

Ye Olde Plum News

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SAILING UNDER FALSE FLAG

BERTIE WOOSTER (and JEEVES)

Now, those who know Bertram Wooster best will tell you that he is always at his shrewdest and most level-headed in moments of peril. Who was it who, when gripped by the arm of the law on boat-race night not so many years ago and hauled off to Vine Street police station, assumed in a flash the identity of **Eustace H. Plimsoll**, The Laburnums, Alleyn Road, West Dulwich, thus saving the grand old name of Wooster from being dragged in the mire? (Right Ho, Jeeves, 1934, ch 15)

Without asking Bertie, Bingo Little told his uncle, a great fan of **Rosie M. Banks**, that this was the pen-name of his friend Bertie Wooster. To help Bingo, Bertie agreed to play foul during a lunch with the uncle. *'I always look back to that lunch with a sort of aching regret... Most of the time I might have been eating sawdust for all the good it made to me.'* (No Wedding Bells for Bingo, 1921)

Augustus Fink-Nottle was due at Deverell Hall but was apprehended by the police and detained in coop. His absence would be a disaster for both Gussie and Bertie. The inhabitants didn't know Gussie, and Bertie agreed to take his place. *'In all human affairs there has got to be a goat or Patsy doing the dirty work, and in the present crises I see it has got to be me.'* (The Mating Season, 1949, ch 4)

Bertie had brought Florence Craye to the Mottled Oyster when it was raided by police. He tried to calm Florence. *'Here in a nutshell is the procedure. They round us up, and we push off in an orderly manner to the police station in plain vans... I, for example, generally call myself **Ephraim Gadsby** of The Nasturtiums, Jubilee Road, Streatham Common.'* (Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, 1954, ch 5)

Chief Inspector Witherspoon of Scotland Yard (in reality Jeeves) released Bertie from custody by telling a peace judge that he was taking Bertie to the Yard, where he was known as **Alpine Joe**, because of the blue Alpine hat with a pink feather he usually wore. Jeeves disapproved profoundly of this hat. Bertie thanked Jeeves for saving him: *'I wish there was something I could do to repay you... Ask of me what you will, even unto half my kingdom.'* *'If you could see your way to abandoning your Alpine hat, sir.'* ... *'Very well, Jeeves. So be it.'* (Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves ch 2, 11 and 24)

His friend Oliver Sipperley spent time in jail and Bertie had bad conscience about this. Sippy was depending on his aunt and she had arranged for him to visit the Pringle family. If she found out about his imprisonment she would probably withdraw his allowance. Jeeves suggested Bertie to visit the Pringles impersonating **Oliver Sipperley** which he did. (Without the Option, 1925)

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STANLEY F. UKRIDGE

Ukridge bought a hat and two suits, shoes and collars on an installment system, paying a small amount in advance. *He then pawned one suit to pay for the first few installments, and finally departed, to be known no more. His address he had given - with a false name - at an empty house.* (Love Among the Chickens, 1921, ch 21)

Ukridge, used the name **Mr. Smallweed**, *'just an ordinary business precaution'* and ordered *'absolutely provisionally, you understand'* a tandem bicycle, a camera and some other items from a shop. One of the items broke. A few weeks later the shop-owner began to be unpleasant: *'Wanted me to pay him money!'* Ukridge moved out of the neighbourhood but happened to meet his creditor on the street and fled. *'Why don't you pay the man?'* I suggested. *'Corky, old horse,'* said Ukridge, *with evident disapproval of these reckless fiscal methods, 'talk sense. How can I pay the man?... There's the principle of the thing!'* (No Wedding Bells For Him, 1923)

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RUPERT PSMITH

The Canadian poet Ralston McTodd was outraged by the way the absentminded Lord Emsworth treated him and abandoned the plans to accompany his lordship to Blandings. What's more, the muddleheaded Lord Emsworth had lost his eyeglasses and thought Psmith was the poet. Psmith let him keep his delusion, and accompanied him to Blandings, pretending to be **Ralston McTodd**. (Leave it to Psmith, 1923, ch 6)

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LORD ICKENHAM, "UNCLE FRED"

Pongo Twistleton's uncle Fred swiftly adopted new identities. Pongo and Uncle Fred were out for a walk when it started raining. To get inside for shelter uncle Fred rung the bell at a villa they were passing. They could see a parrot in a window. A maid opened. Uncle Fred said that he was **the man from the bird shop** coming to clip the claws of the parrot. The owners were not at home and the maid was leaving for the day, but she let them in. When the doorbell rang a man asked for Mr. Roddis. Uncle Fred without hesitation said *'I am Mr. Roddis,'* and let him in. Soon three other visitors arrived and Uncle Fred still played this role. When leaving the house, they met a man on the street. Uncle Fred asked him and he confirmed to be Mr. Roddis. Uncle Fred then introduced himself as **Mr. J. G. Bulstrode** from down the road and warned Mr Roddis that

he had intruders in his house, probably thieves. (Uncle Fred Flits By, 1936)

Lord Ickenham intended to visit Ashenden Manor and told Pongo who already was a visitor: *'I go into the residence this evening. And, by the way,'* said Lord Ickenham, *'another small point, I nearly forgot to mention it. My name will be **Brabazon-Plank**. Major Brabazon-Plank, the well-known Brazilian explorer. Don't forget it, will you.'* ... Outside the house, Constable Potter asked for his name. *'Brabazon-Plank, eh? You call yourself Brabazon-Plank, do you? Ho! You look to me more like **George Robinson** of 14 Nasturtium Road, East Dulwich.'* Lord Ickenham stared. *'Don't tell me you're the cop who pinched me that day at the dog races!'* *'Yus, I am ... What are you doing in these parts ... You and your pal Edwin Smith there (Pongo).'* *'So you've recognized him, too?'* (Uncle Dynamite, 1945, ch 7)

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FREDDIE THREEPWOOD

A misunderstanding caused a rift between Freddie and his wife Aggie and she moved to a hotel. Freddie asked his father, Lord Emsworth, to plead for him but he refused. Freddie then visited her, disguised as **Lord Emsworth**. His disguise was a total failure, but his mission a success. *The figure was that of a tall, thin man with white hair and a long and flowing beard of the same venerable hue. Strange as it seemed that a person of such appearance should not have been shot on sight early in his career, he had obviously reached an extremely advanced age. He was either a man of about a hundred and fifty who was rather young for his years or a man of about a hundred and ten who had been aged by trouble.* *'My dear child!'* piped the figure in a weak, quavering voice. *'Freddie!'* cried the girl in the kimono (Aggie). *'Oh, dash it'* said the figure. (Lord Emsworth Acts for the Best, 1926)

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SIR RODERICK GLOSSOP

Bertie: *'Well, when I say 'butler', I use the term loosely. He was dressed like a butler and he behaved like a butler, but in the deepest and truest sense of the word he was not a butler. Reading from left to right he was Sir Roderick Glossop.'* Aunt Dahlia had asked Sir Roderick to Brinkley Court to give an expert opinion on the mental status of a guest, Wilbert Cream. Sir Glossop suggested that as a butler, **Swordfish**, he would be able to observe Wilbert without raising suspicions. (Jeeves in the Offing, 1960, ch 3, 4)

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