

The Prolific Plum

Being a shortish review of the longish career of P.G. Wodehouse

Mr. Wodehouse's idyllic world can never stale. He will continue to release future generations from captivity that may be more irksome than our own. He has made a world for us to live in and delight in. – Evelyn Waugh

Michael Gorman

My maternal grandfather – Joseph Barrett – died in 1936, five years before I was born. I was quite young (nine or ten) when my mother, seeing me reading a Wodehouse book, told me that her father liked PGW's books but had to stop reading them on the bus on the way to work because they made him laugh out loud – something he found mortifying. (It was Britain in the 1920s and 1930s, a time when open displays of any emotion by men were considered extremely bad form.) Is there a Wodehouse gene capable of jumping a generation? Whatever the reason may be, I fell in love with Wodehouse heavily and early in life. I used to lie to the staff in our local public library adult department by telling them that my mother was ill and I was using her (adult) library card to borrow his books for her. There were many secondhand book shops and general "junk shops" (with a table of secondhand books outside on the pavement) in North London in those days. Thus it was that I not only read all the Master's books that the local library had but also amassed a necessarily inexpensive collection of those books with their distinctive orange cloth with black print covers bearing the flying horse logo of his long-time publisher – Herbert Jenkins. They were among the earliest indications of my enduring bibliomania – I display a number of them still, more than 60 years later.

Graham Swift, the English writer, has written that we read fiction in order not to be alone. I would add that part of that flight from aloneness is a desire to be transported elsewhere – in space, time, and milieu.

Wodehouse's worlds were strange and distant places to a young reader in joylessly austere postwar North London, but then they are strange and distant worlds to all readers in all times. They are his own unique creations. They come at the realities of place, time, and milieu (Edwardian upper-class England; Hollywood in the 1930s; the Grub Street of magazine writers in the prewar years; etc) on a tangent and on their own terms. Some, taken in by Wodehouse's artistry and creative genius, have been led to believe that his faerie realms are realistic. There is a folk legend that the Nazis, wishing to infiltrate a spy into Britain in the Second World War, parachuted a hapless individual into East Anglia, wearing a bowler hat, spats, and a monocle and exclaiming "What ho!", "Spiffin' good show," and the like. He was promptly spotted as being far from the typical Englishman he purported and fondly imagined himself to be. Reading Wodehouse is very like the experience of being caught up in a wonderfully staged play – deep down you know it is all artifice far removed from mundane reality but it is artifice of such a high order that you are in a world of joy and you and the world are all the better for it.

Nothing so surely introduces a sour note into a wedding ceremony as the abrupt disappearance of the groom in a cloud of dust.

– *A Pelican at Blandings*, 1969



Early life

Pelham Grenville Wodehouse was born in Guildford, Surrey, on the 15th of October, 1881, the son of Henry Ernest Wodehouse and his wife Eleanor (née Deane). They were, in the intricate and esoteric terms of the British class system, members of the upper-middle class, with the Wodehouses being a cut above the Deanes. The former could trace their lineage back to a 13th century knight, Bertram de Wodehouse, who fought in the army of Edward I, and to Anne Boleyn. (It is a characteristic of English families that the longer the lineage the greater the likelihood of having surnames that are spelled one way and pronounced another – hence, in this case "Bullen" for Boleyn and "Woodhouse" for Wodehouse.) Lacking a Norman and knightly lineage, Eleanor's father was a Church of England vicar in Somerset. The vicar and his wife were the parents of four boys and nine girls – the latter

See *WODEHOUSE*, page 2



CAXTONIAN

Caxton Club, Founded 1895

Donald E. Chatham, *President*
Jackie Vossler, *Vice President*
Arthur Frank, *Secretary*
Jeffrey Jahns, *Treasurer*
Susan R. Hanes, *Immediate Past President*

Council

Class of 2017

Edward C. Bronson
JoEllen Dickie
Ed Hirschland
Tom Swanstrom
John Ward

Class of 2018

Donald R. Allen
John M. Dunlevy
Robert McCamant
Norman Jung
Eileen Madden

Class of 2019

Mary Williams Kohnke
Lisa Pevtzow
John R. Roche Jr.
Kevin Sido
Leora Siegel

Appointed Officers

Dan Crawford, *General Manager*
Paul F. Gehl, *Archivist-Historian*
Michael Thompson, *FABS Representative*; **Hayward R. Blake**, *Representative Emeritus*

Committee Chairs

Matthew J. Doherty, *Development*
Kim Coventry, *Susan Rossen, Publications*

Michael Gorman, *Exhibitions*
Susan R. Hanes, *Membership*
Tom Swanstrom, *Finance*
Doug Fitzgerald, *Dorothy Sinson, Friday Luncheons*; **William Locke**, *Co-chair Emeritus*

Jackie Vossler, *Programs*
Martha Chiplis, *Scholarship*
John M. Dunlevy, *Website*

Caxtonian

Robert McCamant, *Editor*
Brenda Rossini, *Copy Editor*
Patrick Graham, *Proofreader*
Robert Cotner, *Founder*
Matthew J. Doherty, **Wendy Husser**, *Contributing Editors*

©2016, Caxton Club. The *Caxtonian* is published monthly by the Caxton Club, whose office is in the Newberry Library.

WODEHOUSE, from page 1

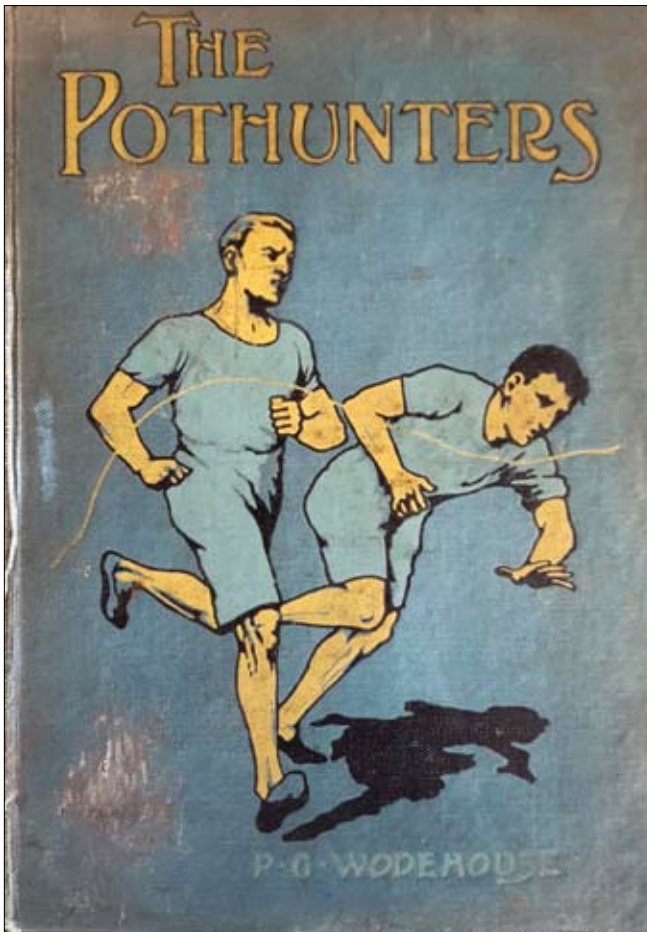
being of great literary significance, since aunts (of which he had eight) loomed large in PGW's life and provided enduring characters in his books.

At the time of PGW's birth, his father was a civil servant – a magistrate – in Hong Kong; his mother had returned to England for the confinement. PGW was the third of his parents' four sons – the others were Philip Peveril, Ernest Armine, and Richard Lancelot. These rococo names were a result of his mother's fondness for poetry and chivalric fiction. PGW was an exception, being named after his god-father – a Colonel Pelham Grenville von Donop. The gallant colonel was a Royal Engineer, active in the colonies and later Chief Inspector of Railways, and a noted sportsman who twice appeared on the English football ("soccer") team and played in the 1882 Wimbledon tennis championships. "Pelham" was soon contracted to "Plum," the name by which he was known to family and friends for the rest of his long life. It is hard to understand nowadays why colonial officials of the time like Ernest Wodehouse had children (unless it was inadvertence) since the unfortunate children rarely lived with their parents after their toddling days. "The right kind of people" were firm believers in the necessity of their children having an English upbringing and education. Thus it was that PGW, at the advanced age of two, found himself boarded, along with his brother Armine, in a house in Bath, run by a severe "Miss Roper." He and his brothers saw their parents every six years or so, when they returned on home leave from Hong Kong. The "Miss Roper" regime was succeeded by a dame school (a private school run by women, usually in the women's homes) in Croydon, then a separate town, now a London Borough. The "Miss Princes" establishment was followed by a small "public" (i.e., private) school in Guernsey in the Channel Islands, a naval preparatory school in Malvern, Worcestershire, and finally, when PGW was 12 years old, the place and school that shaped so much of his life – Dulwich College. This peripatetic educational life for PGW and his brothers was punctuated by visits to his grandmother – "a wizened old lady who looked just like a monkey and gave us a kindly audience for about ten minutes" – visits to various aunts and uncles, and the very occasional visitations of their parents. It has always seemed to me a wonder that such an upbringing produced the kindly, eminently sane, uncomplicated, sunny PGW when it did so much harm to so many others, mentally and emotionally. Dulwich College had something to do with that.

*Madeline Bassett laughed the tinkling,
silvery laugh that was one of the things that
had got her so disliked by the better element.*
– *The Code of the Woosters, 1938*

Dulwich College

Dulwich, in South London, is the kind of suburb that is always described as "leafy." The college was founded in the early 17th century by William Alleyn (pronounced, inevitably, "Allen"), an actor and theater owner and friend of Shakespeare. It was not in the first rank of English "public" schools but offered a solid education and, even more importantly to PGW, many opportunities for sport, especially rugby football and cricket. The four "sides" of the school were the Modern, the Science, the Engineering, and the Classical. In PGW's words, "In my day, to the ordinary parent, education meant Classics. I went automatically to the Classical side and, as it turned out, it was the best form of education I could have had as a writer." Raymond Chandler was PGW's contemporary at Dulwich, A.E.W. Mason (*The Four Feathers*) and C.S. Forester (the Hornblower novels) were among the other future literati who were pupils at Dulwich. PGW was a boarder initially, but after he had been there for more than a year, his father was invalided out of the colonial service and came back to England. The family took a house in Dulwich and PGW and Armine became day boys. For the first time, PGW lived an ordinary family life. It did not last long. His parents moved to Stableford in far off Shropshire and PGW and his brother became boarders again. Despite his many sporting activities and writing for and later being an editor of the school magazine – *The Alleynian* – PGW did well as a scholar in his earlier years. He was preparing, in 1898, for an intensive study leading to a scholarship to attend the University of Oxford when the axe fell. Armine had already been awarded such a scholarship. His father's colonial pension, PGW was informed, could not stretch to supporting both of them at Oxford and only Armine, as the older, could take up the scholarship. PGW was destined for commerce – specifically for a position at the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank. Small wonder that his academic efforts suffered – the learning that enriched his writings was perfectly useless for banking, something for which PGW turned out to have neither talents nor enthusiasm. He left Dulwich College in 1900, to paraphrase something written of Rupert Brooke, magnificently unprepared for the long littleness of commercial life. PGW wrote, many years later, "The fashionable thing is to look back and hate your school, but I loved Dulwich."



A melancholy looking man, he had the appearance of one who has searched for the leak in life's gas pipe with a lighted candle – The Man Upstairs, 1914

Bank clerk to author

In February 1900, a momentous thing happened. PGW's first paid publication "Some Aspects of Game Captaincy" appeared in the *Public School Magazine*. PGW, who no doubt agreed with Dr. Johnson that nobody but a blockhead ever wrote except for money, received 10 shillings and 6 pence (half a guinea – then worth about \$2) in payment for that article in April 1900. His last complete published work, the novel *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, appeared in October 1974. The three-quarters of a century between the two saw a river of books, stories, articles, plays, songs, and essays from the pen of the prolific Plum.

Our hero left Dulwich College in June 1900 and, after a summer spent in the Shropshire countryside, entered the London office of the Hong King & Shanghai Bank in September 1900. The London office of the bank was

a way station for those destined to be sent to the Far East as bank managers. This filled PGW with dread. First, as he wrote, "The thought of being a branch manager appalled me as I knew myself to be incapable of managing a whelk stall." (Whelks, edible marine snails, together with mussels and winkles, were popular cheap food sold from what we now call "food carts" in working class areas.) Second, he wanted to make a living as a writer but how could he do that while miserable in a bank in China or Siam (Thailand)? He found the various departments increasingly incomprehensible, made no real friends among his fellow clerks, and returned to his lodgings in Chelsea every evening to write. He followed the invariable

advice to young authors to "write what you know" and concentrated on articles and stories about public school life. Fortunately, there was a market for such not only in the *Public School Magazine* but also in its rival *The Captain*, from whom he earned the princely sum of three pounds (about \$12) for each story (his annual salary from the bank was £80). In November 1900, his first humorous piece, "Men Who Missed Their Own Weddings" was published in *Tit-Bits* magazine. PGW worked hard at his writing, if not at the bank. During the two years he spent there, he had 80 articles and stories accepted and published in a variety of magazines. This record is even more impressive when one considers the number of his submissions that were rejected. In June 1901, PGW contracted mumps and went to his parents' home in Shropshire. In the three weeks he was there, he wrote 19 short stories. They were all rejected. Many years later, he wrote "Worse bilge than mine may have been submitted to the editors of London in 1901 and 1902, but I should think it very unlikely." Undaunted, he persevered and embarked on his first serial story, which later became his first book – *The Pothunters*. The high/low point of his career as a banker was the Case of the New Ledger. Bored, PGW

opened this pristine blank volume and wrote a jeu d'esprit mocking banking on its shining opening page. Realizing what he had done, he removed the page. When his superior discovered the New Ledger lacked its first page, he accused the stationer of supplying faulty merchandise. The stationer insisted that someone at the bank must have defaced the volume. According to PGW many years later, the following conversation took place.

"Absurd," said the Head Cashier. "Nobody but an imbecile would cut out the front page of a ledger."

"Then you must have an imbecile in your department," said the stationer.

"Have you?"

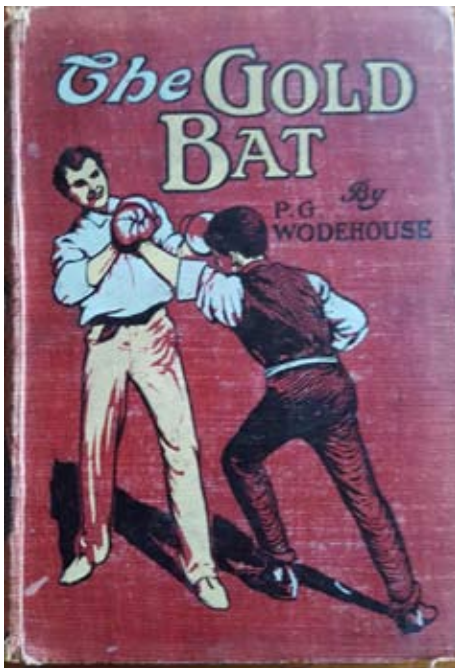
The Head Cashier started. "Why yes," he said for he was a fair-minded man.

"There is P.G. Wodehouse."

The young author

Though PGW hinted that the affair of the New Ledger cost him his job, in fact he left the bank of his own volition. In September 1902, he wrote in his diary, "This month starts my journalistic career." Influenced, according to his own account, by a book by J.M. Barrie – *When a Man's Single* – PGW decided to leave the bank and support himself as a writer. He never looked back. (Later he spun his leaden days in the bank into comic gold – *Psmith in the City*, 1910 – so those two years were far from wasted.) The proximate reason for leaving the bank was the offer of a job filling in as an editor of the *Globe*, a popular magazine of the day. Though this gave him a short-term income, in essence PGW had decided to make his living as a freelance author. The first years of that existence were full of hard work and short on relaxation, but PGW was successful out of the starting gate. In his first full year (1903) on his "wild lone" (his term) he was published in a variety of magazines (including the then dominant *Punch*), his first novel sold respectably, and he earned more than £215 (\$850 then, or about \$20,000 in today's money). His early novels and short story collections – *A Prefect's Uncle*, 1903; *Tales of St Austin's*, 1903; *The Gold Bat*, 1904; *The Head of Kay's*, 1905 – were all school stories and all were based on Dulwich College under a variety of pseudonyms; all concerned sports (cricket and rugby football mostly) and embodied manly Edwardian values. In addition, his bibliography for 1903-1905 records 13 published short stories and a number of

See WODEHOUSE, page 4



WODEHOUSE, from page 3

articles in newspapers and magazines.

PGW embarked on a momentous journey in April 1904 – he took a shared second class cabin on the liner *St. Louis* bound for New York, a city that more than lived up to his expectations and provided a wealth of experience that he reported to be “worth many guineas in the future but none for the moment.” (Writers and professionals were generally paid in guineas – a sum worth £1 and 1 shilling; it would have been considered *infra dig* to be paid in common pounds sterling.) The high point of the five weeks for PGW was a visit to the training camp of the welterweight boxing champion, Kid McCoy. The Kid, whose real name was Norman Selby, is said to be the origin of the phrase “the real McCoy.” Not only was this a great thrill for the pugilism enthusiast PGW, but, as usual, all was grist for his mill. One result of his trip was a series of stories about a boxer called Kid Brady, originally published in *Pearson’s Magazine* (New York) between September 1905 and March 1907. Another, longer-lasting, result of the American trip was that, in those long distant days when few traveled far, it qualified PGW as a journalistic expert on all things American.

“Musical comedies without music”

It was during the Edwardian Age (King Edward VII succeeded his mother, Queen Victoria, in January 1901 and died in May 1910) that the hardworking ex-public school boy turning out school stories and popular journalism became the prolific man of letters and comic novelist of genius that he remained

for more than 60 years. There were several strands in this evolution – the first was his trip to the US, a place that drew him to many more visits and eventually became his home; the second was the mutation from the school novels and stories into comedies with a wide range of settings; and the third was his involvement with the musical theater of the day. This essay is concerned principally with PGW’s books and stories, but it is essential in viewing his career to note that he was a considerable force in musical comedy for more than 30 years. Later in life PGW wrote “I believe there are two ways of writing novels. One is making a sort of musical comedy without music and ignoring real life altogether; the other is going deep down into life and not caring a damn.” “Musical comedies without music” is a keen insight into the craftsmanship, structures, characters, and action of many of his comic novels.

Unlike the male codfish, which, suddenly finding itself the parent of three million five hundred thousand little codfish, cheerfully resolves to love them all, the British aristocracy is apt to look with a jaundiced eye on its younger sons. – “The Custody of the Pumpkin” (Blandings Castle & Elsewhere, 1935)

Ukridge

In June 1906, the first of PGW’s immortal comic creations – Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge – made his debut in *Love Among the Chickens*, his first novel for adults (though his school stories had a sizable adult readership). PGW took an anecdote told to him by his lifelong friend Bill Townend and created Ukridge (“Yewkridge”), the inveterate scrounger forever trying to cadge money from a rich aunt and his friends to spend on doomed schemes like the chicken farm in which the novel is set. As notable for his clothing and appearance (spectacles held together with wire, a bright yellow raincoat, etc) as for his idiosyncratic speech (calling his friends “old horse;” expostulating with “Upon my Sam!”), Ukridge is an

antihero who makes free with the property of others and has only a glancing relationship with the truth. He is no deep-dyed villain, just a dreamer of financial dreams; the genial PGW was seemingly incapable of creating a truly bad person. Ukridge turned up again in a collection of stories (*Ukridge*, 1924) and in stories appearing in various volumes until his final appearance in 1966 (“Ukridge Starts a Bank Account,” in *Plum Pie*) – a 60 year run, the longest of any of PGW’s characters.

Love Among the Chickens marked two turning points for PGW. It was the first work for which he used an agent – Pinker and Son – and, through the good offices of a friend he had made in New York, he sold the American publishing and serial rights. He was promised the, to him, extraordinary sum of \$1,000, something that made him happy until he realized that the US agent his friend had recommended – one A.E. Baerman – was not to be trusted. Not only did the American edition of the novel (published by Circle in 1909) appear with “Copyright, 1908, by A.E. BAERMAN” on the verso of the title leaf but also Baerman stiffed him – at one point sending PGW a check that he had “forgotten” to sign. Insult was added to injury when PGW had to pay Baerman \$250 to release “his” copyright when the motion picture rights were sold some years later. His second trip to the US, in 1909,

was made partly to try to settle things with the rascal Baerman. PGW failed in that but did sell stories, through another agent, to *Cosmopolitan* and *Collier’s Weekly*.

Psmith

The years leading up to WWI would have exhausted many a lesser man – PGW was back and forth to the U.S. (the fare on a transatlantic liner was then about £10). He was involved in various theatrical projects, writing short stories and journalistic pieces, and published

nine novels after *Love Among the Chickens* – that is, between 1907 and 1914. Two of these, both published in 1910, are of particular significance – *Psmith in the City*, because it featured another PGW immortal – Rupert Psmith – and *A Gentleman of Leisure*, because, in the words of David Jasen, it “was the first humorous story to be set in a stately home



in Shropshire and it featured an amiable but dim peer, the first of a long line of Drones, a tycoon, a formidable aunt, a pretty but foolish girl, and a butler – the standard main ingredients for future Wodehouse novels.” *Mike* (1909) was the last of the school stories. It introduced Rupert Psmith (“The ‘p’ is silent, as in pshrimp”) – the languid, fast-talking, monocled Drones Club member who inhabits a world of comic fantasy heightened all the more by the mundane settings in which they appear. Psmith appears in the second half of *Mike* (“The Lost Lambs”), which has a complicated publishing history – reappearing as both *Enter Psmith* (1935) and *Mike & Psmith* (1953). Mike Jackson has to leave Wrykyn (Dulwich College) for a lesser school at which he meets Psmith, who has been expelled from Eton.

“My name,” he added pensively, “is Smith. What’s yours?”

“Jackson,” said Mike.

“Are you the Bully, the Pride of the School, or the Boy who is Led Astray and Takes to Drink in Chapter Sixteen?”

The transition from school stories to adult comic novels takes place right there when Psmith sends up the clichés of the former in one sentence. PGW never looked back.

Another case of tortured publishing history was the novel *The Prince and Betty* (1912). The book was a combination light romance and crime story (the latter featuring Kid Brady) and was published as such in New York by W.J. Watt in February of that year. Mills & Boon, the English publisher, published a book under the same title in May, but the volume contained only the love story elements. PGW, never one to waste material, rewrote the crime story that was left out of the English edition of *The Prince and Betty*. It is to be found as *Psmith, Journalist* (1915).

PGW landed in New York on one of his “jaunts” two days before WWI broke out. The next day, he met a young widow, an English-woman called Ethel Newton Rowley, and was smitten immediately. They married two months later in the Little Church Around the Corner, just off Madison Avenue. He idolized Ethel’s then ten-year-old daughter, Leonora. Her early death, in 1944, was a tragedy from which PGW never recovered. Ethel and PGW remained married until his death 61 years later.

Dedication: To my daughter Leonora without whose never-failing sympathy

and encouragement this book would have been finished in half the time
– *Heart of a Goof, 1926*

Jeeves and Wooster

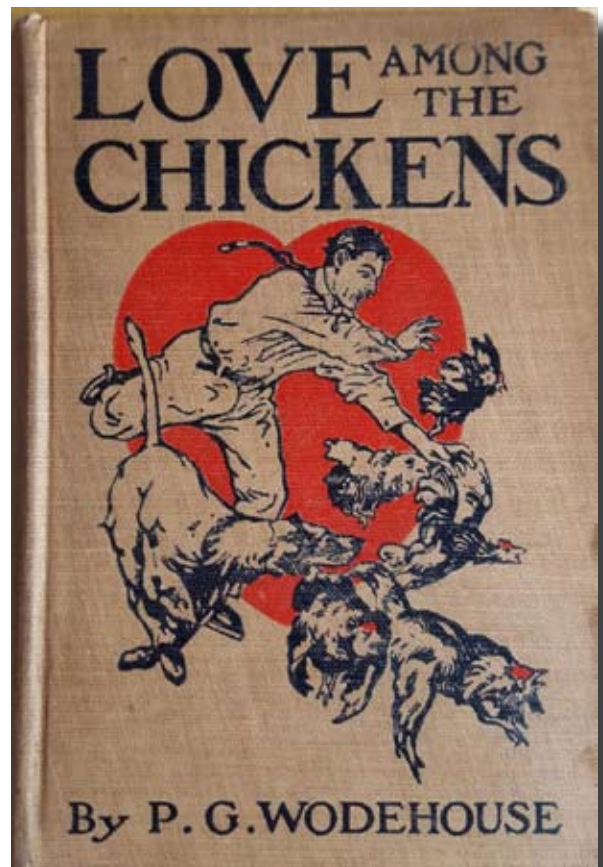
At this time, PGW started a long relationship with the then dominant *Saturday Evening Post*. He sold the serial rights of his novels *Something New* (1915) and *Uneasy Money* (1916) to the *Post*’s famously exacting editor, George Lorimer, for \$3500 and \$5000 respectively. In the twenty-two years of their association that followed, PGW never received a rejection slip from the *Post*. One of the stories that were published in that magazine saw the birth of two more Wodehouse immortals. The 18th of September 1915 issue carried “Extricating Young Gussie,” which marked the debut of a good-natured but dim young boulevardier Bertie Wooster (the name is pronounced with a short o as in “woman” and “Worcester”) and his gentleman’s gentleman (not a “butler” as is sometimes stated – an entirely different class of servant). He is the imperturbable and quietly efficient genius Jeeves – he whose eyes “gleam with the light of pure intelligence,” who reads Spinoza for pleasure, and who wears a size 8 (very large) bowler. His intelligence and deductive abilities have led some Sherlockians to speculate that he may have been the child of Holmes and “The Woman” – Irene Adler (*A Scandal in Bohemia*, 1891). Bertie is amazed by and grateful for Jeeves’s extraordinary abilities:

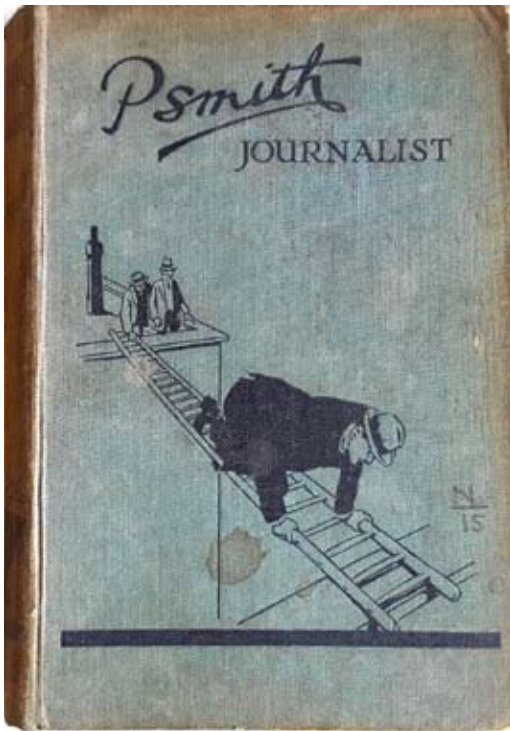
I had betted on Jeeves all along, and I had known that he wouldn’t let me down. It beats me sometimes why a man with his genius is satisfied to hang around pressing my clothes and whatnot. If I had half Jeeves’s brain, I should have a stab, at being Prime Minister or something – “Leave it to Jeeves” in My Man Jeeves, 1919

Bertie and Jeeves belong in the pantheon of great double acts, along with Holmes and Watson, Laurel and Hardy, and Masters and Johnson. The books about them number 16 – beginning

with *The Man with Two Left Feet* (1917) and ending with *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* (1963). In all that near half a century, the world of Wooster and Jeeves scarcely varied. It is a dream world of vaguely 1920-ish comedy; of a perpetually young man with a private income and a flat in the West End; of aunts both friendly (Dahlia) and intimidating (the formidable Agatha); of farcical comic plots involving love affairs gone wrong, stolen ornaments, and the like – all resolved by the omniscient and ingenious Jeeves; of Bertie and Jeeves driving down in the “two-seater” to country house weekends in which dressing for dinner was *de rigueur* and the sun always shone; of pompous butlers, scheming private secretaries, jolly sporting girls good at golf, and ghostly girls who wrote poetry about fairies and the like; and of the Drones Club (in Dover Street, Mayfair), frequented by good-hearted chuckleheads like Bertie – Bingo Little, Gussie Fink-Nottle, “Stilton” Cheesewright, Pongo Twistleton-Twistleton, and the rest. The Drones Club has its own bibliography – it is featured in the forefront or background of 12 books, from *Leave It to Psmith* (1923) to *Ice in the Bedroom*, 1961, the most representative collection being *Eggs, Beans, and Crumpets* (1940).

See WODEHOUSE, page 6





WODEHOUSE, from page 5

Aunt Dahlia guffawed more liberally than I had ever heard a woman guffaw. If there had been an aisle, she would have rolled in it. She was giving the impression of a hyena that had just heard a good one from another hyena.
– Much Obligated, Jeeves, 1971

The interwar years

PGW's work is remarkably consistent over decades, but if there is a period in which his work can be seen at its finest, it would be through the 1920s and 1930s. In those decades, PGW published 35 books: novels, collections of short stories, and a collection of essays – *Louder and Funnier* (1932) – rewritten from articles originally published in *Vanity Fair*; it was the only such collection he published and far from being his favorite – he said the best thing about it was the book jacket designed by Rex Whistler. The bibliography of those books is complicated by the fact that his publishers frequently gave the books different titles. For example, the George H. Doran Company renamed *The Clicking of Cuthbert* (1922) as *Golf Without Tears*; *The Inimitable Jeeves* (1923) as *Jeeves*; and (inexplicably) *Sam the Sudden* (1925) as *Sam in the Suburbs*. Later in the period, the first publication was often in America and PGW's British publishers continued this lamentable practice. For example, Herbert Jenkins renamed *Fish Preferred* (Doubleday Doran, 1929) as *Summer Lightning*.

The interwar years saw innumerable PGW stories (most later collected in published volumes) published in the *Strand* magazine in England and in *Cosmopolitan*, *Red Book*, *McClure's*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and the *American*, among other US magazines. In those days there was a huge market for short fiction and serials and a hardworking, popular, and prolific writer like Wodehouse could and did make a large annual income. The interwar years saw the final transformation of PGW into a hugely successful, world-famous writer – a far cry from his impecunious early years.

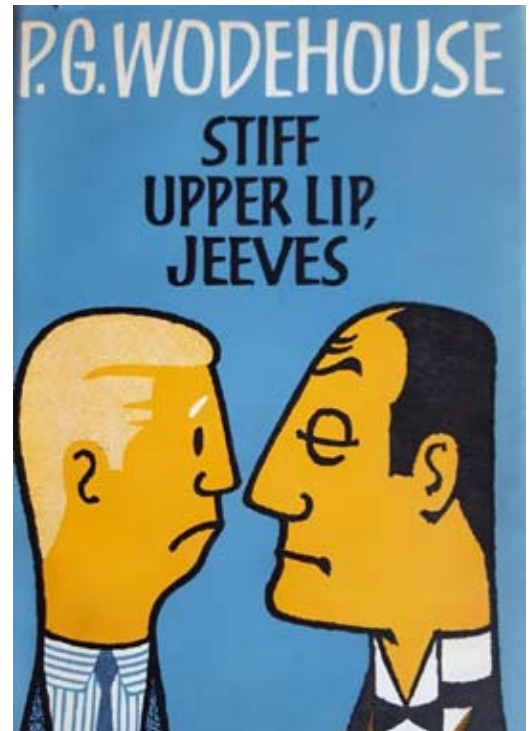
Market Snodsbury is mostly chapel folk with a moral code that would have struck Torquemada as too rigid – Much Obligated, Jeeves,

1971

Plays, musical theater, and films

Wodehouse wrote, co-wrote, or adapted the book of 18 published plays, from *A Gentleman of Leisure*, staged in New York in 1911 and in Chicago (at the McVicker's Theatre under the title *A Thief in the Night*) in 1913, to *Come On, Jeeves*, staged in a provincial tour of England in 1954. Many, including the first and last, were adaptations of his books; others were English versions of plays by Ferenc Molnar, Sacha Guitry, and others. Though none were smash hits, all have enough of the PGW sparkle to be worth reading and collecting.

Our hero wrote lyrics for the musical theater and sketches for revues. His bibliography lists 33 published musicals in which he was involved. The first, in London in 1904, was when he wrote lyrics for a song ("Put Me in My Little Cell") in the Strand Theatre production of *Sergeant Brue* by Owen Hall. He went on to collaborate with Jerome Kern on *Have a Heart*, which opened in the Liberty Theatre in New York in January 1917; then *Oh, Boy!* at New York's Princess Theatre in February of that year, which went on to have 475 performances; and, most notably, *Show Boat* (1927, lyrics by PGW and Oscar Hammerstein II, music by Kern). His last published musical theater piece was *Anything Goes*, first staged in the Alvin Theatre, New York in November 1934. The book was by PGW and Guy Bolton, with lyrics and music



by Cole Porter. The piece has been revived several times (most recently on Broadway in 2011) and filmed twice; the first, starring Bing Crosby and Ethel Merman, in 1936; the second, heavily revised and with additional songs, starring Crosby, Donald O'Connor, and Zizi Jeanmaire, in 1956.

Hollywood, in the late 1920s and early '30s, was an almost irresistible lure for writers. Money, glamour, sunshine – all were available to the talent that the dream factories needed. PGW visited there shortly after the debut of *The Jazz Singer*, the first talkie, in December 1928. That film, in George Cukor's words, "the most important cultural event since Martin Luther nailed his theses on the church door," created opportunities for writers that the silents could not. It came about this way – PGW and Ethel visited New York at the invitation of impresario Florenz Ziegfeld. PGW was to write the lyrics for a new musical comedy that, in the end, came to nothing. The trip did give PGW the opportunity to attend the first night of *Candle-Light*, his adaptation of a Siegfried Geyer play, starring Gertrude Lawrence and Leslie Howard, in September 1929. Frustrated by his dealings with the difficult Ziegfeld, PGW and Ethel took the transcontinental train the *Superchief* to Hollywood, without leaving a forwarding address. He found "Tall eucalyptus, blue-flowered jacarandas, feathery pepper trees dotted with red, and what looked like a thousand new cars" (*Bring On the Girls*, 1953). He also met many of the stars of the day and, more importantly, Hollywood moguls, one of whom, Sam

Goldwyn, offered PGW a contract. The terms, which were negotiated by Ethel, were a princely \$2,500 a week for six months, with an option for another six months. No wonder that he felt finally “in the chips.” They arrived in Hollywood in May 1930, settled in a house once owned by Norma Shearer in Beverly Hills, and to what he described as a “negligible” work load. Partly because of his later farcical descriptions



of his time in Hollywood, and partly because of the intensely collaborative, not to say anarchic, nature of screenwriting then, it is difficult to track down his actual contributions to the films on which he worked – none of which are widely remembered today.

I altered all the characters to Earls and butlers, with such success that, when I had finished, they called a conference and changed the entire plot, starting with the Earl and the butler. So I am still working on it. So far I have eight collaborators. The system is that A. gets the original idea, B. comes in to work with him on it, C. makes a scenario, D. does preliminary dialogue, and then they send for me to add Class and what-not. Then E. and F., scenario writers, alter the plot and off we go again. I could have done my part of it in a morning, but they took for granted I would need six weeks – PGW letter from Hollywood to a friend

PGW’s filmography goes far beyond his meager screenwriting contributions. The many film adaptations of his novels began with the Hollywood silent *A Gentleman of Leisure* (1915) and ended with the British film of *The Girl on the Boat* (1962) none of them storied in film history. PGW has been better served by a number of TV adaptations (especially the *Blandings* series starring Ralph Richardson (1967), the *Wodehouse Playhouse* series starring John Alderton and Pauline Collins (1974-1978), and the *Jeeves and Wooster* series, starring Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry (1990-1993). However, none of these portrayals capture the essence of Wodehouse’s art – an art that can be truly appreciated only when read. The humor is in the characters and plots; the art and the joy are in the text.

Blandings

Blandings Castle, in a sunlit version of the Shropshire of PGW’s young adulthood, is the ancestral home of Clarence Threepwood, 9th Earl of Emsworth. His great joys in life are his gardens, presided over by the curmudgeonly Scot Angus McAllister (“It is never difficult to distinguish between a Scot with a grievance and a ray of sunshine”), with whom

Lord Emsworth is constantly at war over dahlias, pumpkins, lawns, and the like, and his prize pig the Empress of Blandings, an enormous Berkshire sow who wins numerous fat pig contests at the county agricultural show. Lord Emsworth has ten sisters, two of whom, Lady Constance and Lady Julia, rule him with an “iron hand in a leather glove” and generally make his life a misery by making him do things unconnected with gardens or pigs. His brother Galahad is an impecunious man about town, a stage-door Johnny in Edwardian times, who lives “high, wide, and handsome” whenever he can escape to London. Lord Emsworth’s sons, the Hon. Freddie and the Hon. George Threepwood, are Drones Club idlers always getting engaged to chorus girls, ladies’ maids, and so on, and always in financial and other scrapes. Numerous other relatives and friends stay in Blandings Castle from time to time and play their roles in the musical comedies without music that ensue. There are ten complete *Blandings* novels, the first being *Something Fresh* (1915) and the last *A Pelican at Blandings* (1969). In addition, there are nine *Blandings* short stories that can be found in four of PGW’s collections – *Blandings Castle and Elsewhere* (1935), *Lord Emsworth and Others* (1937), *Nothing Serious* (1950), and *Plum Pie* (1966).

Mr. Mulliner and the Oldest Member

Mr. Mulliner, the avid fisherman always to be found in the bar-parlor at the Angler’s Rest pub, is what we used to call a “pub bore,” with the shining and saving exception that he is not at all boring. He is never at a loss for a story to entertain the other regulars drawn from the experiences of his vast family. We know very little about Mr. Mulliner, apart from his many relatives and his taste in drink – a hot scotch and lemon. The stories always begin in the bar-parlor with regulars – all identified by

their choice of drink – discussing some question of the hour, a launching point for one of Mr. Mulliner’s stories. Take the beginning of “The Smile That Wins” (1932). The conversation dealt with the “regrettably low standard of morality prevalent among the nobility and landed gentry”:

Mr. Mulliner nodded gravely.

“So much so,” he agreed, “that I believe that whenever a family solicitor is found in two or more pieces at the bottom of a cliff, the first thing the Big Four at Scotland Yard do is make a round-up of all the viscounts in the neighborhood.”

“Baronets are worse than viscounts,” said a Pint of Stout vehemently, “I was done down by one only last month over the sale of a cow.”

“Earls are worse than baronets,” insisted a Whisky Sour. “I could tell you something about Earls.”

“How about OBEs?” demanded a Mild and Bitter. “If you ask me, OBEs want watching too.”

Mr. Mulliner sighed. “The fact is,” he said “reluctant though one may be to admit it, the entire British aristocracy is seamed and honeycombed with immorality.”

With that, he is off, unstoppably, with a story about a nephew, Adrian Mulliner, a detective, and his search for true love in the ranks of the aristocracy.

The first of the 40 Mulliner stories – “The Truth About George” appeared in the *Strand*
See WODEHOUSE, page 8



in 1926 and the last – “George and Alfred” (a reworking of an earlier story) – in *Playboy* in 1967. Twenty-seven of the stories were collected in three volumes – *Meet Mr Mulliner* (1927); *Mr Mulliner Speaking* (1929); and *Mulliner Nights* (1933). The others can be found in six other Wodehouse collections.

I know all I know about golf from PGW’s golf stories. To be honest, my complete lack of interest in the game is matched by the outdatedness of the little I know of it. PGW’s characters play with mashies, niblicks, and spoons, instruments I am told are no longer in use. Most of his golf stories are told by or to the Oldest Member, who belongs to an unnamed golf club that is sometimes said to be near the fictional Marvis Bay – a resort on the south coast of England (in a couple of the later stories, it’s apparently in the US). The Oldest Member’s perch is in the club house. He sits on the porch observing others playing the game and buttonholing those leaving the course in search of refreshment to tell them stories of golf and romance. He’s a 20th century Ancient Mariner, though without the glittering eye, and he tells his tales to everyone he can, not just one of three. The first Oldest Member story was “The Clicking of Cuthbert” (published as “The Unexpected Clicking of Cuthbert” in the *Strand* in October 1921). The last was “Feet of Clay,” published in *This Week* in January 1950 (as “A Slightly Broken Romance”). The majority of the 25 Oldest Member stories were published in three collections – *The Clicking of Cuthbert* (1922); *The Heart of a Goof* (1926); and *Nothing Serious* (1950).

“After all, golf is only a game,” said Millicent.

Women say these things without thinking. It does not mean that there is any kink in their character. They simply don’t realise what they are saying – “Ordeal by Golf,” *The Clicking of Cuthbert*, 1926

1940-1945

In 1934, PGW and Ethel took a house called Low Wood, near Le Touquet on the north coast of France (just south of Boulogne in the Pas de Calais). They lived there, with trips to the U.S. and UK, until the coming of World War II and the German occupation

of France. The Germans entered Le Touquet in May 1940. In the months leading up to the occupation, the Wodehouses believed that the Nazis would be stopped by the British and French troops. When it became apparent that would not happen, they tried to leave Le Touquet but were unable to do so given the military conditions. PGW, then 59, was taken to an internment camp with other male aliens in Loos, a suburb of Lille, in July. Later that month he and hundreds of other male internees were taken in cattle trucks to a prison in Liège in Belgium. In September 1940, the internees were transported by rail (a three-day journey on meager rations) to a former asylum in Tost in Upper Silesia, now part of Poland, where PGW remained until June 1941. A controversial series of events took place that sullied PGW’s reputation (in the view of most people very unfairly) until almost the end of his long life. The conditions of internment were far from pleasant and PGW’s health suffered, but they were as nothing compared with the hellish atrocities being visited by the Nazis on suffering Europe. PGW continued to write and exercise (playing cricket, among other activities) and there was a camp magazine in which he wrote humorous accounts of the internment. His “My War with Germany,” which he wrote while interned, was published in the *Saturday Evening Post*, July 19, 1941. It was a light-hearted, humorous piece. The Lagerführer complimented him on the article and asked him if he would like to do some broadcasts on similar lines to his American readers. (It is crucial to note here that the US was not a combatant at that time.) Fatally, PGW agreed to do a series of humorous, non-political broadcasts aimed at his American readers, was released from the internment camp and taken to Berlin. The five broadcasts to America were made between June 28 and August 6, 1941; the Nazis also broadcast them to Britain on the 9th through the 14th of August. PGW was certainly naïve and arguably foolish to make the broadcasts (which contained absolutely nothing that was political or propagandistic). The reaction in Britain was, understandably, negative. The accusers, led by a tabloid columnist of a deplorable type with which we are all too familiar – one William O’Connor – foamed at the mouth about treason, collaboration, pro-Nazi sympathies (as if the author were one and the same as the mythical upper-class nitwits of his stories), being in the pay of the Nazis (PGW accepted 250 marks for the broadcasts and no other money from the occupiers), and generally called for his head. O’Connor’s anti-

Wodehouse rant was broadcast by the BBC at the insistence of Duff Cooper, Churchill’s Minister of Information – a blot on the BBC’s reputation.

The Wodehouses were unable to leave Germany, staying as paying guests of pre-War acquaintances, until September 1943, when they left for Paris, where they were when Paris was liberated in August 1944. The whole sorry story is told by Iain Sproat in his *Wodehouse at War*, 1981. The book contains a number of official documents and the texts of the Berlin broadcasts. He also revealed that successive British governments concealed exculpatory reports and, in Sproat’s words, “The workings of the political and bureaucratic machine perpetrated and for 35 years perpetuated a grave injustice upon Wodehouse, which he took to his grave.” Anyone with the absurd idea that PGW was pro-Nazi has never read *The Code of the Woosters*, 1938. In one of the very few political allusions in his works, Bertie Wooster addresses Sir Roderick Spode, the leader of the Black Shorts, a thinly disguised portrait of the British fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley and his Black Shirt thugs:

“It is about time that some public spirited person came along and told you where you got off. The trouble with you, Spode, is that just because you have succeeded in inducing a handful of halfwits to disfigure the London scene in black shorts, you think you are someone. You hear them shouting ‘Heil Spode!’ and you imagine it is the Voice of the People. That is where you make your bloomer. What the Voice of the People is saying is ‘Look at that frightful ass Spode swanking about in footer bags.* Did you ever in your life see such a perfect perisher!’”

(*Public school slang for football [soccer] shorts.)

Far be it from me to suggest there are any contemporary parallels.

Writing to the End

After the liberation of Paris, the French authorities held PGW in a kind of house detention until, having received the all-clear from the British government, he was released in January 1945. He and Ethel had planned to move to the United States, but were delayed until April 1947 when they landed in New York. They lived in various apartments in the city until 1952, when Ethel bought a house in Basket Neck Lane, Remsenburg, Long Island. They lived there only in the summers until 1955, when it became their permanent home



after many decades of wandering. In that year, PGW became an American citizen. He lived in Remsenburg for the rest of his life. He had a longtime relationship with the US and had felt at home there, but it is reasonable to wonder if someone so essentially English might have lived out his life in a home in England had it not been for the way he had been pilloried for the Berlin broadcasts.

Wodehouse had written six novels during the War – *Quick Service* (1940), *Money in the Bank* (1942), *Joy in the Morning* (1946), *Full Moon* (1947), *Spring Fever* (1948), and *Uncle Dynamite* (1948). Later, he published 29 more books – novels from *The Mating Season* (1949) to *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* (1974 – published in 1974 in the US as *The Catnappers*); collections of stories; and semi-memoirs such as *Bring on the Girls* and *Performing Flea* (both 1953) – the title of the latter taken by the self-deprecating PGW from the Irish playwright Seán O'Casey (né John Casey) who had described him as “the performing flea of English literature.” Many of the magazines that had published PGW's short stories shriveled and died in the postwar years and he published far fewer stories than before. Nevertheless, he did place stories in *Playboy*, *Bluebook*, *Punch*, *Colliers*, and other magazines, including, surprisingly, one in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* – “Jeeves and the Stolen Venus” (August 1959). In addition, there are six post-War published plays from *Arthur*, 1947

aply titled *Sunset at Blandings*. The unfinished text (16 of 22 planned chapters) was published in 1977 with notes by Richard Usborne.

Usborne book?

In the New Year's Honours List of January 1975 Pelham Grenville Wodehouse was created a Knight Commander of the British Empire, a shamefully delayed honor for a great English writer. The creator of imaginary worlds would surely have seen the humor of being Sir Pelham Wodehouse, knight of an empire that had ceased to exist decades before. A few weeks later, the 93-year-old knight was admitted to a Long Island hospital, in which he died, of a heart attack, on February, 14, 1975.

A Christmas Card

I am not given to writing fan letters but, in the autumn of 1973, I was reading a book by PGW and it struck me how much his writings and the physical books they contain mattered to me and had mattered to me for almost all my life. It was a wonder to me that the source of this joy in my life was still living and still writing at an advanced age. Impelled by I know not what, I went to the library and looked up his address in Remsenburg. On returning to my house in Pinner, Middlesex, I sat down and wrote a fairly long letter expressing my feelings about his works.

to *Come on Jeeves*, 1954. PGW remained what he had always been – a prolific professional writer – to the end of his life. It was a happy and productive period, with only the shadow of his exile as a continuing sadness. At the time of his death, PGW was working on an eleventh *Blandings* novel, the

Sometime about New Year's Day 1974, I received a Christmas card. The envelope was postmarked “Remsenburg, NY. Dec 24 AM 1973” and it bore a 21 cent U.S. airmail stamp. The typed address was “Michael Gorman, Esq. / 2 Maxwell Avenue / Maxwell Lane / Pinner / Middlesex / England.” No matter that I lived in 3 Waxwell Close – the envelope was not only delivered but I fondly imagine had been typed by the Master himself on his own Remington (if anyone has evidence that it was not, I do not wish to hear it). The inscription inside, indubitably in PGW's hand, read “P.G. Wodehouse / So glad you like my books.” The charm and modesty of that salutation and the kindness in his replying sum up the measure of a great man.

Like so many substantial citizens of America, he had married young and kept on marrying, springing from blonde to blonde like the chamois of the Alps leaping from crag to crag – Summer Moonshine, 1938

§§

I have used a number of sources for this essay, among them are:

Connolly, Joseph. *P.G. Wodehouse: An Illustrated Biography*. London: Orbis, 1979.

Green, Benny. *P.G. Wodehouse: a Literary Biography*. London: Pavilion; Michael Joseph, 1981

Jaggard, Geoffrey. *Wooster's World: a Companion to the Wooster-Jeeves Cycle of P.G. Wodehouse, LL.D.* London: Macdonald, 1967.

Jasen, David A. *A Bibliography and Reader's Guide to the First Editions of P.G. Wodehouse*. London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1971.

Jasen, David A. *P.G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master*. London: Garnstone Press, 1975.

McCrum, Robert. *Wodehouse: A Life*. London; New York: Viking, 2004.

Sproat, Iain. *Wodehouse at War*. London: Milner, 1981.

Usborne, Richard. *Wodehouse at Work to the End*. Revised edition. London and New York: Penguin, 1978.

2016-'17 Caxton Club Grant Recipients Announced

Winners from School of the Art Institute, Columbia College, and the University of Iowa

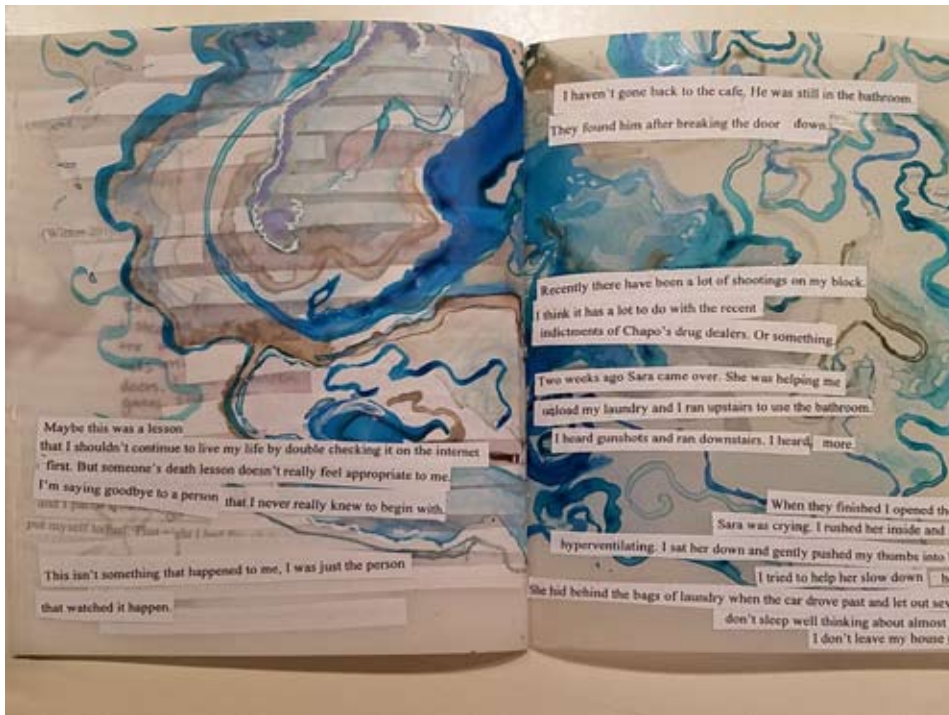
Martha Chiplis

The Caxton Club is awarding over \$11,000 in grants for 2016-'17. And in addition to the grants, which include a scholarship for Rare Book School, books published by the Club and Club membership were given to the winners of the T. Kimball Brooker Prize for undergraduate book collecting at the University of Chicago. Books were also awarded to all Mellon Rare Book Scholars and National Collegiate Book Collector recipients.

Applications for Caxton Club grants this year came from students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Columbia College Chicago, the University of Iowa, Missouri State University, Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

From the many promising applicants, the Grant Committee chose graduate students Ruby Figueroa and Woody Leslie from Columbia College Chicago as winners as well as Lisa Miles and Michelle Moode from the University of Iowa. For the Colleen Dionne Memorial Grant for a School of the Art Institute of Chicago undergraduate, two students were chosen, Sarah Krupa and Stephanie Wang.

Ruby Figueroa is a 2017 MFA candidate in Book, Paper & Print Art at Columbia. Ms. Figueroa writes in her proposal that her project, titled *A Story, a Screenplay, and the Truth*, will be an edition of 125 artist's books with a simple hand-sewn binding, printed



Ruby Figueroa work samples

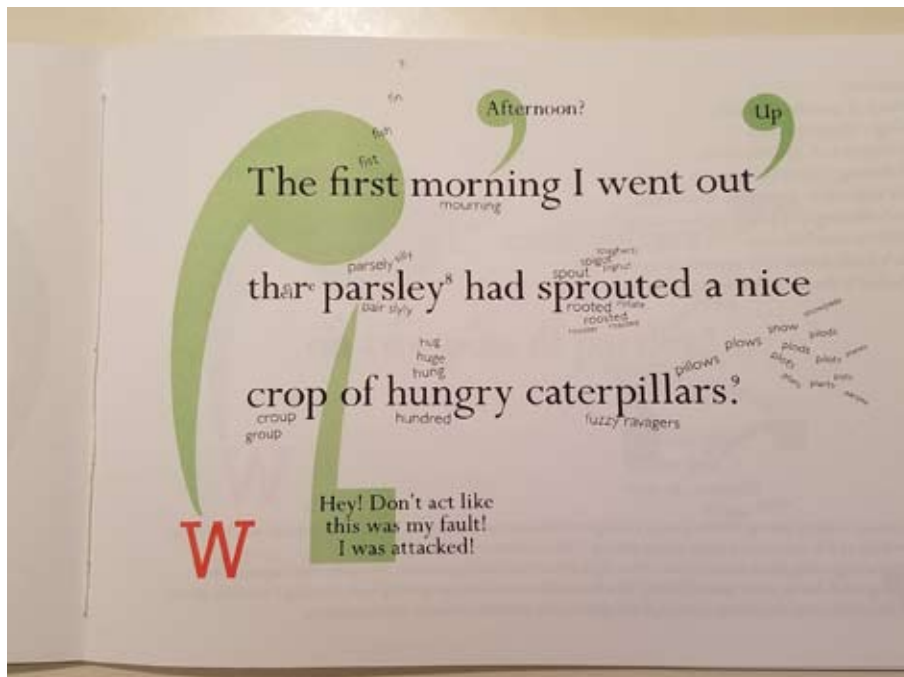
offset and letterpress. The finished book will have three parts. The stories themselves will not follow chronological order, but will instead use foreshadowing, flashbacks and anecdotes. The second section concerns two Mexican-American teenagers who step into an original folktale. They find a beating heart on their lawn; when they touch it, they fall into a different time frame. "This book will tell my personal narrative, mimicking the imagery and historical implications of traditional Mexican folktales while giving light to the story of a young girl growing up as a first-generation Mexican American in Chicago." The book will combine mono-type poetry broadsides and autobiographic zines in its completed form.

Woody Leslie is a 2017 MFA candidate in Book, Paper & Print Art at Columbia. Leslie writes in his proposal that his book, *Some Definitions of Vegetables*, will be "a verbo-visual artist's book that uses words alone to both narrate and illustrate a series of thematically linked autobiographical micro-memoirs.... Like much of my previous work, while the book purports to be about one thing, in reality it is about something else entirely. The nar-

rative is a device to guide the reader through the book...ultimately the work will connect vegetables and words as similar things – entities grown, constructed, and consumed by humans." The book will be offset printed and handbound by the artist in an edition of 200.



Lisa Miles is a 2017 MFA candidate at the University of Iowa Center for the Book. Miles's upcoming MFA thesis exhibition is titled *No Blue, No Green*. She writes, "As a book artist and papermaker, I use beaten bark papers as the core of my art-making practice. By combining bark papermaking with plant dyes and printmaking, I create one-of-a-kind artist books that feature vibrant designs and encoded texts. My hand-printed bark-paper codices are meant to invoke a sense of wonder and curiosity from the audience. Inspired by the relics of ancient bookmakers, I attempt to create portals to unknown times, places, and human cultures. The project will consist of an interrelated triad of handmade artist books that explore themes of identity and mythology within this



Woody Leslie work samples: Understanding Molecular Typography, Parsley

analogous color palette." (In naming colors, the ancient Maya used the word "yax" for both blue and green.)

The three parts of Miles's project incorporate and combine handmade paper from her personal clothing; reflections on family, heritage, and nationality; DNA test results; miniature bark paper codices; and portions inspired by the Dresden Codex, the most intact, and until recently, the oldest known pre-Columbian Maya codices.

Michelle Moode is a 2018 MFA candidate, also at the University of Iowa Center for the Book. Moode's artist's book is titled *When Out Looking for Antlers in Wyoming in January*. It was written by Claire Miye Stanford. Moode will be the designer,

See AWARD WINNERS, page 12



due to dense light pollution. Living in Chicago makes it difficult to even know what is beyond the veil of light that is pulled over our eyes.” By making this book, Krupa hopes to uncover the curiosity that the universe can inspire, and unveil the sky for those who cannot see the clear night skies.

Chicago Sky Guide will be an accordion-fold book that expands to mimic the vast night sky, with a removable transparent overlay highlighting the major constellations and names of different celestial objects located within those areas. The base paper, handmade by the artist, will be pigmented cotton that includes pearlescent shimmers to bring depth to the page. The stars will be carefully mapped for accuracy and applied with paper pulp, then defined with

Lisa Miles: (1) Work samples including Three Threads; (2) Miniature blank mockup for Mymyth.



Sarah Krupa work samples: papermaking and bookbinding projects including embroidered International Phonetic Alphabet.

Colleen Dionne Memorial Grant for a School of the Art Institute of Chicago Undergraduate

Sarah Krupa is an SAIC BFA candidate. Her *Chicago Sky Guide*, a hardcover 20” x 8” book, will be printed in an edition of ten. From Krupa’s proposal: “The book will be a guide to the constellations and celestial bodies that are inaccessible to stargazers in Chicago



AWARD WINNERS, from page 11

printer, and binder. Moode writes, “The text for this piece is a 681-word work of fiction about thinking, walking, and looking for small things in a vast environment. The project will be handset in metal type, letterpress printed, with imagery [by Moode]. The imagery will evoke animal tracks and map-like trails. Drawings made during my time in Wyoming will be working with layered imagery and many sparse and minute marks, reinforcing the content of the text. Colors will be subtle and drawn from the Wyoming winter landscape: a spectrum of whites, greys, browns, and bright sky blue.”





Stephanie Wang, *Syzygy* working mockup.

white ink. The removable transparent overlay will be made of fine beaten abaca pulp with corresponding names and reference numbers. Attached to the inner side of the back cover will be a sleeve with a removable booklet containing histories and descriptions of the major celestial bodies named on the overlay sheet.

Yueyang (Stephanie) Wang is an SAIC BFA candidate. Wang's artist's book is titled *Syzygy*. The term comes from astronomy, defined as the conjunction of celestial objects in the same gravitational system. *Syzygy* takes the form of a box, which presents complementary short poems and handmade polymer replicas of dishes. Poems are selected from Tagore's *Stray Birds*, while dishes by Chef Adria are matched according to the tone and sentiment of the poems. Each pair will be housed in a miniature book.

"The sensual nature of the two – within the magical format of the artist's book – will prompt a refreshing, uplifting and awakening experience for the viewer," writes Wang's teacher, Cathie Ruggie Saunders. The poems will be letterpress printed on Japanese paper, the dishes made of polymer clay. By tracing shared inspirations, *Syzygy* introduces viewers to connections that evoke new perspectives. The two fields of the poet Tagore and chef Ferran Adria resonate in content and form – literature and molecular gastronomy, short poems and petite servings – and give their audiences seemingly ephemeral experiences, but with an everlasting aftertaste.

§§

Caxton Club Complete Set Holiday Book Sale!

One can ponder... TO GIVE or TO KEEP?
But do not dither... Sale ends January 6, 2017

The complete set of available Caxton Club publications:
(shown: individual prices with member discount)

*Other People's Books: Association Copies and
the Stories They Tell...* \$65

Inland Printers: The Fine Press Movement in Chicago
... \$15

*The Caxton Club 1895-1995: Celebrating a Century
of the Book in Chicago...* \$60

Western Life in the Stirrups... \$10

The Chicago Diaries of John M. Wing, 1865-1866... \$15

On a Variety of Subjects by Paul M. Angle... \$ 6.25

*RHN: Robert Hunter Middleton, the Man
and His Letters...* \$ 20

Chicago Under Wraps... \$ 5

Regular Complete Set Price \$196.25

HOLIDAY SALE PRICE \$ 90*

*Postage \$10.00. Or pick up at the Newberry for no charge.
Purchase price must be received by January 6, 2017.

Book- and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Lisa Pevtzow

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.)

- Art Institute of Chicago**, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: **“Moholy-Nagy: Future Present”** (painting, photography, film, sculpture, advertising, product design, theater sets, and book design by László Moholy-Nagy), through January 3, 2017. **“I Am the Sun”** (companion exhibit featuring books on artists, highlighting experimental photography’s collaborations with light and time), Burnham and Ryerson Libraries, through December 5.
- Chicago Botanic Garden**, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: **“Pteridomania: The Victorian Fern Craze,”** through February 5, 2017.
- Chicago Cultural Center**, 78 E. Washington Street, Chicago, 312-744-6630: **“Stand Up for Landmarks! Protests, Posters & Pictures”** (images, artifacts, and ephemera relating to saving Chicago landmarks), ongoing.
- Chicago History Museum**, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: **“Lincoln’s Undying Words”** (Lincoln’s changing views toward slavery, through five key speeches made between 1858 and 1865), through February 20, 2017. **“Chicago Authored”** (works by writers that define the character of Chicago), ongoing.
- Harold Washington Library Center**, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: **“Called to the Challenge: The Legacy of Harold Washington”** (an overview of Washington’s life and projects as mayor), Harold Washington Exhibit Hall, ninth floor, ongoing.
- Loyola University of Chicago Cudahy Library**, 1032 W. Sheridan Road, Chicago, 773-508-2632: **“Art Young Cartoons from the Collection of Anthony J. Mourek”** (38 Art Young drawings, plus books, prints, and zinc plates from the collection of Caxtonian Anthony Mourek, including cartoon drawings from 1892 of then-mayor Carter Harrison, and of FDR from 1943), Donovan Reading Room, through March 31, 2017.
- Newberry Library**, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: **“Creating Shakespeare”** (Shakespeare’s life and afterlife, from the 16th century through the 21st), through December 30.
- Northwestern University Library**, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658: **“You’re No One ‘til Somebody Hates You: Karen DeCrow and the Fight for Gender Equality”** (DeCrow’s personal papers and materials from Northwestern’s Femina Collections documenting the first and second wave liberation movements), through December 30.
- Pritzker Military Museum and Library**, 104 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-374-9333: **“SEAL The Unspoken Sacrifice”** (features photographs from Stephanie Freid-Perenchio and Jennifer Walton’s 2009 book and artifacts on loan from the Navy SEAL Museum), ongoing.
- University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library**, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: **“Alma Lach’s Kitchen: Transforming Taste”** (explores the Chicago chef’s culinary career and displays selections from her fascinating collection of cookbooks), through January 6, 2017.
- University of Illinois Richard J. Daley Library**, 801 S. Morgan, 312-996-2724. **“Selling Design: 27 Chicago Designers 1936-1991”** (celebrating the 80th anniversary of 27 Chicago Designers, an organization of illustrators, typographers, photographers, and designers,) through February 28, 2017.
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Rare Book & Manuscript Library**, 346 Main Library, 1408 W. Gregory Drive, Urbana, 217-333-3777: **“H.G. Wells: Time Traveler”** (items related to the fantastic fiction and political writings of H.G. Wells, curated by Simon J. James and Caroline Szylicz),



Loyola Library / Art Young
Cartoons

FROM THE COLLECTION OF ANTHONY J. MOUREK



U of Illinois / Making and Breaking Medieval Manuscripts
LEAF OF MANUSCRIPT BIBLE: BOOK OF AMOS CA. 1325



Art Institute / I Am the Sun
CHRIS McCRAW. SUNBURNED GSP#360 (PACIFIC OCEAN), 2009.

through December 21.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Krannert Art Museum, 500 E. Peabody Drive, Champaign, 217-333-1861: **“Making and Breaking Medieval Manuscripts”** (Western European manuscripts from the 13th to 19th centuries showing marks of provenance, the effects of printing on the manuscript industry, and the practice of “book breaking,” curated by Maureen Warren and Anna Chen) through February 11, 2017.

Send your listings to Lisa Pevtzow at lisa.pevtzow@sbcglobal.net

Caxtonians Collect: Diann Lapin

Interviewed by
Robert McCamant

Diann Lapin's varied career and interests have focused on solving perplexing questions or "puzzles." Her father, an engineer, loved analyzing the causes and outcomes of the puzzle that was World War II. As he worked his way through Churchill's six-volume history of the Second World War and other seminal works, Lapin's father taught her a love of history and the importance of ordering its chaos to create one's own understanding of events. After majoring in French Foreign Area Studies at the University of Maryland (a major involving language as well as cultural history), Lapin went to work for the National Security Agency late in the Vietnam War, translating French and other language communications. After NSA, she moved to the University of Florida, where she taught high school and received a master's degree in curriculum development, a discipline that calls for organizing course content in a pedagogically sound manner. These experiences served Lapin well after she moved to Chicago in the 1970s and engaged in a ten-year career in banking systems and high tech (more puzzles).

A move back to Florida in the early 1980s with a high-tech firm led, a few years later, to a career shift to higher education. Why the shift? Lapin says, "Two reasons. First, I wanted to return to teaching, which I have always loved; and second, I wanted to expand my historical research and study of human culture." As she career-shifted, her husband's job moved her to London later in the 80s. There, she took French immersion courses and earned a postgraduate certificate in art history. After returning to Florida, she began teaching humanities and art history courses at Valencia College. Lapin and several colleagues authored an introductory humanities course textbook titled *Visions and Values... the Human Experience*. She also earned an MA in Liberal Studies at Rollins College; this degree kicked off her 20-plus-year passion for researching 18th century France. Her 130-page thesis, intriguingly titled "Diamonds and Blood: Artistic Images and Reactionary Politics of the French Revolution," delves into the gender and class conflicts of the time. Why this topic for her thesis? As Lapin explains, "When the 200-year anniversary of

the French Revolution occurred, my interest in it rekindled and I began reading the received scholarly research. As I read, I became more and more fascinated with the era's cultural clashes." These clashes have continued to perplex and absorb her; over the years, she has built a library of primary and secondary source books and materials.

In the mid-1990s, Lapin and her family moved to the near north side of Chicago,



where she continued her career in higher education. She parlayed her administrative experience into positions as an admissions dean/director in the graduate and professional schools at Columbia College, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, and Valparaiso University School of Law. At each institution, she developed systems and protocols for addressing the perplexing questions of whom to admit based on the qualities needed for success in the field.

Lapin also continued teaching. She taught art history and English courses at Columbia. For six years, she was faculty in Northwestern's Medical Humanities and Bioethics Program, where she taught medical humanities seminars of her own conception and design, all focused on human behavioral and creative response to disease. I wanted an example, so Lapin described one of her courses: "Syphilis: Its Impact on the Famous and Infamous." "After studying the disease's

profile, each student then chose a famous person known to have had syphilis and researched them and their work. Van Gogh stands out as an obvious example who, while in the throes of syphilitic-induced insanity, created phenomenal art that we look at differently knowing the impact of the disease on his brain," she says.

From Northwestern, Lapin was recruited to become the executive director of admissions at Valparaiso University's law school. After five years, she retired from the law school to become a full-time lecturer in the English department of the university's College of Arts and Sciences. There, she taught in an interdisciplinary program called "The Human Experience," where students studied and wrote on thematic topics that incorporated texts in the fields of English, philosophy, religion, the arts, and political and social sciences.

Lapin retired from Valparaiso a second time last year. She has since had the opportunity to become more deeply involved in her longtime passion: researching the gender and class conflicts of 18th century France. She has expanded her library, ramped up her research and, most importantly, engaged with the Newberry's formative holdings. Did you know that it possesses an archive of 30,000 pamphlets and 43,000 newspapers from France's Revolutionary era? (It's actually a large collection of collections, each indexed around a variety of topics, from the government to censorship to the trials and executions of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The U. of C. calls it one of the three top such collections in the world.)

"Until this past June, when she moved east, Minna (and David) Novick were our next door neighbors and close friends," Lapin says. It was Minna who invited her to join the Club this year.

You read it here first: Lapin is scheduled to teach a Newberry seminar during February-March 2017: check the website for details. It is titled "Laclot's *Dangerous Liaisons*" and will focus on the memorable 1782 epistolary novel of sex, revenge, and secrets. Using the Newberry's pamphlet and newspaper collections, students will take a close look at the French culture that was both scandalized and titillated by the novel.

§§



NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 416
FOX VALLEY, IL

CAXTONIAN

Caxton Club
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, IL 60610
USA

Address Correction Requested

Bookmarks...

**Luncheon: Friday, December 9, Union League Club
Emily Kadens on Books for Learning the Law, 1200-1700**

Why should legal scholars at Northwestern whistle “Gary Indiana” from *The Music Man* as they peruse the school’s stunning collection of rare law books? You’ll learn that and more as Northwestern professor and gifted speaker Emily Kadens reveals important developments in the history of legal education in a beautifully illustrated talk. Drawing on a top collection of rare continental European and English law books – many with gorgeous hand-drawn lettering, painted illuminations, and lavish woodcuts – she will even highlight some odd illustrated books designed to teach younger students. A prizewinning writer and lively speaker, she brings a rich academic background, with a JD from the U. of C. complemented by a PhD in history from Princeton and a degree in medieval history from the Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve. She speaks fluent Dutch and also fluent Texan, having been on the faculty at UT-Austin. Whether you’re a lawyer, have ever watched a courtroom drama, or just love great stories about rare books, this luncheon’s for you!

December luncheon: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am; program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$32. Reservations or cancellations by noon Wednesday for Friday lunch. Call 312-255-3710 or e-mail caxtonclub@newberry.org.

Beyond November...

JANUARY LUNCHEON

David Jones will deliver a beautifully illustrated talk that draws on his experience in the paper arts at Columbia College and now at Propp Jones studios. He’ll serve up the inside scoop about a new paper arts partnership that has taken culture behind the cheddar curtain. Friday, January 13, Union League Club.

JANUARY DINNER

January 18, 2017, at the Union League Club, Sarah Pritchard, Dean of Libraries at Northwestern, will discuss “The Chicago Collections Consortium: Connecting Resources, Enhancing Access and Preserving History.” This program will also present the online portal which allows collectors, scholars, and the public access to the archives of Chicago’s top institutions.

**REVELS ONE WEEK EARLIER! Second Wednesday!
Dinner: Wednesday, December 14, Newberry Library
Our Annual Holiday Revels Including
a Fund-raising Auction of Things Bookish**

Join our festive holiday Revels with the camaraderie of your fellow book lovers, libations, and our own Tom Joyce as live-auction host. The evening will feature drinks, dinner, music, and the chance to find out what Caxtonians have had on their shelves as we bid for silent- and live-auction items. Bring your friends. All are welcome to participate in the bidding. Cash, check, and credit cards will be accepted for payment. Enjoy this club tradition and fun-filled evening.

Contact Dan Crawford at the Newberry to make arrangements to drop off your auction items. Deadline for inclusion in the catalog is December 2, but items are accepted until December 12.

December dinner: Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton. Pre-dinner festivities with silent auction, cocktails and appetizers begin at 5 pm. Buffet dinner begins at 6:15. The silent auction will close at 6, reopen at 7, and finish at 7:15. Live auction and drawings will begin at 7:30. Cost for this event, which includes appetizers and a dinner with wine, is \$60. Please join us for this festive fund-raiser for the Club.

Reservations required; call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org. Please reserve by noon, December 9, 2016. This event requires catering; **cancellations** not received before 5:00 pm December 12 **will require payment.**

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

Sir Winston Churchill wrote more than 50 books, composed hundreds of articles, served as a war correspondent, and was awarded a Nobel Prize for literature. Lee Pollock, executive director of the Churchill Centre, will tell the remarkable story of Winston Churchill: reader, writer, leader.

FEBRUARY DINNER

February 15, 2017, at the Union League Club, Jim Akerman, Curator of Maps at the Newberry with a program designed to intrigue both map and book collectors. Full details to follow.