LONDON WORDPLAY

DARRYL FRANCIS
Mitcham, Surrey, England

Over the years, Word Ways has presented a variety of material concerned with placenames. United States statenames and placenames have figured extensively; there have been several articles about 'strange' British placenames; and there have been numerous mentions of foreign placenames satisfying this or that logological phenomenon. However, I believe that the material presented here is new, and is not a rehash of material previously published.

What is here is a brief study of some of the logological phenomena associated with placenames in and around London. In London is relatively easy to describe, but around London becomes rather more vague. How far round -- 10 miles, 25, 50? I haven't set any definite limit, so there may be a few placenames geographers amongst you might want to argue over.

Throughout the rest of this article I have capitalised the in-or-around London placenames. All other words have been spelt in lower case. Dictionary sources are given; a guide to the abbreviations used is at the end of the article.

TRANSPOSA LS

The first list presents straightforward transposals of London placenames into other words or names:

ACTON canto W3
ANERLEY enlayer (enlay is a W2 variant of inlay; W2 also lists inlayer; thus, enlayer is a reasonable inference)
BARKING braking W3
BARNET banter W3
BATTERSEA Atrebates W2
BEAN bane W3
BETHNAL (Green) benthal W3
CHEAM meach W3
CHELSEA leaches W3
CROYDON Corydon W2
DALSTON daltons W2
DATCHET chatted W3
DEBDEN bended W3
DORKING king-rod F&W
DOWNE owned W3
EALING linage W3
EASTCOTE ecostate W3
EDGWARE ragweed W3, wagered W3
ELSTREE  steeler W3
ELTHAM  hamlet W3, Thelma RHD
ENFIELD  enfiled W3
EPPING  pigpen W3
EPSOM  mopes W3, poems W3, pomes W3
ERITH  their W3
ESHER  sheer W3
FULWELL  wellful OED
GOLDERS (Green)  lodgers W3
GREENWICH  rechewing W2
HAMPTON  phantom W3
HANWORTH  hawthorn W3
HARLESDEN  rehandles W3
HARTLEY  earthy W3
HAVERING  rehaving W3
HESTON  honest W3
HORNSEY  noshery OED2
ILFORD  florid W3
ISLEWORTH  whorliest (W3 shows whorly but not the -ier or -iest forms)
IVER  rive W3
KENLEY  keenly W3
KENSAL (Green)  ankles W3
KENTON  nekton W3
KEW  ewk W2
LEE  eel W3
MERTON  mentor W3
MORDEN  morned W2, rodmen W3
NEASDEN  enneads W3
NINE ELMS  linesmen W3
ONGAR  argon W3, groan W3, orang W3, organ W3
OSTERLEY  Tyrolese W3
PALMERS (Green)  sampler W3
PONDERS (End)  respond W3
PRIMROSE (Hill)  primeros W3
PUTNEY  puntey W2
PURLEY  purely W3
RADLETT  rattled W3
RAYNES (Park)  yearns W3
REDBRIDGE  rebridged W2
RUSH GREEN  hungerers W2
SELHURST  hurtless W3, hustlers W3, ruthless W3
SELSDON  oldness W3
SHIRLEY  relishy W2
SIDCUP  cupids W3, cuspid W3
SLOUGH  ghouls W3, loughs W3
SOUTHALL  thallous W3
SOUTH EALING Leiognathus D24
STAINES satinés W3, tansies W3, tisanes W3
STANMORE monaster W3, Monstera W3, on-stream W3, storeman W3, transome W3
STEPNEY peyntes OED (see paint, verb)
STONE notes W3, seton W3, tones W3
(St.) PAULS CRAY capsulary W3, scapulary W3
SUTTON untost OED (see 1819 quote at untossed)
TULSE (Hill) lutes W3
WEST HAM Mathews WBD
WISLEY wisely W3

The second list presents London placenames which posed to form other London placenames. Both the examples here depend on the use of initials: NE for north-east, N for north, and S for south.

KENSINGTON N.E. KINGSTON
N. KENSINGTON S. KENNINGTON

TRANSADDITIONS
Transadditions are quite numerous. To create a transaddition, take a London placename, add one letter, and rearrange the letters to create another word or name. There are probably many other examples; readers' contributions would be welcome.

ABRIDGE bearding W3, breading W3
ACTON canton W3
ALDGATE galeated W3, gladiate W3
ALPERTON prelation W3
ARKLEY rokelay W3
ARSENAL analyser W3, prenasal W3, sangreal W2
ASHTEAD HALSTEAD
BANSTEAD bastinade W3
BARBICAN Caribbean W3
BARKING breaking W3
BARNES bankers W3
BARNET baronet W3
BELVEDERE rebelieved W2
BETHNAL (Green) benthal C
BRENT banter W3, BARNET
BOW blow W3
BROMLEY bloomery W3, sombrely W3
CAMDEN (Town) decuman W3
CARSHALTON achromate W2
CATERHAM achromate W2
CHARLTON antichlor W3
CHELSEA bleaches W3
CHESSINGTON touchingness W3
CLAPTON platonic W3
DARENTH adherent W3, threaden W3, unthread W3
DENHAM headman W3, headmen W3, herdman W2
DOWNE snowed W3
EAST HAM masthead W3, schemata W3
EAST SHEEN manesheets W3
EGHAM homage W3
ELSTREE reelects W3, reselect W3, resettie W3, teaseler W3, treeless W3, verselet W3
ELTHAM FELTHAM, LAMBETH
ENFIELD ensf-grade W3, fendini W3, inflexed W3
ERITH zither W3
EUSTON tonsure W3
FAIRLOP fire-opal C, paliform W3
FELTHAM half-term W2, half-time W2
FULHAM harmful W3
GARSTON negators W3, organist W3, roasting W3
GOLDERS (Green) pledgors W3
HAINAULT ailanthus W3
HAMPTON phantomy W2
HARTLEY leathery W3
HAWLEY wealthy W3
HERNE (Hill) hereon W3
ILFORD Florida W3
ILSEWORTH fish-trowel C
KENTON nektons W3
KINGSTON knottings W3
LEE keel W3, leek W3
LETCHEMORE emery-cloth C
LEYTON novelty W3
MAWNEYS yes-woman OED2
MILE END demilune W3, endemial W3
MITCHAM mismatch W3
MORDEN doormen W3
MOTSPUR (Park) no-trumps W3, proti urns W3
NUNHEAD unhandled W3
OLYMPIA polymnia W3
ORPINGTON organ-point C
OSTERLEY areostyle W3, polyester W3, proselyte W3
OVAL volta W3
PENGE peeing W3
PERIVALE reprieveal W3
PINNER spinner W3
PUTNEY unpiety W2
RAINHAM chairman W3
RAYNES (Park) barneys W3
RICHMOND monorchid W3
RUISLIP plurisie C
SELSDON boldness W3, coldness W3, loudness W3
SHIRLEY slithery W3
SIDCUP cuspid W3
SIPSON pistons W3
STANWELL wall-newts C, wall tents W3, stonewall W3
SURBITON obtrusion W3
SWANLEY Wesleyan W3
(Thames) DITTON dotting W3
TOOTING tootling W3
TULSE (Hill) lusted W3
UPNEY pungey W3, PUTNEY
WADDON downa-do C
WAPPING swapping W3
WELLING swelling W3
WOKING working W3
YEADING readying W3

BEHEADMENTS

Here are ten straightforward beheadments -- that is, deletion of the first letter results in another word or name. Note that three of the resultant words are placenames, too:

BARKING arking W3
EWELL well W3
FELTHAM ELTHAM
HARROW arrow W3
HAYES ayes W3
NUNHEAD unhead W3
PADDINGTON ADDINGTON
PINNER inner W3
SELDSON Elsdon RHD
SHENLEY HENLEY

Double-letter beheadments are beheadments achieved by removing the first two letters of a London placename. Four of the resultant words are also London placenames. Note that the placename DENHAM is arrived at by doubly beheading both ALDENHAM and SYDENHAM. I wonder how many other placenames there are in the world which result in DENHAM when doubly beheaded.

ABRIDGE ridge W3
ALDENHAM DENHAM
EALING ling W3
EGHAM HAM
ENFIELD field W3
EPPING ping W3
ESHER her W3
EWELL ell W3
HAYES yes W3
HOMERTON  MERTON  
ILFORD  ford W3  
SYDENHAM  DENHAM  
TWICKENHAM  ICKENHAM  
WOKING  king W3  

REVERSALS  
Reversals of London placenames are very rare. I have only unearthed three examples, all of which are only three letters long.  
Bow  wob W3  
Ham  mah W2  
Lee  eel W3  

TRANSDELETIONS  
Transdeletions are effected by taking a London placename, deleting one letter, and rearranging the remaining letters to make a new word or name. There are many examples of these, so I have chosen to present only the more interesting ones, those where the initial placename is eight or more letters long, or those where the new word is also a London placename.  
Alperton  planter W3  
Belgravia  variable W3  
Chobham  COBHAM  
Dagenham  headman W3, managed W3  
Heston  stone Eton  
Lambeth  ELTHAM  
Pulmstead  pulsated W3  
Putney  upney  
Stanwell  wallets W3  
Upminster  impurest W3, imputers W3, rumpiest W3, stumpier W3, terminus W3, unpriest W3, unripest W3  

LETTER SWITCHES  
Letter switches are achieved by changing just one letter in a placename to some other letter, and arriving at a new placename without having to rearrange any letters. Letter switches are classified by the ordinal position of the switched letter. Can anyone find a fifth-letter change?  

1 Beddington  - Teddington, Catford  - Watford, Hampton  - LAMPTON, Heston  - Keston  
2 Hersham  - Horsham  
3 Kenton  - Keston, Ned Addington  - N.E. Paddington, New Eltham  - N.E. Feltham, Sudbury  - Sunbury  
4 Cranford  - Crayford, Harlow  - Harrow, Kennington  - Kensing-ton  
5 Barnes  - Barnet
SPECIALS

A second-order reduplication is a word in which the first half is repeated but with the first letter changed, as in bowwow. A non-London placename example is HONG KONG. The only London place-name example of a second-order reduplication is MILL HILL.

Single- and double-letter beheadments were dealt with earlier in this article. This paragraph looks at those placenames which can be transformed into other placenames by the excision of one or more letters from positions within the placename. Here are the few examples which I have found.

C(H)OBHAM COBHAM
D(AG)ENHAM DENHAM
KEN(NING)TON KENTON
KEN(SING)TON KENTON
KE(N)(SING)TON KESTON
WAL(LING)TON WALTON

If any readers have further observations about the material here, or wish to add to it, I would be delighted to receive such offerings. If there is sufficient material to generate another Word Ways article, I shall prepare one.

One related project which I wish to undertake is to examine the names of all the stations on the London Underground system. This collection of approximately 280 names has never been examined logologically before. Any contributions or suggestions would be welcome!

DICTIONARY ABBREVIATIONS

C    Chambers English Dictionary
D24  Dorland’s Illustrated Medical Dictionary (24th edition)
F&W  Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary
OED  Oxford English Dictionary
OED2 Oxford English Dictionary (2nd edition)
RHD  Random House Dictionary
WBD  Webster's Biographical Dictionary
W2 Webster's New International Dictionary (2nd edition)
W3 Webster's Third New International Dictionary
W9NCD Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary