

ALAN LEWIS – PUNSTER

By Karen Farrell

Alan Lewis has submitted puns to London's *Sunday Times* since 1971. His first was "Telling bulls from cows is easy; if it's not one thing it's the udder." In a recent letter to us he comments:

Re-reading for the umpteenth time my disintegrating copy of Espy's *Words at Play* from 1975, I decided to trawl the internet to see whether *Word Ways* was still going. And I see it is. So, better late than never, here is a copy of my second book *Pundemoniam* – admittedly now cold off the press – for your marginal interest. Not all items survive the Atlantic crossing because of pronunciation and vocabulary differences such as our *lever* rhyming with beaver as opposed to your never. But I hope a few may bring a smile.

This December sees my 80th birthday – fewer than 12 months before yours, I see – which is a big surprise to everyone in view of my three heart attacks, three cancers (colon, liver and lung), three heart ablations and a pericardectomy. As my latest problem (interstitial lung disease) is incurable, I keep my mind off it by continuing to push *Below Stairs*, a musical I composed to help keep me sane through the first cancer. Set in 1914, this feel-good show has now had 15 amateur productions, with the 16th due to be staged in Gravesend in November. By not charging royalties and allowing libs and scores to be downloaded free of charge, the writer and I have raised over £7500 for cancer research. The 16th production will be in November in Gravesend.

With the US popularity of series such as *Upstairs, Downstairs* years ago and the more recent *Downtown Abbey*, I am convinced that my musical would go down well in your country. However, knowing nothing about the US amateur world and with no contacts of my own, I am at a loss to know where to try. So if you can think of any group who might be tempted, please point them at www.belowstairsshow.com. If the miracle happened and it were to be staged, I could not afford fares and insurance to come over but it would be wonderful to know it was being seen.

Incidentally, since I began punning in *The Sunday Times* in 1971, plagiarists such as Crosbie, Brandbreth and others have regularly raided my first (*A pun my soul*) and second books with little or no acknowledgment: some pieces have even appeared in collections of graffiti.

Lewis' first book was "A pun my soul" and his second "Pundemoniam!" Both are now out of print but we can print some excerpts from the 1992 "Pundemoniam", with a foreword by Gyles Brandreth and illustrated by 'Quanda'.

PUNDEMONIAM!

the collected puns of
ALAN LEWIS
'The World's Greatest Punster'

with a foreword by
**GYLES
BRANDRETH, MP**

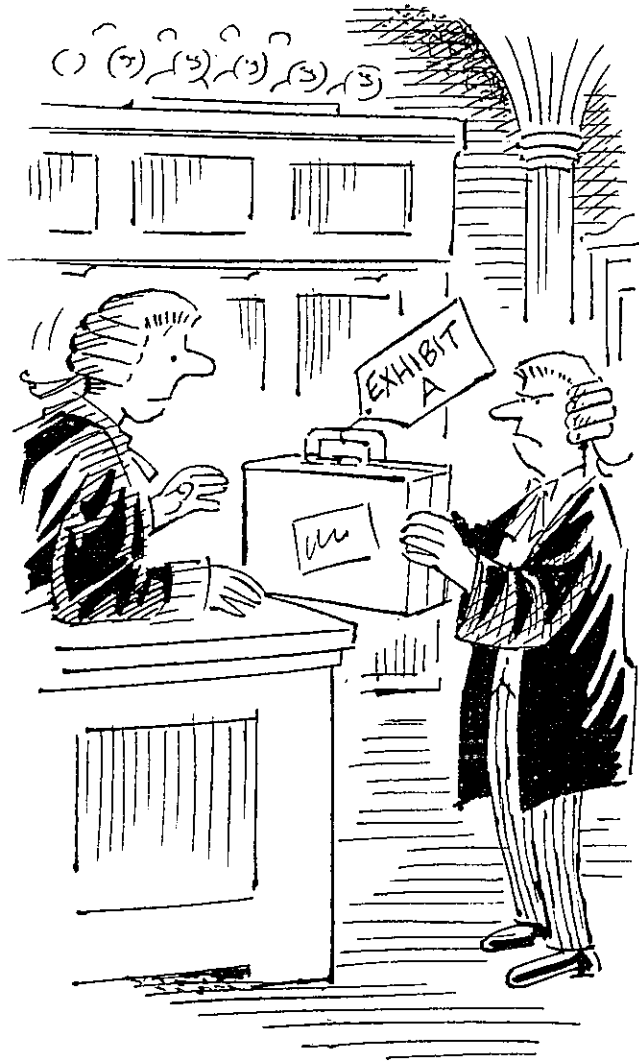
and illustrated by
'QUANDA'



**PAUL WATKINS
STAMFORD
1 9 9 2**



**VALENTINE
RHYME**
My heart and I
Call to you
But you're too deaf
To Eros



The hotel porter refused
To carry my baggage
So I punched him.
My case comes up next week



When the witch said
'Abradacabra'
Nothing happened.
She's a hopeless speller