater, Wodehouse wanted to do “legitimate” theater, collaborating to adapt his own stories into plays. Plum wrote to his close friend Bill Townend that he needed a collaborator to adapt even his own stories to the stage. His success in theater with multiple collaborators showed that Plum was curious and flexible, and enjoyed collaborations because he learned from them.

Plum's and Molnár's Outlooks

WHY DID PLUM choose to adapt a comedy by Molnár? An introvert who liked to work in a quiet office or a country house, Wodehouse shunned parties and small talk, disappearing as soon as his social obligation allowed. Yet he lived and wrote with a benign optimism and navigated his world little affected outwardly by great anxieties or unruly passions. As

Evelyn Waugh put it, in Plum's fictional world, “His characters have never tasted the forbidden fruit. They are still in Eden.”

Ferenc Molnár was an extrovert with smaller and larger passions. This garrulous denizen of the Café New York in Budapest gossiped all night with his bohemian crowd. He often wrote his plays at a table in the middle of this noisy scene with a band playing in the background. He had serial love affairs with talented actresses who were the muses he wrote plays for. Two affairs were stormy enough to cause his arrest (for dueling) or hospitalization. His own anxieties, failings, and superstitions became those of the characters in his plays. In contrast to Plum's characters, Molnár's have all tasted the forbidden fruit. His comedies explored the comedy of human failings, infidelity, and jealousy. He also explored the nature of illusion and self-delusion produced by human frailty. Perhaps Wodehouse wanted to venture outside of Eden, but did not know where to start. Molnár provided a gate.

Whatever Wodehouse's motivation, his having chosen to adapt and stage this particular comedy by Molnár was a happy occurrence for both. *The Play's the Thing* enjoyed a lengthy initial run in 1926 and 1927 and has been staged multiple times since then. It remains a pleasure to this day.

References available upon request.



From his fourteenth year onward Ashe had been in love many times. His sensations in the case of Joan were neither the terrific upheaval which had caused him in his fifteenth year to collect twenty-eight photographs of the principal girl of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, pantomime, nor the milder flame which had caused him, when at Oxford, to give up smoking for a week and try to learn by heart the Sonnets from the Portuguese.

Something Fresh (1915)

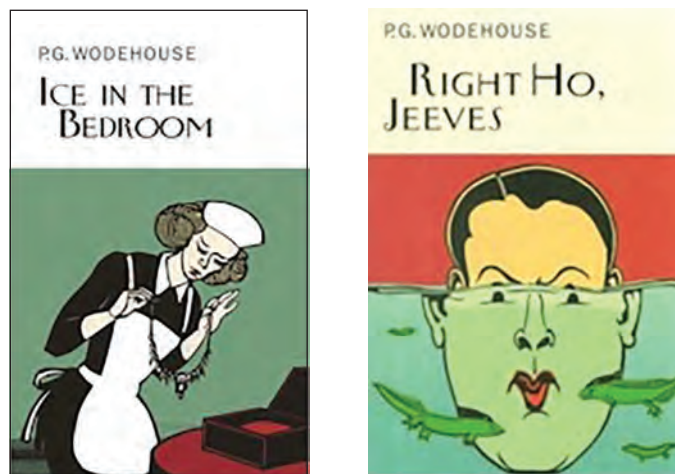
Wodehouse and Making a Piece of Work Really Work: Some Prolific Illustrators and Plural Use

BY GRAEME W. I. DAVIDSON

THE FIRST TWO PARTS of this article (see *Plum Lines*, Winter 2021 and Spring 2022) addressed a number of instances of Wodehouse-related artwork being used as an illustration in plural roles. This part is intended to show that such plural use is widespread, although it will not be an exhaustive description of the phenomenon, so extensive is its occurrence.

An obvious example showing the broad extent of such plural use is the work of British illustrator David Hitch. Before looking at how Hitch's Wodehouse illustrations have not been confined to single use, let's quickly look at some other notable U.K. illustrators who have been prolific in their artwork for Wodehouse titles: Andrzej Klimowski, Paul Cox, and Ionicus.

Andrzej Klimowski (born 1949) might be described as the doyen of dust-jacket illustrators for Wodehouse books, in that his wonderful artwork has been used on both sides of the Atlantic for around a hundred Wodehouse books, published by Everyman in the U.K. and Overlook in the USA. His unfussy designs are key to the strong visual appeal of these books and, when displayed en masse, serve as a powerful temptation to possible buyers to pick up the books and proceed to the sales desk. The images are, to my eye, a wonderful and quirkily unexpected amalgam of moods and tones—Alfred Hitchcock meets Preston Sturges, as it were. Generally, the color image appearing on the dust jacket appears within the book itself, on an early page, in a smaller (and occasionally slightly tweaked) monochrome version.



Samples of Klimowski's front panels for the Everyman/Overlook editions

While it may be unfair or subjective to pick out particular highlights from Klimowski's dust-jacket images, favorites of mine include those designed for *The Heart of a Goof*; *Service with a Smile*; *Sunset at Blandings*; *Ice in the Bedroom*; *Jeeves in the Offing*; *Very Good, Jeeves!*; and *Right Ho, Jeeves*.

The Everyman/Overlook Wodehouse books were beautifully made and published over a period of some fifteen years, a phenomenal feat of publishing and resolve, in a bid to produce a complete uniform edition of Wodehouse books. Some are first editions in either the U.K. or the USA.

Klimowski is consequently the most prolific illustrator of dust jackets for Wodehouse first editions by a long way, making his artwork quite important. A small number of Klimowski's illustrations have also been used for other Wodehouse-related purposes. For example, his artwork for the dust jacket of *Piccadilly Jim* was evidently used in mirror image, and, with slight changes to the colors, for the front cover of a 2006 Spanish paperback edition of the same title, published by Editorial Anagrama.

There are several U.S. and U.K. artists whose illustrations graced Wodehouse novels and stories in the heyday of magazine publication of his writings, and who might be thought to take the crown as the most prolific of Wodehouse illustrators. However, the quietly unassuming Paul Cox (born 1957), illustrator of some two dozen or so Wodehouse books published in the U.K. by the Folio Society, seems to leave them gasping in his wake. What puts Cox into the pole position is the fact that not only has he produced wonderful color drawings, oozing sunniness and/or jauntiness, for the



Paul Cox artwork for back, spine, and front of Folio Society edition (2000) of *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*

covers (back, spine, front), but he has also produced huge amounts of beautiful monochrome artwork published inside the books. Typically, there are some thirty or forty of his illustrations and vignettes per book, and in the Folio Blandings books there is also some lovely artwork on the endpapers.

This unusual aspect of Cox's contribution to Wodehouse illustration over the last quarter century or so has resulted in his tally of published drawings running comfortably into the high hundreds, thereby easily outstripping the many illustrators whose work featured alongside Wodehouse's contributions to magazines.

Joshua Charles Armitage (1913–98), who signed his work as Ionicus, produced a substantial body of artwork for Wodehouse books. From the late 1960s to the 1980s, he was responsible for the cover illustrations of around sixty Penguin editions of Wodehouse's work. So extensive was the number of Wodehouse books produced by Penguin bearing Ionicus covers, so long were they produced, and so beloved were (and are) those editions, with memorable scenes on the covers, that many of the books form a substantial share of Wodehouse enthusiasts' collections, and often are the versions which they grew up reading as part of their introduction to Wodehouse.

David Hitch (born 1961) produced the artwork used on the covers (back, spine, front) of some 45 or so Wodehouse books published by Penguin in a very short window of time in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Hitch, together with Ionicus and Chris Riddell (the multitalented award-winning illustrator, political cartoonist, author, and former Children's Laureate), formed the triumvirate of key illustrators who produced cover artwork for the very large number of Wodehouse books published by Penguin in the last quarter of the twentieth century. That period was arguably the heyday for Penguin in its role as a major paperback publisher of Wodehouse books bearing color artwork on the covers by a single artist-illustrator.

Hitch is further elevated in the pantheon of Wodehouse illustrators, and his appeal enhanced, by the fact that he is the only one of the three to have illustrated the covers of Penguin editions of such popular Jeeves

and Wooster novels as *Thank You, Jeeves*; *Joy in the Morning*; *Ring for Jeeves*; and *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*. This may come as a surprise to people who assume that Ionicus or Riddell illustrated all these titles. It is easy to forget that before the Everyman/Overlook editions, so many series editions were far from complete.

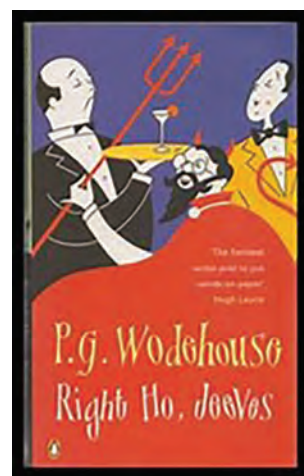
Readers who may have an interest in placing their Wodehouse books on their shelves by category rather than alphabetically may care to note that it was Hitch who apparently had the neat, useful, and visually appealing idea of including motifs on the spines, indicating into which particular sagas the books fall. So, for example, he used a pig for books in the Blandings series, a head-and-shoulders image of Jeeves for books in the Jeeves and Wooster series, and so on. However, it is not his use of such devices that merits his inclusion in this article on plural use of Wodehouse-related artwork. Rather, it is the fact that, unlike other designs, the use of Hitch's Penguin cover artwork has not been largely restricted to its primary intended use.

Nicely echoing the fact that Wodehouse extended the life of his work through its use in different mediums, not just books, and in different parts of the world, so, too, has Hitch's artwork been widely used in different mediums and in different parts of the world. Readers with collections of Wodehouse audiobooks may want to check their cassette and/or CD cases. A considerable number of Wodehouse audiobooks (produced by the likes of Penguin Audio Books, the BBC, and Chivers, typically read or performed by Jonathan Cecil or Simon Callow) have sported Hitch artwork on the case sleeves, using illustrations from the Penguin covers for which Hitch created the artwork. In various instances, his work has continued to be used several years after the Penguin paperback editions have adopted artwork by later illustrators, in a pleasing nod to the lasting appeal of Hitch's artwork. The extent and impact of Hitch's large body of Wodehouse-related artwork represents a very substantial achievement for this rather modest man.

Just as enthusiasm for Wodehouse's writings is not constrained by national borders, so too is Hitch's Wodehouse artwork international in use and appeal. Hitch's illustrations for Penguin paperbacks have gained



Ionicus's cover for the Penguin edition (ca.1975) of Leave It to Psmith

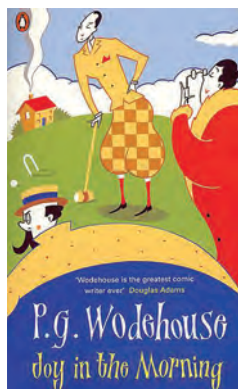


Hitch's front-cover image for the Penguin edition (1999) of Right Ho, Jeeves

extended life on the covers or dust jackets of editions in Germany, Hungary, and Spain. He outstrips other Wodehouse illustrators in the usage of his artwork beyond its initial intended purpose. It is hard to think of another Wodehousean artist whose penetration is as extensive as Hitch's to territories beyond the English-speaking world.

In addition to these comments on the quantity of David Hitch's Wodehouse covers for Penguin, I must also acknowledge the effectiveness of his work. His covers combine visually appealing images with textual information which does not detract from the artwork's impact.

Two Hitch covers are good examples of this, in which the images work both aesthetically and practically. The front covers of *Right Ho, Jeeves* and *Joy in the Morning* show, respectively, Gussie's Mephistophelean cloak and the expansive trousered posterior of one of the croquet players. Each cover provides ample space for displaying the author's name, the book title, and even some blurb, all without compromising the image or resulting in the text looking squeezed-in or clumsy.



Hitch's front-cover image for the Penguin edition of *Joy in the Morning*

Will there be a Part 4? Stay tuned! Graeme may yet look in further detail at specific examples of extended use of Hitch's Penguin cover artwork.—O.M.

Here, he reflected, as they walked round the square, was a girl whose ear was more or less on a level with a fellow's mouth, so that such observations as he might make were enabled to get from point to point with the least possible delay. Talking to Elizabeth Bottsworth had always been like bellowing down a well in the hope of attracting the attention of one of the smaller infusoria at the bottom. It surprised him that he had been so long in coming to this conclusion.

"The Amazing Hat Mystery" (1934)

Behold the Fourth Dimension!

BY FREDA KIRKHAM

GREETINGS, Wodehouse Comrades! Can't get enough Wodehouse? Join the newest chapter, a Zoom-only festivity known as the Fourth Dimension. All chapters, time zones, and persuasions welcome! Furthermore, there's no risk of being beamed by a bread roll or a great chunk of pips and mildew. (To be fair, that could also be viewed as a drawback.)

A joyous time will be had by all, perhaps even on a scale calculated to stagger humanity. We meet on the first Saturday of every month from 11 AM to noon Pacific Time. The consistent Zoom ID is 825-2310-7377. You can also find us on meetup.com under "The Fourth Dimension: A P G Wodehouse Society Zoom Chapter."



For our inaugural meeting on September 3, our plans were to share a memorable experience of Wodehouse, whether of reading his books, watching an adaptation of his work, or revelling with fellow enthusiasts.

Our upcoming meetings will be on October 1 and December 3, with no meeting in November. Feel free to spend the fifth of November enjoying a bonfire or percolating contentedly about October's TWS convention!

For more information contact Freda Kirkham, your Zoom host without portfolio, at fskirkham@gmail.com. In a pinch, or if you run into Zoom snags, you can text/call me at 443-904-7364. Hurray!

Plum-U-Uppo

NOEL BUSHNELL sent along this item: "A letter to the *Weekend Australian* newspaper for June 18–19, 2022, states succinctly: "Wodehouse is an excellent corrective to Joyce and Lawrence." [name of correspondent], Bundaberg, Queensland." The letter followed extensive articles in the *Australian* during the prior week marking Bloomsday (June 16), the centenary of the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and the 1922 sojourn in Australia of D. H. Lawrence when he wrote his novel *Kangaroo*.

We all need our literary medicine cabinet to be full of the right tonics for most any need. Of course, Wodehouse can be claimed to be the restorative and corrective for most any ill.—OM

The Indian Curry Dished Out by P. G. Wodehouse

BY ASHOK BHATIA

Ashok Kumar Bhatia is a Plum fan of Indian origin based in Norway. He says he suffers from Professoritis and Wodehousitis. He is a regular blogger and an occasional author. His Wodehouse-related posts can be seen on What Ho! at <https://ashokbhatia.wordpress.com>. Note that the full-length article (of which this is just a summary) can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/52zaa6xe>.

WHAT HO! To the best of my knowledge, P. G. Wodehouse never set foot on Indian soil. But he often alludes to its exotic temples, its wildlife, its royalty, its fakirs and mystics with magical powers, and even its love lyrics. Many times he vividly captures facets of my beautiful country, serving up a delectable curry spiced with uniquely Indian condiments.

In this essay, the reader will find a random sample of references to India in Wodehouse's novels and short stories. Such references are found across all his narratives, whether he is writing a Jeeves and Bertie story, a tale of Blandings, or a standalone novel. What I present here is merely a synopsis.

The Indian Curry: A Brief

AT LEAST four of Wodehouse's characters refer to stories in which jewels associated with idols of gods in Indian temples are stolen, and overzealous priests chase the villains.

Plum regales the reader with narratives mentioning Indian fauna such as spiders, scorpions, cobras, elephants, tigers, cheetahs, and lions. Butlers like Beach are described as elephants sauntering through an Indian jungle. Princes and maharajas of yore also find a mention occasionally.

Plum suggests a link between the Indian Civil Disobedience movement and the dietary and fasting habits of Mahatma Gandhi. Bertie Wooster motivates Tuppy Glossop to forsake pleasures of the table by quoting Mahatma's example. The Cawnpore (now Kanpur) Mutiny gets referred to in at least two places.

Military men who served in India as part of their duties tell interesting anecdotes, including about their time in the North Western Frontier Province. Some of you may recall that the latter was a province of British India from 1901 to 1947, when it was ceded to Pakistan.

When Bobbie Wickham takes umbrage, she ticks off Kipper like a typhoon on the Indian Ocean. In "Feet of Clay," to impress Agnes Flack, Captain Jack Fosdyke claims to have used a Boy Scout pocket knife to teach the sharks there a lesson or two.

Indian scriptures often use the Sanskrit term "siddhi" to signify either a remarkable accomplishment or a singular proficiency attained by an aspirant. These could be material, paranormal, supernatural, or magical in nature, attained by such practices as meditation, yoga, and intense "tapas" (austere practices). Jeeves, for instance, is repeatedly portrayed as someone who possesses the property of a gas floating from Spot A to Spot B without much ado. Some characters undergo an experience akin to that of curling up on spikes, while others are found contemplating the infinite.

Wherever Plum is, love cannot be far behind. India has gifted the world with the Kama Sutra, but it is not surprising that Plum never alludes to this unique treatise, because he never uses sex as a ploy to popularize his narratives. All of his male characters are steeped in chivalry, strictly bound by Victorian norms. In his narratives, Wodehouse appears to have instead based his observations on *The Garden of Kama*, a collection of lyrical poetry on Indian themes published in 1901, which makes liberal use of imagery and symbols from the poets of the Northwest Frontier of India and the Sufi poets of Persia (Iran). The poems, written by Violet Nicolson under the pseudonym of Laurence Hope, are typically about unrequited love and loss. One of her famous compositions, known as a "Kashmiri Song," appears in at least two of Plum's narratives.

India rubber is one name for the natural rubber that comes from the sap of certain trees. Rubber trees that grow in South America and India produce the majority of India rubber. Plum uses its properties of agility, elasticity, flexibility, and robustness to describe a wide range of physical endeavors of the characters in many of his narratives.

Some characters have a fetish for remaining as fit as a fiddle. One of the instruments which they happen to depend upon to do so is a pair of Indian clubs.



Some of Plum's characters have visited India or plan to do so. While Lady Malvern whips up a book relating to Indians, Crispin Blakeney goes there to lecture. You may recall that, in "Bertie Changes His Mind," Bertie Wooster tells Jeeves that he has a sister in India.

Indian handicrafts and the Taj Mahal are mentioned. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's dietary habits are commented on. Some behavioral traits of Indians are covered. The age-old sordid custom of "sati" is touched upon ("suttee" in *Hot Water*), as are the Indian Civil Services. Stilton Cheesewright has the unique distinction of having come under the spell of Buddhism briefly.

The Luck Stone, a concoction whipped up by Plum under the pseudonym Basil Windham, was serialized in a magazine known as *Chums: An Illustrated Paper for Boys* from 1908 to 1909. It touches upon Indian Vedas, mythology, and superstitions.

Some Missing Ingredients

PLUM'S WORKS are certainly well populated with references to India. But if he had wanted to, he could have used a number of other Indian resources to further enrich his narratives.

The Vedas are mentioned one solitary time, but other references to India's spirituality, multilayered scriptures, and various dance forms are sadly missing. The great diversity of the spirit of India is missing. Its wide spectrum of ethnicities, languages, beliefs, and practices is nowhere to be found. Fortunately, there are some references to cuisine: generic "curry" shows up several times; "mutton curry" is in "The Juice of an Orange"; "chicken curry" in *Pearls, Girls, and Monty Bodkin*; and others.

As to a liberal use of many other references of an Indian origin, imagine a distraught Gussie Fink-Nottle pining for Madeline Bassett and sending messages to her through clouds passing overhead, à la "Meghadut," the classic poem penned by Kalidasa. Poets like Ralston McTodd could have drawn some inspiration from the creative outpourings of Tagore. To improve Bertie's intellect, all Florence Craye had to do was to insist that he peruse at least one of the chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Laura Pyke could have drawn some inspiration from the science of Ayurveda, the healthy lifestyle system that people in India have used for thousands of years. Anatole could have been found whipping up "chhole-bhature" or "dosas"!

Yoga could have helped someone like Ashe Marson heal his clients faster and better. Sir Roderick Glossop could have gone about advising his loonier patients to make meditation an essential part of their mundane

lives. Vicars could have lived a happier Thos-infested life while brooding on spiritual tenets dished out by Indian scriptures, thereby becoming hotter at their jobs. George Bevan, while working on one of his next musical comedies, could have been drawing inspiration from the *Natya Shastra* of Bharata Muni. Gentlemen aspiring for India rubber legs could have been practising such dance forms as Kathak or Bharatnatyam.

The possibilities are endless. But we should not be concerned with what might have been. Instead, we should simply enjoy the legacy Plum has left behind. In fact, it is befitting that quite a few of his works have been translated into some other languages—including Bengali, Kannada, Telugu, and Sanskrit—forming a pale parabola of subtle humor across India.

Consistent Depiction, Despite 1947

THE INDIA that Plum refers to belongs to a bygone era. India gained independence in 1947, but his works published during the period from 1947 (*Joy in the Morning*) until 1974 (*Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*) do not reveal much change in references to the things of India. Astral bodies, scorpions, and cobras continue to rule the roost.

From a global perspective, the devastation caused by World War II overshadowed the topic of India gaining independence. Plum had personally suffered as a result of the war, including being a prisoner of the Nazis for a time, and had relocated from Europe to the USA in April 1947, never to visit Europe again. Owing to his preoccupation with other matters, perhaps the last thing on his mind would have been the British (or American) reaction to the events unfolding in India. Hence, his story lines and characters never touched upon the emergence of an independent India.

Love Sans Borders

INDIA LOVES Plum's works. That's not a major revelation, of course, but a statement of well-known fact. His works represent a composite way of life on the Indian subcontinent, and broad enjoyment of his stories continues today in India. Plum sets a gold standard of pristine humor not only in English but also in many other languages into which his works have been translated, including in many regional ones in India.

Plum dished out his narratives in a pre-internet era, when access to information was more challenging. This makes it even more amazing that he could leave behind for us such a spicy Indian curry, making India shine through in so many ways through a vast array of his novels and stories.

Pip pip!

Chapters Corner

WHAT IS YOUR chapter up to these days? Please send all news to Gary Hall (see back page). Note that webmaster Noel Merrill keeps chapter items posted on the society website. It's good to send advance info about upcoming events to Noel; his contact information is on the last page of this issue.

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Capital! Capital!

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Chapter One

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THE WIDELY DISPERSED members of Chapter One gathered by Zoom on June 14, 2022. We discussed the first two episodes of season 2 of the Fry/Laurie Jeeves & Wooster series. Both episodes generally follow the book *The Code of the Woosters*. The first episode involves Bertie's misadventure in sneering at the silver cow creamer for Aunt Dahlia and running afoul of old Sir Watkyn (Pop) Bassett and Roderick Spode.

In the second episode, Gussie Fink-Nottle is engaged to Madeline, the daughter of Pop Bassett. Fortifying himself to give his engagement party speech, he has compiled a little black book of embarrassing notes about members of the audience. He loses the



Various Chaps in various stages of browsing, sluicing, discussing, and generally enjoying themselves



book and his subjects find it and are incensed by the contents. Jeeves supplies a magic word to pacify Spode. The separate story lines of the creamer and the book are intertwined in the novel, but were untwisted into two distinct, sequential episodes in the video series.

As usual, we enjoyed each other's company, though only virtually.

Attending were Bob Sloan, Bob Rains, Will Campbell, Ben Wieland, Karen and Mark Reber, Carolyn Daffron and Rich Weishaupt, Hope Gaines and David MacKenzie, Betty and Tom Hooker, Karen and David Ruef, Susan Barr, and Steve Wieland.

The next meeting of Chapter One will be in person. The plan is for noon on Saturday, September 10, at Cavanaugh's Headhouse in Philadelphia. We also plan to include a Zoom link for our far-flung members.

Our topic will be our summer beach reading: *Barmy in Wonderland*, a short novel of hijinks in the theater, and, of course, a love story.

—Steve Wieland and Susan Barr

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THE NEWEST and most ethereal chapter of TWS looks forward to communing with you! All are welcome! See our brief article in this edition of *Plum Lines* (page 15) for details, including the Zoom information.

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The New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS)
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or Roberta Towner, robertatowner@gmail.com



THE NEWTS have swarmed two times (in May and July) since the last report. May brought the traditional "Christmas Nottle" at Stef Adams's amazing bicycle factory. The original plan to do this in December had been cancelled by Covid statistics. The resourceful NEWTS simply brought their gifts and holiday spirit and spirits and decorated the bicycle space as planned, ignoring calendars.



In July we celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the NEWTS. And to think that newts in the wild only live ten to fifteen years. Exceptional browsing and sluicing were followed by a cake honoring the occasion. Max Pokrivchak put together a spiffing reading of excerpts from NEWTS skits presented at conventions through the years. Many original actors were present and able to reprise the parts they had performed at the premieres.



—Lynn Vesley-Gross

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The Orange Plums

(Orange County, California)

Contact: Lia Hansen, 949-246-6585

or Diana Van Horn, dianavhfv@yahoo.com



GREETINGS YET AGAIN from somewhere in the South Pacific. Your nautical knave Adm. Fruity Biffen here, checking in over the maritime wireless once more with the latest from the Orange Plums.

We O. Plummies will joyfully be on full fleet maneuvers at the San Diego convention, joining in the fun of all scheduled activities but especially, of course, the harbor cruise. We much look forward to greeting old friends and meeting new ones out on the brine!

On a related note, we've sadly discovered that a few fast friends made at the Cincy soiree don't now appear on the San Diego duty roster (they know who they are). The heart bleeds over this disappointing development. Profusely! So here's fervently hoping they may yet change their minds and join us for this binge after all—or we'll all be asking, with hands decidedly wringing, "Where in the world are they?"

Meanwhile, we continue to enjoy our own monthly gatherings. Ah, yes, and we are currently ensconced in the Master's *The Mating Season*.

See you all in S.D.!

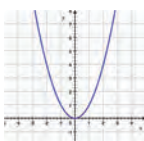
I have the honor to be Your Obedient Servant,
—Admiral George J. "Fruity" Biffen (Jeff Porteous)

The Pale Parabolites

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The Pickering Motor Company

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THE PICKERINGS met on May 22 at the Smith residence. The reading assignment was *Thank You, Jeeves*. Mike Smith was impressed with the author's phrasing and descriptive passages, which we all agreed are very humorous. There was a discussion about the banjolele, the musical instrument that plays a prominent role in the novel. Some veterans recalled a banjolele at the Toronto Convention. The plot of *Thank You* is not as complex as some of the later Jeeves novels. There are no Wooster aunts or cousins in this one.

The next meeting was August 6, and the reading assignment was *Mike and Psmith*. On August 28 we traveled to Michigan State University in East Lansing, where Tad Boehmer gave us a tour of the special collection library.

The twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Pickering Motor Co. is fast approaching. We will figure out an appropriate way to observe it.

—Robert Walter

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The Plum Crazyes

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THE PLUM CRAZIES gathered on Saturday, June 25, at Tom and Betty Hooker's home to bid a fond farewell to Youngest Member Uttam Paudel. Uttam has moved to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, to take a new position in cybersecurity.

The gang enjoyed an Anatole-inspired picnic potluck. In keeping with the exit theme, we watched "The Delayed Exit of Claude & Eustace" from season 4 of *Jeeves & Wooster*.

In addition to Uttam and Betty and Tom, the meeting attendees included Andrea Jacobsen and Bob Rains, Lisa and Russ Vriezen, Nancy and Chuck Buckley, Janet and Bruce Montgomery, and Henriette and David Evans.

—Betty Hooker

The Plum Street Plummies

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IT WAS A comfortable, overcast 68 degrees as the Plum Street Plummies gathered for the Sixth Annual Wodehouse Open Mini-Golf Tournament at Parkland Putters in Parkland, Washington, near Tacoma. Parkland Putters has four courses, and the Plummies elected to play the hardest one. Sue Dorsey pulled into the lead on the first hole and by the ninth was six strokes

ahead of the pack. She finished with a 73, including a hole-in-one on the 18th. Her closest competitors, Susan Spatola-Knoll and Tom Smith, tied at 78.



Tom Smith presents the Wodehouse Open trophy to champion Sue Dorsey.

The Right Honorable Knights of Sir Philip Sidney

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<https://wodehouse-society.nl>



Rugby in All Its Niceties

(Rugby, Tennessee region)

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The Size 14 Hat Club

(Halifax, Nova Scotia)

Contact: Jill Robinson

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Dinner is usually the meal at which you catch Bertram at his best, and certainly it's the meal I always most enjoy. Many of my happiest hours have been passed in the society of the soup, the fish, the pheasant or whatever it may be, the soufflé, the fruits in their season and the spot of port to follow. They bring out the best in me. "Wooster," those who know me have sometimes said, "may be a pretty total loss during the daytime hours, but plunge the world in darkness, switch on the soft lights, uncork the champagne and shove a dinner into him, and you'd be surprised."

Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves (1963)

The P. G. Wodehouse Collection at Vanderbilt University

BY ANITA AVERY

The collection, which we believe to be the premier accumulation of Wodehouse's works and Wodehouse-related items in the United States, came into existence in 2019. Thanks to the vision of several members of TWS, and to Anita's tireless oversight, the collection continues to grow and prosper.

THIS COLUMN presents an overview of the collection's holdings published during Wodehouse's years with Herbert Jenkins, Limited, and its successors, an association that began with the 1918 first English edition of *Piccadilly Jim* and would last for the remainder of his life and beyond. This association was fortuitous for Plum. In a 1927 letter to Bill Townend, he wrote, "I didn't sell over two thousand till I went to Jenkins with *Piccadilly Jim*. . . . The more I see of them, the more I think they are the best publishers of the lot." It was reported that this first outing with Jenkins sold 9,000 copies.

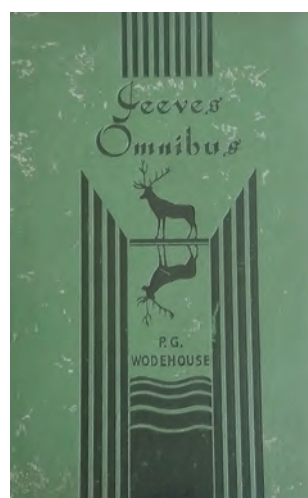
Though the format of books and dust wrappers would change over time, and newer edition sets would be issued, behind the scenes it is clear that two of Plum's habits remained constant. First, in a new 1969 preface to the Barrie & Jenkins reprint of *Uneasy Money* (1917), Wodehouse relates, "There is a butler in *Uneasy Money*, and I suppose they thought that if given encouragement I would go on buttlings again, and how right they were. A butler figures, I think, in every book I have written since *Uneasy Money*. There have been complaints about it." Second, except for one brief encounter with a dictaphone, he relied on his typewriter to churn out the daily words. A letter written while visiting Hunstanton Hall in 1926 describes to what lengths that might go: "I spend most of my time on the moat. . . . I'm writing this in the punt with my typewriter on a bed-table wobbling on one of the seats." When asked late in life his secret to being a writer, he replied, "I just sit at my typewriter and curse a bit."

The collection is most fortunate to have three large categories of Wodehouse titles spanning 1918–79, published by Herbert Jenkins and its successors: first editions/first English editions, the Autograph Edition, and the Barrie & Jenkins Edition, as well as two titles about Wodehouse. In Section A (Novels and Semi-Autobiographical Works), the holdings include 41

Herbert Jenkins first editions/first English editions (21 with dust wrappers), the earliest of which is his second novel with Jenkins, *The Coming of Bill* (1919), plus two Barrie & Jenkins first English editions with dust wrappers. Section B (Omnibus Volumes) holdings include Wodehouse's first omnibus (1931's *Jeeves Omnibus*) plus seven titles (five with dust wrappers) published by either Herbert Jenkins or Barrie & Jenkins through 1977, followed by several later titles by another publishing descendant, Hutchinson. Titles in Section H (About Wodehouse and His Works) include first editions with dust wrappers of Richard Usborne's *Wodehouse at Work* (1961) and *Homage to P. G. Wodehouse* (1973) edited by Thelma Cazalet-Keir, plus several later titles published by Hutchinson.

Within the Autograph Edition, published in uniform format between 1956 and 1966, the holdings include 36 of the 41 titles, some of which predate those listed in McIlvaine's *Bibliography*. The earliest holding in this edition is the first title issued, *Thank You, Jeeves* (1956). Most volumes have Wodehouse's signature blind-stamped diagonally on the lower right-hand corner of the cover. The covers are green with a decorative frame on the spine with the title and "P. G. Wodehouse" in gold. The dust wrapper's spine echoes this frame, and the overall design is a dense pattern of small squares arranged diagonally and wrapping to a third of the dust wrapper's back. The remaining back space features either an advertisement for *Wodehouse at Work*, a list of Autograph Edition titles, or a heading of "Mr. Wodehouse" followed by short excerpts of praise from various publications, as well as J. B. Priestley. The wrapper front features a frame encasing the author's name and title above the phrase "The Autograph Edition." This uniform edition was deemed significant enough to warrant a listing of its own in Section K (Named Editions) in McIlvaine's *Bibliography*.

Following suit, the collection's online TWS database added a subsection under Section A for the Barrie & Jenkins Edition titles published between 1969 and 1979. Except for five of the earliest titles issued (which McIlvaine lists as having black covers and gold lettering on the spine) and some later volumes, the *Bibliography* does not routinely describe covers or dust wrappers, nor does it consistently list Barrie & Jenkins Edition volumes as such, but simply as "Reissues." The majority of volumes issued in this edition had black covers, though other colors are known to exist. We don't have cover descriptions for volumes shipped directly to Vanderbilt, but those from a second donor all have black covers with the title, publisher's device (a



Some of the various items now in the PGW collection at Vanderbilt University from Wodehouse's years with publisher Herbert Jenkins

small owl), and "Barrie & Jenkins" printed in gold on the spine. Notably, fourteen titles in this edition have new prefaces by Wodehouse.

The holdings include 51 (all with dust wrappers) of the more than sixty titles in this edition, the earliest of which are two of the four titles issued in the first format of illustrated dust wrappers with various background colors: *Bill the Conqueror* (1970) and *The Small Bachelor* (1970). Also in the collection is *The Man Upstairs* (1971), one of two titles in the second format of dust wrappers, with no illustrations, but with the addition of "New Preface by the Author" on the front.

Holdings of the remaining titles in this edition have dust wrappers in the third format, a uniform design on a white background. On the front cover, “P. G. Wodehouse” is in black lettering above a block of varying color on which the title is printed in white. The spine features Wodehouse’s name in black lettering, the title is printed in the same color as the front-cover color block, and at the base are the publisher’s device and “Barrie & Jenkins,” both in black. The wrapper’s back cover has the header “Books by P. G. Wodehouse” above two columns listing the titles of his books. Titles in this format having new prefaces tout that on the front of the wrapper.

Some of the 1979 titles were about .5” taller than the usual 7.5”. Others from that year were in a “transition” format employing subtle changes: at the base of the book spines, the Hutchinson device appeared above “Barrie & Jenkins” and printed on the lower right corner of the half-title page was a small Hutchinson device. The transition changes foreshadowed Hutchinson’s 1980 early reissues, which had a new dust-wrapper format and a curious mix of both publisher names within single volumes and their wrappers.

With deep gratitude, we raise a hearty toast to Arthur Robinson for the donation of 109 volumes (the vast majority of holdings) in the above categories, and for always being a great source of information.

We always welcome donations to the collection. To view current holdings, please consult the online database at <http://www.wodehouse.org/PGWCVU>. Click on the gold navigation bar for links to all sections. For further information, please contact anitaavery@verizon.net.



Herb Moskowitz, 1942–2022

BY JAMES ARMSTRONG



HERB MOSKOVITZ, who passed away on May 6, 2022, was born and raised in his beloved city of Philadelphia. His father worked for the Philadelphia *Inquirer* and instilled in Herb a sense of wonder and affection for his native city.

Herb was a theatrical set designer and taught art and design to young people. For decades, he worked for the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation, where he shared his love of the city with others, and also documented its changing face through his photography.

Community was important to Herb; he always sought to bring people closer together. As a longtime member and president of Chapter One of The Wodehouse Society, Herb formed many friendships with others who shared an affection for PGW. He made numerous presentations about Wodehouse, including on the various adaptations of the 1919 novel *A Damsel in Distress*. The 1937 musical film based on the book gave Herb an opportunity to talk not just about Wodehouse, but also about musicals and classic films, two others of his great loves. When friends called, he would often have to pause Turner Classic Movies; he could frequently quote long sections of the films. Herb was also a frequent theatre patron, and particularly enjoyed attending plays at Philadelphia’s historic Walnut Street Theatre.

Sometimes going by the moniker of Vladimir Brusiloff after the character in Wodehouse’s short story “The Clicking of Cuthbert,” Herb was a regular fixture at meetings. He could discuss with expertise many of Plum’s novels and short stories and Broadway collaborations.

He enjoyed telling the story of how his chapter volunteered to adopt a Mandarin newt named Gussie at the Philadelphia Zoo, an allusion to the newt-loving character Gussie Fink-Nottle from the Bertie Wooster and Jeeves books. The zoo sent a photo of the newt every year to the Chapter One members. One year, they mistakenly sent a photo of a hippopotamus! When Herb called about the mix-up, a zoo employee, clearly sensing that Herb had a sense of humor, replied that they could arrange an exchange with the hippo on one end of a bridge and the newt at the opposite end, slowly walking towards each other like in a spy movie.

In addition to loving the humor of P. G. Wodehouse, Herb was an active member of groups dedicated to the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Charles Dickens. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

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We appreciate your articles, research, Quick Ones, and other observations. Send them to Gary Hall via e-mail or snail mail at the addresses above. Deadlines are February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1.

“It is a moot question,” proceeded the Oldest Member, thoughtfully, “whether the clergy, considering their peculiar position, should not be more liberally handicapped at golf than the laymen with whom they compete. . . . There are certain occasions when an oath seems to be so imperatively demanded that the strain of keeping it in must inevitably affect the ganglions or nerve-centres in such a manner as to diminish the steadiness of the swing.”

“Chester Forgets Himself” (1923)

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