OUCH! Downsizing the big guy

A literary kick in the pants. Reported by Reg Green

One of P.G. Wodehouse's upper-class characters has "a look of disdain that could open an oyster at 60 paces."

He is the formidable Roderick Spode who was based loosely on a British fascist at a time when the Nazi brownshirts, Mussolini's blackshirts and Communist redshirts fought viciously in European streets. He terrified both the languid Bertie Wooster, by threatening to tear off his head and make him eat it, and me.

But Wodehouse was too good-natured to leave his readers uneasy. I lost my fear when it turned out that Roderick was the leader of a party called the Black Shorts.