INTERNALLY CAPITALIZED WORDS

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Some while ago we lighted on the strange term Tir na nOg in the Second Edition of Webster's New International Dictionary. This is one of the names that the Irish have given to the dwelling place where happy souls exist after death (1). The term itself fascinated us because of the presence of the capital O in the middle of one of the constituent words of the term. We wondered if it might be possible to find similar words with an internal capital letter -- by 'internal' we mean any position in a word other than the first. We even considered the heady possibility of drawing up a list of 26 of these words and terms, each letter being exhibited in an internally capitalized form.

The search was on! Initially, we realized that there were a number of rather undesirable words and terms which we could have used to complete our intended list fairly quickly. For example, there are hosts of Scottish and Irish names beginning with the prefixes Mac and Mc, these often being followed by a capital letter. MacArthur, McBride, MacCallum and McDavid are just a few such names. Arbitrarily, we decided to limit the number of Mac/Mc names in our list to just one. In a similar vein, there are many hyphenated dictionary words where the first letter after the hyphen is a capital. For instance, there is un-Egyptian, pseudo-French, pro-Ghana and sub-Himalayan. These are all too easy to find, so we chose to limit the number of such words on our final list to one. A third class of undesirable words is that where all the letters of each word are capitalized. Three such words are COBOL, FORTRAN and UNESCO. Words in this class tend to be acronymic in nature, more often than not. We decided to limit the number of all-capitalized words in our list to one.

The reader may feel that we have been overly restrictive in discriminating against these three classes of words. However, we think that to include too many of these undesirable on our list takes the fun out of searching for the really esoteric terms, like Tir na nOg.

Anyway, after literally months of casual, though determined, searching we have completed our list of 26 internally capitalized words and terms. Here is our list, with an explanation appended to each:

A: TelAutogram of Webster's New International Dictionary.
B: RaMBaM, the year 1338 Second Edition.
C: StClair - a dictionary.
D: ReDak - a newspaper.
E: NErot - the town NErota in the Indian vil-lage Fredericktown in Mexico.
F: AuxFor - Auxiliary.
G: Cumann na mBan - the name of a branch of the British Women's National Federation.
H: pHisoHex - a dictionary.
J: Imuiden - a Dutch town.
K: WaKeene - it is the name of a population center.
L: HeLa cell.
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We examined, capitalized words to each:

A: TelAutograph - this is listed in some, though not all, printings of Webster's Third Edition. It is a trademark name applied to a telegraph system for reproducing graphic matter.

B: RamBaM - a name of Maimonides, a Spanish writer who died in the year 1204. This is in the biographical section of Webster's Second Edition.

C: StClair - this is a prename listed in Webster's Biographical Dictionary. It is a variant form of Saint Clair and St. Clair.

D: Redak - a name of Rabbi David Kimchi, a Hebrew grammarian who died in 1235. This is given in Webster's Biographical Dictionary.

E: NRot - this is another name for Noot, an early 20th century Indian village in British Columbia. We extracted this name from Frederick Webb Hodge's Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico.

F: AuxFor - this is a slang name used by the military to refer to Auxiliary Force. We plucked this name from Berry and van den Bark's American Thesaurus of Slang.

G: Cumann na nGaedheal - Webster's Second Edition gives this as the name of a political party in the Irish Free State.

H: pHisoHex - a trademark for an emulsion containing the antiseptic and detergent hexachlorophene. This double-H name appears in Dorland's Medical Dictionary.

I: ApIvor - the surname of Dennis ApIvor, a famous Welsh composer. This is listed in the BBC Pronouncing Dictionary. Ap is the Welsh prefix corresponding to the Scottish/Irish Mac and Mc. It is, however, far rarer.

J: Lmuiden - this is the name of a town in the Netherlands, which has a population of about 28,000. Webster's Geographical Dictionary is our source for this particular name.

K: WaKeeney - this is also in Webster's Geographical Dictionary. It is the name of a town in Trego County, Kansas, which has a population of about 2800. This spelling is to be distinguished from Wakeeney, which is the Union Pacific railroad name for the town.

L: HeLa cells - these are certain carcinoma cells, named after the
patient, HeLa, from whom they were first isolated. Dorland's Medical Dictionary was our source for this item.

M: DiMaggio - a name that we are sure all Americans are familiar with. It is, of course, the surname of the famous baseball player Joe DiMaggio. A standard reference for this name is the Random House Dictionary.

N: RNAase - this is another name for ribonuclease, an important crystalline enzyme. RNAase can be found in the Addenda section of Webster's Third Edition.

O: Tir na nOg - this is the term that inspired this article. As we have already mentioned, this is in Webster's Second Edition as an Irish name for the place that happy souls retire to after death.

P: DePauw - Webster's Biographical Dictionary lists Washington Charles DePauw as an American banker and industrialist. It was after him that DePauw University, in Greencastle, Indiana, was named.

Q: ZoQkt - another name for the Indian village of Zoht, in British Columbia. This village seems to have disappeared from existence at the turn of the century. The name is listed in Hodge's Indian Handbook.

R: DuRant - this is a prename listed in Webster's Biographical Dictionary.

S: SSaumingmiut - this is another name for Saumingmiut, an Eskimo subtribe of Baffinland. Our source for this was, once again, Hodge's Indian handbook.

T: TelePrompTer - a trademark listed in some printings of Webster's Third Edition. It refers to a device for allowing an individual to speak directly into a television camera, reading from a magnified script.

U: IOU - this is a promissory note. The name derives from the phrase "I owe you". The term is common enough for us not to have to specify any one particular source for it. It is also the only all-capitalized word we have included on our list.

V: VistaVision - a cinema system that uses a large frame to produce improved definition. We extracted this name from Payton's Proper Names.

W: BuWar - a slang name used to refer to the Bureau of War Informa-
X: McXulay - this is the only Mc example we have allowed ourselves, and even so it exhibits a remarkable degree of non-Scottishness. It is the surname of one Miss V. McXulay, listed in the 1971 London Telephone Directory. We know that this is a rather non-standard source, but words and names with an internal capital X are not exactly ten a penny. If any Word Ways reader can find a word or name with an internal capital X in some more standard source, we will be happy to substitute it for McXulay. We'll be waiting!

Y: HcYiani - as with X, Y is an almost impossible letter to conquer. However, we eventually found this surname, HcYiani, in the 1970 London Telephone Directory. We wondered what nationality the holder of this name might be. His first name is listed as Charles, not too helpful! Can any Word Ways reader suggest the country of origin for a person with a strange name like HcYiani?

Z: anti-Zwinglian - this is the only word in our list with a hyphen immediately preceding the internal capital. This is in Webster's Second Edition; it is an adjective meaning 'opposed to Zwinglianisim, a doctrine held by Ulrich Zwingli'.

This name can be found in the American Thesaurus of Slang.