

BY THE WAY

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WODEHOUSE IN THE OED – 3

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 64 were included in *By The Way* Numbers 5 and 8.

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.

[One] Jump ahead 1940 *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets (Sonny Boy)*

“If ever I saw a baby that looked like something that was one jump ahead of the police . . . it is this baby of Bingo’s. Definitely the criminal type.”

Lame-brain 1929 *Mr Mulliner Speaking (The Reverent Wooing of Archibald)*

A girl with an aunt who knew all about Shakespeare and Bacon must of necessity live in a mental atmosphere into which a lame-brained bird like himself could hardly hope to soar.

Lemon 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves, ch1*

“What might you have missed?” I asked, the old lemon being slightly clouded.

Lit up 1948 *Spring Fever, ch18*

A lit-up Augustus Robb should, he considered, provide a spectacle which nobody ought to miss.

Locust Stick 1919 *The Coming of Bill, pt1, ch1*

The policeman . . . relieved his feelings by dispersing the crowd with well-directed prods of his locust-stick.

Loony Bin 1919 *My Man Jeeves (Doing Clarence a Bit of Good)*

If you’re absolutely off your rocker, but don’t find it convenient to be scooped into a luny-bin, you simply explain . . . it was just your artistic temperament.

Loony Doctor 1925 *Carry On, Jeeves (The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy)*

“ . . . old Sir Roderick, who’s a loony-doctor and nothing but a loony-doctor, however much you may call him a nerve-specialist . . . ”

M-p-h-ing 1960 *Jeeves in the Offing, ch19*

I deposited Upjohn at the ‘Bull and Bush’ and started m-p-h-ing homeward.

Ma 1932 *Louder and Funnier (About This Book)*

Faber *mi* got hold of the manuscript and refused to give it up and Faber *ma* was so annoyed by his snorts and chuckles that he hit him over the head with a *croisson* or small French roll.

Map 1922 *The Clicking of Cuthbert (The Rough Stuff)*

The portrait . . . was that of a man in the early thirties. . . . “What a map!” exclaimed the young man.

Mat 1924 *Leave It To Psmith, ch1*

"I . . . heard . . . you and Aunt Constance going to the mat about poor old Phyllis."

Matey 1919 *A Damsel in Distress, ch16*

We got extremely matey.

Matiest 1946 *Joy in the Morning, ch25*

I . . . continued to tut-tut a bit at having missed the young pipsqueak, with whom my relations had always been of the matiest.

Merger 1949 *Uncle Dynamite, ch2*

"I have always hoped that you and Sally would eventually form a merger."

Mesa 1951 *The Old Reliable, ch5*

There he was . . . under the dressing-table, with his fanny sticking up like a mesa in the Mohave desert.

Metrop 1919 *My Man Jeeves (The Aunt and the Sluggard)*

Dear old Rocky made him look like a publicity agent for the old metrop!

Mid-season [form] 1921 *Indiscretions of Archie, ch19*

I was just putting old Bill through it . . . with a view to getting him into mid-season form.

Middle 1919 *A Damsel in Distress, ch2*

My dad ran a Bide a Wee Home for flowers, and I used to know them all by their middle names.

[Going home with the] Milk 1917 *The Man with Two Left Feet (The Romance of an Ugly Policeman)*

You talk of a man 'going home with the milk' when you mean that he sneaks in in the small hours of the morning.

Million 1974 *Aunts aren't Gentlemen, ch9*

His refusal to do as Miss Cook asked was unequivocal. "Not in a million years," was the expression he used.

Million [Dollars] 1925 *Carry On, Jeeves (Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest)*

It was one of those topping mornings, and I had just climbed out from under the cold shower feeling like a million dollars.

Mob-Warfare 1930 *Very Good, Jeeves (The Ordeal of Young Tuppy)*

By the time he had come to the surface, a sort of mob-warfare was going on at the other side of the field.

Mopping [it up] 1921 *Indiscretions of Archie, ch7*

"Seacliff always had a—a tendency—a—a weakness—it was a family failing—" "Mopping it up, do you mean? Shifting it?"

[Just like] Mother [makes] 1919 *A Damsel in Distress, ch1*

There's a new musical comedy at the Regal. Opened last night, and seems to be just like mother makes.

Mute 1962 *Service with a Smile, ch1*

"That's why she slinks about the place like a funeral mute, is it?"

Niff 1934 *Thank You, Jeeves, ch3*

"I've started breeding mice and puppies. And, of course, they niff a bit."

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

Every time I started to pull a nifty, Sir Roderick swung round on me with such a piercing stare that it stopped me in my tracks.

Non-Starter 1934 *Right Ho, Jeeves, ch2*

I reminded myself that this non-starter and I had been at school together.

Not-at-all 1936 *Laughing Gas, ch2*

I was not-at-alling and shoving the handkerchief up my sleeve again.

A Further Selection of Principal Citations Will Appear in By The Way, September 2001