

BY THE WAY



Occasional Newsletters from The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

Number 5

September 1998

WODEHOUSE IN THE OED – I

As mentioned in *Wooster Sauce No 1*, P G Wodehouse has over 1,600 quotations in the current edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Of these, 192 are principal citations, indicating either the first or only use of a word or of the particular nuance for which it appears.

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.

Aisle 1940 *Quick Service*, ch12

I made the speech of a lifetime. I had them tearing up the seats and rolling in the aisles.

Angel-face 1913 *The Little Nugget pt I* ch1

“Ogden, darling . . . stay by me, angel-face.”
“Oh, slush!” muttered angel-face.

Barge 1903 *Tales of St Austin’s*
(*How Pillingshot Scored*)

There was something wonderfully entertaining in the process of ‘bargeing’ the end man off the edge of the form into space.

Beat 1917 *Uneasy Money*, ch7

They pay me money for that! . . . Can you beat it?

Bee-farming 1909 *Globe By The Way Book*, p124

Lord Sangazure has already tired of his latest hobby, bee-farming.

Beefy 1903 *A Prefect’s Uncle*, ch15

I doubled across to bring off a beefy c-and-b.

Bend 1910 *Psmith in the City*, ch18

If any tactless person were to publish those very able speeches, . . . our revered chief would be more or less caught bending . . . as regards his chances of getting in as Unionist candidate at Kenningford.

Biff 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves*
(*Jeeves Exerts the Old Cerebellum*)

Bingo biffs about London on a pretty comfortable allowance.

(*The Metropolitan Touch*)

I can’t go chucking all my engagements . . . in order to biff down to Twing.

Billiken 1914 *The Man Upstairs*
(*Ahead of Schedule*)

When you send a girl three bouquets, a bracelet and a gold Billiken with ruby eyes, you do not expect an entire absence of recognition.

Bite 1925 *Carry On, Jeeves*
(*The Artistic Career of Corky*)

His principal source of income . . . was derived from biting the ear of a rich uncle.

Blue-eyed 1924 *Bill the Conqueror*, ch19

If ever there was a blue-eyed boy, you will be it.

Bogey 1922 *The Clicking of Cuthbert*
(*A Mixed Threesome*)

“Weren’t you giving yourself rather a large family?” . . . “Was I?” he said, dully. “I don’t know. What’s bogey?”

Book 1946 *Money in the Bank*, ch28

There's nothing in the book of the words to prevent Mrs Cork having the bozo . . . stowed away in the cooler, if he's a thief.

Bring 1924 *Ukridge*

(The Long Arm of Looney Coote)

It may be that my bit will turn out to be just the trifle that brings home the bacon.

Bubble 1918 *Piccadilly Jim*, ch23

From the direction of the street, came the roar of a starting automobile. . . . "Gee! He's beat it in my bubble – and it was a hired one."

Buttling 1918 *Piccadilly Jim*, ch19

"How on earth did you come to be here? What's the idea? Why the buttling?"

**Cart 1903 *Tales of St Austin's*
*(L'Affaire Uncle John)***

Half-way through the over I carted a half-volley into the pav.

Cauliflower 1907 *The White Feather*, ch5

"My right ear feels like a cauliflower. Does it look rum?"

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

"Did he seem fond of her?" "Couldn't keep his eyes off the chassis."

Cheater 1921 *Jill the Reckless*, ch9

A tall guy in tortoiseshell cheaters.

Cheerio 1919 *A Damsel in Distress*, ch21

He refilled the glasses . . . and raised his own to his lips. "Cheerio! Here's to us all!"

**Chemmy 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves*
*(The Delayed Exit of Claude and Eustace)***

We went on from Ciro's to play chemmy with some fellows.

Clean 1917 *Uneasy Money*, ch17

Then the man comes down for a visit and goes about cleaning up the neighbouring houses.

**Cloth-head 1927 *Meet Mr Mulliner*
*(Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo)***

"You've forgotten it again, you old cloth-head."

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

"Let's beef in or we'll be missing the educational two-reel comic."

Corkingly 1917 *Uneasy Money*, ch15

"I saw a most corkingly pretty girl bicycling down to the village one morning."

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

When not pleased Aunt Dahlia, having spent most of her youth in the hunting-field, has a crispish way of expressing herself.

**Crust 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves*
*(The Purity of the Turf)***

The blighter had the cold, cynical crust to look me in the eyeball without a blink.

Cuppa 1925 *Sam the Sudden*, ch6

"Come and have a cuppa coffee."

**Dance-director 1932 *Louder and Funnier*
*(Fair Play for Audiences)***

The dance-director is instructed to think up a lot of different business for the first encore.

Deep-dish 1936 *Laughing Gas*, ch2

I polished off the steak and put in a bid for deep-dish apple pie with a bit of cheese on the side.

Dodderingness 1915 *Something Fresh*, ch3

The amiable dodderingness which marked every branch of his life.

A Further Selection of Principal Citations Will Appear in By The Way, September 1999