

Ye Olde Plum News

No 77 February 2026

TREES

YEW ALLEY

The mossy path in the yew alley at Blandings is in true relation for colour to the trees and grassy edges. Lord Emsworth was appalled when his gardener McAllister suggested the moss to be replaced by gravel. *Will you credit it that that soulless disgrace to Scotland actually wished to grub it all up and have a rolled gravel path starting up from beneath those immemorial trees!* (Leave it to Psmith, 1923) Norman Murphy wrote: *Sudeley is Blandings castle as sure as Weston Park is Blandings Estate.* (In search of Blandings, 1986) and *The Sudeley Yew alleys are famous in this part of England.* (The World of Wodehouse, 2013). The Yews at Sudeley are still imbedded in a moss carpet.

~~~~\*~~~~

### CHESTNUT TREES

Close to the terrace and the first tee at the Golf Club where Oldest Member used to reside, there were some big chestnut trees.

*He was sitting on the stone seat under the chestnut tree* (The Salvation of Georges MacIntoch, 1921)

*Over the terrace outside the club-house the chestnut trees threw long shadows.* (High Stakes, 1925)

~~~~\*~~~~

CEDARS

Plum evidently liked cedars. Cedars are mentioned more often than other species of trees.

The lawn below the terraces at Blandings was dominated by a splendid Cedar of Lebanon. (Murphy: The P.G. Wodehouse Miscellany, 2015). The shade of this cedar was one of sir Galahad's favorite places. *A little wistfully Sue looked past the shrubbery at the cedar-shaded lawn where the Hon. Galahad Threepwood, thoughtfully sipping a whisky and soda, lay back in a deep chair, cool and at ease.* (Heavy Weather, 1933)

As a diversion to help the girl Clementina (AWOL) to slip in at her school, Bertie Wooster climbed a cedar to drop a flower-pot through the roof of a greenhouse. *I will say for that tree that it might have been placed there for the purpose. My views on the broad, general principle of leaping from branch to branch in a garden belonging to Aunt Agatha's closest friend remained unaltered; but I had to admit that, if it was to be done, this was undoubtedly the tree to do it on. It was a cedar of sorts; and almost before I knew where I was, I was sitting on top of the world with the conservatory roof*

gleaming below me. I balanced the flower-pot on my knee and began to tic the string round it. (Jeeves and the Kid Clemantina, 1930)

At least three other young men climbed cedars in Plums stories.

- Augustus Mulliner. It was a bazaar in the garden of Balmoral where Hermione Brimble was living. *She was presiding over a stall in the shade of a large cedar at the edge of the lawn. Augustus Mulliner saw her and fell with a thud that could have been heard as far off as Putney Hill.* Some days later, when Augustus asked her to marry him, she answered "No!". Disappointed he lingered in the garden when a hostile dog entered. *To climb the nearest tree was the work of an instant. It happened, oddly enough, to be the very cedar in the shade of which in happier days Hermione Brimble had sold him a tea-cosy, two Teddy bears ...* (The Right Approach, 1959) The same thing happened to:

- Dudley Finch (Dudley Is Back to Normal (1940),
- Barmy Fotheringay Phipps (Joy Bells for Barmy, 1947).

In Belper Castle a certain window was known as "Leonard's leap". To avoid compromising a woman Lord Leonard in 1787 heroically hurled himself out through this window, managed to cling to the branches of a cedar tree, climb down and escape. (A Damsel in Distress, 1919)

~~~~\*~~~~

### FASTGROWING OAK

*One's attitude towards Life's Little Difficulties should be that of the gentleman in the fable, who sat down on an acorn one day, and happened to doze. The warmth of his body caused the acorn to germinate, and it grew so rapidly that, when he awoke, he found himself sitting in the fork of an oak, sixty feet from the ground. He thought he would go home, but, finding this impossible, he altered his plans. "Well, well," he said, "if I cannot compel circumstances to my will, I can at least adapt my will to circumstances. I decide to remain here." Which he did, and had a not unpleasant time. The oak lacked some of the comforts of home, but the air was splendid and the view excellent.* (Mike, 1909) Plum reused this story in Leave it to Psmith, (1923)

~~~~\*~~~~

TREACHEROUS EL(LU)MS

"Your dog has frightened my kitten up the tree," she (Kay Derrick) said... "You want her brought down?" "Yes, I do." "Leave it to me," said Sam (Shotter). ... "I shouldn't," said Hash (Todhunter)

*heavily. "Only go breaking your neck." ... He hoisted himself into the tree and began to climb rapidly. So much progress did he make that when, a few moments later, Kay called to him, he could not distinguish her words. He scrambled down again. "What did you say?" he asked. "I only said take care," said Kay. "Oh!" said Sam. He resumed his climb. Hash followed him with a pessimistic eye. "A cousin of mine broke two ribs playing this sort of silly game," he said moodily. ... "Also cuts, scratches and contusions. Ellums are treacherous things. You think the branches is all right, but lean your weight on 'em and they snap. That's an ellum he's climbin' now." The kitten allowed itself to be picked up. Hash: "It's now that's the dangerous part, miss," he said. "The coming down, what I mean. I don't say the climbing up one of these 'ere ellums is safe - not what you would call safe; but it's when you're coming down that the nasty accidents occur." A branch snapped but Sam managed to grasp another branch. *It was as if the elm, having played its practical joke and failed, had become discouraged.* (Sam the Sudden, 1925)*

~~~~\*~~~~

### ASPEN

Aunt Dahlia wanted Bertie Wooster to play Santa Claus at her children's Christmas party. *I tottered where I sat. I was trembling like an aspen. I don't know if you've ever seen an aspen - I haven't myself as far as I can remember - but I knew that they were noted for trembling like the dickens.* (Jeeves and the Greasy Bird, 1965) Pongo Twistleton also noted this phenomenon. (Service With a Smile, 1961)

~~~~\*~~~~

A PASSING TREE

I found myself clutching Boko's arm in ill-concealed panic and drawing him beneath a passing tree. (Joy In the Morning, 1947)

~~~~\*~~~~

### TREES AS ESCAPES

*It is not often that Aunt Dahlia, normally as genial a bird as ever encouraged a gaggle of hounds to get their noses down to it, lets her angry passions rise, but when she does, strong men climb trees and pull them up after them.* (Right Ho, Jeeves, 1934)

~~~~\*~~~~