

Pelham Grenville Wodehouse
known as “Plum” to his family and friends
1881 - 1975

Born 15th October, 1881 at 1 Vale Place, Epsom Road,
Guildford, the home of one of his aunts

Third of four boys whose parents lived in Hong Kong.

1883 – Three oldest boys brought back to England and started
a series of schools. Summer holidays were spent with Grandma Wodehouse in Worcestershire.
Other holidays were spent at
various aunts and uncles.

1894 – He was sent to Dulwich College, which he loved and maintained his links for many years,
especially the cricket
matches. Played cricket and football for his college, and also enjoyed boxing. He was also
academic and could work in Greek and Latin as well as English, especially writing verse in all
three languages. He read voraciously and wanted to be an author.

1900 – Parents said he had to earn a living and so was placed with the Hong Kong and Shang-
hai Bank in the London Branch. He earned £80.00 per year and his father gave him an
allowance of £80.00. He did not understand figures and he would write his notes for stories in
the ledger books. When he tore the pages out to keep his notes his days were numbered.

1902 - 9th September – he left banking and became a full time writer. Wrote regularly for The Globe and also stories for schoolboy magazines.

His first novel “The Pothunters” was published and he sold nearly 400 copies.

1903 - he was introduced to Herbert Westbrook, who also wanted to be an author. He introduced P.G. Wodehouse to Emsworth, where he was teaching at a small prep school.

P.G. Wodehouse stayed in a room above the stables, and then took a lease on a property nearby called Threepwood. Its advantage was that it had a gate into the grounds of Emsworth House School.

He met Jerome Kern and wrote with him in London.

1914 - he visited New York and was unable to return because of the outbreak of the 1st World War.

He met and married Ethel within a few weeks and they settled in New York.

1919 - was the first appearance of Jeeves who became one of his most famous characters.

After the 1st World War they travelled between America and England regularly although he found writing in England easier.

He visited Emsworth many times, but never lived there again. His last visit was in 1929 for the funeral of Baldwin King-Hall.

He met and began collaborating with Guy Bolton, who became his main working partner when he was writing for the theatre or films, and they worked with Jerome Kern, as well as George and Ira Gershwin and Irving Berlin on several theatrical productions.

1934 - he and his wife bought a property in Le Touquet in France as their main home. It was easy to travel to England or America, but it avoided the tax problems of both countries.

1940 - they were caught up in the capitulation of France and the evacuation of Dunkirk and he was interned in Poland.

1942 - he was released because he was nearly 60 years old, but had to stay within Germany territory. For a time they stayed in Berlin and then moved to Paris.

He recorded a series of radio broadcasts to be transmitted to America as a thank you to all the American friends who had been sending him gifts and trying to get him released.

These recordings were not well received in Britain and he was nearly tried as a traitor. He was merely naïve and had not realised the consequences of his actions, but it affected his popularity in Britain and he did not live there again.

1947 - he and his wife moved to America permanently and settled outside of New York.

They were both animal lovers and always had dogs and cats in the house. They also set up an animal sanctuary nearby and visited nearly every day.

He continued writing novels and short stories until his death at the age of 94 in 1975

By the time he died his prodigious work consisted of 10 books for boys, 43 novels, 300 short stories and was author or part-author of 16 plays and 23 musical comedies.

Life of P.G. Wodehouse in Emsworth

When he came to Emsworth he was not the great man of letters that he later became, but an impoverished would-be journalist, who was determined to become an author. He was not well known enough to figure in the events and happenings of the village to any greater degree than any other of the ordinary citizens. Only the pupils of the small school in the Havant Road, which was known as Emsworth House, would have thought he was anything special, and this was because of his love of, and skill in playing, cricket. However, Emsworth had a great effect on him, and influenced him at a time when he was looking for inspiration and a place to develop his skills.

When he began to earn a living from his writing he treated himself to a car. He only had one lesson and then decided to drive to Emsworth. How far did he get? We do not know, but he ended in a hedge, left the car there and caught a train. He never drove again and so his journeys between London and Emsworth were always by train.

In order to get to Threepwood and Emsworth House he had to walk, or use Mr. Pennicotts taxis. The route was from the Station, passing the Railway Hotel, down North Street.

Then he had a choice – did he go through the churchyard of St.James' Church, and down Church Path?

Or did he take the other route, which continued down North Street to the centre of the town?

He then turned the corner into West Street, taking care not to get bowled over by the herd of cows Mr. Tier took through West Street to be milked, and along the road, over the Westbrook Stream and up the Havant Road hill to turn into Record Road or go on to Emsworth House.

On his way up the hill did he turn into his aunt's house for a refreshing cup of tea?

Other places in Emsworth that would have been familiar.

Warblington Church – the pupils of Emsworth House School attended church at St. Thomas a'Beckett every Sunday. Baldwin King-Hall is buried there

Emsworth House was a villa built along the same lines as Hollybank House, Oak Lodge and Seafields House and originally known as Hayfield Lodge. Two storey, originally with a verandah around the southern side, it was eventually enlarged and became a preparatory school for boys being prepared for entry into the Navy.

Record Road was a typical Edwardian residential road, with attractive modern houses. Beach Road and Park Crescent were all built at about the same time with similar houses. To the north Horndean Road was also a desirable place to move to, out of the centre of the town and have a garden.

P.G. Wodehouse's home at Threepwood had the advantage of backing on to the playing fields of the school, so he just walked through the gate at the bottom of the garden whenever he wanted to visit Baldwin King-Hall.

Beach Road, as the name implies, leads to the beach, or waterfront, where the boys from Emsworth House would go for rambles and exercise. The view from the bottom of Beach Road is described accurately and from memory in "Damsel In Distress", which was published in 1919, when he was living in America.

In Havant Road, just at the top of the hill is Forbury, a beautiful Regency semi-detached villa where P.G. Wodehouse's Aunt Marion lived with her husband Walter Deane. Marion was one of his mother's numerous sisters; there were 13 children in the family, which provided much inspiration for aunts and other relations.

Emsworth foreshore and harbour is the true setting of the description of the “sleepy by-the-world-forgotten” town of Belper. The oyster industry of Emsworth was the envy of nearly every fishing community in England at the end of the 19th century, and overnight it was destroyed by the oysters being infected with typhoid and causing illness and death. The remains of the industry can still be seen along the shoreline between South Street and King Street.

The Crown Hotel is virtually certain to have been the model for the Marshmoreton Arms in “Damsel in Distress”. It is described as the only inn which offered accommodation and was described as “a comfortable, respectable hostelry, catering for the village plutocrats”. During P.G. Wodehouse’s time in Emsworth it was the only respectable hotel in Emsworth although Emsworth did boast a vast array of public houses.

All the main social events were held at The Crown, such as ship launching parties and many fund raising events.

Housekeeper to P.G. Wodehouse

Lillian Sarah Hill came from Alton, where it appears her father was a gardener, and she was employed as a housemaid at Emsworth House School when P.G. Wodehouse first stayed there. When he moved into Threepwood he obviously needed someone to “do” for him. He was not the sort of man who was very good at keeping things tidy and he needed someone who could use their own initiative and get on with the housework and cooking, while he just kept on writing. They also had to be tolerant of his friend Herbert Westbrook, who could be a disruptive influence.

When he moved into Threepwood he said he had a typewriter, a chair, a table and a bed, but it is likely that he soon added more.

Lillian was his housekeeper and was responsible for buying food and keeping him fed. It appears from some of his letters that he had accounts with some of the traders in Emsworth, so Lillian only had to go and collect items, and he would settle up the account on a monthly basis.

In 1908 Lillian married Albert Louis Barnett, whose family had lived in Emsworth for several generations and were fishermen. Albert was a fishmonger and lived in West View Terrace in Emsworth, which is in Bridgefoot Path and this is where they set up home together.

Lillian must have been a valuable servant because Baldwin King-Hall and his sister Ella allowed her to be married from Emsworth House and to hold the wedding reception there. Ella (signing herself Isabel) was also a witness at the wedding at St. Thomas a'Beckett Church, Warblington.

The presents the couple received included :

And a cheque from P.G. Wodehouse, which was possibly spent at Scadgells furniture store.

Their first child Hugh was born in 1909 and Norah was born in 1913, but Lillian still looked after P.G. Wodehouse.

When P.G. Wodehouse sailed for America in 1914 it appears as if it was only for an extended holiday, and he had done nothing about closing up Threepwood or surrendering his lease. All this he explained in letters to Lillian and she was given several small tasks to do for him.

He continued to write to her up until her death, and was constantly referring to her as his best friend.

She must have been a special person to hold such a place in his memory.

P.G. Wodehouse's Letters to Lillian

P.G. Wodehouse had a long and affectionate correspondence with Lillian which lasted from his leaving Emsworth in 1914 until her death in 1974.

Very often it was just an exchange of Christmas wishes, which always included a “little something” with which to buy a present or something nice.

Lillian obviously replied to his letters, but we do not know if any copies were kept. She must have kept him informed of events in Emsworth and of any mutual acquaintances, because he very often commented in reply to these.

Their correspondence wandered over many subjects such as

His Work

Unfortunately we are having the worst theatrical season that has ever been known: nothing is succeeding: and the man who was to have produced my “Little Nugget” has got scared and has postponed it till next year, when things ought to be better. It's a nuisance from my point of view as I was hoping for a regular income from it. Still, I believe it would have failed if they had put it on now, so I suppose it's all for the best.

Dec. 2nd. 1914

I have been terribly busy for a long while, having been out on the road with a new piece. We tried it out in Baltimore and it was all wrong, so we set to and rewrote the entire play in a week!!

We threw away all the music and got a new lot written and then started out again. The piece now looks like a big success. It did very well in Washington and for three weeks in Philadelphia. It will come on in New York in the Autumn.

June 20th 1918

I am still working very hard and have just finished a new Jeeves story. But everything has changed very much here as regards the magazines since I was here last. There are very few markets for my sort of stuff, and I generally sell only about half of what I write to magazines instead of selling it all as I used to. In England, thank goodness, I seem to be doing very well, but in America they don't seem to want stories about English life. Still, I am doing quite well.

Sept. 19th 1953

I am working very hard, as usual. I am about half way through a new novel, which is coming along rather slowly, but I think it will be good.

Dec 17th 1954

I am working as hard as ever and have a new book coming out in England in January. I am also writing every other week for Punch. I have done fifty-seven articles for them since January 1953.

Dec 15th 1955

Her Family

We have only just been able to get a maid, and for the first six weeks my wife did all the cooking and I washed the dishes and did the house-work. It has increased the admiration I have always had for you! How on earth you managed to look after me and your own home and the two children I cannot understand. I don't wonder you used to get up at four in the morning or whatever it was. My only wonder is that you were ever able to go to bed at all. What an awful lot there is to do about a house.

Dec 14th 1914

This time we have bought a house! It is a very nice place, with three acres, including a tennis court and a garage. I only wish you and Bert were here to look after us. Why don't you come out after the war and settle down here? There are splendid schools for the children. This place is about fourteen miles from New York, but is right out in the country and on the seashore.

June 20th 1918

I hope Norah will be very happy. I enclose a cheque. Will you buy her a wedding present. I'm afraid it is a bit late, but I couldn't write before.

April 5th 1939

What a shame Hugh's boy had to start his national service before Christmas. I wonder how he will like being in the army. My grandson started his service at the beginning of September and his first letters were not very cheerful, but I expect he has settled down by now.

Dec 17th 1954

I can't tell you how sorry I was to get your letter and hear of your sad loss. I was always so fond of Bert and I know how you will miss him. You were so happy together. Forty-nine years! How long it seems. But as he was suffering so much, it is a consolation to feel that he will have no more pain. I am so glad that you have Norah and Hugh to help you through this bad time.

They must be a great comfort.

Nov 16th 1957

Emsworth and Emsworth House

I'm afraid I shan't see Emsworth for another year. We have taken this place for the whole of 1915. But at the end of that time I hope to settle down for good in England. This place rather reminds me of Emsworth. There is the same sort of shallow bay, with an island like Hayling stretched cross the mouth of it. I believe it is perfectly splendid in summer, but the cold is very bad in January and February.

Dec. 2nd 1914

I suppose Emsworth looks exactly the same as it used to? What happy days those were. But I find I am always pretty happy. I enjoy living in America, as I always have done.

Sept 19. 1953

That book you were reading, "The Little Nugget", was written in 1911, and all of it, I think, at Emsworth House. What a splendid place that was for work!

Dec 17. 1954

How sad that Emsworth is so changed. It used to be such a charming place, and now I suppose it's just a mass of buildings. I don't think I could bear to see Emsworth House grounds all covered with bungalows.

Oct 21st 1967

Lillian herself

Your mother was one of my best friends, and though we did not see each other for years we corresponded regularly. Isn't it extraordinary to think that I first knew her in 1903. I always looked on her as the best and kindest woman I knew.

Oct 30. 197

His home

This address will always find me. I have been here four and a half years and have just taken it on for another two. We have also bought a house down at Remsenburg, Long Island, very nice with five acres of ground, and we are having a lot of alterations made in it. That is why we are up in New York now. The painters finally made the house uninhabitable. I think we shall go back next week. This is the best time for being in the country – after Labour Day, when all the summer visitors go home.

Sept 19th 1953

What a lot of work there is to be done in the country. I have to water the bushes and flowers every evening and it takes about two hours.

Sept 19th 1953

We shall be up in New York till the Spring. It's quite nice here, but I must say I long to be back in the country. We have made the house down there so comfortable, and I think we shall give up this flat in September and live in the country all the year round.

Dec. 19th 1954

We have given up our New York apartment and are now living all the year round in the country. It is very pleasant.

Dec 15th 1955

We are still leading our quiet life down here. It is now nineteen months since I was away from the place. People are always trying to get me to go to Florida for the winter, but I love it here in the cold weather when I can take Bill the foxhound for his walk and come back and be cosy.

Dec 13th 1956

Westbrook (Herbert and Ella)

I got a letter from Mrs. Westbrook the other day, saying that you had been helping her with Mr. Rob. King-Hall,

June 20th 1918

I hear pretty regularly from Westbrook. He is writing plays very industriously and sends them to me. They are very good, but it is so difficult to sell a play. He seems very cheerful. About two years ago he got engaged to be married – he must be at least 70! But, as far as I can gather, nothing has come of it.

In his last letter he spoke of his 'fiancée', so it must still be on. But isn't it just like him to go and get engaged in his seventies!

Sept 19th 1953

His pets past and present

The other dog is Bill, the foxhound, who also is an angel. When my wife was down at Remsenburg putting in the furniture, I was in New York and I rang her up and asked how everything was going, and she said everything was all right. "But," she added in a melancholy voice, "a foxhound has turned up". It came into the garden and sat down, looking on. It was nearly dead with starvation and covered with ticks. These ticks are horrible things which fasten on to dogs and suck their blood. Poor Bill had scarcely any blood left in him and had to be taken to the vet for transfusions.

Sept 19th 1953

My friend Guy Bolton had to go to New York the other day and left his Peke puppy and dachshund puppy with us. You would have laughed to see me parading down the lane with four dogs and a cat. This cat never leaves me. She always comes with me on my walks, however long they are, and sleeps on my bed.

Dec 13th 1956

We now have two dogs, the dachshund and the Boxer, and two cats living in and four or five cats which call for food at the kitchen door every night. One of them was a tiny kitten and we managed to lure it into the house, where it has now settled down very comfortably.

Dec 12th 1964

We now have four dogs and seven cats, so have plenty of society. Our only trouble is that we have had to take in a male Peke, prevent him being miserable at the Shelter, and he has turned out one of those quarrelsome Pokes and is always trying to fight with the dachshund, who is the most amiable dog in the world and can't understand what the Peke doesn't like him. It's a great pity, as all our animals were such a happy family.

Dec 15th 1969

The dogs and cats are all very well and happy. Jed the dachshund is really wonderful. He is fourteen years old, but behaves like a puppy.

Emsworth House and Baldwin King-Hall

Dedication to B.W. King-Hall in “Indiscretions of Archie”
published in 1921.

My dear Buddy –

We have been friends for eighteen years. A considerable proportion of my books were written under your hospitable roof. And yet I have never dedicated one to you. What will be the

verdict of Posterity on this? The fact is, I have become rather superstitious about dedications.

No sooner do you label a book with the legend : -

TO

MY BEST FRIEND

X

Than X cuts you in Piccadilly, or you bring a lawsuit against him. There is a fatality about it. However, I can't imagine anyone quarrelling with you, and I am getting more attractive all the time, so let's take a chance.

Yours ever,

P.G. Wodehouse

Emsworth House School was a typical example of a small preparatory school at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries that taught small boys the basics of education ready for moving on to a proper boarding school. This school also had naval connections and so some of the boys were being prepared for entry into the Royal Navy.

Baldwin King-Hall was an eccentric character, who would be regarded as larger than life. He was the youngest son of a naval family, and from family diaries it would appear that they were in the aristocracy of the navy. They knew and mingled with most of the major naval families of the Edwardian area, and it may have been this which influenced the founding of the school.

Two of the older sons had joined the Navy and rose to high rank, but Baldwin was refused because of his poor eye-sight. Obviously a career was needed for him, and running a school seemed to be the outcome. He was not a natural organiser and the school seemed to lurch from one financial crisis to another. There are several entries in his brother's diary about visiting various buildings around the country to see if they were suitable to transfer the school. Running a school was an expensive business and there are many entries in George King-Hall's diaries about Baldwin's financial difficulties.

Mr. W.H. Duffield purchased Emsworth House in 1899 for £5,000 and Baldwin rented it from him just before 1901. When Mr. Duffield died in 1918 it was inherited by Mrs. Duffield, who then sold it to Baldwin in 1923 for £4,000. However it needed about £3,000 spent on repairs, so quite an expensive purchase. Baldwin died in 1929 and his widow, Nellie, sold it in 1930, being unable to continue running the school.

One of his novel methods of education was to start the day with breakfast in bed, while the pupils gathered around and talked of general subjects.

There were not many boys at the school, but they enjoyed sports, with cricket during the summer. The school also owned two beach huts on Hayling Island, so visits during the summer were on the curriculum.

Most of the King-Hall family visited at various times, and nearly all of them tried to attend the annual sports day in June. Robert, one of Baldwin's brothers, also helped in the school at various times as a teacher, but appears to have been in poor health for most of the time and had to have lengthy spells in hospitals and sanatoria.

Ella King-Hall assisted her brother at times, and provided the musical education. She was gifted musically and wrote several pieces of music. At one time she collaborated with P.G. Wodehouse to produce a play for the boys. After he left England, P.G. Wodehouse employed her as his literary agent here.

The original contact with Emsworth came through Herbert Westbrook, who was employed as a teacher at Emsworth House. He was a slightly erratic character, whom P.G. Wodehouse used as part of his template for Ukridge. Westbrook was not above borrowing items without telling anyone, but was charming enough to get away with it.

He married Ella King-Hall and remained a friend of P.G. Wodehouse for the rest of their lives. During the 1st World War he became a war correspondent, and when he found he was not allowed to go further than Paris as a journalist, he enlisted. He was hospitalised with various illnesses, possibly caused by gas, but returned to the front line several times.

P.G. Wodehouse's descriptions of Emsworth in his books

“Damsel in Distress” – Chapter 7

George Bevan, the hero, visits a small seaside town and it is described thus:

“Belfer, in addition to all the advantages of the usual village, has a quiet charm all its own, due to the fact that it has seen better days. In a sense, it is a ruin, and ruins are always soothing to the bruised soul. Ten years before, Belfer had been a flourishing centre of the South of England oyster trade. It is situated by the shore, where Hayling Island, lying athwart the mouth of the bay, forms the waters into a sort of brackish lagoon, in much the same way as Fire Island shuts off the Great South Bay of Long Island from the waves of the Atlantic. The water of Belfer creek is shallow even at high tide, and when the tide runs out it leaves glistening mud flats, which it is the peculiar taste of the oyster to prefer to any other habitation. For years Belfer oysters had been the mainstay of gay supper parties at the Savoy, the Carlton, and Romano's. Dukes doted on them; chorus girls wept if they were not on the bill of fare. And then, in an evil hour, somebody discovered that what made the Belfer Oyster so particularly plump and succulent was the fact that it breakfasted, lunched, and dined almost entirely on the local sewage. There is but a thin line ever between popular homage and execration. We see it

in the case of politicians, generals, and prize-fighters; and oysters are no exception to the rule. There was a typhoid scare – quite a passing and unjustified scare, but strong enough to do its deadly work; and almost overnight Belper passed from a place of flourishing industry to the sleepy, by-the-world-forgotten spot which it was when George Bevan discovered it. The shallow water is still there; the mud is still there; even the oyster-beds are still there; but not the oysters nor the little world of activity which had sprung up around them. The glory of Belper is dead; and over its gates Ichabod is written.....

.....He walked down the quaint cobbled streets to the harbour, sauntered along the shore, and lay on his back on the little beach at the other side of the lagoon, from where he could see the red roofs of the village, while the imitation waves splashed busily on the stones, trying to conceal with bustle and energy the fact that the water even two hundred yards from the shore was only eighteen inches deep. For it is the abiding hope of Belper Creek that it may be able to deceive the occasional visitor into mistaking it for the open sea.

And presently the tide would ebb. The waste of waters became a sea of mud, cheerfully -covered as too much of its surface with green grasses. The evening sun struck rainbow colours from the moist softness. Birds sang in the thickets. And George, heaving himself up, walked back”

“Something to Worry About”

“He selected Millbourne because he had been butler at the Hall there, and because his sister Jane, who had been a parlour-maid at the Rectory, was now married and living in the village. Certainly he could not have chosen a more promising reformatory for Sally. Here, if anywhere, might she forget the heady joys of the cinema. Tucked away in the corner of its little bay, which an accommodating island converts into a still lagoon, Millbourne lies dozing. In all sleepy Hampshire there is no sleepier spot.”

Local Names that are found in P.G. Wodehouse's writings

P.G. Wodehouse was like blotting paper and absorbed names and situations and incidents. Just like a computer he stored them in his brain, and when he needed a plot he could recall these past incidents and develop them. He was an appreciator of the absurd, and was able to use and develop the absurdity into a story.

People's names were obviously easy to remember if you knew them, and what was better than to use proper names, rather than imaginary ones?

Watson in "Head of Kings" in 1905 and "Autograph Hunters" in 1909.

Robinson in "Mike" in 1910 Pitt in "Gentleman in Distress" in 1912

These were all genuine people living in Record Road, but how much of their character is in the book we are unable to say.

Threepwood, his home in Record Road, was the family name of Lord Emsworth in the Blandings stories

In "Something Fresh" published in 1915 Felix Clovelly and Lord Mount Anville are two characters. These were house names in Record Road.

Local shop names are used. He obviously used local shops and got to know the local shop keepers, so their names sprang to mind.

Mant in “Something Fresh” 1915

The Mant family had several businesses in Emsworth at this time. Butchers and taxi firm were the two best known, and were based in the High Street, where the Old Pharmacy now trades. William Mant in 1911 was the Assistant Overseer, Rate Collector and Sanitary Inspector to the Warblington Urban District Council, and combined this with being Captain of the Fire Brigade.

Silver in “The Head of Kays” in 1905 and
“The Prince & Betty” in 1912

The Silver family lived in North Street, immediately opposite the Fire Station. They were farmers whose horses were used to pull the fire engine to all the incidents in the area and later became furniture removers and owners of charabancs for general outings. Mr. H. Silver allowed his son, Phil, to drive the fire engine, but on one occasion Phil was not available, so his sister, Isobel, took the reins when Blendworth House burnt down in 1917. This made the national newspapers because it was so unusual for a women to be involved in such work.

Clayton in “The White Feather” in 1907

Matthew Clayton was a butcher and farmer. He had a shop in Emsworth and his farm was at the top of Thorney Island, where he reared his own beef and supplied most of the fishing fleet in Emsworth. A large cheerful man, he was at the centre of most of the community events in Emsworth and seems to have been the unofficial Mayor of the town. A paper-mache caricature of him was made and was worn by the leader of all carnival processions for many years.

Foster in “Adventures of Sally” in 1922

James Duncan Foster and his brothers were the main employers in Emsworth. They owned saw mills, ship building yards and were gravel and sand merchants. J.D. Foster had built and operated the most advanced inshore fishing fleet in the country at the time, and was one of the foremost oyster merchants, selling over 3,000,000 oysters a year, until a typhoid epidemic in 1902 wiped out the trade.

Rogers in “Damsel in Distress” in 1919

D.S. Rogers & Co were the local printing company and any posters or programmes printed for events in Emsworth were usually finished with their name. They also became newspapers publishers and were responsible for the local newspaper “The Hants and Sussex County Press”. Their offices were originally on The Square, but later moved to purpose built premises behind the Post Office in North Street

He did not only use the names found in Emsworth but used place names of the villages and towns in the area, or places that he saw when he travelled down to Emsworth by train.

Clarence Pier
Hayling Island
Warblington
Thorney Island
Southbourne
Bosham
Wickham
Southwick
Deverill Hall
Hampshire
Rogate
Stockheath
Godalming
Havant
Liss
Stansted
Fittleworth
Chichester
Arundel
Bognor

Lord Clarence
Lord Arthur Hayling
Lady Ann Warblington
Thorne (head gardener)
Countess of Southbourne
Lord Bosham
Bobby Wickham
Southwick House
in Purbrook
Duchess of Hampshire
Lord Rogate
Lord Stockheath
Bishop of Godalming
Duchess of Havant
Hon Adelaide Liss
Sansted House School
Boko Fittleworth
Chichester Clam
7a Arundel Street
Bishop of Bognor

Leave it to Psmith in 1923
The Prince & Betty in 1912
Something Fresh in 1915
Something Fresh in 1915
Man Upstairs in 1914
Something Fresh in 1915
Very Good Jeeves 1930
Something Fresh 1915
The Mating Season 1949
Meet Mr Mulliner 1927
Lord Emsworth and others 1937
Something Fresh 1915
Something Fresh 1915
A Gentleman of Leisure 1910
The Man Upstairs 1914
Little Nugget 1913
Joy in the Morning 1947
Joy in the Morning
Something Fresh 1915
Mulliner Nights 1933

People's Recollections

Recollections of Mr. Edward Fielder of Selangor Avenue.

{He was prompted to write his memories by an article by Michael Kennett which mentioned the cricket ground at Emsworth House School}

In the very early 1920's the local Emsworth cricket team was captained by Mr. Frank Corry (Headmaster of the Emsworth Church School), and a team made up of regular members and promising young boys would be invited to play a couple of games at Emsworth House during the season against a team comprising members of staff and guest players.

It was after one such game that Emsworth Cricketer Mr. Bert Barnett approached the Headmaster of Emsworth House School (Baldwin King-Hall) and asked if he would consider allowing his son to bring a team of local boys to play his young gentlemen. Mr. Barnett was known to Baldwin King-Hall because Mrs. Barnett was housekeeper to P.G. Wodehouse when the author taught at the school and lived at nearby Threepwood in Record Road. "Send you son along" said Baldwin King-Hall "and we will discuss it and see what we can arrange."

I went with his son (my personal friend, the late Bill Barnett) and met Baldwin King-Hall. We were told that if he allowed us to bring a team of young local boys to play cricket they were to be nice and tidy with clean white shirts and plimsols and well-behaved. We readily agreed to this

and went home thrilled at the prospect of playing at Emsworth House (always known to us as King-Hall's).

On the following Saturday, a team of 12- to 13-year-old boys (still in our short trousers in those days) made its way to Emsworth House and was met by the school-boys dressed in long cream flannels, blazers, caps, and with a full complement of equipment. Our kit consisted of two old discarded cracked bats from the Emsworth men's team with three inches sawn off the bottom to make them lighter and patched up with yards of tape. On seeing our equipment, Baldwin King-Hall offered us the use of the school's bats and pads and we gladly accepted.

We won the toss and decided to bat first, Bill Barnett making a brilliant 42, I and another boy made a couple of dozen more runs between us before we were all out for 82, which we did not think would be enough runs to win. Refreshments between the innings were served by Ma Brown and we tucked into her sandwiches and cake before continuing the game.

Little did we imagine that six overs later we would have skittled them out for 14 runs. Our captain, Bill Barnett, rushed excitedly up to Baldwin King-Hall and said "Can we put them in again, sir?" "Put them in again after that disgraceful exhibition and all that coaching?" he said. "Certainly not, they will all be sent straight to bed."

And so our game at Emsworth House was over and as the little group of excited young boys wandered down the old Havant Road, the talk was one thing only – we had played the young gentlemen of King-Hall's and won. We'd won!

Recollections of Mr. John Witham in November 1995.

{His memories were prompted by the dedication of a plaque on Threepwood in Record Road where P.G. Wodehouse once lived}

The recent placing of the plaque on Threepwood in Record Road has revived memories of my early days as a pupil at Emsworth House School.

There must be very few of us who remember the visits of P.G. Wodehouse to Emsworth House as a guest of Baldwin King-Hall in the early 1920s. I recall that Wodehouse appeared to keep very much to himself, and that he seldom spoke to the boys; but he moved freely around the school and sometimes he watched us play cricket. Although he may have taught the boys in the earlier days he had never been a master there. He gave me the impression of observing everything in his own quiet way, but he was not the jovial man one might have expected from reading his comic novels. This may have been due to an inherent reserve.

I well remember a day in November, 1925 when I saw him sitting on the wooden table in the centre of the kitchen and watching the boys as we filed past him, each taking his turn at stirring the Christmas pudding.

The last occasion on which I saw P.G. Wodehouse was when he attended Baldwin King-Hall's funeral at Warblington in November 1929.

