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Psmith in Pseattle: The 2015 TWS Convention

ALL THE DREAMS and schemes came to fruition as a throng of cheery Wodehouseans descended on Seattle for the biennial convention of The Wodehouse Society. Well-sluiced members toasted Plum, friends both present and absent, and the drizzly city. The convention was officially held October 30–November 1, but many conventioners arrived early and/or left late, taking in the sights, sounds, and shenanigans of that fine northwestern town.

As with other recent conventions, we're printing here a collector's edition of *Plum Lines*, replete with four pages of convention photographs. We were very fortunate to hear some top-shelf papers delivered at this convention (most of which will be published within the next year in this journal), the performances par excellence, and plans for the 2017 convention. You'll read tales of bonhomie and boisterousness, culture and conviviality. And you can experience (or relive) the charms of our good-humored conventions. Read on, Wodehouseans, read on!

A Frizzled Ferry and a Refreshing Rail

BY KEN CLEVENGER

THE 2015 TWS CONVENTION in Pseattle offered visitors opportunities to explore, including a chance to take a ferry trip across Puget Sound to Bainbridge Island. According to the tourist websites, it's a beautiful and rustic destination. Our party of intrepid Wodehousians boarded a ferry near downtown Seattle



*"Come sluice with us!" Leah Fleming raises a toast at
The Wodehouse Society convention in Seattle.
(photo by Elin Woodger)*

for a three-hour cruise. A ferry, of course, is a boat loaded with cars, bikes, and people crossing a body of water. Been there, done that, you say? Ah, but what about with a boatload of Wodehousians crossing Elliott Bay? In our opinion, it is definitely on the high end of ferry experiences for good company and conversation.

Seattleites, like the Inuit describing snow, must have 37 different words for different types of rain. We set out in a light "frizzle." It "dampled" briefly during the crossing. On landing near a rustic Bainbridge Island auto shop, we got some welcome sunbreaks amidst the coffee-with-cream clouds. Thus, our enterprising hike along the main street (East Winslow Way to those in the know) was positively enjoyable. A bookshop was found,

as well as candy stores, toy shops, and a sewing nook. Naturally, coffee shops and bakeries abounded. Just as much fun were the fabrics, folios, foods, and fancies; a highlight was Plum, a gift shop. The aforementioned bookshop was devoid of Wodehouse, but candy and pastries restored our sense of sweetness and light.

Back on the ferry, the foretelling clouds proved sooth. A brisk “splatter-and-spittle” rolled in to become “wettifying,” or at least “misticating.” But the rain, by any name, did not dampen our spirits. The consensus was that we were glad to have seen Bainbridge Island and that the convention organizers had let us in on a good thing.

THE SEATTLE MONORAIL ride is fun, if short, between the downtown Westlake Center and the Space Needle. This iconic landmark is adjacent to numerous other attractions now inhabiting the 1962 Seattle World's Fair site.

We were guided on this tour by no less a luminary than soon-to-be TWS vice president Major Thomas (Tom) Langston Reeves Smith (nom de plum Plug Basham). Some took time to see the Pacific Science Center, the Children's Museum, and the rock and roll EMP (Experience Music Project) Museum. We visited the Chihuly Garden and Glass exhibition, and it was awesome. Pacific Northwest native Dale Chihuly's superb art ranges from massive to minimal, from individual pieces to a room-sized work that looked like a fantastical seabed garden.

The international food court, set in an old National Guard armory, was a welcome tour stop and another integral part of the Seattle Center experience.

Kudos to Tom Smith for his insightful remarks about Seattle and its Center. His leadership in shepherding a gaggle of Wodehousians on this tour was very caring. The monorail, like the Seattle Center, was clean and efficient and made for a pleasant prelude to the marvelous Psmith in Pseattle convention experience.



*The Wodehouse cognoscenti (Katy and David McGrann, Elliott Milstein, Bob Rains) begin to gather—in the lobby bar, of course.
(photo by Barbara Combs)*

Sugar and Spice: Desserts, Dan, and Maria

BY LYNETTE POSS

Lynette: When word went out to chapter scribes that Plum Lines editor Gary Hall was looking for volunteers to cover convention events, I took my one step backwards by sending that information on to my pal Liz Davenport, who is actually the brains of our Mottled Oyster group, the Jeeves to my Bertie. However, in my inimitable Bertie fashion, I accidentally sent my comment (“An offer to muse over”) to Gary. Gary: She who makes any reply at all is assumed to be an eager volunteer! Thanks, Lynette, for your brave service to TWS!

AROUND 6:30 PM on Friday, October 30, your courageous correspondent wandered down to the Terrace Room of the Fairmont Olympic Hotel in order to join fellow revelers in drink and conversation prior to the evening entertainment. I met up with my cohort from San Antonio, Liz Davenport (Mottled Oyster/Jellied Eel), who introduced me to her new Wodehouse friends: Colin McCawley and Meredith McGuire from Des Moines; Dean and Martha Miller of the Chicago Accident Syndicate; and Karen Byrne, “recovering librarian,” from Spokane (and Anglers’ Rest). We chatted a bit about the interesting ways in which each of us was introduced to Wodehouse.

Then the swarm of Plummies trooped to the Garden Room, where we loaded down our plates with lavishly presented, delectable calories. We filled cups with cozy beverages. Flitting about the room with notepad and pen in hand, this roving reporter spoke briefly with quite a few celebrants from points all over the map. There was Katherine Jordan of the Flying Pigs chapter, attending her fourth convention. She could not readily decide if the character she loved most was Ukridge (my own favorite) or Lord Emsworth. Wendell Verrill, from Hingham, Massachusetts, was enjoying his sixth or seventh convention. (Ah, yes, I remember it well!) Barbara Combs of the Anglers’ Rest chapter was among those present as well, camera in hand, helping us to preserve many wonderful memories in the making. I mingled a bit with Jean Tillson, Indu Ravi, and J Ravi from the NEWTS chapter.

The entertainment was then off to an impressive start with a welcome from master of ceremonies Thomas Smith. He introduced Hilary Bruce, chairman of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK), who read greetings sent by Edward Cazalet, Wodehouse's grandson. After a few remarks, Tom, accompanied by “volunteer” pianist

Troy Fisher (who just happened to have with him the sheet music), then launched into “Sonny Boy,” ignoring the possibility that some listeners might be wielding vegetables and might not approve of the choice. He even offered us an encore, Wodehouse’s “Till the Clouds Roll By.” He certainly deserves points for bravery if nothing else. The more restive members of the audience calmed themselves with more fine confectioneries, none of which were tossed.

If memory serves, it was at this point that Karen Shoting, at that moment the sitting (well, actually, standing) president of TWS, took the podium for several announcements. Then Tom came back to encourage us to continue browsing and sluicing, or, if we wanted variety, sluicing and browsing.

With all due respect to Thomas’s singing, we were now in for the highlight of the evening when (drum roll, please) vocalist Maria Jette and pianist Dan Chouinard delighted and enchanted us with a program entitled “Song in Wodehouse & Wodehouse in Song!”

As a guest on Garrison Keillor’s *A Prairie Home Companion*, Maria has charmed many a public radio listener. Maria has performed with the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival and the Oregon Bach Festival, among others, and is a lifetime member of the American Composers Forum. Dan and Maria have recorded two CDs of songs with lyrics by Wodehouse. Mr. Chouinard is, to quote our program notes, “a saloon pianist, street accordionist, concert soloist and accompanist, polyglot (both musical and linguistic), writer, Italian teacher, and bicyclist.” He also writes and performs for Minnesota Public Radio.

There is much I am leaving out of the resums of these two very gifted performers, but let me say as strongly as I can that they do know how to entertain! As suggested by the title of the program, it was comprised of two parts: music mentioned in the Wodehouse oeuvre and songs for which Plum penned the lyrics.

Maria was animated and witty as she introduced the songs, and the entire concert was most inspiring. We did not readily let them go, but kept them on for two encores, which only encouraged our enthusiasm for more. The two artists worked together flawlessly and injected the flair, the gestures, the humor, and the *joie de vivre* one hopes to find in the entertainment for a convention of Wodehouse fans. In short, it was wonderful.

Happily welcomed, the Wodehousean crowd broke into little groups and wandered off to our rooms, anticipating yet another day of erudition, entertainment, excitement, and Halloween costumes. Already the convention was a rollicking success.

Sublime Speakers and Dreaded Business

BY GARY HALL

SATURDAY ARRIVED, as it often does, though this Saturday was one of those special Saturdays that comes but once every two years. The hallowed tradition of Riveting Talks was renewed, and certainly this batch of speakers rivaled those of previous gatherings.

Host and emcee Tom Smith popped up to warn us of the impending joy, and then the speakers and readers were off and running. [*We will print several of these papers in future issues, so you may allay your fears of missing out on such good stuff.*]

Throughout the day **Tony Ring** presented several short ghost stories, originally published in *Punch* under the heading of *Mr. Punch’s Spectral Analyses*. These stories were delightful interludes between the formal papers and talks, and the conventioners were presented with a printed version of the stories as a souvenir. In “The Ghost’s Point of View,” the spectre was surprised to find that humans were afraid of him, professing that the feeling was mutual, and fully expected humans to “take the scientific point of view” of ghosts. “The Ghost with Social Tastes” very much enjoyed meeting those living beings who could be rational and not just gibber. The several stories had their share of spectres who held their heads in their hands, and there were references to the standard methods of clanking chains and groans and such.

The title of **Elliott Milstein’s** talk was “It Wasn’t a Dark and Stormy Night: A Study of the Openings of the Novels of P. G. Wodehouse.” Elliott categorized Wodehouse’s story openings into three phases. The first/early phase ended in 1923, according to Elliott, and gave way to the middle phase, which he feels is predominantly in a Psmith voice. The openings of the middle phase not only set the scene but also foreshadow. The third/final phase is in a rich Wooster voice and is characterized by getting right into the story, as though Wodehouse was less concerned with crafting stylistic openings, and no longer needed to try to pull his readers in, since his popularity ensured that they would buy the books without the extra pull. Elliott said that the first great opening was in *Leave It to Psmith*, and that many critics and readers consider the very best opening to be that of *The Luck of the Bodkins*, with its reverse-camera close-up. Elliott’s favorite is from *Joy in the Morning* with its five dependent clauses before a predicate or object. Elliott has a pdf of all seventy openings of all

novels and will send it along to anyone who sends him a request at ellmilstein@yahoo.com.

John Dawson, and then Tony Ring, gave a recap of the Globe Reclamation Project, which has resulted in two recently published books (see *Plum Lines*, Autumn 2015). The first features paragraphs from the *Globe's* "By the Way" columns that John believes were written by Wodehouse; the second features poems from the column that the GRP members agreed were probably written by Wodehouse. John thanked the committee (Ananth Kaitharam, Ian Michaud, Neil Midkiff, Karen Shotting, Raja Srinivasan, Arthur Robinson, and consultants Tony Ring and Norman Murphy) and told us of the massive effort they all had put into the project.

Ken "Leave No Pun Unturned" Clevenger spoke of "Fish in Plum Sauce" in the witty style of his published Mulliner Menagerie articles and collection. Ken identified many of the novels, stories, and titles in which fish were featured, and referred to Chris Dueker's famed "Remembrance of Fish Past" talk at the UCLA TWS convention.

In "Of Pale Young Curates and Me," **Bill Scrivener**, wearing his clergyman's clothes, treated us to the lyrics from "I Was a Pale Young Curate," which undoubtedly spent much time in the Billboard Curate Top 40. Bill mentioned that a curate is "any ecclesiastic entrusted with the 'cure of souls.'" According to Bill, curates are generally aiming to become vicars, but the term is (not surprisingly) also associated with Irish bartenders. Bill told several anecdotes about his peers and so-called superiors. The Very Rev. Wendell Verrill provided able assistance in reading a short Wodehouse passage that included an argument about chasubles that had too many orphreys.

Lunch came and went, and most of us came back for the Dreaded Business Meeting. Ian Michaud announced to massive applause that he will stay on as membership secretary. Indu Ravi was elected to succeed Kris Fowler as treasurer; Tom Smith became our new vice president; and Bob Rains ascended to the high throne of president of TWS, succeeding the acclaimed Karen Shotting, who ruled with grace and aplomb for the last two years.

The biggest news came when Scott Daniels announced that the Capital! Capital! chapter will host the nineteenth convention of The Wodehouse Society in Washington, D.C., sometime in October 2017. "Mr. Wodehouse Goes to Washington" is fully expected to be the next in our series of highly successful fêtes. The host hotel may be slightly over the river in Old Towne Alexandria or in D.C. proper. Details to come soon!

The president of the Dutch Wodehouse Society, **Peter Nieuwenhuizen**, presented a session on "Wodehouse

in the Comics." Peter presented a historical array of English and Dutch comics that featured Wodehousean themes and stories, including a Donald Duck issue of "The Butler Did It"; "The Mixer," a canine comic with a dog as narrator; a Lego Wodehouse comic; and two Mulliner stories. The earliest item he could find in comic book form was a version of *Psmith, Journalist*.

Elin Woodger talked about "P. G. Wodehouse, Feminist," where her summary response to the claims that Wodehouse appeals only to men was "Piffle!" Much of the blame for this myth, according to Elin, lands on Frances Donaldson, who, in her 1982 biography of Wodehouse, called the canon "purely masculine fantasy." Elin pointed out that more women than men had registered for this convention, and that Wodehouse made equal fun of women and men. Elin listed several strong female characters from the Wodehouse stories, some of them recurring. She believes that some of Wodehouse's female friends during his formative years (including his Deane cousins, the Bowes-Lyon girls, and others) gave Wodehouse a good sense of what a confident woman could offer the world.

Honorita Glossop (**Jen Scheppers**) writes a blog called Plumtopia and also helps administer the Fans of P. G. Wodehouse Facebook page. Her fascinating talk, "The Modern Wodehouse Reader: The Psychology of the Individual," was about the demographics that are available to identify those who visit Wodehousean websites. Jen has 650 regular readers, representing many countries around the world. Readers are an even mixture of male and female, some religious and some not, some politically on the left and some on the right. In her opinion, there is no stereotype of the standard Wodehousean: they come from an extraordinary range of ordinary and extraordinary people.

Tad Boehmer's career goal is to be a curator of rare books, and if he doesn't accomplish that, he "may as well raise chickens." In "Plumming the Vaults," Tad made the rounds of some very prominent collections of Wodehouse materials, including the Dulwich College Wodehouse Library, the New York Public Library Rare Books Division, and others. Tad mentioned that Wodehouse "never loathed Jeeves" like Doyle did Holmes, and that Wodehouse most enjoyed writing about Blandings. After talking about how Wodehouse often had characters listed generically (character A, B, C, or hero, heroine, etc.) until the book was nearing completion, Tad demonstrated this technique with portions of a manuscript of *Bill the Conqueror*.

The last of this sparkling series of talks was from Wodehousean biographer **Robert McCrum**. In

“Wodehouse in Wonderland,” Robert told us that he believes this is “the beginning of a golden age of Wodehouse.” He described Wodehouse as “profoundly private” and suggested that some might even say Plum was repressed. Robert noted that Plum rarely wrote about himself in the first person until he was a German captive, and that his theme song should be Monty Python’s “Always Look on the Bright Side of Life.” Robert stated that Wodehouse never forgot the outcome of the Oscar Wilde trial, and he pointed to Wodehouse’s mention of so many other writers but not even a faint allusion to Wilde—“the dog that doesn’t bark,” to borrow a phrase from Conan Doyle. Wodehouse’s own escapism about the prisoner-of-war years (“camp was really great fun”) was an allegory of how he spent his adult life in the little cell of his imagination. Robert listed the litany of horrors Wodehouse saw or experienced during the war years, and contended that the broadcasts were a personal means of survival: “Wodehouse was, in fact, happiest in a kind of artistic solitary confinement.”

The Riveting Talks thus concluding, the flock of Plummies, gratified and satisfied, migrated to their rooms, or to the tavern, in prep. for the big event that approaching evening.



*Tom Smith
thanked the
riveting speakers.
(photo by
Barbara Combs)*

*The revelers
began to revel.
(photo by
Barbara Combs)*



A Costumed Extravaganza

BY ELIN WOODGER

IT IS ALWAYS a joy to attend a convention banquet for its delicious mix of formality and informality. Over here you can admire a particularly resplendent couple, he in full soup and fish, she in full-length gown, white gloves, and tiara; while over there is a relaxed-looking cove hanging out in everyday togs, backpack slung on one arm. All around you are assorted folks

in costumes ranging from madcap portrayals of Wodehouse characters to obscure representations of book titles or incidents. And occasionally you glimpse fellow conventioners dressed simply but elegantly, as for a classy cocktail party. At a Wodehouse Society convention, the sky is the limit when it comes to what to wear to the banquet.

This one, however, was even more special because it was being held on Halloween night, offering even greater scope for creativity. With laudable foresight, the Anglers’ Rest had, since the Friday reception, provided mask-making stations so that conventioners could decorate and bring their own masks, whether or not they were coming in costume. Glitter, feathers, cat whiskers, and more adorned these ornate creations, adding extra sparkle to the occasion. No wonder the Anglers had chosen to call this the Masked Ball.

And our hosts had crafted even more fun by setting up a photo booth in the foyer of the Spanish Ballroom. Here the merrymakers could pose and have their pictures taken in front of a curtain or while seemingly sitting in a classic 1920s touring car. What fun!

Cameras flashed all over the foyer as Wodehouseans chattered and admired the incredible medley of costumes around them, then slowly filtered into the ballroom to claim their seats for the dinner. Of the food served I will say no more than that it was probably the best ever served at *any* convention—delicious. Tom Smith had a few words of welcome to make at the start. He noted there were table prizes to be won, the winner at each table being the lucky person who had in front of him (or her) a small cellophane bag of candy pumpkins (what else?) tied with a gold twist, rather than the silver one on all the other bags. At my table it was Ravi Iyer who won the prize: a specially made salt-and-pepper set in the shape of pigs (again, what else?).

Then we had the traditional toasts. New prez Bob Rains offered the toast to Plum, the reason we had gathered together for this wonderful event; and Gary Hall gave the toast to absent friends, those whom we have lost in the two years since the last convention. Two of those friends received special attention this year: Gary spoke movingly of Ed Ratcliffe, our former Oldest Member and editor of *Plum Lines*, while Tom paid tribute to the late Stu Shiffman.

We then tucked into our meals like the Empresses we all are at heart, after which came the announcement of prizes. This year’s quizmeister, Lynn Vesley-Gross, had put together a humdinger of a challenging quiz—or “fiendish fishy quiz,” as she called it. (Yes, the theme was fish, which must have delighted the cockles of Ken Clevenger’s heart, given the subject of his talk earlier

that day.) Apparently there were a record number of entries this year, with winners announced as:

Amateur class: (3rd) Karen Shotting; (2nd) Betty Hooker; (1st) Susan Diamond
Expert class: (3rd) Neil Midkiff; (2nd) Elliott Milstein; (1st) Ian Michaud

All were given lovely prizes, though Karen disclaimed hers, pointing out that she had won the amateur class in the past, which should have put her into the expert class this time. We were having too jolly a time to notice her protests, though.

Then it was Susan Collicott's turn at the podium to announce the winners of the raffle prizes, which included too many goodies to mention here. Suffice to say there were some very big smiles as the victors made off with their treasures.

Announcement of the costume prizes was to be next, but the judges were still in decision-making mode, so we moved on to the auction, which was conducted by Bob Rains. Among the items auctioned off were three unusual books as well as stamps donated by the Dutch Wodehouse Society; an antique silver-plated creamer bearing the crest of the Fairmont Olympic Hotel; a copy of *Leonora—The Author: The Collected Writings of Leonora Wodehouse* (one of only twenty produced), donated by Sir Edward Cazalet and signed by Sir Edward and Tony Ring; and a first-edition copy of *The Intrusion of Jimmy*, donated by David McGrann. The last two were the big-money items, with the bidding reaching giddy heights as our own Vanna White (aka Barbara Combs) sped about the room displaying them to prospective buyers.

The total amount raised by the auction came to a gratifying \$1,220, with all proceeds from the auction, raffle, and rummage sale going into the Convention Reserve Fund to help support future conventions. Thanks to all the donors!

Finally, our costume judges—Amy Plofker, Scott Daniels, and Andrea Jacobsen—arrived on the stage to announce the winners of this year's coveted prizes. I can do no better than to simply provide you with a list that demonstrates the ingenuity of both the masqueraders and the judges (who named the twelve categories after the costumes):

Out in the Cold: Robin Stemen & David Alvarez as Aunt Dahlia & Uncle Tom after Bertie rang the fire bell
Psmith in Pseattle Award #1: Lynette Poss as Baxter in lemon-colored pajamas

Psmith in Pseattle Award #2: Diane Madlon-Kay as a flower pot in a library
Best Actress: Maria Jette as Lottie Blossom
Scary Enough to Put a Golfer Off His Stroke: Michael Sheldon as Bill Lister
Shopping at the Same Store: Marjanne & Jelle Otten as Bill Towcester (Rowcester) and Jeeves in the guise of Honest Patch Perkins and his assistant
Best Mask: Anita Avery as a cat
Man's Best Friend: Allan Devitt as the Dog Bartholomew
Man Who Disagrees with Previous Award: Steve Carter as a bobby
Flapper of the Year: Elaine Coppola as a, well, flapper
Fave Former Fiancée: Carol Cavalluzzi as Honoria Glossop, ready for tennis
Best Drink: Tina Garrison as the May Queen

And with that the formal part of the proceedings came to a close, though the informal part continued with entertainment provided by Percy Pilbeam, aka Troy Arnold Fisher, who tickled the ivories to provide music for those who wanted to dance. As we slowly departed, there was time for a few more pictures to be taken at the photo booth and for one last look back at the magnificent ballroom in which the evening's laughter still lingered. It had all been jolly good fun.



A beshrubbed Masha Lebedeva, a bejewelled Susan Diamond, and Allan Devitt as the Dog Bartholomew
(photo by Barbara Combs)

Boodles for Brunch

BY WILL SADDLER

THE CONVENTION wound to its inevitable close with our traditional Sunday brunch. Though your reporter spotted no kippered herring, the assembled multitude got themselves outside of generous portions

of eggs & b., roasted potatoes, and other comestibles too numerous to mention, displaying a gusto that would have done any Drones Club member proud.

Once the clatter of cutlery, wielded with verve and vigor, had subsided, the morning's events turned to that other tradition of our farewell brunches: the NEWTS's play. The offering this day was an original production penned and directed by NEWTS member Max Pokrivchak. True to form, he managed to inject much Wodehouseanness as well as to pay homage to our host city: the piece was entitled *Espresso Delivery*. It captured, in seven well-paced short scenes, the bracing story of how one Murgatroyd Mulliner (played by John Fahey) came to win the heart of the ambassador's lovely daughter, Miss Susanna Smith (played by Cindy McKeown).

Wendell Verrill was well cast as Mr. Mulliner (Murgatroyd's uncle), Elizabeth Landman beamed as Mrs. Smith, Elin Woodger portrayed Ambassador Smith, and Jean Tillson was a fine Miss Postlethwaite. David Landman (hilariously butling as though lives depended on it) served as Boodles the butler. John Kareores channelled Jos. Waterbury and Roberta Towner was a delight as Lottie the saloon keeper. Playwright Max, along with J and Indu Ravi, rounded out the cast as lumberjacks.

The entire business was nicely stage-managed and generally goosed along by the redoubtable Lynn Vesley-Gross. The period-perfect scene-change scrolls were a terrific and high-quality addition created courtesy of the artistically gifted Jean Tillson, who must have spent a goodly number of hours putting those together.

For those who weren't lucky enough to be at the convention, we can help you share in the fun. As you can see below, the saloon was already evolving in a new direction; then came the discovery of the power of some South American beans to perk one up. If we can believe the events in the skit, Buck-U-Uppo isn't the only bracing tonic to which a Mulliner may lay claim.



The NEWTS skit and some Seattle caffeine sent us off to our distant homes, happy and fulfilled. (photo by Elin Woodger)

P. G. Wodehouse and the Flora of Degenershausen

BY MARTIN BREIT

IT MAY SOUND too good to be true, but almost sixty years after its first publication, P. G. Wodehouse's novel *Money in the Bank* played a vital part in saving magnificent plantings of rhododendrons from the whims of local German authorities.

Just a few days after Plum was released from the internment camp at Tost in June 1941, he found himself in a dream world. Although he wasn't permitted to leave Germany, he found a sanctuary at Degenershausen, the rural estate of Anga von Bodenhausen, the fiancée of an old friend from Wodehouse's Hollywood days. There he saw green hedges instead of barbed wire and a luxuriant English-style landscape garden instead of the narrow and muddy camp courtyard. And instead of being cramped into one cell block with sixty other men, he shared the elegant manor with the Bodenhausen family, his wife Ethel, and Wonder, their beloved Peke. Here at Degenershausen, the war was far away, and Wodehouse could write and move about in peace.

Fifty years later, the Cold War was over and the inter-German border was history. The park of Degenershausen, which became derelict in GDR times, was carefully reconstructed, using historical plans. The postwar landscape architect was very experienced and recognized a place in the park that would be perfect for planting rhododendrons. Some time after he planted a number of bushes, the Landesdenkmalamt Halle (the local authority for the protection of monuments) appeared on the scene. They claimed there was no historical proof of rhododendrons at that very spot or in the entire park for that matter, so they should be removed—despite the fact that the magnificent and beautiful plants had become a major attraction among the visitors to Degenershausen.

For years and years there was a lot of discussion—until the fortunate day that *Money in the Bank* was brought into play. The setting of the novel, first published in 1942, is Shipley Hall. The estate's park hosts, among many other attractions, large plantings of rhododendrons, which are the perfect location for exchanging kisses.

The point was made to the authorities that the gardens of Shipley Hall were based on the gardens of Degenershausen. It was a convincing point, considering that Plum wrote the book in Germany, while living in that rural Eden. Also, there were some similarities in the description of Shipley and the appearance of



Built in 1835 and demolished in 1986, the manor-house of Degenershausen is shown here in a 1914 postcard.



The would-be Wodehouse-Linde

Degenershausen, and it is a well-known fact that Wodehouse frequently was inspired by the people and places he knew and integrated them into his work.

In short, after the Landesdenkmalamt acknowledged the novel, they never again expressed the desire to remove the rhododendrons. This was a remarkable triumph for literature, although the fictional estate is by no means influenced by Degenershausen. The manuscript was already finished when Plum came here, and it is proven fact that Shipley Hall is based on Fairlawne, home of Wodehouse's daughter Leonora. However, after almost sixty years, the novel helped to save the lives of some remarkable plants. This is a beautiful footnote to the novel.

Even today there is a lime tree (*Linde* in German, linden or basswood in America) at Degenershausen that Wodehouse knew very well. He loved to sit under it, relax, enjoy the view, and think about his work. Today the 110-year-old *Tilia* doesn't host famous authors anymore, but one or more tawny owls live there.

There are recent plans at Degenershausen to remember its prominent guest and to officially christen the tree "Wodehouse-Linde"—most likely accompanied by a suitable celebration, which would be of interest for Wodehouse lovers. Furthermore, there are plans to sell cuttings so that anyone could take home a young plant and grow a genuine Wodehousean tree at home.

The Degenershausen Landscape Park is situated in central Germany, Saxony Anhalt, as part of the town Falkenstein/Harz. Those who want to get an impression of the park should visit the home page (in German only): <http://www.landschaftspark-degenershausen.de>.

[Editor's note: To learn more about Wodehouse's time at Degenershausen, get Baroness Reinhild von Bodenhausen's P. G. Wodehouse: The Unknown Years (on Amazon and at lakehousebookshop.com).]

The Importance of Being Timely with Address Change Notifications

BY NEIL MIDKIFF

WE SEND OUT *Plum Lines* to USA addresses via first-class mail, which generally works quickly and reliably, and which ensures that your issues will be forwarded to your new address for one year after a move. First-class forwarding, however, does not include letting us know your new address right away; that service is only available to commercial mailers. Unless you tell us your new address, we'll keep sending *Plum Lines* to your old one. The first four quarterly issues will be sent on to your new address, and the next issue will be returned to us marked "Forwarding Time Expired"—perhaps with your new address but sometimes without it. That leads to extra work and expense for us and a delayed or lost issue for you.

So please remember to keep us up to date whenever your address changes, using the web form at <http://wodehouse.org/membership>. Alternatively, you may email twsmembership@wodehouse.org, or send a letter or card to the membership secretary at the address on page 24 of *Plum Lines*. The USPS forwarding labels are usually yellow, just as our "Dues are Due" inserts are; remember that "yellow" means "action required" in order to keep your *Plum Lines* coming.

Every author really wants to have letters printed in the papers. Unable to make the grade, he drops down a rung of the ladder and writes novels.

Louder and Funnier (1932)

The BBC's *Wodehouse in Exile*: A Sympathetic Retelling of the Berlin Broadcasts and their Tragic Consequences for an Innocent Abroad

BY BOB RAINS

THE BBC has performed yeoman's service in producing in 2013, and recently releasing for free limited distribution in the United States, its sympathetic "docudrama," *Wodehouse in Exile*, written by Nigel Williams.

For those readers who are not familiar with the events in which Wodehouse was caught up during World War II, here is a brief outline. Wodehouse and Ethel were living in Le Touquet, France, when the war in Europe broke out. On May 22, 1940, Le Touquet was overrun by German forces. Beginning July 21, Wodehouse was interned by the Germans as a male civilian noncombatant under the age of sixty at a series of locations, ending up at a former lunatic asylum in Tost, Upper Silesia. He continued writing during his captivity, including humorous descriptions of life in the camps which he read to his fellow internees. On June 21, 1941, the Nazis released Wodehouse and transported him to Berlin, where he read a version of his camp talks on German radio in five sessions that were to be broadcast to the then-neutral United States to reassure his American fans that he was all right. Without his knowledge, the Nazis rebroadcast his talks to the U.K., where they resulted in charges of treason being levelled against him. Largely as a result of this contretemps, Wodehouse never returned to the U.K. after the war.

Wodehouse in Exile opens with a voice-over from the odious July 15, 1941, broadcast on BBC radio of William Connor, speaking as "Cassandra," denouncing Wodehouse. "I have come to tell you tonight of the story of a rich man trying to make his last and greatest sale—that of his own country. It is a somber story of honor pawned to the Nazis for the price of a soft bed in a luxury hotel. It is the record of P. G. Wodehouse ending forty years of money-making fun with the worst joke he ever made in his life." Not quoted in the film are Connor's further words: "And Dr. Goebbels taking him into a high mountain, showed unto him all the Kingdoms of the world . . . and said unto him: 'All this will I give thee if thou wilt worship the Führer.' Pelham Wodehouse fell on his knees."

Not content with broadcasting (over protest) the Cassandra diatribe, the BBC went even further, apparently of its own accord (also not mentioned in the

film), and, on December 22, 1943, announced a ban on the broadcast of any Wodehouse works. That ban remained in effect for years after the end of the war.

Anyone interested in the truth about the Berlin broadcasts and the circumstances under which they occurred should read *Wodehouse at War* by Iain Sproat, M.P., published in 1981. Sproat had been trying for years to obtain access to the U.K. government's files on the matter in order to either clear Wodehouse's name or to ascertain of what Wodehouse might actually have been deemed guilty. Finally, in 1980, almost forty years after the broadcasts, and five years after Wodehouse's death, the U.K. government relented and made available to Sproat a slightly redacted version of the file, including Major Cussen's official report to MI5 dated September 28, 1944. Not surprisingly, Sproat found that the charges were either outrageous distortions or outright fabrications.

Those with neither the time nor inclination to read *Wodehouse at War* may simply read the transcripts of the admittedly unfortunate broadcasts themselves, which are reprinted as Appendix One to Sproat's book and are also available online, along with a chronology of the events, at the website of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK). The reader will immediately realize that the broadcasts were "stiff upper lip" in nature, intended to show how Wodehouse and his fellow internees managed to carry on despite harsh conditions beyond their control. The broadcasts suggested nothing even remotely pro-Nazi or pro-surrender.

Some mysteries do remain about the whole incident. Most significantly, did the U.K. government suppress the Cussen Report because of information in it about another internee who may in fact have abetted the Nazis in some way? The redacted report given to Sproat omitted the name of an internee who was released at the same time as Wodehouse and accompanied him to Berlin. In the film, this mysterious internee is named Mackintosh, and we learn near the end that he had indeed been cooperating with his captors.

The title *Wodehouse in Exile* is quite apt as, in fact, Wodehouse served many exiles in the last decades of his life. Although never alluded to in the film, it was Wodehouse's tax troubles that had caused him to be a tax exile in France when the Germans arrived. In *You*

Simply Hit Them With an Axe, Tony Ring explains, “There is no doubt at all that it was the fallout from the U.K. tax case and the double taxation of U.S. earnings which would be created by existing U.K. tax laws if he moved to the U.K. . . . that caused both the Wodehouses to be in Le Touquet when war broke out.”

Then, in the hands of the Germans, Wodehouse was interned first in France, then Belgium, then Upper Silesia, which was at that time part of Germany (later Poland). Later he was compelled to live in Berlin, which was under British bombardment, and elsewhere in Germany, then allowed to be in occupied Paris, also under bombardment.

After the war, he never returned to his homeland, and finally lived out the last two decades of his long life in the tiny village of Remsenburg on Long Island, a bucolic setting but far from the England about which he continued to write so lovingly.

One can quibble with certain aspects of *Wodehouse in Exile*. As noted, it provides no explanation of why the Wodehouses found themselves in their perilous situation in May 1940. It does not show that the Wodehouses made two abortive attempts to flee by car in advance of the German army. There is one entirely gratuitous “f-bomb” thrown in for bad measure. There is an equally discordant suggestion that Wodehouse was impotent as a result of having had the mumps as a young man. [Note: See Chris Dueker’s article on this topic in the Winter 2014 Plum Lines for the definitive answer.—Ed.]

Tim Pigott-Smith, as Wodehouse, just doesn’t look like a man who has lost 42 pounds during eleven months of dining on internment cuisine. Finally, it fails to mention in the end notes that Wodehouse astonishingly forgave Connor (the broadcaster “Cassandra”) after the war, and that they became friends. This says more about Wodehouse’s true character than all the slurs, innuendoes, and outright lies that still follow him beyond the grave.

But let us be charitable and give credit where it is due. Pigott-Smith is an excellent Wodehouse, both clever and naïve. Zoë Wanamaker convincingly portrays the redoubtable Ethel Wodehouse. Flora Montgomery is simply heartbreaking as the loyal but doomed Leonora. Richard Dormer evinces an appropriately sleazy Werner Plack. And Paul Ritter makes a splendid morally ambiguous, possibly double-agent, internee. The entire cast is superb.

After seven decades, we can and should say that the BBC has finally atoned for its sins against Wodehouse. If Wodehouse could forgive Connor, it is now time that we forgive the “Beeb.”

A Few Quick Ones

Send ‘em along! If we don’t get your Quick Ones printed this issue, they may pop up in the next!

Beth Carroll sent this: In *The Week*, June 19, 2015, in the column “Best Books: Chosen by Alexandra Petri,” one finds: “*Right Ho, Jeeves* by P. G. Wodehouse (Norton, \$14). When newt fancier Gussie Fink-Nottle shows up drunk to present prizes at Market Snodsbury Grammar School, the result is one of the funniest train wrecks you will ever read. ‘What was what’s-his-name,’ Gussie asks one bewildered student, ‘the chap who begat Thingummy?’”

Beth also found this in *Country Living* (British edition), August 2015, about Isabel Knowles, a well-known dyer and dressmaker: “One range has dresses named after P. G. Wodehouse characters; she listens to the audio books as she works.”

Max Pokrivchak noticed that in the new film *The End of the Tour*, set during the late author David Foster Wallace’s book tour for his magnum opus *Infinite Jest*, we learn that one of Mr. Wallace’s black Labradors is named Jeeves. Max warns us that though the film is both enlightening and enjoyable (especially the scenes with Jeeves), *Infinite Jest* itself runs to more than a thousand pages and seems to be heavily influenced by *Types of Ethical Theory*.

Though a bit aged (*The Spectator*, November 23, 2013), Harry Mount’s review of Gavin Stamp’s *Lost Victorian Britain: How the 20th Century Destroyed the 19th Century’s Architectural Masterpieces* is noteworthy for quoting Wodehouse’s view on the matter from *Summer Moonshine*: “Whatever may be said in favor of the Victorians, it is pretty generally admitted that few of them were to be trusted within reach of a trowel and a pile of bricks.”

Wodehouse often is referenced in what would seem the least likely places. In a lengthy review of Ben Macintyre’s book *A Spy Among Friends: Kim Philby and the Great Betrayal* (December 4, 2014, *New York Review*), Xan Smiley noted that some believe Philby died thinking communism had succeeded. Smiley argues otherwise, basing his claim on Philby’s high intelligence, and demonstrates this in part by saying the spy’s writings are “models of clarity and wit, often phrased in old-fashioned jocularities that echo the attitudes as well as the style of P. G. Wodehouse.”

Psmith in Pseattle in Glorious Color

All photos by Barbara Combs, except where noted.
EW = Elin Woodger ES = Ellie Sheldon SC = Susan Collicott



Dan and Tina Garrison (aka Ukridge and the May Queen) know how to handle the Seattle rain. (SC)



Scott Daniels announces the 2017 convention in D.C.!



John Davies



Ripe for a banquet: Dan Chouinard and Neil Midkiff (SC)



Andrew Walker accosts Richard Fleming.



Gary Hall and Chapter One's Jim Hawking are riveted by the talks.



Donna Myers and Diana Van Horn share a smile.



Dr. Diane Madlon-Kay prescribes the proper use of flower pots.



Tom and Betty Hooker take a pre-banquet ride. (SC)



Chris and Joyce Dueker welcome Robert Bruce to another convention.



Hosts Tom Smith and Susan Collicott with Andrew Walker



Brunch artist Linda Adam-Hall's pig-coloring entry



Elizabeth and David Landman bring NEWTian class to the affair. (SC)



We could ask for guesses—but we'll save time and tell you that it's Cindy McKeown. (EW)



Katherine Jordan and Ninad Wagle arrive for the festivities. (SC)



Maria Jette delights as Lottie with Mickey in tow.



Speaker and ace rare-books master Tad Boehmer lights up the room.



The curate in a cozy moment: Speaker Bill Scrivener and his wife, Susan Pace



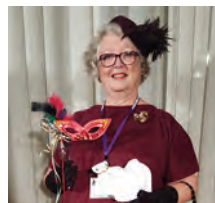
David and Katy McGrann, ready for the court



Costume prize winner Lynette Poss (SC)



The members of the Globe Reclamation Project: Tony Ring, Neil Midkiff, Karen Shotting, Ian Michaud, John Dawson, Ananth Kaitharam (Raja Srinivasan, Arthur Robinson, and Norman Murphy absent)



Orange Plum Diana Van Horn as The Old Reliable (SC)



Vikas Sonak and Lynn Vesley-Gross



Susan Bellamore (right) clowns around with a Plummy pal. (SC)



Susan and Owen Dorsey (SC)



Behold the Plummy registration desk: Kathy Smith, Tom Smith, Jennifer Smith



Richard Coad and Stacy Scott (SC)



Eileen Jones



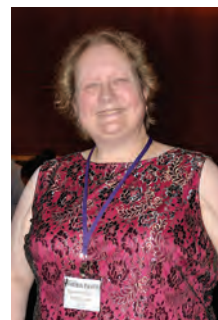
Neil Midkiff and Tad Boehmer



Michael Sheldon aka Bill Lister (ES)



Tuxedoed and glowing: Ken Clevenger and Bill Franklin



Convention hostess Susan Collicott beams at the results of all that work.



Troy Fisher and Karen Shotting on our festive Friday



Joe Coppola escorts costume winners Elaine Coppola and Carol Cavalluzzi.



Ellie Sheldon seems unconcerned about the wild habits of husband Michael.



Beth Fleming and Richard Fleming enjoy the browsing.



Susan Garrett made sure that her mask would delight!



Wendy and Carol Colby relax at mid-banquet.



TWS president Bob Rains is flanked by former students Maren Miller Bam and Josh Bam, now members of the bar in Washington State.



Always a prize-winning picture: Tim Kearley and Barbara Combs impress us with their impeccable classic style.



Membership secretary Ian Michaud gets his best photos when in hiding.



The typically virtual Jen Scheppers gets into the swing of things. (EW)



Netherlanders Jelle and Marjanne Otten as Jeeves and Bill Towcester (Rowcester) in the guise of Honest Patch Perkins and his assistant. (SC)



Nelson Bridwell and Robin Darby-Bridwell express the typical banquet sentiment.



A masked Robert Bruce



New president Bob Rains and Andrea Jacobsen as Oily and Sweetie Carlisle



Plum Lines editor Gary Hall and Linda Adam-Hall with armfuls of new material



Tim Andrew



Broadway Specialist Amy Plofker (SC)



John Coats and Tina Woelke radiate in harmony during the banquet. (SC)



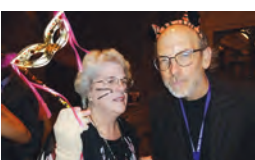
Perpetual energy: translator Tamaki Morimura



Mottled Oysters Lynette Poss and Liz Davenport entertain Karen Byrne of Anglers' Rest.



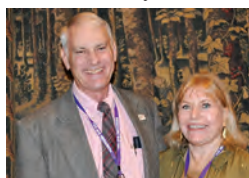
Frits Smulders, one of our Dutch friends



Anita Avery studies NEWT Max Pokrivchak's tiger regalia. (EW)



Extraordinary entertainers Dan Chouinard and Maria Jette (EW)



Perpetual cheer from Ken and Joan Clevenger



The Mullers (James and Judith) might be from Alaska but they channelled the Nile.



David Alvarez and Robin Stemen as Aunt Dahlia and Uncle Tom after Bertie rang the fire bell



Jelle and Marjanne Otten

Lesley Tapson, the convention scribe for Wooster Sauce



Harris Booker and Liz Davenport beaming at the brunch.



Robert McCrum delivers the final riveting talk.



Lucy and webmaster Noel Merrill and flowers



Pillars of the society: Jean Tillson and Elin Woodger



NEWTS John Kareores and Roberta Towner (SC)



Peter Nieuwenhuizen, president of the Dutch Wodehouse Society



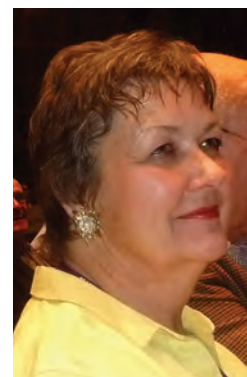
Plum Crazy's Diane and Ed Hain (SC)



Leah Fleming, Cori Fleming, and Beth Fleming raise the beauty bar. (SC)



Spode and friends: Suzan, Jim, and Stacey Hughes (SC)



U.K. society leader Hilary Bruce sparkles on Friday night. (EW)



Many a convention for this group: Dr. Paul Abrinko, Tamaki Morimura, J Ravi, and new TWS treasurer Indu Ravi light up the room.

Chapters Corner

WHAT IS YOUR chapter up to these days? We welcome you to use this column to tell the Wodehouse world about your chapter's activities. Chapter representatives, please send all info to the editor, Gary Hall (see back page). If you're not a member of a local chapter but would like to attend a meeting or become a member, please get in touch with the contact person listed.

Anglers' Rest

(Seattle and vicinity)

Contact: Susan Collicott



Birmingham Banjolele Band

(Birmingham, Alabama, and vicinity)

Contact: Caralyn McDaniel



Blandings Castle Chapter

(Greater San Francisco Bay area)

Contact: Neil Midkiff



(New York City and vicinity)

Contact: Amy Plofker



Capital! Capital!

(Washington, D.C., and vicinity)

Contact: Scott Daniels



(Greater Philadelphia area)

Contact: Herb Moskowitz



A BEAUTIFUL DAY in Philadelphia greeted the Chaps of Chapter One for our September meeting. As usual, we met at Cavanaugh's on Head House Square.

The first order of business was collecting funds to feed Gussie, our newt at the Philadelphia Zoo. The

money flowed, and we are happy to report that Gussie will be fed well this year. Bob Nissenbaum (Anthony, Lord Droitwich) showed us an article by Sam Sacks in the *Wall Street Journal* about a new book by Faith Sullivan, titled *Good Night, Mr. Wodehouse*. The story is about an early twentieth-century schoolteacher whose soulmate is her favorite author.



Gussie, the Chaps' beloved newt

Bob also showed us an advertisement for the upcoming *Musicals Tonight!* season. They are doing two shows which Wodehouse helped create: *Oh, Kay!* and *Oh, Boy!*

Bob Rains (Oily Carlisle) had three items for show and tell. There was a two-volume set of *By the Way: Day by Day* and *By the Way: 200 Verses*, which are collections of columns and poems, respectively, written by Plum for *The Globe* between 1901 and 1908. [See more detail in the *Autumn Plum Lines* and in this issue on page 4.]



Bob Rains as Nelson Cork and Richard Weishaupt as Percy Wimbolt

The other book was *Wodehouse's School Days* by Jan Piggott, formerly Head of English and Keeper of the Archives of Dulwich College, which was reviewed by Neil Midkiff in the *Autumn 2015 Plum Lines*.

Bob Nissenbaum then led a group reading of "The Amazing Hat Mystery." Everyone participated; the lead

actors were Richard Weishaupt (Tom Travers) and Bob Rains reading the parts of Percy Wimbolt and Nelson Cork, respectively. To add to the fun, they wore hats especially sent in from Bodmin Hats of London.

Chicago Accident Syndicate

(Chicago and thereabouts)

Contact: Daniel & Tina Garrison



AS DEPARTURE for “Psmith in Pseattle” was fast approaching, your faithful scribe prepared only this brief missive on behalf of the Chicago Accident Syndicate.

August 22 found us gathered once again at the spacious digs of Susan Diamond and her spouse, Allan Devitt, in lovely Bensenville. We browsed and sluiced (as always) in yeoman-like fashion while Jenna and Lily (two of our honorary canine members) foraged about the room in search of the odd nibble. (On a sad note: not long after this, Jenna passed on to that celestial estate where she no doubt continues to cadge that nibble in company with the two-legged Wodehouse aficionados who have preceded her.)

Once again, no-longer-new member Mary-Carol Riehs delighted us with an unusual discovery. This time it was a piece from Michael Dirda’s collected essays for the *Washington Post: Readings: Essays and Literary Entertainments*, published in 2000 by W. W. Norton & Company. The particular piece is entitled “Weekend with Wodehouse” and tells of Michael’s experience with the Syndicate’s first foray into convention hosting in 1997. A Google search on the article’s title should turn it up if you missed the event yourself—I recommend it even if you were there.

Dan Garrison shared a marvelous excerpt from “Jeeves and the Impending Doom.” Dean Miller and Martha Swift delighted us with a joint reading of Wodehouse’s foreword to his *Over Seventy: An Autobiography with Digressions*.

Your humble scribe also penned a piece on the Sunday brunch in Seattle at the convention (see pgs. 6–7).

The Clients of Adrian Mulliner

(For enthusiasts of both PGW and Sherlock Holmes)

Contact: Elaine Coppola



A SENIOR BLOODSTAIN was held at the Psmith in Pseattle convention on Friday, October 30, 2015. After introductions, the attendees enjoyed a reading of *The Disguised Detective*, a play in three acts adapted from Stephen Leacock’s *Maddened by Mystery, or The Defective Detective* by Elaine Coppola. The dramatis personae included Joe Coppola (Sherlock Holmes), Carol Cavalluzzi (Dr. Watson), Allan Devitt (Lord Emsworth), Susan Diamond (Lady Georgiana Alcester), and Elaine Coppola (Narrator). A Junior Bloodstain will be held on Saturday, January 16, 2016, at 11:30 AM in the Roosevelt Hotel, York Suite, during the Baker Street Irregulars weekend in New York City. Suggestions for the program are greatly encouraged. Contact Elaine Coppola as listed above.

The Den(ver) of the Secret Nine

(Denver and vicinity)

Contact: Jennifer Petkus



(Houston and vicinity)

Contact: Carey Tynan



The Flying Pigs

(Cincinnati area and elsewhere)

Contact: Susan Brokaw



Friends of the Fifth Earl of Ickenham

(Buffalo, New York, and vicinity)

Contact: Laura Loehr



The Melonsquashville (TN) Literary Society

(Tennessee)

Contact: Ken Clevenger



The Mottled Oyster Club / Jellied Eels

(San Antonio and South Texas)

Contact: Lynette Poss



THE MOTTLED OYSTERS met over the summer and fall, more or less in regular numbers, to discuss the

book chosen for that month. Some members wandered off in search of cooler climes, which left the rest of us green with jealousy, yet still able to talk about *Leave It to Psmith*; *The Luck Stone*; *Thank You, Jeeves*; *The Man With Two Left Feet*; *Frozen Assets*; and *Big Money*.

In late October, Lynette Poss and Liz Davenport attended The Wodehouse Society's Psmith in Pseattle meet-up. They reported back at our November meeting, with a discourse on the convention's Riveting Talks, the Globe Reclamation Project, and other items. Miss Poss, costumed as the Efficient Baxter at the Saturday night banquet, won a prize. Both women refrained from wearing their costumes to the November meeting, but brought them in case we wanted to see.

A Few Quick Ones is up in December; "Death at the Excelsior" for January; and, in February, *Do Butlers Burgle Banks?*

If you are a Wodehouse fan living near San Antonio, or visiting, join us. We meet at the La Cantera Barnes & Noble bookstore, currently on the first Wednesday of each month.

The New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS)

(Boston and New England)

Contact: John Fahey



NEWTS IN THE FOOTLIGHTS: It was quiet in New England this fall, a bit too quiet. Enquiring minds were asking, "Whither the NEWTS? Do they hibernate? And isn't it a bit early for hibernation?"

We are now free to reveal what Pseattle conventioners already know. The NEWTS were deep in rehearsals for their latest production, *Espresso Delivery*, which was performed during the Sunday brunch at that convention. The skit included Mr. Mulliner, his nephew (Murgatroyd), the Anglers' Rest, Miss Postlethwaite, an ambassador's family, a butler, lumberjacks, coffee beans, and a very large box, which we'll name The Box.

Gad, you say, surely you didn't foist that on the attendees while they were trying to recover from the previous night's festivities? Prudence prevailed, and the kickoff was delayed until after the assembled had tucked in their repast, thus ensuring a more docile and pliable audience. Last-minute costuming devilry added a bit of electricity to the mounting excitement.

At the conclusion of the performance, the audience rose to their feet with a rapturous look on their faces. Opinions were mixed as to whether this was appreciation of the performance or relief that they were now free to escape without making a scene.

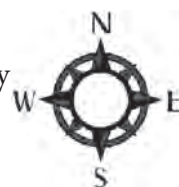
Special mention must be made of the author of this original production, Max Pokrivchak, aka Terry Kitchen. (Or is it Terry Kitchen, aka Max Pokrivchak?) Actually, neither. Your intrepid reporter is the first to press with a major scoop. Said author, who has been operating under multiple false names, is none other than the celebrated son of Saskatoon, Whiskers Beardsley. You may recall his big hit from a number of years ago, *Medulla Oblongata*. It never made it to Broadway, and was a bit further out than Off-Broadway. Hoboken to be precise.

Finally, a remembrance of The Box, a key part of the action, which gave its all to the production. The Box will never be used for any purpose again, unless perhaps to stoke the fireplace. A moment of silence for The Box.

The Northwodes

(St. Paul, Minneapolis, and vicinity)

Contact: Kristine Fowler



The Orange Plums

(Orange County, California)

Contact: Lia Hansen



THE ORANGE PLUMS met at the Old Spaghetti Factory and were graced with the presence of Doug Kendrick and Karen Shottling of the Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corporation chapter. Karen brought along an advance copy of *By the Way: Day by Day* and gave us the background of the project and how the pieces were chosen. A new item was added to many a Christmas list!

In November we read *Mr. Punch's Spectral Analyses*, and December will find us riveted with tales from Psmith in Pseattle. Our mascot, the Duchess, made the trip accompanied by the club secretary and, from the photos we've seen, had a delightful time.

The Pale Parabolites

(Toronto and vicinity)

Contact: George Vanderburgh



(Kansas City and vicinity)

Contact: Bob Clark



The Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corporation
(Los Angeles and vicinity)
Contact: Karen Shotting



PZMPCo MET in November to discuss three favorite Jeeves and Wooster short stories: “Jeeves and the Old School Chum,” “The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy,” and “Jeeves and the Kid Clementina.” In an effort to avoid any rannygazoo with the lunch basket, one of our members provided a sumptuous repast of which Bingo Little would approve. In fact, Bingo mentions these delicacies in “School Chum”: anchovies on toast, potted meat sandwiches, cakes, and hard-boiled eggs. (Alas, we found that there was a bit of foul play after all, despite the care to keep the Pyke menace away from the victuals. Though we searched with all the assiduity at our command, the bottle of Bollinger was nowhere in evidence.)

It should be noted that, while discussing “The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy,” we also followed along with Bun Katsuta’s most excellent manga of the story. Doug provided Japanese translations and explained the significance of the way that Bun portrayed Biffy as a very small character. Bun’s artistry gave universal satisfaction. “A delightful literary repast,” commented one member.

Bill, our Facebook coordinator, had shared some of Barbara Combs’s photos of the Psmith in Pseattle convention, and former prez Karen provided commentary to give the group a feel for the delights of the coming together of Wodehouse fans from all over the world, some of whom are virtual members of PZMPCo. She also treated the small group of members to the inside story of some little-known aspects of the last days of her presidency, including, “The Tale of a Doll Named Charles” and “That Was No Meeting! That Was My Breakfast!” Karen was proudly wearing the pendant she had received for having answered a few of the fiendish quiz answers correctly.

Finally, we bandied the names of various venues for our December gathering. We usually do something involving browsing and sluicing for the holiday season, and this December was no exception. The Hotel Constance on Colorado Boulevard (just a few blocks from our usual corner) was the winner and therefore target for our holiday fête. The hotel was thoroughly vetted by a panel of experts and promised to be unique in every respect.

Other than our December and May meetings, we generally can be found on the second Sunday

of the month at 12:30 PM at Book Alley, 1252 East Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, CA. Join our Yahoo! group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PZMPCo/> or our Facebook offering at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/373160529399825/> for more information on upcoming readings and changes of schedule and venue.

The Pickering Motor Company
(Detroit and vicinity)
Contact: Elliott Milstein



The Pittsburgh Millionaires Club
(Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)



ON OCTOBER 18, members of the Pittsburgh Millionaires Club convened to read aloud the short story “High Stakes,” published in 1926 in *The Heart of a Goof*. Ever anxious to pick up tips about authentic millionaire behavior, such as how to get the most out of one’s education at Sing Sing, trade railroads, and add just that little bit more to the millions we already have, we also explored some of the mysteries of golf. We learned about baffies and biffing and swashing and sloshing. “High Stakes” is the tale of two millionaires who take to the links to battle, not over the love of a fair woman but for the ownership of a superior English butler. “It’s my wife’s birthday next week,” says one millionaire, “and I’ve been wondering what to get her.” Meanwhile, the Oldest Member observes somberly: “It is a curious thing that men whose golf is of a kind that makes hardened caddies wince always play for high stakes.” It was difficult for us millionaires to keep our heads down and our elbows in as recommended by Vardon when we were laughing so hard.

The Plum Crazyies
(Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and vicinity)
Contact: Betty Hooker



The Portland Greater Wodehouse Society (PGWs)
(Portland, Oregon and vicinity)
Contact: Carol James



The Right Honourable Knights of Sir Philip Sidney
(Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
Contact: Jelle Otten



THE MOST RECENT meeting of the Honourable Knights of Sir Philip Sidney was on October 17 in good old Mulliner's Wijnlokaal in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Although we had competition that night from the world-famous Amsterdam Dance Event, the Knights' meeting was very well attended. One of the reasons was the announcement of another new Dutch Wodehouse publication by Leonard Beuger. Eleven Mulliner stories were translated into Dutch for the first time, and the book, *Mr. Mulliner's Sterkste Verhalen*, was published by IJzer Uitgeverij in Utrecht, Netherlands. Leonard's daughter Laura illustrated the cover, which shows eleven different bottles of alcoholic spirits or drinking glasses to represent the special drink featured in each story.

Leonard is indefatigable. He is at the moment translating *The Mating Season* into Dutch. In honor of his work, the Knights sang "The Hunting Song" from that novel.



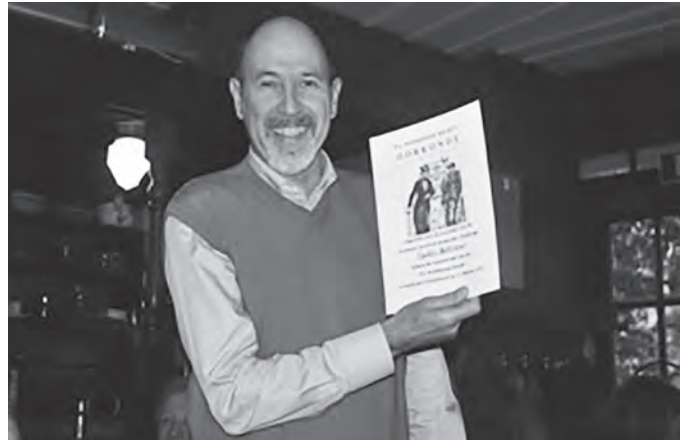
Leonard and Fiora Beuger play "The Hunting Song."

Jelle Otten told the group about the Globe Reclamation Project and showed us a copy of the two volumes published thus far.

Ronald Brenner told us about his hilarious adventure with the Belgian Drones Club. He was invited by the Duke of Arenberg to make an old-time rally through Flemish Brabant, Belgium. The rally was called the First Arenberg Trophy, and many pre-World War II cars were paraded, including a Ruska Regina, a Morgan Jaguar, a Singer, and a 1925 Chrysler.

Finally, we held the Mulliners' Spiritual Bartender Challenge. For this quiz you had to guess which bottle or drinking glass (from Laura's book cover) was connected

with which story. Pjottr Hatzman won the first prize, a certificate of appreciation.



Pjottr Hatzman, who won the Mulliners' Spiritual Bartender Challenge.

The next meeting of the Knights is scheduled for February 13, 2016, at 1 PM. The meeting place is again at Mulliner's Wijnlokaal, Lijnbaansgracht 266-267.

The Size 14 Hat Club
(Halifax, Nova Scotia)
Contact: Jill Robinson



(West Texas: Canyon, Plainview, Amarillo, Lubbock)
Contact: Troy Gregory

THE WEST TEXAS WOOSTERS met several times during September and October, mostly to sort through our temperament, take stock of our gifts, and establish our personality in the world of Wodehouse enthusiasts. On October 29, we gathered in costume as our favorite Wodehouse characters. (We had Berties, Gussies, a Jeeves, a Bill Dawlish, a handful of Nobbys, a Florence Craye, a Lady Constance, and an Aunt Dahlia.) Our meetings are held in a historic theater auditorium in Plainview, Texas, an ideal space for chucking cards into top hats, chipping Haskells into large pails, bowling short-fly cricket balls toward a guarded wicket, and playing indoor tennis with period rackets and a deflated Wilson-Western. Best luck of all, we have a raised stage, with green velvet curtains and theater props, upon which to act skits and accentuate the musical comedy of Wodehouse's writing. We are currently blocking "Unpleasantness at Bludleigh Court" as part of a fundraiser for our 2016 Maymester trip to

England. We also plan to join our Society cousins in London and engage them in a friendly skit competition.

We've dubbed our auditorium the Drones Club, because the red bricks of its exterior and its chief architectural features (from 1911) link closely to Buck's Club at 18 Clifford Street, London. As Wayland Baptist University is religiously affiliated and enforces strict prohibitions on alcohol, our Drones Club is uncharacteristically dry, though its newest members, at least, practice proper dippiness. We siphon carbonated water into ginger syrup and so simulate the vital w. and s. that no self-respecting Drone can forego, and we always try for eggs, beans, crumpets, scones, or sandwiches with our tea at our assemblies. There are even whispers of a leg of lamb, boiled potatoes, spinach, and roly-poly pudding to precede our Christmas gathering.

Our numbers are healthy, with more than a dozen in attendance and close to a dozen in the offing. Though we draw our numbers largely from local universities—Wayland, West Texas A&M, and Texas Tech—we've had inquiries from local high schools and the general public and plan to cast a still wider community net.

In keeping with the hundred-year anniversary of "Extricating Young Gussie" and of *Something Fresh*, we read and discussed both texts at our October meetings, and during that time we came out strongly for emphasizing Wodehouse's musical comedy during our discussions, deciding to fight out our interpretations on the boards and give the architectonics of humor a practical airing. We've agreed to imagine our impromptu performances much better than a critic's pen might report them.

And speaking of Jeeves, I've always been somewhat cognizant of the shifting nature of the Jeeves-Wooster dynamic in real life or nonliterary applications. I mean, I play Jeeves to my son's Wooster but Bertie to my wife's Jeeves. (And, really, I feel that Lisa pulls off the "domestic Mussolini" with much more verve and verisimilitude! More believable, I mean.) That said, in this world of West Texas Woosters, I find myself wanting to direct the games, brew the tea, pour carbonated water into tumblers of ginger syrup, initiate the conversation, recall the quotation, lend the mot juste, and generally keep the tambourine a-roulin'—and I'm fogged if I could have foreseen my role as such earlier in the proceedings. Mind, I'm not complaining, though I am most distressed to discover myself squarely in the role of Jeeves, up to the bowler brim, as it were. I've always sympathized with Bertie for the control Jeeves exerts over him, but now I'm coming to discover the necessity of the tension between the two. Nothing would get done without that tension: no plot advanced, no conflict

resolved, no series of short stories or collection of novels penned. It's just the necessity of playing Jeeves to the more vibrant body of student readers that I begrudge. I think that means I've now grown up, though I've been avoiding it for over forty years, and, well, I'm dashed.

"Jeeves," I said, "I am going to shave my moustache."

His left eyebrow flickered, showing how deeply the words had moved him.

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes, you have earned this sacrifice."

Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit (1954)

Rolling the Eye



BOB RAINS (our newly anointed TWS president) took note of a posting on the *ABA Journal Online* website. The article, written by Debra Cassens on August 21, 2015, informed us that "a Missouri restaurant known for tossing dinner rolls to customers is being sued by a pastor who says she suffered an eye injury as a result of the practice." Troy Tucker, a 67-year-old St. Louis pastor, is bringing the suit. According to the article, the defendant is Lambert's Café, which bills itself as the "home of throwed rolls."

Bob was unable to resist penning this poem about the sad affair:

Reverend Tucker
Neglected to duck her
Head at the Lambert's Café,
When a dinner roll flew
Over table and brew,
And sailed toward her that fateful day.

And now she has sued
Claiming inj'ry ensued—
A cornea was torn—
Or so she has sworn.
So, who's in the wrong, and who's in the right?
One seldom doth know in a legal roll fight.

Surely if Bertie and his fellow Drones chaps
Had suffered thru similar roll-play mishaps,
They would not have sued.
(That would have been crude.)
Each Plummy believes
They'd have just rung for Jeeves.

Bricolage in the Later Works of P. G. Wodehouse

BY CHRIS DUEKER

THE WINTER ISSUE of *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies* (Vol. 14 No. 4) led with an article entitled “Authentic Anachronisms” by G. A. Aistara. This rare opportunity to learn more about authenticity within inauthenticity caused me to defer my study of the provocatively titled article “Raw Milk, Raw Power.”

The author’s thesis was based on craft bread production in Latvia and Latvian wine history. Unfortunately, the author was not strong on the meanings of authentic or anachronism. Regarding Latvian wine, the less said, the better.

However, the conscientious reader always learns. In the article’s abstract Dr. Aistara wrote that “the result is a material and symbolic bricolage.” My introduction to “bricolage” would prove valuable in the contemplation of P. G. Wodehouse’s style of composition.

“Bricolage” is a newish (1960) French noun derived from the verb *bricoler* (“to putter about”). In the broadest sense, a bricolage describes a combination of different elements in the practical or fine arts. Aistara used bricolage to explain the combination of old and new techniques in Latvian bread-making. An author could use combinations to produce a rich story, a literary casserole.

Several months before I read this paper in the *Gastronomica* journal, a moving experience caused the dislocation of most of my Wodehouse library, just when I most needed it. Fortunately, a box yielded an anthology which included *The Butler Did It* (1957, U.K. *Something Fishy*). Though calming, the book reminded me that the modern Wodehouse books are not my favorites. Valley Fields with sunshine on “its neat little gardens, its rustic front gates” is not enhanced by “its soaring television antennae.” Favorite expressions lose their appeal when repeated dozens of times. I could almost understand the critics who rail against repetition in Wodehouse.

Then “Authentic Anachronisms” entered my life and offered “bricolage.” Wodehouse never used “bricolage” in his essays on critical theory. Nonetheless, this fine word describes his technique of combining old with new. He used combinations in sites, characters, plots, allusions, and expressions. The later works would use bricolage more because there was a greater volume of antecedents. I decided to look for bricolage in late examples of the independent novels, Wooster/Jeeves books, and the Blandings saga.

The Butler Did It is far from the last independent novel. I chose it because it demonstrates bricolage so well. It has brought both pleasure and disgruntlement.

Valley Fields serves as the center for most of the book, with excursions to New York, London, and Shipley Hall. Wodehouse used Dulwich, the southern London suburb, as Valley Fields several times. Television had come, though it mercifully passes after chapter seven. In a feudal twist, a viscount shares a house with his niece and his retired butler, who owns three houses.

Not surprisingly, the plot involves romantic love. In the early chapters one marriage occurs and an engagement ends. Soon a different engagement is weakened while another ends. At the book’s end two more marriages are imminent.

The action derives from a matrimonial tontine formed by New York plutocrats in the halcyon days of September 1929. Each participant has contributed \$50,000 to a pot which will pass to the son who remains unmarried the longest. The exactness of dates is unusual for Wodehouse. From the tontine’s inception at a dinner on September 10, 1929, the story moves quickly to June 20, 1955. Wodehouse usually paid scant attention to historical events, but this story depends on the Great Depression and World War II. He references financial ruin, evacuation of children from a besieged England, war deaths, and postwar social disruptions. This is quite different from Evelyn Waugh’s “Wodehouse’s idyllic world can never stale.”

A drama needs characters, and Wodehouse obliged with abundance. Independent novels might be expected to have more single-appearance participants than would appear in the sagas. *The Butler Did It* offers a mixture. One star: George, sixth Viscount Uffenham, had appeared in *Money in the Bank* (1942). Lord Uffenham suffers from profligate ancestors and postwar deprivations. According to Norman Murphy’s *A Wodehouse Handbook, Volume 1*, Wodehouse used a fellow internee at Tost as a model for Uffenham. Other characters from the past include Percy Pilbeam and the Billsons (Flossie and Wilberforce). (After this they would go on to other books.) Landlord and retired butler Augustus Keggs, the epitome of the clever servant, debuts here and is then part of *Ice in the Bedroom* (1961). Mortimer Bayliss, a private art collection curator, moves to *A Pelican at Blandings* as an art critic. Among the single-story characters are Jane Benedick, Bill Hollister, Roscoe Bunyan, and Stanhope

Twine. Offstage actors include Anne Benedick, J. J. Bunyan, Jeff Miller, the criminal Molloy, and James Brewster.

Some wise person has observed that perception is reality. Perhaps that semi-truth, now a cliché, explains why later works of Wodehouse seem to be repositories of clever expressions transformed into clichés. In *The Butler Did It* the fine “Lord love a duck” seems abused. The phrase only appears sixteen times, but it is used solely by Lord Uffenham. Thus, there are segments where it appears on almost every page. Its origins are unknown; it is neither biblical nor Wodehousean.

The Butler Did It concludes with a twist worthy of Wodehouse’s favorite mystery writers. No one dies, fortunately. The twist demonstrates that Keggs is not perfect and that espionage has limitations.

No other Wodehouse stories better illustrate the principles of bricolage than those in the Blandings stories. In Latvia, bricolage brings a loaf of bread. At Blandings, the triumph of love over diverse complications provides the conclusion.

A Pelican at Blandings (1969) was the final completed Blandings novel. The bricolage begins with the redundancy of the title. *Galahad at Blandings* (1965) preceded it, and Galahad Threepwood was the ultimate Pelican. By this time, Gally has abandoned his plans to publish his reminiscences, but Pelican Club memories fill many pages of this book.

Clarence, ninth Earl of Emsworth, again provides a focal point with his well-established love for his pig, Empress of Blandings. Clarence generally bumbles, but it is he who provides the letter that enables Galahad to effect the happy ending.

There have been personnel changes at Blandings Castle. Lady Constance has married James Schoonmaker and lives in New York. She visits Blandings after being absent in *Galahad at Blandings*. Clarence has no secretary. The current pig man, Cuthbert Price, has a tiny role.

Wodehouse used more dated references in the Blandings saga than in Wooster/Jeeves. Ambitious readers have tried to determine Lord Emsworth’s age, Beach’s service history, the dating of adventures, etc. Wodehouse rather painted himself into a corner with this, and he tried to escape in *A Pelican at Blandings*. Only two characters have been given ages. Lady Constance’s marriage makes this a late story. Mortimer Bayliss’s reappearance from a tightly dated *The Butler Did It* places this story after 1955. Cultural references (Paddington is a “refined station” and there’s also the use of trans-Atlantic passenger ships) tend to place events ahead of the publication date of 1969. The Empress has

again won the fat pig event three years in succession. This is written in a slippery enough style that it does not prove restrictive. We learn, once more, that Beach was a footman eighteen years ago.

Impostors are old news at Blandings, and three new ones are offered here. Howard Chesney (con man) has a letter of introduction from Freddie Threepwood. James Halliday (love star) is brought in by Galahad as a supposed junior partner of Sir Rodney Glossop. Vanessa Polk, daughter of P. P. (or G. P.) Polk, leads Constance to believe that she is the daughter of J. B. Polk.

Other characters, old and new, appear in person or in references. Alaric, Duke of Dunstable, has previously pestered Clarence and Galahad. His experience with his nephews, brothers of Linda Gilpin, is the reason for his restrictive guardianship of Linda. Joe Bender and Wilbur Trout are new onstage players. Blandings still has a boy who cleans the knives and boots. In the closing scene of *A Pelican at Blandings*, Galahad observes, “Peace, perfect peace with loved ones far away, as one might say.” This phrase, used elsewhere by Wodehouse, sounds like it might have come from a disruptive hymnal. The sentiment jars a bit. A hymn, “Peace, Perfect Peace” (E. H. Bickersteth, 1875, from Isaiah 26:3), contains a stanza that begins with “Peace, perfect peace with loved ones far away?” Wodehouse has eliminated the question mark, thus completely changing the meaning of the phrase. He knew the power of punctuation.

Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen (1974), the final completed book by P. G. Wodehouse, brings an impressive mixed cast to the world of Wooster and Jeeves.

Tipton Plimsoll, the wealthy American, suffers from pink spots early in *Full Moon* (1947), a Blandings book. He recovers and becomes engaged to Veronica Wedge, a niece of Lord Emsworth. In the story “Birth of a Salesman” (in *Nothing Serious*, 1950) he marries in a New York ceremony attended by Lord Emsworth. In *Galahad at Blandings* (1965), Clarence returns to New York for the wedding of Constance. There he bails Tipton out of jail. Tipton and Veronica later flee Blandings for a London registry-office marriage.

By the time of *Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen*, Tipton has become betrothed to Veronica and is in London. Bertie has pink spots (slightly itchy) and calls Tipton for the name of the doctor who treated his similar condition “not long ago.” Thus, E. Jimpson Murgatroyd reenters the canon.

Two characters from the Drones story “Tried in the Furnace” (1935) return in *Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen*: Rev. Ambrose Briscoe (formerly P. P. Briscoe) and his daughter Angelica. Angelica seems rather short of the

angelic character hoped for in a clergyman's daughter when she schemes with Aunt Dahlia.

Most of the action takes place in Maiden Eggesford, a village near Bidmouth-on-Sea. The village is the longtime workplace of Rev. Briscoe and the site of Eggesford Hall, home of his brother Jimmy. It should not be confused with Eggesford Court, home of Mr. Cook.

A feud between Jimmy Briscoe and Mr. Cook, based on the previously noted prohibition of "moving pigs without a permit" (*Uncle Dynamite*, 1948), has intensified the tension of an impending horse race. Cook is entertaining Major Plank, who had been in school with Dr. Murgatroyd. Major Plank had been a problem for Bertie in *Stiff Upper Lip*, *Jeeves* (1963).

Aunts Aren't Gentlemen introduces two important characters who are well known to Bertie although they had not appeared in earlier Wodehouse stories. Vanessa Cook, rebellious daughter of Mr. Cook, is a sturdy, beautiful type who once wanted to mold Bertie; they had been briefly engaged. Here, she has been brought back from London by her father. O. J. (Orlo) Porter, a communist with material aspirations, had been at Oxford with Bertie and had sold him insurance policies. Orlo loves Vanessa and has followed her to Maiden Eggesford.

The allusions and quotations contribute to the lighter, more modern flavor of *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* as compared with earlier Wooster/Jeeves books. There is more Ogden Nash and less Tennyson. But Wodehouse worked hard even with Ogden Nash. Early in the book Jeeves identifies Barbara Frietchie as "A lady of some prominence in the American War Between the States, sir," after Bertie recalls her support of itching in a Nash poem. Nash had gotten her name from "The Ballad of Barbara Frietchie," a poem by John Greenleaf Whittier which had achieved fame. Unfortunately, Jeeves does not know that the Whittier poem was not historically accurate. Mortimer Bayliss had quoted Whittier's poem early in *The Butler Did It* when he said, "Shoot, if you must, this old gray head." Wodehouse again uses a punctuation modification to transform the meaning of the original.

Late in the book (chapter 17), Orlo states that he is 27 years old. The disclosure of age powerfully affects the history of the Wooster stories since Orlo and Bertie were at Oxford together. This would place Bertie's age between the mid- to late twenties in *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*. He had led quite a life by the time of his final narration.

Nothing implies that Wodehouse intended *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* to be the ending of the Wooster/

Jeeves saga. The introduction of the wonderful Herbert ("Billy") Graham by Angelica gives hope for the future.

P. G. Wodehouse had many talents. Prominent among these was his ability to mix old with new. This was much more than simple repetition, just as symbiosis is more than commensalism. Occasionally there were errors, as when *Daffodil Days* (from *The Girl in Blue*, 1970) was substituted for *The Prose Ramblings of a Rhymester* in *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* (chapter 16). The past usually enriches the present.

Wodehouse's characters frequently searched for the right word. They should have considered "bricolage."

A Few More Quick Ones

In the July 11 *Spectator*, Andy Miller reviewed Jonathan Ames's *Wake Up, Sir!* very favorably in a column titled "An American Wodehouse." Mr. Miller compared the book to an offbeat Coen brothers comedy, but then said that Ames's "mastery of the Wodehousian idiom is total," and concluded that "what sustains and fuels the book is the way in which fluent Plum pastiche is constantly bumping up against tropes of the Great American Novel." Heady praise indeed!

Michael Dirda, in the July 1 *Times Literary Supplement*, told tales of some less-than-stellar book tours on which he was sent, when no members of the public would attend some book signings. However, he was always successful in finding good bookstores, professing that he "may have bought more books than [he] sold," including the time he carried off seven or eight of Wodehouse's scarcer titles from Moe's Books on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley.

In the June 6 *Spectator*'s "Life" column, Jeremy Clarke bemoaned his fate as the writer chosen to contribute to the "Low Life" section, which is the section of that column that humorously complements the "High Life" section. He contended that he landed this dubious honor by being a "terrible lightweight who can't take drink like others can" and that after three pints of strongish lager, he's "Gussie Fink-Nottle giving out the prizes."

American writer Matthew Walther made a good case for why the Man Booker Prize should be given only to British authors in a column from the September 20, 2014, *Spectator*. More importantly, he stated that "America is in the midst of a P. G. Wodehouse revival." [*We're not sure how long the revival has lasted thus far, but let's hope that "the midst" lasts a good long time!*]

Wooster Saves Society

FROM DAVID CAIN: In the September 26 *Australian*, Ben Macintyre contended that the “Code of the Woosters has saved the upper class.” He stated that Wodehouse makes the upper crust seem much nicer than many of them actually were and argued that this was not a bad thing. He quoted Wodehouse when he explained that “the only English characters the American public would read about were exaggerated dudes. It’s as simple as that.” Macintyre was convinced that Wodehouse’s apparent naiveté and innocence was “wholly knowing,” going on to say that “with masterful use of language and comic timing, he set out to portray the English upper class as dotty and lovable, when he knew it was nothing of the sort.”

Join the Wodehouse Web Team!

NOEL MERRILL and **Ken Clevenger** have done a wonderful job designing and building TWS’s website. To ensure continuity and support, we would love to have someone who’s good at website maintenance to work with Noel, giving us a bit of bench strength, as it were.

While we fully expect Noel to live to 100 (though it’s possible he may retire from web work in his nineties), we would welcome others to become familiar with the secrets of our website.

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Quick Ones (unless otherwise credited) courtesy of John Baesch and Evelyn Herzog.

We appreciate your articles, research, Quick Ones, and other observations. Send them to Gary Hall (addresses above). Deadlines are February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1. If you might miss the deadline, let me know and we’ll work something out. Note that submission of material to Plum Lines grants permission for The Wodehouse Society to republish on its website.

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