

# Newsletter

## Celebrating twenty-five years of the Friends

This year the Friends of the British Library is celebrating its silver jubilee. Since its foundation in January 1989, the Friends of the British Library, a registered charity, has raised money for the Library, helped to buy desirable items for its collections at auction and by private sale, widened its circle of admirers and spread the enjoyment of the riches that the Library has to offer.



During this time, the Friends has raised over £1 million for the Library, supporting acquisitions and projects from renovation to digitisation, co-sponsorship of lecture series and prizes for the winners of bookbinding competitions.

The assistance of the Friends has helped the Library to acquire the bust of George III by the Belfast-born sculptor Peter Turnerelli (1774–1839) which stands in front of the King's Library Tower, the Macclesfield Alphabet Book (1475–1525), the late 7th-century *St Cuthbert Gospel* and the archives of Mervyn Peake, Harold Pinter and Ted Hughes.

It has given money to assist with the purchase of the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* and a football fanzine collection.

An exhibition currently running in the Sir John Ritblat Gallery displays a selection of items acquired with the assistance of the Friends.



Images: Detail from the *Macclesfield Alphabet Book* and *St Cuthbert's Gospel* on display in the British Library's Sir John Ritblat Gallery.



Above is one of the most recent Friends' assisted purchases: a sample of leather tooling which was part of a Dutch bookbinder's repertoire in the early 18th century. It was purchased in 2013 for £5,500.

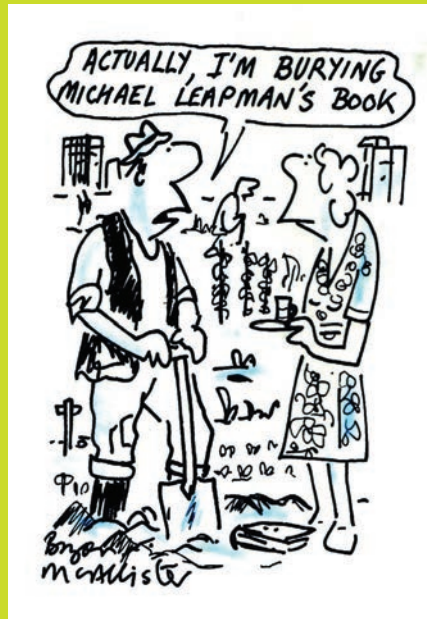
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## Michael Leapman

This cartoon by Bryan McAllister, published in *The Guardian* in 1976 to greet the publication of Michael Leapman's book *One Man and His Plot*, gives an impression at least of the unstoppable nature of its author, a long-standing Friend and user of the British Library who has stepped down as editor of the Newsletter after seven years. Michael is a prolific journalist and author whose first published article appeared in *The Spectator* on 27 June 1958, when he was 20 and doing National Service in the Royal Navy. Headlined "Spontaneous Outburst", it was a sardonic account of preparations for the Queen's Birthday Parade in Chatham – a parade that was called off because of the weather. He has worked in the Middle East, filing copy by air mail for *The Spectator* and the *Observer* from Cyprus and Iran. As well as holding staff jobs at



*The Scotsman*, *The Sun*, *The Times* and the *Daily Express*, he has written for nearly every national paper. At present he contributes

obituaries for the *Independent* and the occasional light-hearted piece for the *Daily Telegraph*, as well as writing about cricket and other matters for *The Oldie*.

Michael has also published biographies of Rupert Murdoch, Inigo Jones, Neil Kinnock and the 18th century nurseryman Thomas Fairchild. Other titles include *The World for a Shilling*, about the Great Exhibition of 1851 and last year's *The Book of the British Library*. He tells us that: "I have no plans to write another book at present". Everyone who has worked with Michael appreciated his energy and professionalism, which will continue to go into his allotment.

(*One Man and His Plot* is available as a print-on-demand item from [faber.co.uk/faberfinds](http://faber.co.uk/faberfinds).)

## Special events

Among the events organised to mark the jubilee, is an evening of lectures on 7 April when individual speakers will focus on items acquired with the assistance of the Friends. Zoe Wilcox, Curator Modern Literary and Theatrical, will examine the posthumous reputation of the artist and writer Mervyn Peake who died in 1968. There was a failed attempt to interest the British Museum in Peake's papers in 1970, and it was to be another 40 years before the archive finally joined the national collection. This illustrated talk will tell the story of Maeve Gilmore's quest to revive her husband's reputation and find a home for his archive.



Peter Barber, Head Cartographic and Topographic Materials, will speak on 'Norfolk Perspectives: John Darby's map of Smallburgh, 1582–2014'. In 2005 a generous grant from the Friends enabled the British Library to acquire one of this

## Donations

The Friends would not exist without the support of its members through their annual subscriptions. Another source of income is from legacies. In 2013, the charity received a generous legacy of over £100,000 as the share of the residuary estate of Mrs Cherry Ah Loa Lee who died in September 2012. In the same year it received £1,000 in the will of John Lewis Hillelson who died in February 2012. Details of how to leave money in your will can be obtained from [friends@bl.uk](mailto:friends@bl.uk)

country's earliest and most splendid estate maps. A remarkably accurate geographical depiction, that was novel for its time, the map also illustrates the social, political and cultural values of Shakespeare's England. And, more than 400 years later, the landscape and buildings are remarkably unchanged.

**Other speakers will include:** John Falconer, Lead Curator Visual Arts; Richard Chesser, Lead Curator Music Sound and Vision – Music, Collections Division; and Roger Walshe, Head of Public Engagement and Learning, Audiences Division.

**The Annual General Meeting** will take place at the British Library on Monday 17 March. The lecture will be given by Professor Mary Beard who will speak on the subject of libraries ancient and modern.



## A Georgian Background

The exhibition *Georgians Revealed: Life, Style and the Making of Modern Britain*, which runs until 11 March 2014, emphasises the social life of the 18th century citizen, surveying popular pastimes such as theatre, dancing, tourism and fashion, and displaying items from prints and books to teapots, shoes and fans.

A striking feature of the exhibition, and one in keeping with its theme of a popular environment, is the background to the display. The walls are covered with a series of graphic images showing an 18th century London townscape in which occasional 20th century elements can be discerned in the familiar façades, among them posters and shopfronts showing brands which have survived over 300 years such as Colman's mustard and Hamleys toyshop.

This dramatic wallscape is the creation of the Catalan designer Gregori Saavedra who came to the UK four years ago. Working with the exhibition designer Fernando

Gutierrez and the exhibition staff of the British Library, Saavedra selected images from books and prints with an eye to scale and enlarged them digitally to fit the particular exhibition space. Saavedra, who took some of his inspiration from walking around London to observe the patterns of the streets and squares, chose suitably beguiling images and enlarged them carefully so as not to blur the resolution before sending his designs to be approved by the exhibitions team.

The designs were often modified as the project proceeded, with colour added then removed and invented images inserted to fit in with the Georgian aesthetic of hatched backgrounds and sinuous line. Saavedra, who describes working long days and nights from October with a final deadline of ten days in which to get everything in place, emphasises how much is gained from working as part of a happy and creative team. He also recalls with pleasure the appreciation his work received from visitors to the exhibition.



## Volunteers

Jean-Anne Ashton, who organises the volunteers manning the Friends' desk in the Entrance Hall to the Library, has thought deeply about some of the qualities needed for the task. Volunteers, she tells us, should enjoy people-watching, and be able to look interested, even when bored. Other

qualities might include a willingness to connect with the public and answer queries, including where to eat nearby and how to get to the British Museum, to be ready to deal, calmly and politely, with awkward – and occasionally abusive – members of the public and to know when to call security if things

get out of hand. Above all, they should enjoy being a part of a team that raises funds for the Library through the Friends' grants. If you feel that you could rise to the occasion contact Jean-Anne on 020 8964 2292 or at [ashtonjeanne@aol.com](mailto:ashtonjeanne@aol.com).

## My British Library

**Caroline Moorehead** is the author of six biographies. Her most recent publication is *A Train in Winter* (2012). Here she writes about the place of the British Library in her writing life:

The old British Library was my introduction to the vast and never failing pleasures of research. I went there for the first time in the late 1970s, when I was writing a book about terrorism in Italy. Like every young reader in the great domed hall, I was enchanted by the circle of desks, by the heavy catalogues, laid out on leather tables, by the old-fashioned chairs, by the obsessive attachment shown by readers to particular places. The one I fought for, if I remember correctly, was H4, but why I loved that one I now have no idea. But it was a long time before I fully realised the richness of what lay beyond the swinging doors, from where the trolleys of books were trundled out.

It was not, in fact, until the mid-2000s, when I started working on the French revolution, that I took on board the Library's extraordinary collection of foreign books. Having begun to travel regularly to Paris to do research in the Bibliothèque Nationale, I chanced one day to go into the British Library – by now in its new building – taking with me a list of little known early 19th century French writers. I assumed none would be there. I was wrong; most were. I found revolutionary pamphlets, memoirs by exiled countesses, inventories of chateaux seized and ransacked. My visits to France halved. When I moved on to write about the French resistance in the Second World War, I discovered that the collection of 20th century French writers was equally impressive.

For a while, I assumed that this was somehow an anomaly, explained by the closeness between Britain and France, the gift of some bibliophile, a reflection of the intellectual ties between the two countries. Not something, I assumed, that would be true of other languages. Once again, I was proved wrong. I am now at work on a book about two Italian brothers, Carlo and Nello Rosselli, antifascists murdered in the late 1930s on Mussolini's orders. In the British Library, I have found, in Italian, copies of collections of their letters, along with a memoir written by their remarkable mother Amelia, a woman more or less unknown, even in Italy.



Like all Readers, I mourn the domed room and the blue leather chairs. But I know of no pleasure greater than the certainty that I shall find in the catalogue the very books that I am looking for, and no happiness more guaranteed than the hours I spend each week in the Reading Room of the new Library. And if it moved to the Outer Hebrides, I would follow it there.



Digitising the Library's Newspaper archive © Chris Close.

## The Newspaper Collection

The British Library's programme to safeguard the long-term future of the national newspaper collection involves moving the collection from its home in Colindale, north London, to a purpose-built Newspaper Storage Building at the Library's site at Boston Spa in West Yorkshire. The move will extend the life of the collection, which encompasses some 750 million pages of newspapers and periodicals, spanning more than three centuries, and includes local, regional and national newspapers from across the UK and Ireland and around the world.

The existing location at Colindale was far from ideal for storing fragile newsprint, with few environmental controls and outdated means of access to the collection. The new building at Boston Spa will offer full temperature and humidity control, maximising the life-span of newspapers, and will have low-oxygen conditions to eliminate the risk of fire.

The British Library Newspaper Library at Colindale closed on Friday 8 November 2013. High-use periodicals, microfilm collections, print newspapers and Newspaper Reading Room reference collections are now closed until the new Reading Room opens.

Once the print newspapers have moved to Boston Spa, access to newspaper content will be via microfilm or digital copies made available in a new News and Media Reading Room at the Library's main St Pancras site, which opens in March 2014. At this point periodical collections will also become available to order again.



## New Books

**The Georgian Art of Gambling**  
by Claire Cock-Starkey (British Library,  
£10, or £9 to Friends)

The downside of being exceedingly rich in Georgian England was that there was not a great deal to do. The wealthiest men came from the landed class and the idea of actually working for a living was anathema to them. Instead they took up gambling, betting on card games, dice, horse-racing, boxing matches, cockfighting, bull-baiting and much else besides. The betting book at White's club records sizeable wagers on which aristocrat will wed a certain eligible young woman; on when Sir Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington) will get his peerage, and on the outcome of specific engagements in the Napoleonic Wars.

Many gentlemen's clubs in Mayfair and St James's were established specifically to provide the idle rich with a safe place to fleece each other, rather than being fleeced by charlatans in the high-pressure gambling dens of Covent Garden and other raffish localities. But even in these salubrious new surroundings cheating was rife: several inveterate gamblers, having lost the family fortune, were driven to suicide.

Claire Cock-Starkey tells this essentially discreditable tale with verve, even if the book is organised somewhat haphazardly. The rules of intricate card games jostle with hints on cheating and tales of celebrated gamblers such as Beau Brummell, the Duchess of Devonshire and the Earl of Sandwich, who invented the eponymous snack so that the encasing slices of bread would protect his hands and the playing cards from the greasy meat between them.

There are, too, a number of lists, including famous racing colours, catastrophic gambling losses and the frequency of card games in the novels of Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice* comes top by a wide margin. Many passionate denunciations of the vice



are quoted (“Alas! Gaming is the shame of our nation!”) and all is interspersed with drawings and cartoons by leading illustrators of the time, among them Gillray, Rowlandson and Cruikshank. The book is published to coincide with the Library's *Georgians Revealed* exhibition and provides a lively reminder that what we generally regard as an age of elegance was afflicted with this dark underbelly.

By Michael Leapman

### Heroes' Lives

**The Deputy Chairman describes a project on which he has been working**

Among the more surprising treasures in the rich military holdings of the British Library is a Victoria Cross. It was awarded to Sergeant Patrick Mahoney of the 1st Madras Fusiliers for seizing an enemy standard at the Battle of Mungulwar in September 1857 during Major General Havelock's advance to relieve the troops and civilians besieged by mutineers in the Residency at Lucknow. Mahoney had three fingers sliced off in the action. Sadly, he was never to know that his gallantry had been recognised for he was killed six weeks later in fighting at the Alambagh just outside Lucknow. His Cross, which had been sent out to India, was returned to the India Office.

Little is known about Mahoney other than the bare outlines of his career. This held true of a surprising number of VCs and in 1999 the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association, to which surviving award holders belong,

approached the British Library for assistance with its project to compile a biographical dictionary of individuals who have received this decoration, 1,358 of them with three Bars, and also the 409 who have held the George Cross. As the then Head of Modern Historical Papers at the Library, I was asked to help and since I retired in 2005 have, with others, been working several days a week at Horse Guards on the book. In November, 14 years after the project began, *The Victoria Cross and The George Cross: The Complete History* has finally been published in three volumes by Methuen. The three volumes, which are priced at £75 each, can be ordered from any bookshop.

The Victoria Cross was instituted in 1856 to reward acts of gallantry in the Crimean War and, unlike other decorations, it was open to all ranks. It was, however, limited to bravery shown in the face of the enemy. The Second World War, which brought conflict to the Home Front, highlighted the need for an award of equal status for bravery not in the face of the enemy and in 1940 King George VI instituted the George Cross. In 1971 this incorporated two existing civilian gallantry awards. In consequence, recipients of the two decorations range from poor Irishmen such as Mahoney and the black Canadian, William Nelson Hall, whose parents had been slaves, to Lord Henry Percy, the brother of a Duke, and Henry Clifford, the grandson of a Cardinal. While some came from a landed or professional background, many more had worked either as agricultural labourers or in the mills and mines of Industrial Britain. All of us who have worked on the project hope that readers of these volumes will discover that what might at first appear a specialised study of two gallantry awards also provides a rich panorama of British and Commonwealth social history over the last 150 years.

By Christopher Wright

## A Visit to the Garrick

The Garrick is unique among London's old-established gentlemen's clubs in many ways. First its location – not in the aristocratic enclaves of Mayfair and St James's, but on the raffish fringe of Covent Garden. Its members are not, for the most part, scions of the aristocracy but professional men from the fields of law, journalism and, most notably, the theatre – after one of whose 18th century stars it is named. It remains one of the few London clubs that refuses to admit women as members.

Happily that discrimination does not extend to visitors, for women were well represented in the group of some 30 Friends who visited the club early one autumn morning. Our guide, Frances Hughes, told us that the club was formed by the Duke of Sussex in 1831 in nearby King Street, moving to its present building in 1864. Apart from the elegant Victorian interiors, its most notable attraction is a collection of more than a thousand paintings, mostly of actors.

The best of these, including several by Johann Zoffany, hang in what is still called the coffee room but is now the club's principal dining room. Henry Irving and Sarah Siddons figure prominently among the portraits of 19th century thespians, many depicted in their most famous roles. More paintings adorn the walls of the breakfast room. The collections and the Club itself have benefitted from the sale to Walt Disney of the rights to *Winnie the Pooh* which had been donated to the Club by A A Milne. After taking coffee in the morning room we moved on to the bar, where some 20th century stars of stage are depicted. They include Laurence Olivier, Alec Guinness, John Osborne, Noel Coward, Alastair Sim, as well as some who are still with us, such as David Suchet and Michael Gambon. We left to the comforting clink of sherry glasses as the first members were arriving for lunch.

Michael Leapman

## Spring Visits

To reserve a place on these events, please use the booking form enclosed with this Newsletter.



**Dennis Severs' House**  
**London E1**  
**Wednesday 9 April, 3pm, £17**  
**Limit 15 people**

Dennis Severs' House is a "still-life drama" created by the previous owner as an "historical imagination" of what life would have been like inside for a family of Huguenot silk weavers. From 1979 to 1999 it was lived in by Dennis Severs, who gradually recreated the rooms as a time capsule in the style of former centuries. It is now open to the public.

Severs started on a programme to refurbish the ten rooms of the house, each in a different historic style, mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries. The rooms are arranged as though the occupants had only just left. There are displays of half-eaten meals, and sounds and smells are used to evoke the atmosphere of the house.

Friends will be treated to a short introductory talk before being allowed to explore the house on their own.



**Linnean Society**  
**London W1J**  
**Tuesday 15 April, 3pm, £10**  
**Limit 15 people**

Carl Linnaeus was a Swedish botanist, physician, and zoologist, who laid the foundations for the modern biological naming scheme of binomial nomenclature.

The Linnean Society maintains the majority of Carl Linnaeus' plant and animal research collections, as well as his personal library, all stored under optimum conservation conditions. These unique collections are of continuing fundamental importance as a primary reference for taxonomy. The collections are enhanced by the Society's own rich library which provides key resources for research.

The library is open to Fellows and the general public alike and is a major source of publications on taxonomy, evolutionary biology, the history of the biological sciences as well as the life and work of Linnaeus.

**Persian Collections talk**

**Asian & African Studies  
Reading Room,  
British Library  
Wednesday 30 April, 5.30pm, £10  
Limit 15 people**

The British Library holds one of the largest collections of Persian manuscripts in the world, consisting of over 11,000 manuscripts. The Friends recently gave a grant of £10,000 towards the digitisation of Persian Manuscripts. Ursula Sims-Williams, the Curator of Iranian languages, will discuss some of these manuscripts, as well as showing individual items to the Friends up close in this exclusive event at the British Library.

**BBC Broadcasting House**

**London W1A  
Wednesday 7 May, 1.45pm, £17  
Limit 25 people**

BBC Broadcasting House, the home of the BBC, has been reinvented for the digital future. For the first time in its history, the BBC has brought together its News, Radio, Television and Online services into one central London headquarters to provide the most advanced digital broadcast and production centre in the world.

This one-and-a-half-hour tour will give you a chance to see behind the scenes of one of the largest creative broadcast centres in the world.

**A Tale of Two Churches**

**Walking Tour, start from  
British Library  
Tuesday 20 May, 11am, £13  
Limit 20 people**

This tour of the St Pancras area will take in the two parish churches, the medieval old church and the neo-Grecian Parish Church of St Pancras in Woburn Place. The walk will also give insights into the social history of St Pancras and Somers Town.

What used to be the old borough of St Pancras – the area to the west and north of the Library site – was mainly developed when the ‘new’ Turnpike Road came through in the mid-18th century and then radically restructured by the arrival of the railways in the next century.

**Albert Memorial**

**London SW7  
Wednesday 11 June, 2pm, £14  
Limit 25 people**

Influenced by the series of 13th century Eleanor Crosses (of which only three originals survive) and other statues in Edinburgh and Manchester, the Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens is one of the grandest high-Victorian Gothic extravaganzas in Britain.

The guided tour of the Albert Memorial will give exclusive access. Visitors will be able to go inside the memorial railings in order to appreciate the finer details of the bravura marble carving of the Parnassus frieze with its 169 figures of renowned poets, musicians, painters, sculptors and architects.

**Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library,**

**Canterbury, Kent CT1  
Friday 20 June, 2pm, £20  
Minimum 10, maximum 15 people**

Canterbury Cathedral in Canterbury, Kent, is one of the oldest Christian structures in England and forms part of a World Heritage Site.

The Cathedral Archives hold the historic records of the Cathedral, which date back to the 8th century. Records in the Cathedral’s collection include the medieval charters of the Cathedral priory, historic maps, photographs and fragments of medieval books. Document repair and fine bookbinding are carried out in the Conservation Department at the Archives.

Please note your event price does not include entry to the Cathedral.

**Whitechapel Bell Foundry**

**London E1  
Saturday 28 June, 4pm, £18  
Limit 20 people**

Due to the overwhelming popularity of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry visits, another has been arranged.

The Whitechapel Bell Foundry is Britain’s oldest manufacturing company, established in 1570 and in continuous business since then. The present buildings date from 1670, four years after the Great Fire. The business moved there from the north side of Whitechapel Road and has remained on the site ever since. Whitechapel’s famous bells include the original Liberty Bell (1752), the Great Bell of Montreal and, best known of all, Big Ben at the Palace of Westminster.

**Friends 25th Anniversary Reception  
British Library**

**Tuesday 1 July, 6pm–8pm  
Free, but booking essential**

To celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Friends Roly Keating, the Chief Executive of the British Library, will host a reception for all Friends.

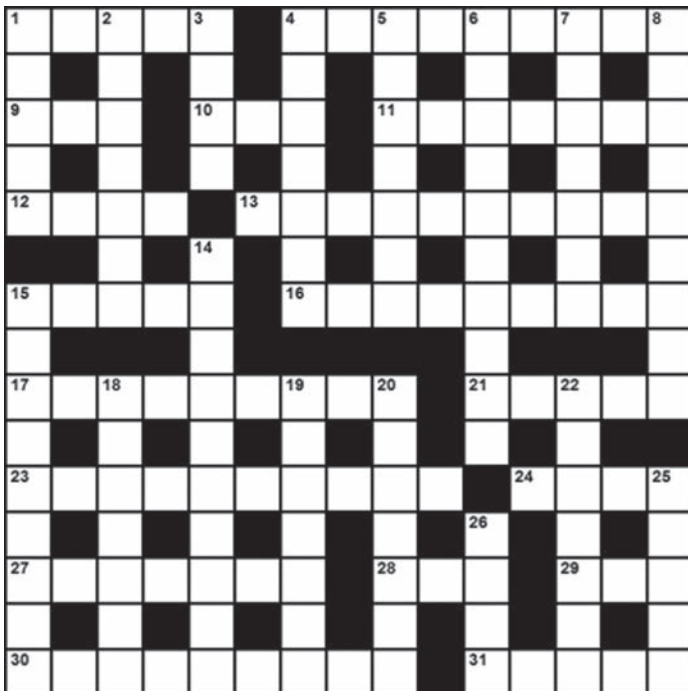
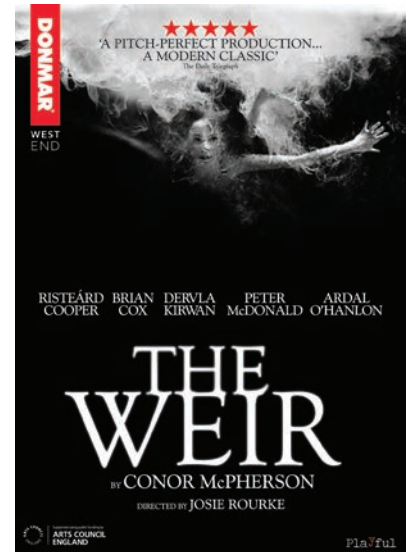


## Win tickets to *The Weir* in the West End

The senders of the first three correct solutions opened will each win a pair of top price tickets to *The Weir* at Wyndham's Theatre in Charing Cross Road, following its sell-out run at the Donmar Warehouse. When it premiered in 1997 this modern ghost story won three major awards as best new play and established Conor McPherson as one of our most original playwrights. Josie Rourke's critically acclaimed production reunites the original Donmar company: Risteard Cooper, Brian Cox, Dervla Kirwan, Peter McDonald and Ardal O'Hanlon. More details at [www.TheWeirLondon.co.uk](http://www.TheWeirLondon.co.uk).

Subject to availability, the tickets will be valid for Monday to Thursday performances until 27 March. Send entries to the Friends office at the address below, marking the envelope "Crossword" and including your name, address, membership number and an email address and/or telephone number, so that the winners can be contacted quickly by the theatre's representative.

Closing date is 28 February or seven days after delivery of your Newsletter, whichever is the later.



### Solution to Winter puzzle

**Across:** 1 Georgians, 6 Hobos, 9 Enfield, 10 America, 11 Tweaks, 12 Skeleton, 14 Eats, 15 Undersells, 18 Sebastopol, 20 Pair, 23 Armourer, 24 Orphan, 26 Lasagne, 27 Osborne, 28 Tided, 29 Testament.

**Down:** 1 Greatness, 2 Offbeat, 3 Greeks, 4 Aide, 5 Shackleton, 6 Heedless, 7 Bristol, 8 Spain, 13 Incoherent, 16 Stringent, 17 Assuaged, 19 Bemused, 21 Ash tree, 22 Arabia, 23 Allot, 25 Gods.

**Winners of the winter crossword, who won tickets to *Jeeves and Wooster* in 'Perfect Nonsense':** Haydon Luke of East Sussex; Louise Sheppard of Northamptonshire and Bernard Spatz of Hertfordshire.

### Across

- 1 Award for lightweight before tirade (5)
- 4 Probably a bad idea for Jo's bad men to mix with him (5,4)
- 9 A country scrambling to top Australia (3)
- 10 Dreadful setback for fish (3)
- 11 Even Cal is lost in this isolated place (7)
- 12 Petulantly ejected from small people carrier (4)
- 13 Will lyrical reptiles be seeing you later? (10)
- 15 Species of happy men, says one down (5)
- 16 Aquiline, with vision (5-4)
- 17 Plenty of space for dizzy dunce to absorb a garbled word (9)
- 21 A winner, if you play your cards right (5)
- 23 Oddly, these substitutes make guests roar (10)
- 24 Live before morning? Just smile (4)
- 27 Bill sounds like he's on song (7)
- 28 Centre back is not too bright (3)
- 29 Nothing in the *Daily Telegraph*? Just a small point (3)
- 30 Pub where Charles lost it? (5,4)
- 31 ... but in this house queens lost theirs (5)

### Down

- 1 Ill-fated John is emaciated (5)
- 2 Determine exactly what goes on in lane, say (7)
- 3 Going with the flow, editors do it backwards (4)
- 4 Among Friends, this is a year to celebrate (7)
- 5 Tryst for lovers of Shakespeare on arrival (7)
- 6 State capital adds nothing to holy ritual (10)
- 7 Powerful words – in conjunction with a Conservative (7)
- 8 Nowhere to go? Then why get all this? (7,2)
- 14 In ferment, I lose God, i.e. my strong beliefs (10)
- 15 Caroline's square suited Virginia's circle (9)
- 18 Parked either side of major road, either vehicle could pull it (7)
- 19 Dick, in capital pinafore, is invariably on target (7)
- 20 Better red than dead, but greatly feared with both in the mix (7)
- 22 In the ascendant, then finished – completely overturned (7)
- 25 Some 18s have one but most don't (5)
- 26 In slalom, it's easy to leave out an obstacle (4)

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