



BY THE WAY

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Wodehouse's Lesser Clergy – Part I

Following last September's survey of Wodehouse's Bishops and Archbishops, this issue starts a review of the lesser clergy who graced his pages - the Deans, Vicars, Rectors and Curates who number well over fifty. Travelling down the alphabetical list of surnames, incorporating the occasional geographical appointment, in this issue we reach Canon Fosberry, who officiated at Market Blandings.

Cuthbert 'Bill' Bailey, Curate

A large, likeable man with a high moral sense who had been educated at Harrow before meeting up with Pongo Twistleton at Oxford. He refused to submit to blackmail, his ultimate reward being a visit to a registry office with Myra Schoonmaker.

(Service with a Smile)

Rev. Mr Barlitt

He recommended to Mike Jackson's father that Sedleigh would be an appropriate school for Mike to attend in place of Wrykyn.

(Mike)

Rev. James Bates

The nephew of Rev. Francis Heppenstall received nepotistic help when he had urgent need of a long sermon to impress some special visitors to his church at Gandle-by-the-Hill, where he was acting as locum for the Rector. Considered a rank outsider with a fifteen-minute rating in the Great Sermon Handicap, he outwitted his rivals by borrowing his uncle's masterpiece entitled *Brotherly Love*.

*(‘The Great Sermon Handicap’ in
The Inimitable Jeeves)*

Rev. James Beckett

The Headmaster of Beckford College, who opened interviews with suspected miscreants by asking “Why have I sent for you?”

(A Prefect's Uncle)

Rev. James Belford

The respected Rector at Market Blandings at the time of the Empress's first triumph. His son, James Bartholomew Belford, achieved a triumph of his own, successfully wooing the Emsworth niece Angela with the assistance of the Empress herself.

(‘Fig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey!’ in Blandings Castle)

Rev. Mr Bellamy

The 89-year-old incumbent at Hockley-cum-Meston, he was about to retire and leave a vacancy in a living controlled by Major Plank, who, after scouring the countryside for a replacement, found just the man in Harold ‘Stinker’ Pinker.

(Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves)

Rev. Rupert ‘Beefy’ Bingham

A muscular friend of Freddie Threepwood and Bertie Wooster, he held an appointment at Bermondsey East before staying at Blandings under the pseudonym ‘Popjoy’, successfully wooing the Emsworth niece Gertrude and landing the newly vacant post of Vicar at Much Matchingham.

*(‘Company for Gertrude’ and ‘The Go-Getter’ in
Blandings Castle; ‘Jeeves and the Song of Songs’ in
Very Good, Jeeves)*

Very Rev. Dean of Bittlesham

He conducted the wedding service for Adrian Mulliner and his bride, Millicent, but afterwards, having seen the bridegroom smile, his evidently guilty conscience persuaded him to ask Adrian if he could have a word in private.

(‘The Smile That Wins’ in Mulliner Nights)

Rev. Mr Blake

The Vicar of East Wobsley, George Mulliner's Worcestershire village, where the local peasantry run riot with pitchforks at every opportunity.

(‘The Truth About George’ in Meet Mr Mulliner)

Canon Blenkinsop

A theoretical parson recalled to mind by Aline Hemmingway when first meeting Bertie Wooster as someone who had once come to preach at her brother's church at Chipley-in-the-Glen.

(‘Aunt Agatha Speaks Her Mind’ in The Inimitable Jeeves)

Rev. Mr Braithwaite

The retiring Vicar of Much Matchingham, ordered by his doctor to the south of France.

(‘Company for Gertrude’ in *Blandings Castle*)

Rev. Stanley ‘Pieface’ Brandon

The shrewd and extrovert Vicar of Lower-Briskett-in-the-Midden, he fondly recalled memories of his time as Cambridge heavyweight boxing champion when rebuked by his Bishop for wearing too many orphreys on his chasuble.

(‘Mulliner’s Buck-U-Uppo’ in *Meet Mr Mulliner*)

Rev. Ambrose Briscoe

It is not absolutely clear whether this man of the cloth is related to the Reverend P P, but it is clear that both were blessed with daughters named Angelica. It may simply be that the name ‘Ambrose’ is a form of nickname – or on the other hand, it may not. In either case, he was the brother of Colonel Briscoe of Maiden Eggesford.

(*Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen*)

Rev. P P Briscoe

In charge of the souls of the local peasantry at Maiden Eggesford, he was also the father of an Angelica, who caused consternation in at least three bosoms simultaneously.

(‘Tried in the Furnace’ in *Young Men in Spats*)

Rev. Aubrey Brotherhood

A curate at Ashenden Oakshott, whose timely outbreak of measles enabled him to avoid judging bonny babies.

(*Uncle Dynamite*)

Rev. Septimus Brown

An aged master at St Austin’s, with no appreciation of the ways of modern boys.

(‘Author!’ in *Tales of St Austin’s*)

C D Codger, Sub-Dean, Westminster Cathedral

An Old Wrykynian, whose appointment to the junior sub-deanery at Westminster was announced as one of the highlights of the year at an Old Wrykynian dinner that Ukridge attended.

(‘The Long Arm of Looney Coote’ in *Ukridge*)

Rev. Joseph Dacre

He played cricket for Cambridge in the 1890s and later captained the Marvis Bay team.

(‘The Lost Bowlers’ in *Strand Magazine*)

Rev. Cuthbert Dibble

The Vicar of Boustead Parva, receiving nine minutes in the Great Sermon Handicap, remained among the also-rans when all the returns were in.

(‘The Great Sermon Handicap’ in *The Inimitable Jeeves*)

Rev. W Dix

He, too, failed to interest the judges in the Great Sermon Handicap, despite having been fourth favourite, receiving just five minutes. The faithful congregation listening to him at Little Clickton-in-the-Wold evidently did not come up with sufficient inspiration on the day.

(‘The Great Sermon Handicap’ in *The Inimitable Jeeves*)

Rev. Trevor ‘Catsmeat’ Entwhistle

Headmaster of Harchester College, he is, like his old friends the Bishop of Stortford and Rev. Stanley Brandon, an old Harcastrian. He was much exercised to find that, after sharing a small Buck-U-Uppo with the Bishop, he had surreptitiously helped him paint pink a newly-erected statue of Lord Hemel of Hempstead.

(‘The Bishop’s Move’ in *Meet Mr Mulliner*)

Rev. Cyril Ferguson

The curate at Little Weeting was called upon by Maud Marsh to rescue her from a ‘rough sort of tramp kind of man’ who had been following her for miles. His consequent reproach to her brother Lord Belfer was firm and threatening, and (mistakenly assuming his Lordship had had one too many) he suggested that he should perhaps learn to do with just one drink, for soon it would be too late. Having got into his stride, he went on to explain to Lord Belfer that with a little perseverance, he would soon get the same pleasure from cocoa.

(*A Damsel in Distress*)

Rev. Herbert Fitch

The father of Sally, and resident Vicar in Much Middlefold, where he coached young men for their Diplomatic Service exams.

(*Bachelors Anonymous*)

Canon Fosberry

The respected Vicar of Market Blandings was lucky enough to receive a visit from Lady Julia Fish on her return from a shopping trip to Shrewsbury.

(*Heavy Weather*)