

# \*Ye Olde Plum News\*

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## KNOCKED OUT

### BATTLING BILLSON

*Like an animated windmill he cast himself upon the bloke of troubles. He knocked him here, he bounced him there. He committed mayhem upon his person. ... It only remained for the Battler to drive home the final punch, and a hundred enthusiasts, rising to their feet, were pointing out to him desirable locations for it. ... And finally Mr. Billson approached his man and drew back his right arm. Having done this, he looked over his shoulder once more to the referee. It was a fatal blunder. The man who had had a lot of trouble may have been in poor shape, but, like most of his profession, he retained, despite his recent misadventures, a reserve store of energy. Even as Mr. Billson turned his head, he reached down to the floor with his gloved right hand, then, with a final effort, brought it up in a majestic sweep against the angle of the other's jaw. And then ... he buried his left in Mr. Billson's stomach. ... Battling Billson drooped like a stricken flower, settled slowly down, and spread out. (The Début of Battling Billson, 1923)*

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### ALF TODD

*The ropes collided with the small of Alf Todd's back. Something else collided with his chin, He endeavoured to withdraw, but a pulpy glove took him on the odd fungoid growth which he was accustomed laughingly to call his ear. Another glove impinged upon his jaw. And there the matter ended for Alf Todd. 'Battling Billson is the winner,' intoned the vicar. (The Return of Battling Billson, 1923)*

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### STANLEY F. UKRIDGE

*'I think he's asleep.' ... 'Having contrived to be alone with your nephew, Miss Ukridge, he (a thief, stealing from her) slips knock-out drops in his drink --- 'Knock-out drops?' 'A drug of some kind.' (Buttercup Day, 1925)*

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### RUPERT BAXTER

*Lord Ickenham said to Pongo Twistleton: 'If Baxter sees us slip away on some mysterious errand, his detective instincts will undoubtedly be roused. But I have the situation well in hand. I shall give Baxter a knock-out drop.' 'A what?' 'Perhaps you are more familiar*

*with it under the name of Mickey Finn.' 'But where on earth are you going to get a knock-out drop?' 'From Mustard. Unless his whole mode of life has changed since I used to know him, he is sure to have one. ... Baxter raised the glass to his lips. He did not drain it with a hey nonny nonny, but he drained it. It was then too late for him to say 'Hey, nonny nonny,' even if he had wished to. (Uncle Fred in the Spring-time, 1939)*

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### CLAUDE 'MUSTARD' POTT

*The Duke (Dunstable) went to the door and opened it. Lord Ickenham stretched a hand over the brandy glass and opened it. The Duke came back. 'Nobody there.' Someone began to sing 'Bonny Bonny banks of Loch Lomond' outside and Dunstable left Lord Ickenham to catch and molest the marauder. Mustard entered from his hiding place in the bathroom, shocked by the discovery that he had shared hiding place with The Empress of Blandings, which the Duke had pignapped. He was afraid of pigs. He was shaking in every limb. An imperious desire for a quick restorative swept over him, and suddenly he perceived that there was relief in sight. ... 'Mustard! Stop!' Lord Ickenham's warning cry came too late. It was with a sympathetic eye and a tut-tut-ing tongue that Lord Ickenham bent over the remains. (Uncle Fred in the Springtime, 1939)*

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### CONSTABLE ERNEST DOBBS

*Gussie Fink-Nottle had stolen a dog from the police station and was hunted by Constable Dobbs. He passed Bertie and Jeeves and then suddenly climbed a tree. Ernest Dobbs may not have been one of Hampshire's brightest thinkers, but he was smart enough to stand under a tree. And this he proceeded to do. ... To shut out the painful scene which must inevitably ensue, I closed my eyes. It was an odd, chunky sound, like some solid substance striking another solid substance, that made me open them. And when they were opened, I could hardly believe them. Ernest Dobbs, who a moment before had been standing with his feet apart and his thumbs in his belt like a statue of Justice Putting It Across The Evil-Doer, had now assumed what I have heard described as a recumbent position. ... Jeeves, like a warrior sheathing his sword, replaced in his pocket some object which instinct told me was small but serviceable and constructed of india-rubber. ... 'I took the liberty of coshing the officer, sir,' he explained respectfully.*

*'I considered it advisable in the circumstances as the simplest method of averting unpleasantness. Gussie grasped the opportunity and disappeared. (The Mating Season, 1949)*

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### RODERICK SPODE/SIDCUP

*Roderick Spode was going to examine Dahlia Travers' jewelry. Dahlia wanted to prevent this because he would discover that she, in need of money for her magazine, had replaced the jewels with fake ones, without telling her husband. Dahlia had found a cosh on the floor. 'There was Spode, with his back turned, starting to take the necklace out of the case' ... I gasped gurgingly. 'You didn't cosh him?' 'Certainly I coshed him. What would you have had me do? What would Napoleon have done? I took a nice easy half-swing and let go with lots of follow-through, and he fell to earth he knew not where. (Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, 1954)*

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### COSMO WISDOM

*He had in his pocket the only proof that existed that he was not the author of *Cocktail Time*, for the motion picture rights of which the Superba-Llewellyn studio would, he hoped, shortly be bumped up to an offer of two hundred thousand dollars. ... Turning sharply, he perceived Mrs. Gordon Carlisle, and with considerable emotion noted that she was holding, and in the act of raising, one of those small but serviceable rubber instruments known as coshes. ... It was almost immediately after this the roof fell in, and Cosmo knew no more. ... 'Nice work, Sweetie,' said Mr. Carlisle, vewing the remains with satisfaction. 'Just behind the ear, that's the spot.' (Cocktail Time, 1958)*

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### A MINOR COSHED PROPHET

*Mr. Nickerson looked like one of the less amiable prophets of the Old Testament about to interview the captive monarch of the Amalekites. He then made the shocking discovery that the Pekingese he held as security for his claim on Ukridge had disappeared. Ukridge threatened to sue him. He resembled a minor prophet who has been hit behind his ear with a stuffed eelskin. (Ukridge's Dog College, 1923)*

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