

Extract from: [Obscurorant](#) posted 19/2/2004

And if you think you've problems with love and romance, consider the **very** complicated relationships of one Jennifer Ross:

In 1942 Jennifer, already pregnant, married Robert Heber-Percy and entered a most unusual ménage. Heber-Percy had been living at Faringdon for a decade as the boyfriend of Lord Berners, the composer and eccentric known for his waspish sense of humour and his exotic way of life: guests were summoned to dinner by a music box in the hall; the doves that flew about were dyed many and various colours (inadvertently making them vulnerable to predators), and the whole set-up was gently parodied by Nancy Mitford, who drew on Lord Berners for the fictional Lord Merlin.

Heber-Percy himself was a wild figure, known as "the Mad Boy" in Berners's circle. He had done more than enough to earn the sobriquet; even if Berners's fondness for exaggeration is taken into account, there is substance in many of the stories. He once nearly killed a woman in Salzburg by throwing a tankard from a restaurant, attempted to commit suicide and had to be removed heavily tranquilised. When he arrived in Florence he was "carried into the hotel in a semi-conscious state still dressed in his Tyrolean costume and with his hair hanging all over his face". At Amalfi he hit Berners over the head with a button-hook when Berners, wary of being spotted at the table with a young man sporting a bright red shirt, refused to accompany him to breakfast on the terrace.

The Heber-Percy marriage took everyone by surprise, not least Lord Berners, who was not at all sure how to react.

Jesus that last sentence absolutely kills me.
