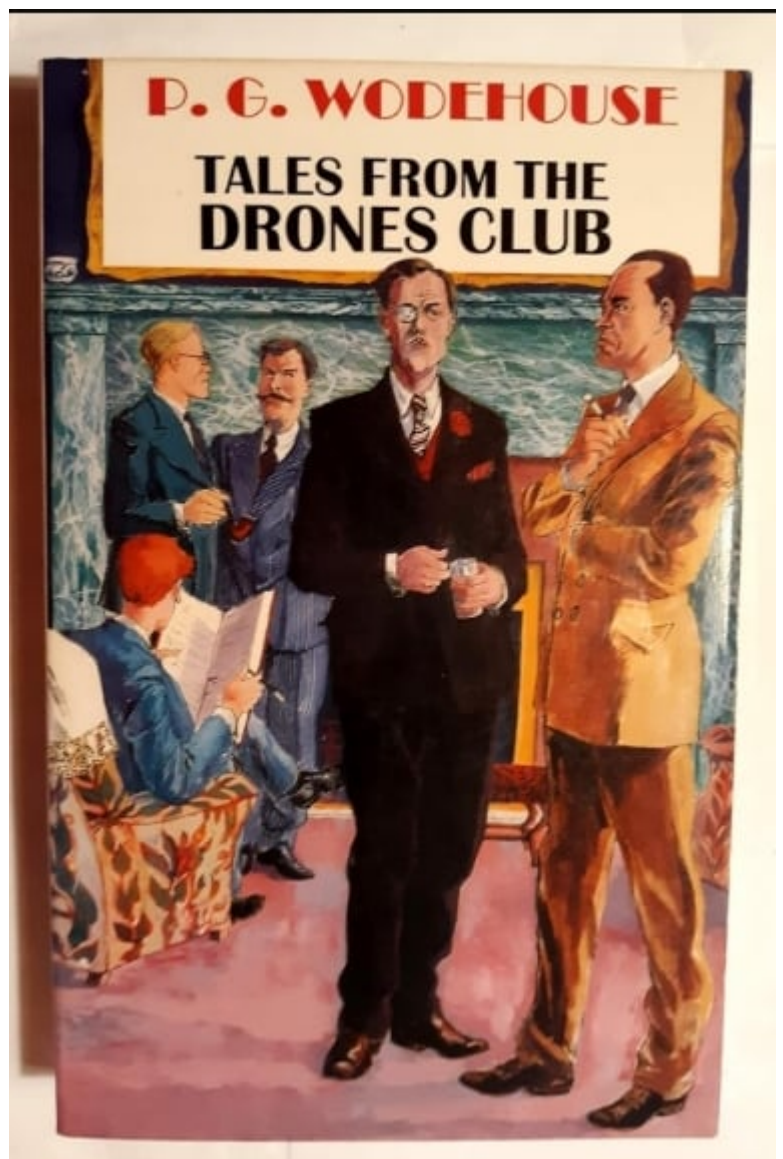


Ouch! Nothing is the Same Any More

By Reg Green

With the pace of technological change having accelerated so fast that even teenage boys often can't keep up, we have become used to words that had stayed stable for centuries changing their meaning overnight.

One particularly (dare I say it?) flighty word – drone – came to me this week with the attack on Russia's Engels air base. When I was growing up a drone was unequivocally a bee with a quite extraordinary sex life. Then a few years ago it conjured up the prospect of having your shaving cream or new shoes delivered just in time. Now it means death from the skies.



But to a generation of readers like me its association has always been with the charming but gossamer-light well-to-do young gentlemen created by P.G. Wodehouse who spent their days sipping drinks decorously but relentlessly and talking

about golf scores and this week's shattered love of a lifetime. They had butlers (or 'gentlemen's gentlemen') who nursed them through their fearsome hangovers or snatched them from a dreadful marriage just as the church doors were closing in on them.

Jeeves, Wodehouse's supreme creation, who did not walk into a room but 'shimmered' in so as not to add a grain of sound to his employer's morning headaches, was the epitome of these saviors. But Oscar Wilde's Lane was immaculate too. Asked to comment on his employer's piano playing, he replied. "I didn't think it was polite to listen, sir."

And what, with his unerring choice of words, did Wodehouse call the club where he set many of his stories about these lighter-than-air beings? The Drones.

It's a long way from Ukraine, isn't it?



Still from the TV series Jeeves and Wooster