

BY THE WAY



Occasional Newsletters from The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

Number 17

September 2002

WODEHOUSE IN THE OED – 5

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 127 were included in *By The Way* Numbers 5, 8, 11 and 14.

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.

Rannygazoo 1924 *Bill the Conqueror*,
ch11

“I’ll hang around for a while just in case friend Pilbeam starts any rannygazoo.”

Raspberry 1919 *A Damsel in Distress*,
ch6

Convict son totters up the steps of the old home and punches the bell! What awaits him beyond? Forgiveness? Or the raspberry?

Rejection 1907 *Not George Washington*,
part ii, ch2

I papered the wall with editorial rejection-forms, of which I was beginning to have a representative collection.

Repaint 1922 *The Clicking of Cuthbert*
(*The Clicking of Cuthbert*)

“Why, you are a pearl among women, the queen of your sex. . . . You make the rest look like battered repaints.”

Rib 1939 *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*, *ch3*

“Leave it to me. I will get into his ribs for you.”

Ribbing 1935 *The Luck of the Bodkins*,
ch24

“I was just kidding. Sure! Ribbing, we call it over here.”

Right-Ho 1936 *Laughing Gas*, *ch4*

I had met her when she was taking a holiday at Cannes. We became chummy. I asked her to marry me. She right-hoed. So far, so good.

Ring (seat) 1929 *Mr Mulliner Speaking*
(*The Ordeal of Osbert Mulliner*)

The sportsman in him whispered that he was missing something good, for ring-seats to view which many men would have paid large sums.

Rose-hopper 1919 *A Damsel in Distress*, *ch1*

The small, yellowish-white insect . . . sometimes called a rose-hopper.

(rub) Salt (into the wound) 1967 *Company for Henry*, *ch10*

He could see that Henry was deeply stirred, and he had no wish to rub salt into his wounds.

Sand-trap 1922 *The Clicking of Cuthbert*
(*Sundered Hearts*)

As for the deep sand-trap in front of the seventh green, he spent so much of his time in it that there was some informal talk . . . of charging him a small weekly rent.

Sec 1960 *Jeeves in the Offing*, *ch16*

I was in my room, having shed the moistened outer crust and substituted something a bit more *sec* in pale flannel.

Shattering 1924 *Bill the Conqueror, ch5*

Any ordinary disaster she might have coped with, but this was too shattering.

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

I bounded into the sitting-room, but it was empty. Jeeves shimmied in.

Shrubbery 1937 *Lord Emsworth and Others (Buried Treasure)*

"Something has eaten off Sir Preston's moustache . . . I met him outside, and the shrubbery had completely disappeared."

Shove 1902 *The Pothunters, ch5*

"You might shove up the list tonight."

Shot 1906 *Love among the Chickens, Epilogue*

"Oh, shot, sir! Shot, indeed!"

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

It was one of those occasions about which I shall prattle to my grandchildren if I ever have any, which at the moment of going to press seems more or less of a hundred-to-one shot.

Shot 1928 *Good Morning, Bill, Act 2*

"I think I'll take a shot in a glass."

Sit (in on) 1925 *Sam the Sudden, ch13*

"Do you mean to say . . . that if Soapy was sitting in with the Archbishop of Canterbury on a plan for skinning a sucker, the archbishop wouldn't split Even Stephen?"

Sleeve (across the windpipe) 1952 *Barmy in Wonderland, ch1*

My wardrobe perished in the holocaust, of course. When you're being given the sleeve across the windpipe by Acts of God, you don't waste time fumbling around for socks and trousers.

Slippiness 1974 *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen, ch12*

I think I outlined the position . . . rather well, making it abundantly clear that . . . the cat . . .

must be restored to its proprietor with all possible slippiness.

Slosh 1936 *Laughing Gas, ch10*

I recalled that I had noticed her hand quiver once or twice, as if itching for the slosh.

Smooth 1922 *Jill the Reckless, ch19*

"What charming manners Major Selby has. So polished. . . . So smooth!" "Smooth," said Mr Pilkington dourly, "is right!"

Snapper 1924 *Leave it to Psmith, ch1*

"You see, this fellow understands my snappers."

Snooter 1923 *The Inimitable Jeeves (Aunt Agatha Speaks Her Mind)*

My Aunt Agatha . . . wouldn't be on hand to snooter me for at least another six weeks.

Sock 1930 *Very Good, Jeeves (Indian Summer of an Uncle)*

Her name was Maudie and he loved her dearly, but the family would have none of it. They dug down into the sock and paid her off.

Soul-testing 1932 *Louder and Funnier (Butlers and the Buttled)*

The unmistakable look of a man who has passed through some soul-testing experience.

Soupstrainer 1932 *Hot Water, ch8*

He did not propose to have a valet hanging around him festooned with fungus and snorting at him all the time from behind a great beastly soupstrainer.

Soup-and-fish 1918 *Piccadilly Jim, ch1*

He took me to supper at some swell joint where they all had the soup-and-fish on but me.

Soupiness 1963 *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves, ch5*

That squashy soupiness of hers, that subtle air she had of being on the point of talking baby-talk.

Spanner 1934 *Right Ho, Jeeves, ch11*

He should have had sense enough to see that he was throwing a spanner into the works.

The Final Selection of Principal Citations Will Appear in By The Way, September 2003