

fulsome



fulsome

Word of the Day - for Toastmasters everywhere
Monday 24th June 2024



fulsome

(adjective) FOOL-sum

Excessively complimentary, sickeningly offensive, nauseatingly admiring or fawning; copious, lavish.

This is an awkward word: be sure to make it clear which meaning of the word is intended. Better still, avoid it, to prevent embarrassing misunderstanding.

... Sutherland wrote a piece in a Sunday paper in which he expressed his anxiety about what 'the web is doing to the craft and ethics of reviewing' - an anxiety that had been provoked, in part, by the Amazon reader reviews of Victoria Glendinning's new biography of Leonard Woolf (a run of pretty awful reviews was followed by one so outlandishly **fulsome** in its praise that it could only have been written by Glendinning's husband - which, in fact, it was).

Rachel Cooke, *The Observer*, 26 November 2006. *The Observer*

Fulsome and **fulsomely** were again used in error in a complimentary sense. It means excessive or insincere in an offensive or distasteful way - Collins (*Prayer Book Rebellion*, page 14, G2, August 7, and *Domenech's quiet revolution is winning friends*, page 2, Sport, July 8). It is the policy of the *Guardian* to correct significant errors as soon as possible.

(Corrections and clarifications), *The Guardian*, 16 August 2006. *Guardian*

Fresh disclosures about the money Charles Kennedy's party took from a foreign-based company to finance its May election campaign have "driven a coach and horses through Liberal Democrat claims that they checked out the donation properly", a Conservative spokesman announced this week. Driven a coach and horses through them, eh? What a dazzling new metaphor! Once. No doubt whoever first used it was deluged in lavish, even **fulsome** (in the proper sense of that word) congratulations. "Stap me, Cholmondley," this innovator's interlocutor would have enthused, "that's a deuced handsome metaphor, what? It may well, I trow, become the talk of the town." As it did, for several centuries; but why is it still with us now?

David McKie, *The Guardian*, 1 December 2005. *Guardian*

The book's **fulsome** Poe-worship remains more peculiar than persuasive, to the point where the story's benighted skeptics begin to sound reasonable.

Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*, 5 June 2006, New York Times reviewing Matthew Pearl's *The Poe Shadow*.