



BY THE WAY

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Painters and Painting – Part III

This issue in our series of Wodehouse references to Painters and Paintings completes the listing of the genuine and fictional artists in Wodehouse's work. Information about the paintings referred to will be provided in the final part in 2020.

Robichaux, Claude

A late (and probably fictitious) member of the Barbizon School, whose *Reclining Nude*, bought by the Duke of Dunstable, sent a tremor round the art galleries that his work was starting to get 'hot'. Apparently he was likely to become a sort of sensation reminiscent of Renoir, whose work you could buy at one time for a few francs, but now you would have to sell the family jewels.

(A Pelican at Blandings)

Robinson, Wilfred

A copy he made of a Gainsborough painting could be found hanging at Shipley Hall. As Mortimer Bayliss said, "He painted a beautiful Gainsborough."

(Something Fishy)

Romney, George (1734–1802)

Thieves who stole one of his paintings would be unlikely to go for a Wetherby.

(Uneasy Money)

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel (1828–1882)

A poet and artist, renowned as an authority on blessed damozels.

(Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves)

Sellers, Reginald

An offensively patronising would-be painter who in rare intervals between addressing Annette Brougham (who lived in the same block as he did) as "Ah, little one!" converted his limited talents to the commercials for Little Gem Sardines, the Restawhile Settee, and Waukeesey Shoes, as Annette was at pains to point out to the equally poor but far more personable Alan Beverley (see *By The Way*, March 2017).

(‘The Man Upstairs’ from The Man Upstairs)

Smith (see Bennison, Jeff)

A synonym of Jeff Bennison (*By The Way*, March

2017). Gally Threepwood was very clear in his instruction to Vicky Underwood that when she met him, she should address him as Mister Smith.

(Sunset at Blandings)

Somerville, Marjorie

Her painting of a landscape with a cow in one corner was rejected by the Royal Academy.

(‘Cupid and the Paint-Brush’ from Windsor Magazine)

Stanborough, Billy

An artist friend of Lord Mountry, who tried to get him a commission to paint the world's leading gargoyle, Ogden Ford, for his mother's pleasure, overlooking the fact of some importance that Ogden was not living with her, and she had no power to make him available to sit.

(The Little Nugget)

Stoker, Emerald

The younger daughter of J. Washburn Stoker, she studied painting at the Slade.

(Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves)

Tad

An artist on a New York paper, the *Journal*, who showed how far Kid Brady's star was in the ascendant by drawing a picture of him.

(Psmith, Journalist)

Tintoretto (1519–1594)

An illustrious artist with a familiar name, but one who might have had difficulty in selling comic strips.

(Sunset at Blandings)

Townend

An artist friend of Bob Romney who spent the winter thinking out schemes for big canvases. We can be confident that the name was chosen in tribute to Wodehouse's friend from Dulwich

College, William ('Bill') Townend, who illustrated Wodehouse's novel *The White Feather*.

(‘Ladies and Gentlemen v Players’
from *Windsor Magazine*)

van der Faes, Pieter

See Lely, Sir Peter, *By The Way*, March 2018

Van Meegeren, Hans (or Henricus) (1889–1947)

He started forging paintings in a modest way with a de Hooch, worked up to Vermeer, and made a cool half a million sterling from his final effort. He was charged in 1945 with selling art treasures to the Germans, but was acquitted when he proved that he had painted them himself. Two years later he was charged with forgery and given 12 months' imprisonment.

(*Something Fishy*)

Vermeer, Johannes (1632–1675)

The copy of one of his paintings to be found at Shipley Hall might have been the work of either Jan Dircks or Paul Muller, both of whom were, by repute, pupils of Van Meegeren (see above).

(*Something Fishy*)

Weatherby, Joss

He sold his artistic soul, temporarily, to the commercial devil, preparing posters for Paramount Ham while working for Duff and Trotter. Having left D&T under a cloud, he joined the Steptoe household, during which time he produced a painting of Beatrice Chavender which was good, but perhaps not quite so good as if it had been painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

(*Quick Service*)

Wetherby, Lord Algernon

His American wife, Polly, described his hobby of 'painting footling little pictures' as something she didn't mind since, until he developed an artistic temperament, it kept him out of mischief in his studio down in Washington Square. In reality, he was an artist of such modest talents that thieves who had stolen works by Gainsborough or Romney, for example, would not have been satisfied merely by acquiring one of his.

(*Uneasy Money*)

Wheeler, James B.

An artist friend of Archie Moffam, whom he engaged as an artist's model to adorn a magazine

cover, and persisted with him despite his difficulty in maintaining the pose, in a two-piece bathing suit of vivid lemon colour. All came to nought when the studio appeared to be blown up by a barrel of home brew.

(*Indiscretions of Archie*)

Whistler, James McNeill (1834–1903)

A skilled practitioner who might reasonably have felt as much discontent in trying to ring the changes to meet a client's wishes if he had made painting pub signs his profession as Mrs Beale felt on being criticised for the lack of variety in her meals when she only had chickens and eggs as raw materials.

(*Love Among the Chickens*)

In answer to the question "Who the dickens was Whistler, anyway?", Jeeves explained to Bill, the ninth Earl of Rowcester, that he was

A figure, landscape and portrait painter of considerable distinction, m'lord, born in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1834. His *Portrait of My Mother*, painted in 1872, is particularly esteemed by the cognoscenti and was purchased by the French Government for the Luxembourg Gallery, Paris, in the year 1892. His works are individual in character and notable for subtle harmony.

(*Ring for Jeeves*)

Winfield, Kirk

His private income allowed him to indulge in painting as a hobby after studying in Paris. It was rather a habit with him to start a new painting in a vague spirit of adventure, and decide on a title when he could see what it looked like.

(*The Coming of Bill*)

Yeardsley, Clarence

After stealing Elizabeth Shoolbred from her fiancé Reggie Pepper, Clarence married her within a month. He was an artist who was inordinately proud of his *Jocund Spring* and anything but proud of his father's artistic ability.

(‘Doing Clarence a Bit of Good’
from *My Man Jeeves*)

Yeardsley, Sir Matthew

Clarence's father, and an extremely bad artist who maintained an inexplicable attachment to his *Venus*, even after presenting it to his son as a wedding present.

(‘Doing Clarence a Bit of Good’
from *My Man Jeeves*)