



# Plum Lines

*The quarterly journal of The Wodehouse Society*

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See article on page 9  
for important changes  
to your TWS account  
status notifications.

## Pelham in San Diego

BY GARY HALL, OM

MY, MY, MY. Three years between TWS conventions seems like a long time. In Cincinnati in 2019, little did we suspect that a worldwide pandemic would intervene and push the San Diego celebration out an extra year. We've lost some illustrious Wodehouseans and good pals along the way, but the spirit of Plum lives on, even as society seems progressively more tumultuous. Wodehouse has a very broad presence on the world wide web, that great library in the sky, and spirits are high in our merry band after this congenial and fun convention in the sun.

Over the next year or two, we'll publish several of the talks that were given. Till then, we'll need to keep a few secrets—I can't recall a set of Riveting Talks with so many fabulous and exciting "reveals." If you were not able to make it to San Diego, stay tuned and we'll bring you into the know. If you were there, you'll get to revel again in the words of your peers. Bob Rains made a very grand entrance (see page 5), with his lush purple robe and candelabrum. Norman Murphy Award honoree Elliott Milstein might win for the most laughs per minute. Every one of the speakers lit up the room. We enjoyed formal greetings from the U.K. and The Netherlands; the banquet, the cruise, the cricket, and the concert generated sweetness and light; and the closing brunch provided plenty of joy in the morning.

Personally, I was very happy to able to be at the convention. These three years have been a battering ram, so we got just what the doctor ordered: the warm Santa Ana winds, time along the harbor promenade and San Diego's Embarcadero, and interaction with purveyors of intellect and wit. I'm ready for my next helping in Nashville in 2024. Read on!



*It really was no contest. Robert Bruce won the Best Cricket Shirt award hands down. (MP)*

## You Could Hear Cricket (and See It)

BY SRI JANNATHAN, AS TOLD TO J. RAVI

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2022: a date etched forever into the annals of cricketing history.

On this momentous day, the elite TWS Cricket Club displayed its talents on the lawns of Golden Hill Recreation Center at Balboa Park in San Diego. Police reports indicate that traffic had to be routed to manage the surging crowds seeking to occupy choice positions in the stands.

With bat and pad, flannels and shoes in white and white, they marched in, a full complement of two teams, along with their coaches and physical trainers. As is customary in international tournaments, the team introductions came first, with a “What ho!” bonhomie and a “Pip-pip, old chap” camaraderie.

With the toss settled, the match began in earnest. The man from the MCC was ready for the opening ball from the Balboa Road end. The stands were soon treated to scintillating drives to third man and then again a glance to deep fine leg, and the partnership soon started to build.

With morning dew now gone, the pitch was showing signs of wear and tear, and the spinners came on. On a flighted ball, hanging in the air like a daisy in flight, the tall man with spanking new shoes reached forward to pop a dolly to silly mid-off, and the partnership was broken.

The new batter, a sparkling young lad who has been spoken of as promising talent (see page 9), came in, and sure enough, he was quickly off the mark. There are rumors that spotters were nearby, searching for new recruits for Nottinghamshire. Youth was soon in full flow, reaching a landmark 25 on his first outing. But all things have to come to an end, as his late cut was captured brilliantly at gully.

The man from The Hague was next at bat, and he swung his club diplomatically. The scoreboard marched on with twos and fours. The girl in the blue sweater was next at the crease, and she batted with a firm eye and solid grip. No boundaries, but the singles kept the scoreboard ticking.

As the shadows stretched across the pitch, the appeal for bad light was accepted, and the umpires called it stumps. The spectators were seen leaving the grounds animatedly debating the field placements, the choice of bowlers, and the artistry of the cover drive off the front foot, as they adjourned for their afternoon cuppa.



Four UC San Diego students joined us for cricket.  
Left to right: Aryaman Sinha, Sashank Kanchustambam,  
Crish Chengappa, Gokul Prasad (MP)

## Troop Transport Patrols San Diego Harbor

BY JEFF PORTEOUS

AHOY, SHIPMATES! Convention Friday: Talk about a perfect afternoon for a San Diego Harbor excursion with my fellow Plummies! Weather fair, temperature warm, seas glassy, and troop dispositions upbeat, to say the least. This waterlogged wretch indeed felt most privileged to be among those present.

Upon arrival, we were warmly welcomed aboard by our Flagship Cruises host and narrator, Rusty, and the atmosphere below decks became festive quickly—with drinks, snacks, and conversation abundant—as all our troops showed eagerness to head out onto the brine.

But no sooner had we slipped our berth than I shied like a startled mustang to discover we were in for more excitement than anticipated. Rusty was suddenly talking of our good ship being dive-bombed—by something referred to as a Fig-Eater Beetle. I wasn’t aware of this aircraft type myself, but apparently one of these larger-than-life metallic green apparitions had just been sighted strafing our crew out on the bow, causing no little alarm among them. Rusty assured us however, that despite the deadly look of the enemy aviator, he and any others of his ilk flying in formation with him were actually quite harmless—so the practiced gun crews fore and aft were able to stow their weapons safely as we began our reconnaissance in earnest.

San Diego being a U.S. Navy town, heading south down South Coast Bay instantly brought us navy base views in all directions. In fact, it was immediately obvious that this was indeed the base on the country’s West Coast. Impressive naval power was evident as far as the eye could see, beginning with the retired aircraft carrier *Midway* (a tourist attraction) adjacent to our own berth. As we continued south, Rusty pointed out endless types, names, and descriptions of navy vessels, including all manner of escort and littoral combat ships, two active-duty *Nimitz*-class aircraft carriers and more, and even the destroyer *O’Kane*, named for one of my own favorite WWII submarine heroes. We also got a look at the Naval Air Station as we passed.

Other notable sights off our port and starboard beams were cruise ships belonging to Disney and other lines; PetCo Park, home of the Padres (I had to choke back a “boo” after what had happened to the Dodgers); and the famed Coronado Bridge. After half an hour, we turned about, headed back north, and passed our own dock again as we continued on for an additional



*Just lion in the sun (JT)*

northerly tour, stretching our patrol into a delightful two hours. It was on this leg that we also encountered a photogenic, if lethargic, gathering of sea lions.

Just before heading back, I was struck amidships by a sight I thought we wouldn't sail far enough north to see: the U.S. Navy Submarine Base at Point Loma. Two berthed *Los Angeles*-class nuclear-powered attack subs thus came into view, and I thought of how all the other powerful ships we'd seen earlier on the patrol were mere "skimmers" to those who effortlessly pass undetected beneath them. How many kinds of ships are there? Well, two, actually: submarines and targets—or so say our submariners.

Soon we were pulling back into our troop transport's own berth, and of course it occurred to me that the real highlight of our afternoon patrol was merely in spending peaceful time out on the water in perfect weather with dear Wodehousean friends, old and new. See you all aboard the planned Cumberland River cruise in Nashville, eh, what?

## Browsing and Sluicing and Singing—Oh, My!

BY ELIN WOODGER

AFTER FORTY YEARS of biennial binging, TWS conventions have become steeped in tradition. Friday night in San Diego saw a merging of the long-established opening reception with the more recent custom of having Maria Jette and Dan Chouinard regale us with songs and music guaranteed to tickle the fancy of Wodehouseans everywhere.

The evening kicked off in the Crystal Ballroom, and if any Plummies were tired after a day of cricketing, cruising, and rummaging, they certainly didn't show it. The line at the bar was long, and the room echoed with happy chatter while servers with an assortment of delicious canapés made the rounds through the crowd. Then, at 6 PM, a cowbell was rung, the signal to adjourn to the Bivouac Ballroom for an eagerly anticipated

treat. (The evening also featured a cricketing award to a special young man. For more on this, see page 9.)

Since first delighting us at the 2009 convention in St. Paul, Maria and Dan have become a fixture at TWS conventions, and this concert—billed as “An Imaginary Musicale at ~~Downton~~ Blandings Abbey”—was undoubtedly one of their best. The first three numbers were “Practically guaranteed to have emanated from Lady Constance’s soirées in Blandings’ music room, ca. 1922.” Though none contained Wodehouse lyrics, they were certainly well known to him, including “Bedouin Love Song” (1899), “There Are Fairies at the Bottom of Our Garden” (1917), and—Maria’s particular favorite—“The Lost Chord” (1877).

The next section featured lyrics from a young Plum dipping his toes into the theatrical world: “Put Me in My Little Cell” (1904) and “Two to Tooting” (1914). We were assured that “Visiting Londoners of advanced age would have been humming these Edwardian hits.” Following this came a selection of songs from that rare bird, a Bolton & Wodehouse flop: *See You Later!* (1918). It’s a mystery as to how the show could have failed, given such wonderful music and lyrics—especially “In Our Little Paradise,” which not-so-coincidentally happens to be the title of the duo’s first CD of Wodehouse songs produced several years ago.



*Maria Jette and Dan Chouinard: O-o-o-o-o, you make Plum fun! (DB)*

Finally, we enjoyed two “American imports for the cocktail hour,” both with later Wodehouse lyrics: “The Enchanted Train” (*Sitting Pretty*, 1924) and “Journey’s End” (*The Cabaret Girl*, 1922, and *The City Chap*, 1925). Both touched the heartstrings, and the cheering led to a pleasurable encore with a long title: “Day by Day in Every Way I’m Getting Better Day by Day” (music by Jean Schwartz, lyrics by William Jerome)—a song dedicated to Dr. Emil Coué, the predecessor of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. The truth of that handy phrase was experienced throughout the weekend.

As ever, Maria’s beautiful voice and charming theatricality, along with Dan’s masterful keyboard work and occasional vocal interpolations, had us thoroughly entranced and clamoring for more. We certainly hope we will get more at future conventions, since we Wodehouseans do like our traditions.

# RIVETED ONCE AGAIN

BY TAD BOEHMER

SATURDAY MORNING in San Diego found the masses bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and assembled in the Bivouac Room of the US Grant Hotel.

First speaker Daniel Lowenstein, in “Wodehouse in the Western Comic Tradition,” traced the author’s roots to the ancient playwrights Aristophanes, Plautus, and Terence, and from there through Shakespeare and Dickens to Wodehouse. Dan argued with great erudition that Wodehouse was the greatest writer of romantic comedy in the twentieth century—this genre being largely defined by domestic situations that achieve a satisfactory resolution. These kinds of works end with happiness, but are not necessarily happy all the way through.

In his delightful “Villains in the Jeeves & Wooster Saga,” David Warren, an attorney, profiled several villains he has known in his legal work; one notable anecdote involved a jar of potentially poisoned honey. He then provided several definitions of the term from dictionaries and diagnostic manuals, which he applied to characters in the Wodehouse oeuvre. Is Bertie a villain? Is Spode a victim? Who is the greatest villain in Wodehouse? Keep reading the pages of future *Plum Lines* to find out.

A different type of “criminality” was profiled in Elin Woodger’s “It Takes a Thief,” namely Plum’s borrowing (or even outright thievery) of other writers’ words. Elin imparted some fascinating origin stories, including that of Anatole, whose prototype is to be found in Barry Pain’s character Alphonse. Was Wodehouse a plagiarist, or were his borrowings from others justified? The answer will be revealed in due course!

Travel writer Tim Richards had the listeners on the edge of their seats as he described his journey to Toszek in Poland, formerly known as Tost, in “If this is Upper Silesia, what must Lower Silesia be like?”: In Search of Wodehouse’s Wartime Prison.” This talk, illustrated with Tim’s photographs from his



Toszek red brick (TR)

visit of just over a decade ago, taught us all why some of the best advice while traveling in this part of the world: “Ask at the castle.” (Note that a version of Tim’s talk was previously printed in the Spring 2012 issue of *Plum Lines*.)

The morning’s raft of talks culminated in Elliott Milstein’s well-argued paper on “Wodehouse’s Greatest Novel.” A controversial topic, to be sure, but Elliott backed up his selection with the customary literary and historical evidence, calling on E. M. Forster’s *Aspects of the Novel*. If not all of the assembled were swayed by Elliott’s argument to deem his choice the best of all of Plum’s works, at least no one could quibble with his methods of reaching that conclusion.

Following an adjournment for lunch, we started the afternoon session with a brief business meeting that consisted primarily of the election of officers. Nominations were made, seconded, and approved, with the following results:

President: Maria Jette

Vice President: Bill Franklin

Treasurer: Indu Ravi

Membership Secretary: Lynn Vesley-Gross

Our overseas correspondents next made their reports. The first was Peter Niewenhuizen, president of the P. G. Wodehouse Society of The Netherlands, which just celebrated its fortieth anniversary. The group’s gatherings cover many topics, from Wodehouse pastiches and cocktails featured in the books. The members recently assembled 143 Dutch translations to send to the P. G. Wodehouse Collection at Vanderbilt University.

Tim Andrew, chairman of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK), reported that membership in that organization has now grown to nearly 1100. He also spoke on their inaugural Wodehouse essay prize, whose first winners will be announced in the coming months. Tim told how many U.K. newspapers advised reading Wodehouse to help get through lockdown—a sentiment that rang pleasingly among those present.

Deborah Fox Bellew detailed her impressive record of attending and documenting TWS gatherings in her talk “Conventions I Have Known . . . Since 1993!” Since attending her first convention as a teenager, Debbie has diligently amassed souvenirs of her experiences: videos, photographs, and collecting signatures on programs. To her, capturing the feeling that Wodehouse can bring out in people, as well as sharing it, is paramount.

A hush then fell on the crowd as Elliott Milstein, chair of the Convention Committee, revealed the

location of the next TWS convention. September 26–29, 2024, the convention will be in Nashville, Tennessee, which is home to Vanderbilt University, which is where the P. G. Wodehouse Collection is housed.

A mysterious figure in an deep purple robe next approached the podium, bearing a candelabrum in one hand. This was Bob Rains, who presented a fascinating examination of the link between Wodehouse and Władziu Valentino Liberace (simply Liberace to the world). This presentation uncovered a lost chapter in the history of British libel law. For the full reveal, stay tuned to *Plum Lines*.

Closing out the day was a pun-filled sojourn of Plummish put-downs. “What the Well-Dressed Man Is Swearing: A Fond Look at Wodehousian Insults,” presented by Ninad Wagle and Alison Strickland, included a “beer-reviewed” analysis of the themes and classification of the wide range of insults, spoken and implied, in the Jeeves and Wooster stories, culminating in a diagrammed breakdown of the “veritable slugfest” to be found in *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*.

The aim of the famed Riveting Talks is arguably the same as that of the BBC: to inform, educate, and entertain. And that they did—in spades.

## Saturday Night's AllRight for Citing: The Banquet

BY JEFF PORTEOUS

IT WAS YET another binge to stagger humanity—or at least bring a lot of sweetness and light together in a single spot during these challenging times. And where else could it take place but Saturday night at the TWS convention in San Diego?

It all began in the US Grant Hotel's Fourth Avenue Foyer, where the elite met for a grand reception—and all could see and be seen with scintillating finery cranked to the max. Restorative beverages were imbibed (“Not all the soda, Jeeves”) and compliments and conversation imbued with appropriate élan. Costumes



Bob Rains's  
grand entrance (RF)

ran the gamut from an absolutely dead-on rendering of Monica Simmons (the noted Blandings pig girl), to the alligator in Lottie Blossom's wicker basket—plus a “lamentation” of swans and even a mastodon (honoring the Master's description of aunts' communications among themselves). It'd be a fool's errand to attempt to describe the resplendent range of sartorial entries in any detail, so I shall happily let the photos throughout this issue do the heavy lifting.

Soon after, the revelers herded themselves into the hotel's regal Palm Court to put on the feedbag. The festive fare was of course delectable; it was followed later by sweets for the sweet—but not before the night's program began in earnest, starting with Gary Hall offering heartwarming remembrances of beloved Wodehouseans who had sadly passed beyond the veil over the past three years. TWS immediate past president Bill Scrivener then offered a toast to Bill Blood, our beloved organization's founder. Finally, to cap off this section of the proceedings, glasses were of course raised to the memory of the Master himself.

Then came a discussion of Friday's cricket match—begun by Bill Franklin—followed by an assortment of prizes handed out to the enthusiastic participants (see page 9). Winners of both the Fiendish and Ganymede quizzes were announced—again, see page 8 for specifics. In a clever turn, much-appreciated doses of Buck-U-Uppo (in the large economy bottle) were distributed to all the happy winners.

One particularly satisfying moment—for me, anyway—had fellow Orange Plum Nancy Helmick taking third in the quiz rankings, doing us local O. Plummies proud while foreshadowing an even greater success when the Costume Award Committee—headed by the esteemed Tom Campbell—next announced its awards. (See page 7 for a detailed listing: there's no way my fevered note-taking could keep up with the parade of honorees pushing their way to the podium!) You see, it turns out that the five Orange Plum femmes fatales took the aptly named Repeat Offender Award en masse for appearing most often in effective—or outlandish—group costuming throughout the weekend's festivities. Quite the honor! And I, myself, am humbled to announce receipt of an award for Military Dress—even though I'd left my dress at home—as both my nom de plum Admiral Biffen and a captain-esque seagoer during our harbor cruise. Buck-U-Uppos were freely distributed to costume winners as well. There will be much bucking up in the convention aftermath!

After all this costume tomfoolery came the announcement by Tom Smith and Elin Woodger of the Norman Murphy Award for supreme service to

Wodehouse and the society. Elliott Milstein humbly accepted the honor, closing out the evening's formalities.



*Elliott Milstein, convention guru, scholar, and now (appropriately) the latest winner of the prestigious Norman Murphy Award (BM)*

## *Anatole Sees Us Off*

BY ELIN WOODGER

THE SUNDAY MORNING “farewell brunch” has been an official part of TWS conventions since 1995. This year it was actually a breakfast, kicking off in the Palm Court at 8 AM. For the next couple of hours, hungry Plummies filtered in and helped themselves from buffet tables filled to overflowing with an assortment of delicious foodstuffs. The room buzzed with conversation and laughter, pictures were taken, addresses were exchanged, and folks moved from table to table to chat with friends old and new.

But it wouldn't be a proper brunch without some entertainment to send us on our way. So we gathered near the lectern to enjoy a visit from none other than that master of gastronomy, Anatole. On hand specifically to promote his recently published *Quiche and Tell* biography, the finicky chef, in a pun-filled presentation, provided details of his life before entering into service with Aunt Dahlia. This included mention of his learning English from the chauffeur Maloney while working for an American family in Nice (a detail we learn in *Wodehouse*). As Anatole winkingly informed

us: “Working for Yankees, they try to understand French culture. Par exemple, they curious why do French people only eat one egg for breakfast? I had to explain that one egg is un oeuf.”

Yes, there were groans aplenty, but there was also laughter. As the punfest continued, Anatole also took questions from the audience, who wanted to know (for example) what it was like working at Brinkley Court, and what was the inside scoop behind his near departure from the Travers household. There was some suspicion that these questions had been planted, but it made no difference to an audience replete with e., b., and c., who found it jolly good fun. Bravo to David Ruef, who brought Anatole to life, and his wife, Karen, who played the peripheral role of catering diva Daphne Dolores Morehead. *Très bien, mes amis!*

Anatole's performance signaled the end to the weekend's festivities, but this didn't prevent many from lingering on in the Palm Court for a long time afterward. Indeed, many had chosen to stay on for another day or more in order to visit San Diego and have further opportunities for socializing with those they wouldn't see again until two years hence.

A happy finish to a splendid weekend—and we expect no less at a TWS convention. Nashville has a hard act to follow.



*Susan Pace and Immediate Past President Bill Scrivener host a table of topping TWS travelers. Left to right behind Susan and Bill: Barbara Jacobitti, Janet and Bruce Montgomery, Ian Michaud, Membership Secretary Lynn Vesley-Gross, Editor in Chief and OM Gary Hall, and Linda Adam-Hall (EW)*



*David Ruef brings Anatole to life at brunch. (BR)*

While [the Château] had been modernized, or what these French called modernized—electric light and two bathrooms—it was not at all what he had been accustomed to in . . . California.

*Hot Water (1932)*

# Bucked Up by a Treasury of Costumery: Plums, Gators, Scotsmen & Pig Girls, Mastodons, and More

BY FRED A KIRKHAM

**T**HE ILLUSTRIOUS COSTUME COMMITTEE included Freda Kirkham, Tom Campbell, Andrea Jacobsen, and Amy Plofker. What an amazing rainbow of costumed riches from which to choose! Here's the scoop:

**The Repeat Offenders Award:** Five women of the Orange Plums had amazing costumes throughout the convention. The award went to Diana Van Horn, Nancy Helmick, Margot Churchill, Lia Hansen, and Marcy Downes. (See also picture on page 12.)



*The Orange Plums came to San Diego to make a fashion splash. They succeeded. (JP)*

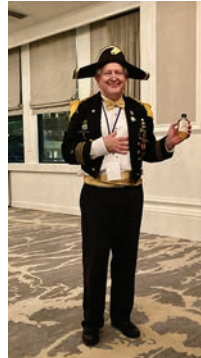
**The Other Alligator Award:** Karen and David Ruef as Ivor Llewellyn and Lottie Blossom, complete with stuffed alligator. (See picture on page 14.)

**The Less Is More Award (also qualifies under Aunts and Wodehouse Bestiary):** Katherine Jordan as "Aunt Calling to Aunt Like Mastodons Across a Primeval Swamp." (See picture on page 12.)

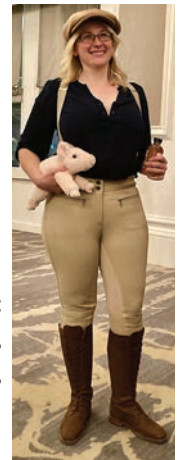
**The Romantic Leads Award:** Lizette Acevedo and Mike McCaffrey as Tuppy Glossop and Angela Travers. (See picture on page 12.)

**The Collective Noun Award (Lamentation of Swans):** Diane Madlon-Kay and Richard Madlon, displaying every swan in the canon, as far as we could tell. (See picture on page 13.)

**The Ensemble Jeeves Most Detests Award:** Bruce Willey in a light-up cummerbund definitely brought a touch of the old hidalgo. (See picture on page 13.)



**The Military Man Award:** Jeff Porteous was looking dapper in yachting getup during the harbor cruise, and then wore an Admiral "Fruity" Biffen ensemble to the banquet. (Picture to the left; see also picture on page 13.)



**The Supporting Character Award:** Ashley Polasek as Monica Simmons, the renowned Pig Girl at Blandings, complete with stuffed pink pig.

## Honorable Mentions

Mike Engstrom as a Golfer (with custom plus-fours, picture on page 13)

Dinesh Sonak in the white mess jacket that troubled Jeeves (picture of Dinesh with his father, Vikas, on page 12)

Alison Strickland in her Pauline Stoker ensemble (picture on page 12)

Barbara Jacobitti in flapper garb (picture on page 14)

Curtis Armstrong as Angus McAllister (below)



# The Winning Fiends

BY MAX POKRIVCHAK

THE SAN DIEGO convention featured two quizzes: the traditional Fiendish Quiz to test the mettle of the most dedicated Plum aficionado and the Junior Ganymede Quiz for the more casual fan.

The Fiendish Quiz's theme was geography, in keeping with our "Where in the World Is Pelham?" convention title. Nancy Helmick took third place, the team of Ninad Wagle and Alison Strickland took second, and Peter Nieuwenhuizen finished first.

In the Junior Ganymede Quiz, Raynell Heaton took the First Time Convention Attendee category. Three tied for first place: Indu Ravi, Tom Smith, and the team of Ninad Wagle and Alison Strickland. The prize—a bottle of Mulliner's Buck-You-Uppo—was awarded to Indu because her birthday is closest to Plum's.



TWS Treasurer Indu Ravi with her Buck-U-Uppo at the banquet awards ceremony (EW)

## Was the "P" Silent?

BY DAVID L. LEAL

FOR THOSE inclined to an appreciation of language, and I cannot imagine a Wodehouse reader who is not, I would like to revisit an apparently settled question: the pronunciation of "Psmith."

In "The Lost Lambs" (later incorporated into *Mike and Psmith*), our new hero introduces himself:

If you ever have occasion to write to me, would you mind sticking a P at the beginning of my name? P-s-m-i-t-h . . . In conversation you may address me as Rupert (though I hope you won't), or simply Smith, the P not being sounded. Compare the name Zbysco, in which the Z is given a similar miss-in-baulk. See?

In *Leave It to Psmith*, we are privy to the following exchange between the great man and a "small maid-of-all-work":

"The name is Psmith. P-smith."

"Peasmith, sir?"

"No, no. P-s-m-i-t-h. . . . The p, I should add for your guidance, is silent, as in phthisis, psychic, and ptarmigan."

Until recently, I never considered that Psmith could be pronounced in any other way. Of course the P must be silent, following the examples given by Psmith himself.

However, as I myself have a confusing name—who would think that just four letters, L-e-a-l, can be pronounced in so many ways in English and Spanish?—I might have known the question was more complicated than at first reading.

When the maid of the fragile Phyllis incorrectly guesses how to pronounce Psmith, I initially read this as the natural and somewhat comic confusion of one who encounters the highly unusual name of a highly spectacular person. I had not considered that pronouncing the "P" might have been normal for some English speakers of the time.

But then I read *The King's English: A Guide to Modern Usage* (1997) by Kingsley Amis. Amis discusses many linguistic matters in a way that is witty, informative, and opinionated. It is a great joy to read his stern denunciation of writing that misuses and confuses the English language, and he skewers artificial constructions and pomposities. He emphasizes the importance of natural writing, so if it reads better to split an infinitive or end a sentence with a preposition, he urges us to do so.

For Wodehousians, the key part is near the end of the book, tucked into the chapter titled "Whizz." Amis observes that "English spelling is littered with intrusive letters that may have been pronounced at some earlier stage but are not, or not everywhere, these days. The initial K in words like knight and knee was probably still sounded by some speakers in some areas in the eighteenth century."

This is all very interesting, no doubt, but I leaped from my seat when I saw the following additional examples: The "initial P in words like psychology and perhaps pterodactyl is supposed to have lasted well into the twentieth, although I myself, born in 1922, never heard it." He appears to regret this change, as it produces "the annoying result among others that psychosis . . . sounds just the same as sycosis, a form of shaving-rash."

This suggests that an initial "P" may have been pronounced by some in England when "The Lost Lambs" and *Leave It to Psmith* were first published (1908 and 1923, respectively). Could a writer with such

an ear for language as Wodehouse have been unaware of this “intrusive letter” issue? Were contemporaneous readers supposed to know that Psmith could have been pronounced “Peasmith,” and might have been by a share of the English people? Might some readers have agreed with the maid that Psmith should be “Peasmith,” even if that sounds implausible today? Was such pronunciation related to region or social class?

As an American who is deep in the heart of Texas, I have no intuition about this and will be happy to hear from readers who do.

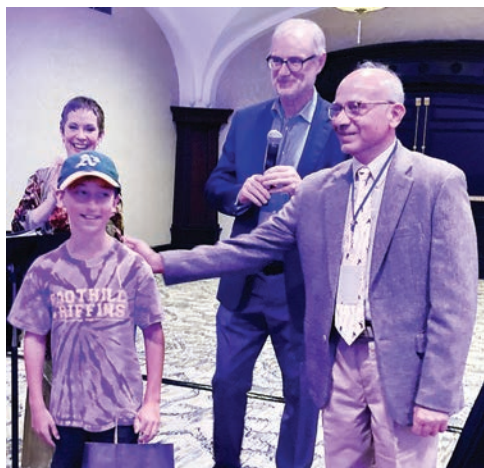
## The Winning Cricketers

BY BILL FRANKLIN

FRIDAY’S CRICKET GAME was a great success, and at the banquet on Saturday, several participants received awards for their efforts. Dinesh Sonak was recognized for his outstanding batting, while Tad Boehmer was rewarded for his superior bowling. But it wasn’t all about the level of playing: Robert Bruce’s handsome outfit, complete with Marylebone Cricket Club cap (see page 1), was widely admired, as was Bruce Montgomery’s superb cricket garb (see page 10).

However, the most impressive player also turned out to be our youngest: twelve-year-old Adam Abrinko. Adam exhibited a keen eye for batting, deftly protected his wicket after a few early bowls, and was rapidly on his front foot slogging fours and sixes. While still a bit young for bowling, he exhibited a wonderful knack for fielding, catching out at least one (maybe two). Consequently, on Friday evening Adam was given a well-deserved award for “Best Newcomer Exhibiting the Most Potential to Become a Serious Cricketer.”

We look for great things from this young man. When last heard from, his father was preparing to read Adam a good dose of *Mike* for bedtime.



Adam Abrinko receives his well-deserved Newcomer cricket award. (EW)

## Changes to Your Account Status Notifications

RIGHT, THEN. It behooves me to let you know of the plots and plans that the *Plum Lines* team has been concocting in recent history.

As most of you know, we have various officers, the *Plum Lines* global production team, our webmaster, and others who hold it all together for our mutual enjoyment. We stay committed to publishing our little journal four times a year, and as close to a quarterly schedule as possible.

In recent years, we’ve moved the printing and mailing operation to the upper Midwest, thanks to Elliott Milstein and the Pickering Motor Club Chapter. They’ve done a terrific job preparing the packages for you, wherever on the planet you might be. To further streamline the operation, we are now about to move the mailing operation so that it will be performed by the same company who handles our printing. This change will occur first with the Spring 2023 issue, which you should receive in March.

What this means to you is that the status sheets that you’re used to getting as an insert with your *Plum Lines* issues will no longer come with the printed journal. Instead, you will receive your status sheets via email from our membership secretary (the eminent Lynn Vesley-Gross). Beginning after this issue is mailed, you will be informed periodically of “dues due” and given the opportunity to renew and to update your contact information. And perhaps a tidbit of other information as necessary related to your account.

The only thing constant is change, and this change will simplify the production and contact process substantially, thereby allowing us to continue to provide *Plum Lines* most efficiently to you for the years to come.

Onward! Thanks for being part of The Wodehouse Society and bringing sweetness and light, in the form of humor and joy, to the world.

—OM

The thought of the distinguished company he was to entertain that night had changed him temporarily, as with some wave of a fairy wand, into a thing of joviality and benevolence. One could almost hear the milk of human kindness gurgling and splashing within him.

*A Gentleman of Leisure* (1910)

# John Dawson, 1952–2022



WE REPORT the passing on October 23, 2022, of Wodehouse scholar John Dawson of Sunnyvale, California. John suffered a major heart attack at the end of April and, despite the efforts of his fine medical team, was unable to overcome ensuing complications. He was seventy years old.

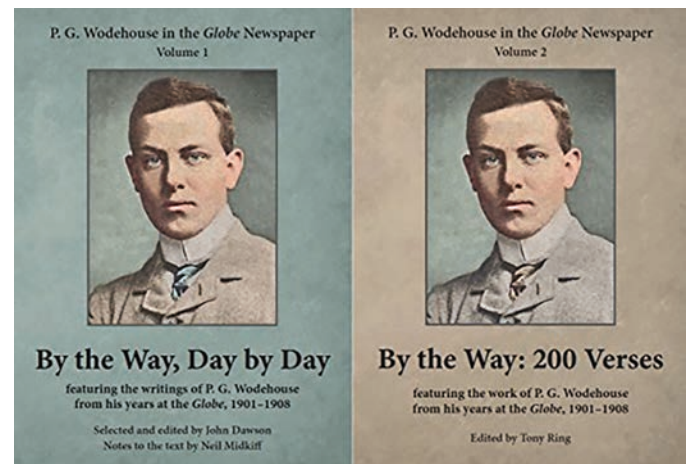
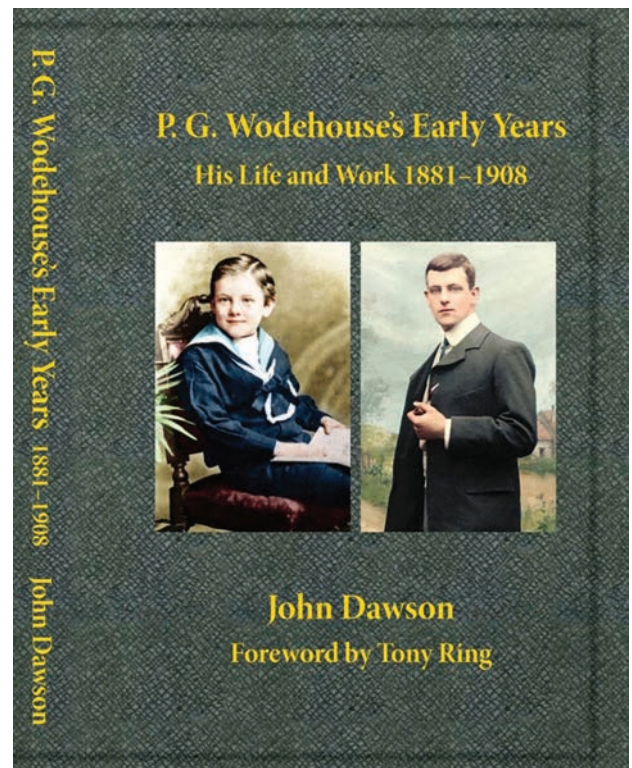
John discovered P. G. Wodehouse by chance in 1972 through the novel *Laughing Gas* and never turned back. He dedicated the rest of his life to finding and collecting everything published by the Master. His collecting goal was to obtain the best copies he could afford of both the U.S. and U.K. editions, a milestone he achieved in the early 1990s. From there, he turned to the large body of magazine and newspaper work (much of it never republished or anthologized), an endeavor in which he was greatly helped by a distinguished group of collectors worldwide. He amassed a voluminous collection of this material, much of which can be seen on his Facebook pages “P. G. Wodehouse Illustrated I and II” (<https://www.facebook.com/PgWodehouseIllustrated> and <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068535638387>).

John credited his interest in Wodehouse scholarship to the late, great Norman Murphy and Norman’s 2006 landmark two-volume set *A Wodehouse Handbook*. This interest ultimately led to the P. G. Wodehouse Globe Reclamation Project (<http://madameulalie.org/grp/GRPMenu.html>), spearheaded by John, and a two-volume publication, *Wodehouse in the Globe Newspaper* (2015), which for the first time published excerpts from his “By the Way” humor columns for London’s *Globe* newspaper, 1901–1908.

During the course of his research into Plum’s life and earliest writing, John came to realize that much of what had been written about Wodehouse’s childhood

and early career by previous biographers was fallacious, misapprehended, or simple fiction designed to drive the preconceived agendas of certain of these writers. He attempted to remedy these injustices to Plum’s precious legacy with *P. G. Wodehouse’s Early Years: His Life and Work 1881–1908* (2021, GRP Publications, <http://madameulalie.org/jdawson/wey.html>). Although opinionated and controversial at times, this book has shed new light and insights into Wodehouse’s life and work. John treasured the friendship and assistance provided by some of our community’s experts and scholars over the years.

John leaves a loving family of three children, five grandchildren, and his sister Dee and brother-in-law Mark Pierron, who cared for him compassionately throughout his final days.



# Photographic Memories of the San Diego 2022 Convention

Thanks to so many for providing wonderful, lively photos. Here's the key:

DB = Debbie Bellew DR = David Ruef EW = Elin Woodger JP = Jeff Porteous PN = Peter Nieuwenhuizen FK = Freda Kirkham  
BR = Bob Rains BM = Bruce Montgomery DS = Dinesh Sonak LAH = Linda Adam-Hall MP = Max Pokrivchak  
MS = Michael Smith RB = Robert Bruce RF = Robert Fox SW = Steven Wieland SC = Susanne Campbell JT = Jean Tillson



Katherine Jordan visits the San Diego Public Library's Wodehouse exhibit. (MP)



Kris Fowler and Jean Tillson expertly attend the rummage tables. (DB)



Newly appointed TWS president Maria Jette with the crown jewels—and a nice chandelier crown (BR)



President of the Dutch Wodehouse society Peter Nieuwenhuizen delivers greetings from our friends in The Netherlands. (BM)



Susan Pace and Larry Smith (EW)



Cricketeer Bruce Montgomery (EW)



Malbork, world's largest brick castle (near Gdansk)—part of Tim Richards's Toszek travels (TR)



J. Ravi and Barbara Jacobitti adorn the cruise ship deck. (EW)



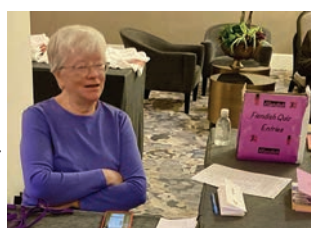
Linda Adam-Hall models the convention T-shirt on the docks. (EW)



The mighty Bob Rains at bat, thrilling the onlookers with a good whack (SW)



The US Grant (JP)



Roberta Towner, registrar extraordinaire (EW)



The multidimensional Freda Kirkham (EW)

Arthur Perkins enjoying the convivialities (EW)



Chicagoans John Coats and Tina Woelke in full banquet mode (FK)



Carol Cavalluzzi, Elaine Coppola, and Kate Andrew, with David Garrett and Sylvia Bernicchi in front (EW)



David Warren describes his adventures with pal Elliott Milstein as they hitchhiked in Europe a few years back. (MS)



*The Orange Plums' seemingly endless variety of fashion, including Marcy Downes as the alligator in the wicker basket (EW)*



*Reber, Eckfield, Reber, and a plethora of Abrinkos (SW)*



*Dan Lowenstein exits the podium to great applause. (DS)*



*Father and son: Dinesh and Vikas Sonak (DS)*



*Lizette Acevedo and Mike McCaffrey (EW)*



*Ashley Polasek portrays the Blandings Pig Girl and Curtis Armstrong channels Angus McAllister. (EW)*



*Drama Queen Diana Van Horn and director Marcy Downes (JP)*



*Alison Strickland as Pauline Stoker, with Ninad Wagle (FK)*



*Cindy McKeown (EW)*



*Alphabet newts (FK)*

*Mark and Karen Reber in Philly hats (DB)*



*Which Noel was first, Merrill or Bushnell? (LAH)*



*Made for the stage: Virtuosos Dan Chouinard and Maria Jette (SW)*



*Kathy Jordan in mastodon gear (JP)*



*Sherry Smith takes the cake. (MS)*



*Hilary Bruce and sizable hat (FK)*





Jeff Porteous and Margot Churchill prepare to set sail. (JP)



Associate editor Tad Boehmer and Vanderbilt envoy Mary McSparran (SW)



Tom and Kathy Smith (LAH)



Elin Woodger (EW)



John and Elise Fahey (SW)



Kathleen Murray, Melissa Harris, Will Saddler, and Karen Byrne (EW)



Balboa Park plaque, apparently from Ickenham's heydays (BR)



Andrea Jacobsen and Shana Singerman (EW)



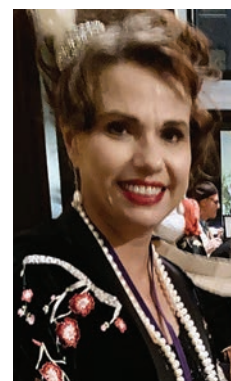
"Jeeves's Nightmare" award winner Bruce Willey (EW)



Aussies Narrelle Harris and Tim Richards (SW)



Our harbor tour guide, Rusty: "Any questions?" (LAH)



Convention planner and chief attendee communicator Allie Weeks (EW)



Deb Marko and newly crowned TWS VP Bill Franklin (EW)



Perpetually creative costumer Diane Madlon-Kay with fellow lamentation of swan fan Richard Madlon (EW)



Niblick-wielding Mike Engstrom receives his award from Tom Campbell. (EW)

Karen Ruef interviews Anatole at the brunch. (EW)



Maria J. and Max P. (MJ)



Ravi looks like a pro cricket bowler.  
(SW)



The famous (or infamous?)  
O Plums PJ pic (JP)



U.K. Wodehouse  
stalwarts Robert and  
Hilary Bruce (BR)



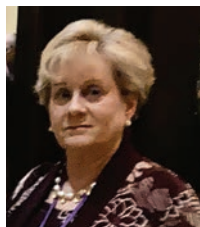
Cruise on! (DB)



Another compelling  
reason why people live  
in San Diego (MS)



A table full of  
joy (DR)



Janet Montgomery  
(EW)



Jean Tillson and  
Rebecca Lytle (JT)



Pickering President for  
Life LuAnn Warren,  
David Warren,  
Sherry Smith (MS)



Ananth  
Kaitharam  
(EW)



Arthur Perkins and  
Katherine Murray (EW)



Karen Shotting (EW)



Wow, is that a San Diego TWS  
convention coffee cup already  
on Wodehouse's gravesite in  
Remsenburg, New York? (PN)



Raynell Heaton gets  
her helping of Buck-U-  
Uppo (JP)



Susan Barr and  
Steve Wieland (EW)



Beaming  
Ian  
Michaud  
with  
Drones tie  
(EW)



Cheers from across the  
pond: Robert Bruce and  
Tim Andrew (EW)



Flapper Barb  
Jacobitti  
brightens the  
banquet hall.  
(SC)



Webmaster  
Noel Merrill, Lucy  
Merrill, Elaine  
Coppola, Carol  
Cavalluzzi (EW)



Karen and  
David Ruef  
get into the  
act. (EW)

Raynell and  
Scott Heaton  
(EW)



Bunches of brunchers enjoy the last minutes  
of the 2022 convention. (EW)

# This Wretched Man: British Government Memorandums Dealing with P. G. Wodehouse, 1944–1948

BY TODD MORNING

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, Thomas Smith emailed me and asked if I was interested in seeing the large number of papers dealing with P. G. Wodehouse which he had collected from the British National Archives and other sources. Readers of *Plum Lines* will know that Tom has written many lively and well-researched articles over the years. Tom stated that he has moved on to other research interests, but he felt that the papers might still generate a worthy article or two from an eager Wodehousian who was also capable of lifting heavy loads. Since I'm much stronger than I look, he thought of me (see picture on page 18). Soon after I agreed to take on the archive materials, a large box appeared on my doorstep.

Many of the papers deal with Wodehouse's time in wartime and postwar France, particularly after the liberation of Paris in August 1944. Plum and Ethel caused the British government to generate a sizable stack of papers as officials sent memos flying back and forth across the Channel. The events of Wodehouse's life while he was in wartime France have been well covered by his biographers. This article gives a behind-the-scenes look at how various departments in the British government tried to deal with Wodehouse's travails.

When the Allied armies reached Paris, P. G. and Ethel Wodehouse were living at the Hotel Bristol on the Rue du Faubourg. Officials in the German government had arranged for them to stay at the Bristol. The hotel was popular with top Nazis, but the staff later reported that the Wodehouses lived quietly and kept to themselves, not mixing with the other guests. When the Germans retreated from Paris, the British embassy staff took over the hotel. (The British embassy in Paris needed extensive repairs before it could be reoccupied.)

Soon after he arrived in Paris, the newly installed British ambassador to France, Duff Cooper, stepped into the Bristol's elevator and found himself standing next to P. G. Wodehouse. He was not happy. In 1940, Cooper, as Minister of Information, had encouraged the denunciations of Wodehouse after the first Berlin broadcast. On September 29, 1944, Cooper sent a memo to the Foreign Office in London: "In view of the difficulties that might arise if the press were to get hold of the story, I am trying to arrange for Wodehouse to be moved to another hotel." By October 3, the Wodehouses had been moved to the Hotel Lincoln in Paris.

Presumably, the Wodehouses would have continued to stay at the Hotel Lincoln and well out of Duff Cooper's sight, or even his thoughts, if the French police hadn't arrested Plum and Ethel early in the morning on November 21, 1944. Malcolm Muggeridge (who, as an intelligence officer, was assigned to look after the Wodehouses) eventually wrote an account of the arrest and his efforts to secure the couple's release. Subsequent Wodehouse biographers have also written extensively about this arrest, so I won't repeat all of the details here.

The papers from the British National Archive show that much of the pressure on the Foreign Office to assist Wodehouse came from members of the British public. British citizens wrote to their Members of Parliament, expressing their concern for Wodehouse. The MPs fired off questions to the Foreign Office. The officials in the Foreign Office, in turn, sent inquiries and directions to the Paris embassy staff. The Paris embassy staff scrambled to discover where Wodehouse was and why he had been arrested.

Adding to the public's concerns were the false newspaper and BBC reports that Wodehouse had been placed in a French concentration camp. The attitude of much of the press was that Wodehouse might need to face a trial in Britain, but in the meantime, those darn French had better leave him alone. Those who wrote letters to their MPs echoed these sentiments, and also frequently expressed sympathy for Wodehouse. For instance, a Mr. Brock from Coventry wrote to the Home Secretary: "I have read with consternation that P. G. Wodehouse is to be interned in France under conditions reminiscent to those reported in relation to similar German institutions and which raised feelings of national horror and disgust." Brock went on: "Probably he [Wodehouse] has done more for Anglo-American friendship than any other man." Joseph Whitworth from Manchester wrote to his MP: "P. G. Wodehouse is a British subject and it seems to me that it is intolerable that he should be treated in the way he is being treated by the French without any apparent protest from our Government." The Rev. A. Maryon Watson wrote a letter to a Mr. Pickthorn, expressing his opinions, which he hoped would be passed to the MP, Sir Edward Grigg. Rev. Watson began his letter: "It would appear that a British subject is to be confined in a French concentration camp without trial on the grounds of

his having broadcast over the German wireless. Public opinion, so far as I have been able to judge it, is vague, ill-informed, and therefore acquiescent in this matter. . . . Perhaps you can secure for me, as representing the rather foolish and ignorant public, some 'prima facie' evidence which justifies the Government's leaving him to the rather obvious impartialities of French justice."

The memos from the British archive underscore the Foreign Office's frustration over the inability of their staff in Paris to discover from the French what was happening. The fallout from the arrest reached Winston Churchill—a man facing more pressing concerns than the arrest of a British humorist. On November 28, 1944, Churchill fired off a memo to Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary: "It seems to me that the French are overdoing things about P. G. Wodehouse. Is he a British subject? If not, we have no interest. But if he is, I think we ought to know what he is accused of doing." Eden replied on November 29, stating that Wodehouse was a British subject and that the French were not treating him harshly. He also raised the possibility that the French authorities had arrested Wodehouse to protect him from the mobs that were handing out rough justice to suspected collaborators. On December 3, Churchill sent a sharp memo to Ambassador Duff Cooper. In his Wodehouse biography, Robert McCrum quotes a few sentences from this memo. Readers of *Plum Lines* may appreciate seeing the full text:

You should certainly make enquiries about what is intended in the case of Wodehouse, who is a British subject. I have noticed quite a distinct change in the feelings here towards him since it was thought that the French were treating him roughly. It seems for us to judge him, as his offense was committed when he was a British subject, prisoner of the Germans. If you are shy about making enquiries which have been suggested and sending a report upon the subject, I will telegraph de Gaulle myself, pointing out that this is a small matter on which to raise difficulties and that it is unwise to arouse sympathy in England for a man like this. Some of the questions which arise are: Has he had any trial? If not, when is he going to be brought to trial? What are the charges against him? Will he have legal protections? These sort of ideas arise very commonly in the minds of people to whom Wodehouse's action is contemptible.

Cooper, who had already been dismissed by Churchill from his job as the government's Minister of

Information in 1941, was quick to respond defensively to the Prime Minister. On December 5 he wrote: "My difficulty with regard to Wodehouse has been due to the fact that since I reported his presence here on September 29, I have received no instructions as to the attitude I should adopt." On December 8, Churchill replied, raising three points:

1. I am sorry you should feel you have been left without instructions, but I don't think that much more could have been said to you in the way of instructions than was said in Foreign Office telegram No. 106 [of October 8th] until Mr. W. was arrested on November 20th. Since then, on the information given in your telegrams, Foreign Office have been expecting from day to day to hear of his release. In any case Foreign Office would have wanted first to know exactly on what grounds the French were holding him, about which they asked on November 28th and again on December 5th.

2. Subject to any views you may have to express on Foreign Office telegram No. 429, most satisfactory solution of question will be that he should live under surveillance in the country or suburbs.

3. As you will have seen from Foreign Office telegram No. 429, Home Office will be likely to agree and I understand that the relatives will also do so.

On December 7, Churchill sent another memo to Eden. In lines quoted in several Wodehouse biographies, he made it clear that he was finished with the Wodehouse matter: "We would prefer not ever to hear about him again and this would be in the general interest. His name stinks here, but he would not be sent to prison. However, if there is no other resort, he should be sent over here and if there is no charge against him, he can live in some place or go to hell as soon as there is a vacant passage."

By the end of 1944, the French and British had agreed that the Wodehouses should be moved to the Hotel Les Charmettes in Barbizon, outside Paris (near Fontainebleau). The Wodehouses moved there on January 20, 1945. Soon after they arrived, however, the hotel was requisitioned by the British Army. P. G. and Ethel were told that they would need to be out of the hotel by February 15. When he learned that the Wodehouses would need to relocate again, Duff Cooper sent a note to the Foreign Office, suggesting that Wodehouse be allowed to move to a neutral

country, such as Switzerland or Portugal. The Foreign Office discussed this proposal and decided that they would not object. A short time later, however, the Treasury Department determined that if Wodehouse went to Switzerland or Portugal, he would not be able to support himself. (Their strict currency transfer laws prohibited Wodehouse from withdrawing money from his accounts in Britain.) On February 8, the British embassy in Switzerland weighed in with a telegram, expressing their desire to keep Wodehouse out of the country: "We have some queer British fish here already and we should be reluctant to add to their number."

A memo from the Foreign Office stated: "The Swiss authorities would probably grant Wodehouse a visa only if they were able to make a public statement to the effect that they had done so at our request." (The Foreign Office did not wish to make a public statement, afraid of giving the impression that Wodehouse was receiving preferential treatment.)

In a letter dated February 15, 1945, to Foreign Office civil servant Oliver C. Harvey, Duff Cooper made it clear that he was fed up with the Wodehouse matter. Cooper began his letter by defending the French: "We are adopting a position which seems to be quite indefensible, and shall end by irritating the French who have been courteous and long-suffering throughout. When the French detained him, English people wrote to the *Times* who printed their stupid letters, protesting that the French had no right to interfere with the liberties of a British subject. . . . When the French offered to deport him, we implored them to do nothing of the kind. When they allowed him to go live in the country in a hotel, our military authorities immediately requisitioned the hotel." He ended the letter by ripping into the Foreign Office and requesting that they figure out a way to get Wodehouse to Switzerland: "And meanwhile a number of British officials are wasting time and money in looking after the old scoundrel. If the true facts were known, an admirable comedy or farce might be written on the subject, in which the most ludicrous part of all would be played by H.M.G. For heaven's sake get the Treasury to agree to his spending a few hundred pounds of his own money in scuttling into Switzerland, and we can wash our hands of the whole affair."

Oliver Harvey offered no remedy in his reply: "Many thanks for your letter of February 15th about P. G. Wodehouse. I need hardly say I am sorry that you and your mission should have been saddled with this wretched man, but I am afraid that we cannot devise any satisfactory way of taking him off your hands."

In February 1945, the Wodehouses returned to the Hotel Lincoln in Paris, until this hotel was also

requisitioned, and they were forced to find other Paris lodgings. Wodehouse's friends and family continued to work on his behalf. On May 15, 1945 (shortly after the end of the war in Europe), Lieutenant Colonel R. C. Thomson of the American army wrote to J. M. Troutbeck of the British foreign office. The subject of the letter was Thomson's recent trip to the German estate Degenershausen, where he was confronted by the estate's owner Baroness Anga von Bodenhausen. In two other *Plum Lines* articles I've written of kindness that the Baroness showed to the Wodehouses when they stayed at Degenershausen in the summers of 1940 and 1941. Thomson probably did not know what he was in for when met the Baroness: "On learning of my presence the Baroness asked to see me, and told me a lengthy story about the stay in her castle for two years during the war. . . . The Baroness exhibited to me a number of very silly letters to herself signed 'Plummie' and a mass of other evidence which she is desirous of bringing to London to clear her friend's name. As I had been sent to Germany to deal with quite different matters, I did not encourage the lady at all and merely consented as the best way of terminating the interview with the importunate widow to take custody of the script of the offending broadcast, which I enclose herein." Thomson went on to write: "She maintains that [Wodehouse] was given to understand that he would broadcast solely to amuse his American friends. When later a heavily erased line on his script was rubbed clean it was evident to his friends, chief among whom were the Baroness and Herr von Dieckhoff, formerly German Ambassador at Washington, that Wodehouse had been duped."

I have never read that Hans-Heinrich Dieckhoff (German ambassador to the United States in 1937 and 1938; later German Ambassador to Spain from 1943 until the end of the war) was a friend of Wodehouse. Have other readers of *Plum Lines* come across this? I also have never heard about the "heavily erased line" on his script that was rubbed clean (and which somehow showed that P. G. had been duped). It's difficult to know what this could possibly mean.

Perhaps better connected and more effective advocates for Wodehouse than the well-meaning Baroness were Peter Cazalet (husband to Ethel's daughter, Leonora, who had died in May 1944) and his older sister, Thelma Cazalet-Keir (the MP for Islington East from 1931 until July 1945). In 1946, with the Wodehouses still in France, Thelma Cazelet-Keir (no longer an MP, but undoubtedly still a person of influence) revived the idea of Plum and Ethel leaving for Switzerland. An April 1, 1946, letter from the Foreign Office to the British embassy in Paris made it clear that

the Treasury's position continued to be that Wodehouse would not be allowed to move money from Britain to Switzerland. The letter ended with this line: "However this may be, as we have heard little or nothing from you about the case of late, we trust that Mr. Wodehouse is no longer a thorn in your side." In May 1946, Mrs. Cazalet-Keir telephoned the Foreign Office and gave them the news that Wodehouse wished to move to the United States. Both the British Home Office and Foreign Office told the American government that they had no objections to the move. After some delay, the Wodehouses left Europe by ship on April 17, 1947, never to return.

After keeping such close tabs on P. G. Wodehouse for many months, the British government almost comically lost sight of him in the late 1940s. This time MI-5 was looking for him. (MI-5 is the agency of the British government in charge of security and counterintelligence.) On January 6, 1947, MI-5 investigator C. E. Wakefield sent a note to Foreign Office official G. C. Allchin: "Do you know if Wodehouse has left for the U.S.A. yet?" Mr. Allchin replied: "I'm afraid that we do not know what has become of this man. We are, however, asking the embassy in Paris and will let you know what they say." It was not until January 31 that the embassy in Paris was able to report that Wodehouse was still living there. MI-5 personnel were even more confused in April 1948 when an agent reported: "We had previously understood that the Wodehouses were in the U.S.A., but it appears that P. G. himself is in Mexico applying for an immigration visa to the U.S.A." (Wodehouse's arrival in New York a year earlier had been reported in the international press.)

The papers that Tom Smith has collected from the archives have more intriguing stories to tell. For instance, in reviewing the papers, I believe the case can be made that the British government had reached the conclusion that Wodehouse could not be charged with any crime, even before their formal investigations began in the autumn of 1944. Watch for my article on this topic in a future edition of *Plum Lines*, provided I still have the strength to lift the papers.



*Todd's research into Wodehouse's wartime and postwar challenges has brought much light to the topics. We're hoping that his energy continues apace.*

# Chapters Corner

**W**HAT 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.

## Anglers' Rest

(Seattle and vicinity)

Contact: Susan Collicott

206-784-7458

susancollicott@gmail.com



## Blandings Castle Chapter

(Greater San Francisco Bay area)

Contact: Bill Franklin

sfblandingscastle@gmail.com



## The Broadway Special

(New York City and vicinity)

Contact: Amy Plofer

914-631-2554

AmyPlf@verizon.net



## Capital! Capital!

(Washington, D.C., and vicinity)

Contact: Susan Parsons

susandparsons@aol.com



## Chapter One

(Greater Philadelphia area)

Contact: Mark Reber

rebermkrk@gmail.com



**O**N SEPTEMBER 10, the chaps and damsels of Chapter One donned their nosebags and gathered at Cavanaugh's Headhouse in Philadelphia—our first non-Zoom meeting in more than two years.

The official topic for discussion was Wodehouse's 1952 novel *Barmy in Wonderland*, but most of our time was devoted to fond conversation on a wide range of subjects: Netflix series we enjoyed, used bookstores, this summer's weather in various locations, and the pleasures of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Mark Reber initiated discussion of *Barmy* by offering information on George S. Kaufman's 1925 play

*The Butter and Egg Man*, from which the novel was adapted. We read passages from the play and compared them with similar passages in the novel, which uses the same names for most of the characters and adheres to the plot of the play from Chapter 7 on.

Bob Rains made mention of a number of Plum's words and phrases that caught his eye and sent him to the dictionary and to Volume 2 of Norman Murphy's *A Wodehouse Handbook*. Who knew that a "clock-golf course" was a miniature golf course on which players putt from twelve numbered points to a hole in the center? Or that "Singer Midget" was a reference to a 1910 Austro-Hungarian stage act with twenty little people? Or that "halidom" was "a holy place or thing"?

There was something of a consensus that one of the main characters in the novel—Hollywood movie star Mervyn Potter—was simply annoying, with his elaborate exaggerations and his long, tiresome speeches.

There is no doubt that everyone present relished gathering in person. We scheduled our next meeting for November 12 at Cavanaugh's.

—Mark Reber

#### Chicago Accident Syndicate

(Chicago and thereabouts)

Contact: Daniel & Tina Garrison  
847-475-2235  
d-garrison@northwestern.edu



#### The Clients of Adrian Mulliner

(For enthusiasts of both PGW and Sherlock Holmes)

Contact: Elaine Coppola  
315-637-0609  
emcoppol@syr.edu



On Friday, October 21, 2022, a Senior Bloodstain was held at 9:30 AM in the US Grant Hotel during the Where in the World Is Pelham? San Diego! convention of The Wodehouse Society.

A congenial gathering of aficionados of Sherlock Holmes and the stories of P. G. Wodehouse enjoyed reading and discussing "The Adventure of the Missing Bee." This amusing pastiche featuring Holmes and Watson was written by Wodehouse and published in *Vanity Fair* (U.K.), on December 1, 1904.

Details are still pending, but a Junior Bloodstain will be held in January 2023 either before or during the Baker Street Irregulars weekend in New York City.

—Elaine Coppola

#### The Den(ver) of the Secret Nine

(Denver and vicinity)

Contact: Jennifer Petkus  
petkusj@virtuallight.com



#### The Drone Rangers

(Houston and vicinity)

Contact: Carey Tynan  
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cctynan@aol.com



#### The Flying Pigs

(Cincinnati area and elsewhere)

Contact: Susan Pace or Bill Scrivener  
513-232-0949  
billscrivener47@gmail.com  
or lspace@cinci.rr.com



#### The Fourth Dimension

(Zoom Chapter)

Contact: Freda Kirkham  
fskirkham@gmail.com  
(443) 904-7364

Email Freda to be added to the Zoom invitation list!  
Or simply use the consistent, secure Zoom Meeting ID:  
825-2310-7377.

FIRST SATURDAYS from 11 AM to noon (Pacific Time) are now a highlight of my month. At the time of this writing, the Comrades of the Æther have had two most excellent meetings. Among the delights: the bittersweet joy of acquiring a library's nearly discarded Wodehouse books; adventures in pig-calling research; Florence Craye, *Spindrift*, and *Types of Ethical Theory*; the wonder of the Tome, the original TWS scrapbook, now in the Vanderbilt archive; Plum's ingenious song lyrics; and more! Thanks to everyone who has attended and contributed to the jollity. It was also lovely to see some familiar faces at the convention.

We look forward to reading Gussie's legendary prize-giving speech aloud and continuing the convivial conversation on December 3. As noted above, just email me to be added to the Zoom invitation list, or join our meeting using the consistent Zoom ID. If you run into Zoom snags, text or call me. And for even more uplifting information, and details about upcoming meetings, visit us on meetup.com at "The Fourth Dimension: A P. G. Wodehouse Society Zoom Chapter." Hurray!

—Freda Kirkham

### Friends of the Fifth Earl of Ickenham

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lawloehr@gmail.com



### A Little More Bertie Than Jeeves

(Waynesville/Sylva, North Carolina)

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### The Melonsquashville (TN) Literary Society

(Tennessee)

Contact: Ken Clevenger

plumbeak@gmail.com



THE MELONSQUASHVILLAGERS have continued our delightful collaboration with the A Little More Bertie Than Jeeves chapter from western North Carolina. We gather on Zoom to read Wodehouse stories and talk about the various aspects of Plum's work that strike our fancies. Our regular participants range from Alabama to Ottawa. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 PM Eastern time, and any Wodehousians would be welcome to join in. Just contact us per the information above for the Zoom data link and particular program details.

—Ken Clevenger

### The Mottled Oyster Club / Jellied Eels

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### The New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS)

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or Roberta Towner, robertatowner@gmail.com



### The Northwodes

(St. Paul, Minneapolis, and vicinity)

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WE ZOOM-MET on September 15, 2022, to discuss *A Few Quick Ones* (1959). Holly Windle and Richard Rames thought any denigrating language in

"Big Business" is inspired by the dialect of "Old Man River," while Michael Eckman blamed the song's diction. Maria Jette later pointed to Plum's displeasure with Kern and Hammerstein's co-opting his song "Bill" into *Show Boat*, which may explain OMR's use in the story. Joan Rabe thought the golf stories weren't as strong as the rest. She liked Plum's teasing of publishers and authors. Holly wants to read the books of Mrs. Lavender ("Joy Bells for Walter") Botts: *My Chums the Pixies*. Maria opined that she may be a parody of Rose Fyleman. Oofy Prosser appears in four of the ten stories. Holly didn't remember him being so horrible. Maria liked how he kept getting his just deserts—finally losing £2000 to Jas Waterbury in a threatened breach-of-promise suit.

In "Big Business," luckless P. C. Popjoy is beamed by Amanda. She explains to him that he'd been hit by Sputnik. Published in 1952, the story couldn't have included Sputnik, launched in 1957. [It was "one of those flying saucers" in 1952.—Ed.] "A Tithe for Charity" is replaced in the American edition with "Unpleasantness at Kozy Kot"—a third reuse of the basic plot of "Helping Freddie." Holly and Richard preferred the self-referential tone of "Kozy Kot." Mike Eckman preferred "Tithe" and the line "The idea of Ukridge dining at the Ritz and paying for it took my breath away."

Our friend and chapter member Dan Sullivan passed away on October 4, 2022. He was 86. His obituary in the *Los Angeles Times* tells of his rich life and loving, talented family, to whom we extend our condolences. We can only add that he was a good egg. A very good egg.

—Mike Engstrom

### The Orange Plums

(Orange County, California)

Contact: Lia Hansen, 949-246-6585

or Diana Van Horn, dianavhfv@yahoo.com



A hoy! Admiral Fruity Biffen here, reporting in once more on the recent activities of the Orange Plums.

Most noteworthy is that my fellow O. Plummies and I were thrilled to make a very strong showing at the recent TWS convention in San Diego. Not only were eight of us (count 'em!) on hand for the browsing and sluicing and other festive debauchery, but the combined efforts of the Diana-Marcy-Margot-Nancy-Lia alliance snagged the esteemed "Repeat Offender" award for appearing most often in coordinated costuming throughout the convention—doing our chapter proud indeed! My usual nautical nonsense nabbed yours truly a Buck-U-Uppo costume prize as well, to my great delight.

Another important development is that our convention encomiums (and unabashed arm-twisting) have apparently resulted in the recruitment of two confirmed new O. Plums members, with a third invited as well. Allie Weeks, Richard Agler, and (perhaps) Pat Levinson, welcome aboard the good ship *Orange Plummie*! We're thrilled to have you join our mad crew, salute you, and inform you that the bar's out on the foc'sle. Drink up, you're at your Auntie's! (The good aunt, of course.)

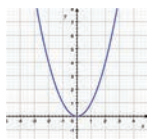
With our November meeting we shall finish off our discussion of *A Pelican at Blandings* (aka *No Nudes Is Good Nudes*), then move on to *Leave It to Psmith* for forthcoming meetings. Votes have been cast for *Laughing Gas* after that, pushing my lobbied reread of my own favorite—*The Code of the Woosters*—down to third place for sometime well into next year. \*Sigh.\*

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

(Detroit and vicinity)

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ON AUGUST 6, the Pickerings met at the Milstein residence. The reading assignment was *Mike and Psmith*, a novel about life and cricket at a minor public school. It was interesting to see how Psmith began and to compare his character and mannerisms with later books. The next reading assignment is *Psmith in the City*. We should see a progressive development in Psmith. Elliott pointed out that, unlike a lot of boys' fiction from that era, this book was not full of preaching and moralizing. Also, unlike Mike, Psmith did not complain about the circumstances that brought him to Sedleigh School.

On August 28 the Pickerings travelled to the library at Michigan State University, where Tad Boehmer is the Curator of Rare Books and Special Collections. He wanted to show us some of the amazing books he gets to work with. We saw some beautiful old books with hand-painted art. Your humble scrivener's favorite was a *Book of the Hours* with beautiful hand-drawn

illustrations on every page. We got to see a first edition signed by F. Scott Fitzgerald and other treasures. Thank you, Tad. We are jealous that you get to work with great books like that every day. Your humble scrivener spent four years on that campus, including a lot of time in the library, and never knew about that collection.

—Robert Walter

#### The Pittsburgh Millionaires Club

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#### The Plum Street Plummies

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#### The Right Honorable Knights of Sir Philip Sidney

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<https://wodehouse-society.nl>



THE KNIGHTS met in person on June 18 for the first time since the Covid pandemic. We met at a new location in Deventer, in the eastern part of The Netherlands.

The theme was Everything French. One of our members, Jannes Koster (nom de Plum "Old Nick"), has translated the novel *French Leave* for his friends and members of the Dutch Wodehouse Society. The translated title is *Franse toestanden*. Jannes explained how difficult it is to translate "franglais" terms into Dutch. Wodehouse wrote the novel in 1956, basing it on a stage



play by Guy Bolton. In the novel the three American Trent sisters spend their holiday in the French towns of St. Rocque and Roville. Jannes read a chapter of his translation for the members. The novel had never before been translated into Dutch.



*The Knights' outdoor games*

After the literature, it was time for a game in the sunny afternoon: the so-called *jeu de champagne*. In a Deventer square, the Knights played the French game *jeu de boules* (pétanque). The goal wasn't to get close to a target or knock balls away from the target, as is typical in the *boules* version. Instead, the competitors had to hit a bottle of champagne. Marieke Mooij, our female chef Anatole, won the contest.

The meeting also included a raffle of a hundred Wodehouse novels and biographies donated by one of the members to the society. So everyone returned home with some new treasures. After a French dinner in Deventer, of course.

—Peter Nieuwenhuizen

**Rugby in All Its Niceties**  
(Rugby, Tennessee Region)  
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**The Size 14 Hat Club**  
(Halifax, Nova Scotia)  
Contact: Jill Robinson  
jillcooperrobinson@hotmail.com



*Quaint San Diego architecture*



*The famous Hotel Coronado (MS)*

## The P. G. Wodehouse Collection at Vanderbilt University

BY ANITA AVERY

*The collection, which we believe to be the premier American accumulation of Wodehouse's works and Wodehouse-related items, 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.*

IN RESEARCHING Wodehouse titles published by Herbert Jenkins and their successors for the *Plum Lines* Fall 2022 column, I found the visual aspects and use of a publisher's device and various logos intriguing. In the absence of a full set of verified Herbert Jenkins first-edition first printings, establishing a detailed timeline is difficult. To date, a comprehensive listing of such details over the decades has not been undertaken. The following is a light (and by no means, definitive) overview of usage observed while reviewing Wodehouse's years with Jenkins and their successors.

Herbert Jenkins's publisher's device was heraldic in design, with an escutcheon (shield) inscribed with "A Herbert Jenkins Book" below a winged horse (Pegasus) on a background suggestive of a feathered crest.

The following examples give a sense of the device's use and placement in first-edition first printings during Wodehouse's first decade with Jenkins. McIlvaine notes the device on the title page of *Piccadilly Jim* (1918), but not for *The Coming of Bill* (1919), though reliable antiquarian booksellers state it is on the copyright page. McIlvaine's "Notes" for the third title, *A Damsel in Distress* (1919), designates copies with the device on the copyright page as "variants." On subsequent Jenkins titles of the next decade, McIlvaine routinely notes the device on the copyright page, though in the case of *The Heart of a Goof* (1926), "[publisher's monogram]" is noted on the copyright page.

McIlvaine's cover descriptions often state "decoration" or "design" but do not specify any devices or logos, though trusted booksellers confirm the presence of the device stamped on the rear boards of "first English edition, first impression" copies of the first two Jenkins titles, a practice that continued, though not on all reissues (later printings).





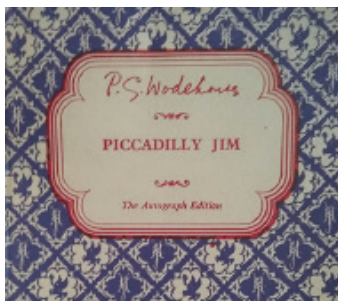
The evolution of various logos, smaller than the elaborate publisher's device, is interesting. To date, this writer has not encountered a logo on the spine of first-edition first printings of the first five Jenkins Wodehouse titles.

A logo of a Pegasus in profile, flanked by the letters H and J, is on the spine of the first-edition first printing of the sixth Jenkins title, *The Clicking of Cuthbert* (1922), and through 1923 on the seventh, eighth, and ninth titles. The use of logos on first-printing copies of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth titles is less clear. Reliable booksellers' photos of first printings of those titles, verified by means of the number and order of titles mentioned in McIlvaine as being on the "What This Story Is About/By the Same Author" page, show no logo on the spines. However, possible errors along that line have been noted in the past, and later printings often have no logo.

First-edition first printings of the thirteenth and fourteenth titles, *The Heart of a Goof* (1926) and *Meet Mr. Mulliner* (1927), include a more elaborate, boldly underscored logo on the spine—a winged Pterocentaur (half man, half horse), one of the rarer creatures in Greek mythology, bearing a raised torch between the letters H and J. That logo became quite familiar on later titles and reprints.

Further research or input from our readers may confirm what Pegasus's background crest on the original publisher's device may have represented—feathers, flames, or a burst of light?—and perhaps what the second logo's added torch may have symbolized. Those owning early Herbert Jenkins first-edition first printings might fill in the blanks regarding the presence or absence of logos on the spines.

Moving beyond the first decade, tracing the use of a publisher's device/logo in the Autograph Edition (1956–1966) and Barrie & Jenkins Edition (1969–1979) is much easier. While McIlvaine makes no mention of either, in those volumes a small, simple Pterocentaur appears on the title page and again in the dust-jacket design, at the center of alternating small diagonal squares.

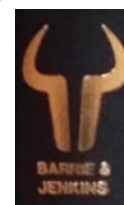


In the Barrie & Jenkins Edition, a small owl logo appears on the spines of the book and dust jacket, but not within the pages.



Presaging the full transition to Hutchinson, introducing the use of the new publisher's logo appeared to be convoluted. Some Barrie & Jenkins 1979 volumes included the Hutchinson logo—the head and horns of a bull—above the Barrie & Jenkins name on the spine and also on the half-title page. However, copies of two of these volumes in my possession have the edition's familiar dust jacket with the owl logo above the Barrie & Jenkins name on the spine, perhaps an effort to use up existing dust-jacket stock.

Hutchinson's early 1980 reissues, sporting a new, illustrated dust-jacket design, used a tiny size of their logo on the half-title page and a slightly larger size above the Barrie & Jenkins name on the spines of the book and dust jacket. The history of Barrie & Jenkins sheds some light on these various pairings. They were taken over in 1972 by Communica Europa, and then by Hutchinson. The copyright page of early Hutchinson reissues identifies Barrie & Jenkins as "An imprint of the Hutchinson Publishing Group."



As a coda to this short chorus line of publishers' devices/logos, in 1986, harkening back to the Herbert Jenkins uniform Autograph Edition, several volumes of Hutchinson's "elegant New Autograph Edition of the best novels and short stories of P. G. Wodehouse" were issued. If one looks carefully, there is a delightful, tiny



bit of whimsy added to the Hutchinson logo that appears on the spines of the book and dust jacket, half-title page and title page: Perched atop one of the bull's horns is a spiffy black top hat. Elegant, indeed.

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



# David Jasen, 1937–2022

WITH PROFOUND SADNESS we announce the death of David A. Jasen in November, one month shy of his 85th birthday. David was the author of *P. G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master* (1974; rev. 1981), *Bibliography and Reader's Guide to the First Editions of P. G. Wodehouse* (1970; rev. 1986), and *The Theatre of P. G. Wodehouse* (1979), as well as the editor of numerous Wodehouse collections. He held the distinction of being the only Wodehouse biographer to have actually met his subject, and he spoke often and warmly of his friendship with Plum. In addition to his Wodehouse expertise, he was an enthusiastic proponent of ragtime music and wrote a book on that subject as well.

David was made an honorary member of TWS in 1987; he was also a member of the Broadway Special. The society extends its deepest condolences to David's wife, Susan—they were married in 1963. A full obituary will be published in the Spring 2023 *Plum Lines*.

## Contents

- 1 Pelham in San Diego
- 1 You Could Hear Cricket (and See It)
- 2 Troop Transport Patrols San Diego Harbor
- 3 Browsing and Sluicing and Singing—Oh, My!
- 4 Riveted Once Again
- 5 Saturday Night's Alright for Citing: The Banquet
- 6 Anatole Sees Us Off
- 7 Bucked Up by a Treasury of Costumery:  
Plums, Gators, Scotsmen & Pig Girls,  
Mastodons, and More
- 8 The Winning Fiends
- 8 Was the "P" Silent?
- 9 The Winning Cricketers
- 9 Changes to Your Account Status Notification
- 10 John Dawson, 1952–2022
- 11 Photographic Memories of the  
San Diego 2022 Convention
- 15 The Wretched Man: British Government  
Memorandums Dealing with P. G. Wodehouse,  
1944–1948
- 18 Chapters Corner
- 22 The P. G. Wodehouse Collection  
at Vanderbilt University
- 24 David Jasen, 1937–2022



*Final thoughts on the San Diego convention? Jeff Porteous ponders the question, while Margot Churchill seems to know the answer. (JP)*

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*We appreciate your articles and observations. Send them to Gary Hall at the email or USPS address on this page. Deadlines are February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1.*

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