

BY THE WAY



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WODEHOUSE IN THE OED – 4

Of over 1,600 P G Wodehouse quotations in the current edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, some 192 are principal citations, indicating either the first or only use of a word or of the particular nuance for which it appears. The first 93 were included in *By The Way* Numbers 5, 8 and 11.

Citations in the *OED* are derived from research by a large panel appointed by the Editors, augmented by information provided by the public. One cannot say definitively that these words or their usage were Wodehouse inventions, merely that the Editors have learned of no earlier use. In fact, readers will recognise that PGW himself used certain expressions earlier than the quotations selected.

Number 1930 *Very Good, Jeeves (The Spot of Art)*

A woman has tossed my heart lightly away, but what of it? . . . The voice of love seemed to call me, but it was a wrong number.

Oil (out of) 1925 *Carry On, Jeeves (The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy)*

“As man to man, do you want to oil out of this thing?”

Oil (in) 1929 *Mr Mulliner Speaking (The Reverent Wooing of Archibald)*

It would be a simple task to oil in, insert the soap, and buzz back undetected.

Oiled (round) 1930 *Very Good, Jeeves (Jeeves and the Song of Songs)*

I . . . oiled round to where Jeeves awaited me.

Old horse 1906 *Love among the Chickens, ch5*

“Garney, old horse, you’re a marvel! You think of everything. We’ll buckle too right away.”

One 1925 *Carry On, Jeeves (Bertie Changes His Mind)*

“Story? Story? . . . I wonder if you have heard the one about the stockbroker and the chorus-girl?”

One-ring 1922 *The Clicking of Cuthbert (Ordeal by Golf)*

“No human being could play golf against a one-ring circus like that without blowing up.”

One (up) 1924 *Leave it to Psmith, ch1*

“Which would make her pretty chirpy, as well as putting you one up.”

Onion 1935 *Right Ho, Jeeves, ch7*

“I claim the right to have a pop at these problems, without having everybody behave as if Jeeves was the only onion in the hash.”

Oofiness 1935 *The Luck of the Bodkins, ch17*

His amazing oofiness had a tendency to slip from the mind.

Oojah-cum-spiff 1930 *Very Good, Jeeves (Jeeves and the Impending Doom)*

“All you have to do,” I said, “is to carry on here for a few weeks more, and everything will be oojah-cum-spiff.”

Ooze 1929 *Mr Mulliner Speaking (The Passing of Ambrose)*

She had planned to lure him into the thing and then ooze off and land him with these septic kids.

Opportunity 1942 *Money in the Bank, ch20*

Opportunity knocks but once, and he had allowed it to knock in vain.

Pain (in the neck) 1924 *Leave it to Psmith, ch9*

“He got there first, damn him! Wouldn’t that give you a pain in the neck!”

Park 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves (Pearls Mean Tears)*

At this point the brother, who after shedding a floppy overcoat and parking his hat on a chair he had been standing by . . . gave a little cough.

Park 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves (A Letter of Introduction)*

The policeman, having retrieved a piece of chewing-gum from the underside of a chair, where he had parked it against a rainy day, went off into a corner.

Patch 1926 *The Heart of a Goof (The Heart of a Goof)*

How like life it all was! . . . We strike a good patch and are beginning to think pretty well of ourselves and along comes a George Parsloe.

Pay-off 1947 *Full Moon, ch7*

A raconteur of established reputation expects something better than silence when he comes to the pay-off of one of his best stories.

Penalty 1935 *The Luck of the Bodkins, ch15*

"The first thing she would do, if she was a sensible kid, would be to go to her lawyer and have a contract drawn up and signed, with penalty clauses."

People 1953 *Performing Flea*

In Dormitory 309 the People's Choice was good old George Travers.

Persp. 1923 *The Inimitable, Jeeves (No Wedding Bells for Bingo)*

The good old persp. was bedewing my forehead by this time in a pretty lavish manner.

Pie-faced 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves (The Startling Dressiness of a Lift Attendant)*

"Did you put that pie-faced infant up to ballyragging Mr Bassington-Bassington?"

Pipped 1924 *Ukridge (The Debut of Battling Billson)*

"Bad luck his getting pipped on the post like that."

Plaster 1924 *Bill the Conqueror, ch15*

Freddy had got so plastered and tried to play the trap-drums.

Plonk 1903 *Tales of St Austin's (How Pillingshot Scored)*

There was a beautiful, musical *plonk*, and the ball soared to the very opposite quarter of the field.

Plush 1930 *Very Good, Jeeves (Jeeves and the Old School Chum)*

He was, to all appearances, absolutely on plush. He ate well, slept well, was happily married.

Poof 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves (All's Well)*

The fact is, I suppose, I'd seen so many of young Bingo's love affairs start off with a whoop and a rattle and poof themselves out half-way down the straight that I couldn't believe he had actually brought it off at last.

Poop-stick 1930 *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, Act I scene I*

"I believe she really does care for that poop-stick . . . Fancy loving a man called Osbert Bassington-Bassington.

Posh 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves (Introducing Claude and Eustace)*

Practically every posh family in the country has called him in at one time or another.

Posh 1903 *Tales of St Austin's (L'affaire Uncle John)*

That waistcoat . . . being quite the most push (*sic*) thing of the sort in Cambridge.

Pottiness 1933 *Heavy Weather ch3*

It was not primarily his pottiness that led him to steal the Empress.

Press agented 1909 *The Swoop, pt ii, ch2*

"Come now, your Grand Grace, is it a deal? Four hundred and fifty chinking o'Goblins a week for one hall a night, and press-agented at eight hundred and seventy-five.

Prompt 1922 *Jill the Reckless, ch14*

The assistant stage-director bent sedulously over the footlights . . . shading his eyes with the prompt script.

Poundage 1930 *Very Good, Jeeves (Jeeves and the Song of Songs)*

Women who have anything to do with opera . . . always appear to run to surplus poundage.

A Further Selection of Principal Citations Will Appear in By The Way, September 2002