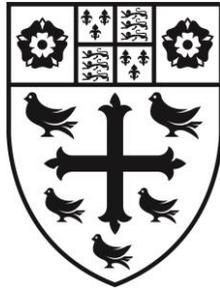


Westminster Abbey

South Quire Aisle



The Dedication of
a Memorial Stone
to P G Wodehouse

Friday 20th September 2019
6.15 pm

HISTORICAL NOTE

It is no bad thing to be remembered for cheering people up. As Pelham Grenville Wodehouse (1881–1975) has it in his novel *Something Fresh*, the gift of humour is twice blessed, both by those who give and those who receive:

‘As we grow older and realize more clearly the limitations of human happiness, we come to see that the only real and abiding pleasure in life is to give pleasure to other people.’

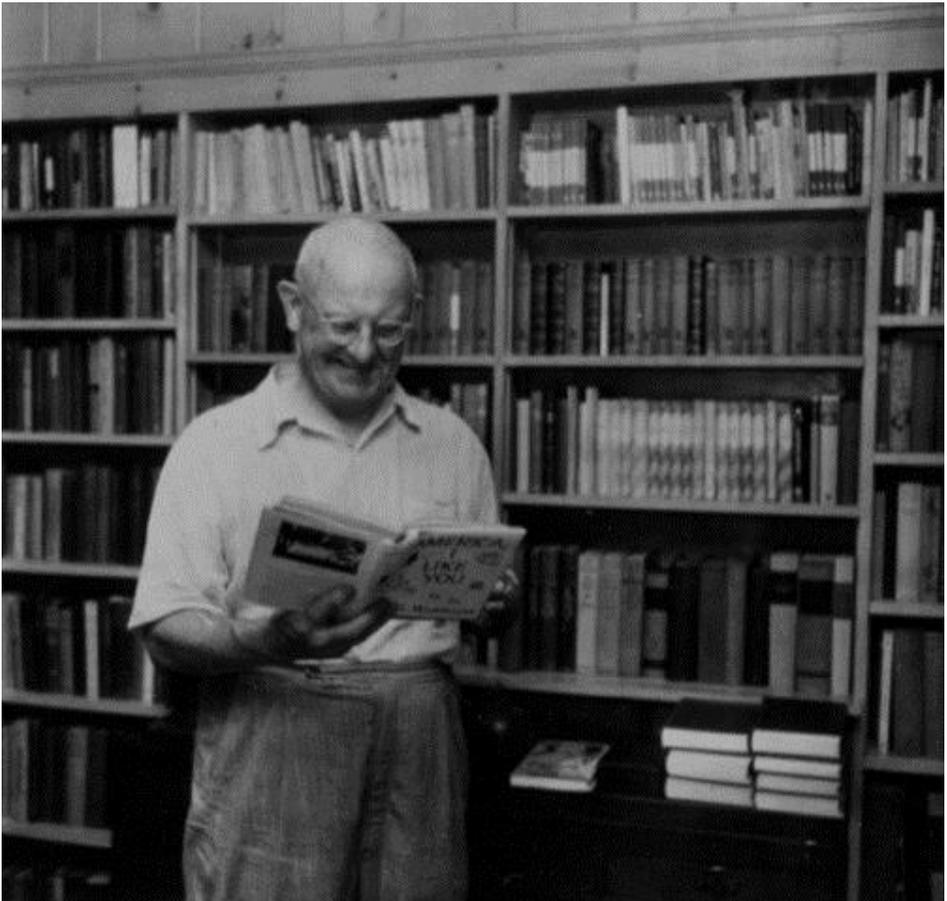
Wodehouse dedicated almost 75 years of his professional life to doing just that, arguably better—and certainly with greater application—than any other writer before or since. For he never deviated from the path of that ambition, no matter what life threw at him. If, as he once wrote, “the object of all good literature is to purge the soul of its petty troubles”, the consistently upbeat tone of his 100 or so books must represent one of the largest-ever literary bequests to human happiness by one man. This has made Wodehouse one of the few humourists we can rely on to increase the number of hours of sunshine in the day, helping us to joke unhappiness and seriousness back down to their proper size simply by basking in the warmth of his unique comic world. And that’s before we get round to mentioning his 300 or so song lyrics, countless newspaper articles, poems, and stage plays. The 1998 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* cited over 1,600 quotations from Wodehouse, second only to Shakespeare. 192 of those were principal citations, meaning they were the first or only use of a word or a particular nuance of it.

Add to this his great good humour and matchless prose style, and it’s possible to appreciate why Wodehouse is not merely surviving but thriving 120 years since he first appeared in print. This most English of authors has been translated into more than 30 languages, from Azerbaijani to Ukrainian via Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, and Mandarin. There are sizeable, well-established Wodehouse societies in the UK, the USA, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, and

Russia actively promoting his legacy. There are reports that India's young professionals binge on marathon Wodehouse quizzes. A 99-volume uniform edition of his complete works is currently in print and has sold well over half a million copies. And subscribing to internet news alerts will prompt dozens of references to his writing arriving in your inbox every week from newspapers, magazines, websites and blogs from just about every corner of the planet.

It is little wonder that in 1936, the Mark Twain Society awarded Wodehouse a prestigious medal "in recognition of your outstanding and lasting contribution to the happiness of the world".

Paul Kent
The P G Wodehouse Society



ORDER OF SERVICE

All stand. The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, gives

THE WELCOME

All sit. Alexander Armstrong reads from

The Code of the Woosters, 1938

Lucy Tregear reads from

The Mating Season, 1949

Hal Cazalet and Lara Cazalet, accompanied by Stephen Higgins, sing

OH GEE! OH JOY!

from Rosalie

lyrics by P G Wodehouse

music by George Gershwin

Martin Jarvis reads from

Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend, in Blandings Castle, 1933

THE ADDRESS

by

Alexander Armstrong

President of the P G Wodehouse Society

All stand for

THE DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL

His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent says

I ask you, Mr. Dean, to receive into the safe custody of the Dean and Chapter this memorial in honour and memory of P G Wodehouse.

The Dean replies

To the greater glory of God, and in thankful memory of Pelham Grenville Wodehouse, and of all that he achieved and contributed to the joy of life, I dedicate this memorial: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Flowers are laid by Hilary Bruce on behalf of the P G Wodehouse Society and David Cazalet on behalf of the family

All sit. Alexander Armstrong, Lucy Tregear, and Martin Jarvis read

A FEW QUICK ONES

Hal Cazalet and Lara Cazalet, accompanied by Stephen Higgins, sing

MY CASTLE IN THE AIR

*from Miss Springtime
lyrics by P G Wodehouse
music by Jerome Kern*

All kneel or remain seated. The Dean leads

THE PRAYERS

Let us pray.

O Lord God, from whom floweth all delight and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore: we give thee thanks for P G Wodehouse and all thy servants whose art bringeth joy and consolation; lifting the heavy heart, and lightening the darkest day. Bless them in their work and confirm thy gifts in them, to the glory of thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O eternal Lord God, who holdest all souls in life: we beseech thee to shed forth upon thy whole Church in paradise and on earth the bright beams of thy light and heavenly comfort; that we, following the good example of those who have loved and served thee here and are now at rest, may with them at length enter into the fullness of thine unending joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Dean says

Let us pray for the fulfilment of God's Kingdom, in the words our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All stand. The Dean pronounces

THE BLESSING

God grant to the living grace; to the departed rest; to the Church, The Queen, the Commonwealth, and all mankind, peace and concord; and to us sinners life everlasting; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Members of the Congregation are requested to remain in their places until invited to move by the Stewards