The Grand Duke Glossary
Compiled by Tim Riley

**Pfennig Halbpfennig.** Penny-halfpenny.

**Dummkopf.** German for ‘dumb-head’.

**Dr Tannhäuser.** The original Tannhäuser was a German Minnesinger and poet of the thirteenth century. There seems no special reason why Gilbert chose his name for the Notary.

**Speisesaal.** German for ‘dining room’.

**Sposo.** Italian for ‘bridegroom’.

**Trolus and Cressida.** 1602 play by Shakespeare.

**We’re all tiled here.** Term from Freemasonry meaning that all present are joined in secure secrecy.

**Sausage-roll.** A sausage, or a roll of sausage-meat, wrapped in puff pastry and baked.

**King Agamemnon.** Chief of the Greek army in *Troilus and Cressida*. Neither a leading nor a humorous role, and not an obvious choice for the company’s principal comedian.

**Louis Quatorze wig.** Shoulder-length wig as worn by Louis XIV of France.

**Citharæ.** Ancient musical stringed instruments.

**Eloia.** This word, evidently a cry of salutation, is not in Liddell and Scott’s Greek lexicon.

**Opoponax.** Sweet myrrh, a fragrant herb.

**Hoydens.** Tomboys.

**A very good part in Gerolstein.** Referring to Offenbach’s 1867 operetta *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, which D’Oyly Carte revived at the Savoy the year after *The Grand Duke*.

**Like turtle, her first love confessing.** Referring to the turtle dove.

**That it was ‘mock’.** See mock-turtle, below.

**Jade.** Hussy.

**Agitato.** Musical term, meaning ‘in an agitated manner’.
Muckled. A verb unknown to the Oxford English Dictionary; presumably Gilbert's elaboration of 'much' in the same line.

A stupid muff. Victorian word for a stupid, dilatory, inactive, and generally amiable young man.

Candle-snuff. The snuff or burnt wick of a candle.

Gibbet. Gallows.

The code of the duello. The established code of duellists.

Falchions. Originally broad, curved swords; later a sword of any kind.

Orthography. Conventional spelling.

Revising Barrister. Official charged with revising the lists of people qualified to vote in parliamentary elections.

King's evidence. (Or Queen's evidence.) Formerly, a common law system by which a defendant could plead guilty and offer evidence against co-defendants in return for a lenient sentence.

Fortune's rubs. Obstacles.

Tuppence-ha'penny. Twopence halfpenny: 2½ pence (equivalent to 1p in decimal currency).

Gingerbierheim and Currantweinmilch. Mock-German words for beverages.

Jujube. Hard fruit-flavoured sweet.

Charlemagne. Charles, King of the Franks (b. 742, d. 814) ruler of a large part of Western Europe.

Mock-turtle. A cheap soup, meant to resemble green turtle soup, made from calves' heads and offal.

Two-and-six. Two shillings and sixpence (12½ pence in decimal currency, equivalent of just under £10 in terms of current retail prices).

Half-a-crown. A coin with the value of two shillings and sixpence.

Waterbury watches. The Waterbury Watch Company, of Connecticut, used mass-production to manufacture inexpensive watches from 1880. In 1886 their watches were advertised in The Times at 10/6 (52½ pence in decimal terms, equal to a little over £40 in terms of current retail prices).

Gamboge in the gill. Yellow in the face.
**Morris wall-papers.** Wallpapers designed by William Morris were much sought-after by devotees of the late Victorian arts and crafts movement.

*‘Jim-jams’.* Nineteenth century slang for a condition anywhere between delirium tremens, jitteriness and a fit of depression.

**To give this man his gruel.** Administer punishment.

**Plebeian.** Lower-class.

**Shoddy.** Cheap cloth, i.e. poorly dressed.

**Pillory.** A method of punishment whereby offenders were secured by the wrists and neck, leaving them immobilised in a public place exposed to verbal and sometimes physical abuse.

**Doughty.** Brave.

**verbum sat.** Abbreviation of *verbum sat sapienti* a word is enough for a wise man.

**Give you ‘what for’.** Give you punishment.

**Spartan.** The people of Ancient Sparta in Greece were famed for their endurance and austerity.

**Grig.** An extravagantly lively person.

**Tollolish.** Passable, fairly good.

**Diergeticon.** Another one that eluded Liddell and Scott.

**Lesbian wine.** The island of Lesbos was famous for its fine wine (known as Pramnian) *(cf Homer, *Odyssey*, X.235.)*

**Cramming.** Learning by rote for an examination.

**Hyporchematic.** From the Greek ὑπορχηματικος, ‘accompanied by dancing’. Relating to a choral hymn to Apollo, accompanied by dancing and pantomimic action.

**Choreutae.** Members of the chorus in Greek drama.

**Criticaster.** A petty or inferior critic.

**Choregus.** The leader or director of a Greek chorus.

**Oboloi and drachmae.** Greek coins.
**The Kalends that are Greek.** *Ad kalendas graecas* was a Latin saying meaning ‘never’ or ‘at some unspecified future date’; kalends (or calends), a term for the beginning of each month occurred in the Roman but not in the Greek calendar.

**In the period Socratic.** In the time of the philosopher Socrates (c.469 BC–399 BC).

**Every dining-room was Attic.** A play on the two meanings of ‘Attic’, the architectural feature, and the adjectival form of ‘Attica’, the region of Greece in which Athens is located.

**Recherché.** Of high quality; something worth seeking out.

**ἀριστον.** Pronounced *arriston*. Literally, ‘the best’ – the best meal of the day; at various periods applied by the Greeks to breakfast or to lunch.

**τρεπεσθαι προς τον ποτον.** Pronounced *trepesthai pross ton potton*; ‘they turned to drinking’. A quotation from Plato’s *Symposium* (176a) in which there is a remarkable amount of steady and conscientious drinking.

**They mixed their wine with water.** The ancient Greeks held that drinking undiluted wine was barbaric.

**Which would shock that worthy gentleman, the Licensee of Plays.** In Gilbert’s day all plays staged in English theatres had to be licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, an official of the Royal Household.

**Corybantian.** Adjective for the Korybantes, an ecstatic sect who worshipped the Phrygian goddess Cybele with drumming and dancing.

**Dionysiac or Bacchic.** Adjectives for the god known to the Greeks as Dionysus and to the Romans as Bacchus – the god of wine, and inspirer of ritual madness and ecstasy.

**Dithyrambic.** The dithyramb was an ancient Greek song to the god Dionysus, noted for its wild and ecstatic nature.

**Mrs Grundy.** Originally an invented character for Thomas Morton’s play *Speed the Plough* (1798), subsequently generally taken as the personification of interfering prudery.

**Goloshes.** Rubber overshoes

**Hardbake.** A sweet made with molasses, butter and almonds

**Butter-scotch.** A sweet made with butter and brown sugar

**Miminy-piminy.** Over-refined

**Leman.** Sweetheart
Corse. Corpse.

Avaunt! Avaunt! Go away!

Chimerical. Wildly fanciful

Epithalamia. Lyric odes in honour of a bride and groom.

Marsala. Fortified wine from Sardinia.

Bumpers. Well-filled glasses

Pommery seventy-four! 1874 was one of the finest vintages for Champagne in the nineteenth century. Pommery’s brut nature champagne of that year was particularly esteemed.

Auric’lar. Auricular, pertaining to the ear

Tol-lol. Average, not particularly impressive.

Numismatist. One whose hobby is collecting coins.

Allons, encore. Off we go again.

Garçons, fillettes. Boys and girls (in contrast to the formal ‘Mesdames et Messieurs’ of other casinos)

Louis d’or. Gold Louis (coins).

Roues d’charrette! Cart-wheels (coins).

Holà! holà! Hello!

Mais faites vos jeux. But place your bets.

Allons, la classe. Off we go, pupils.

Le temps se passe. Time is passing.

La banque se casse. The bank is breaking.

Rien n’va plus! Contraction of ‘Rien ne va plus!’, No more bets! (The call made by the croupier once the wheel is spinning.)

Le dix-sept noir, impair et manque!  The pockets of the roulette wheel are numbered from 1 to 36, alternating between red and black. There is also a green pocket numbered 0 (zero). Bets may be placed on specific numbers (such as 17 here) or on groups or permutations of numbers such as odd (impair) or even (pair) or between 1-18 (manque) or 19-36 (passe).
Holà! holà! vive la banque!  Hello! Long live the bank!

Good lack!  Old variant of ‘Good Lord’ or similar mild expletive.

Allons, la foule!  Off we go, everyone! (Lit. ‘the crowd’).

Ça roule ça roule.  It rolls, it rolls.

Le temps s’écoule.  Time is running out.

Le trente-cinq rouge, impair et passe!  See le dix-sept noir, above. Thirty-five, red, odd, and in the higher half of the numbers.

Très bien, étudiants de la classe.  Very good, students of the class.

Prétendant.  Applicant.

Qui perte fit, Au temps jadis.  Those who lost before.

Gagne aujourd’hui!  Win today!

Le double zéro!  Double zero.

Vous perdez tout, mes nobles héro.  You lose everything, my noble heroes.

Merovingian.  European dynasty of the fifth century.

Gormandize.  Eat gluttonously.

Flibbertity gibberty.  Frivolous, senseless.