ANALYZING WIRETAPs

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In the February 1982 Word Ways, Darryl Francis attempted to form words out of the 255 different subsets of letters from the set NEUSTRIA. There were eight gaps in his list; two, SRT and TRN, were filled in the February 1983 Colloquy as placenames in Yugoslavia. After considerable searching, I was able to plug three more holes:

- aei AEI 16-17th century form of 'a-vie' in the OED
- aeiu AUlE early form of 'advisy' shown in 1330 quotation in the OED
- aeiu ATlUE a place in the South Pacific in the Times Index-Gazetteer

This leaves only nrs, nst and nrst missing.

I decided to try a different set of eight letters, selecting the five consonants PRSTW and the three vowels AEI. The list below is complete, but I had to resort to abbreviations to fill two gaps (TW and PTR) and a symbol for a third (PR). Perhaps Word Ways readers can improve on these. For example, I think it likely that TW is an old Scots form for 'to', 'too' or 'tow', but the Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue has not progressed beyond P.

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PR  PS  PR
SR  SP  SR
ST  SP  ST
TW  TW  TW
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DEFINITION

1. PR  sy
2. PS  pl
3. PT  va
4. RS  pl
5. RT  in
6. WS  17
attempted to from the set in Yugoslavia three more

D 30 quotation times Index-

selecting the table below will two gaps in Word Ways likely that the Dictionary P.

DEFINITIONS

1. PR symbol for propyl (Web 3)
2. PS plural of the letter P (Web 3)
3. PT variant of ‘PT boat’ (Web 3)
4. RS plural of the letter R (Web 3)
5. RT in ‘Cnri Rt’, a point listed in the OSNG, Yugoslavia
6. WS 17th-century Scottish form of ‘us’
7. WT abbrev. for 'wireless telephone' (Web 3)
8. AEI early form of 'any'
9. WIR early form of 'wire'
10. PRS plural of PR, a Puerto Rican, as in the OED citation 'the PR was neutral as grey paint'
11. PTR abbrev. of 'painter' and 'printer' (Web 3)
12. SRT a mountain listed in the OSNG, Yugoslavia
13. WRS a 13th-century spelling of 'worse'
14. AEIT a 13th-century spelling of 'ait'
15. WAIP variant of 'wap' (EDD)
16. WAPT past tense of verb 'wap', shown in c1550 citation
17. STRP a populated place listed in the OSNG, Yugoslavia
18. PRWS plural of 'prw', variant of 'prow', an old word meaning 'profit'
19. WRST 13th- and 14th-century spelling of 'worst'
20. PAITE an early form of 'pate'
21. AWPIE the guillemot (Scottish National Dictionary)
22. PAWTE variant of 'paut', to poke (EDD)
23. WAIRP Scots form of 'warp' (Scottish National Dictionary)
24. WA-PIT the act of sending away (Scottish National Dictionary)
25. SWAPT past tense of the verb 'swap'
26. TWERP an insignificant or contemptible fellow (Web 3)
27. WIRPS jogs along (EDD)
28. TWIRP variant of 'twerp' (Web 3)
29. WISPT past tense of the verb 'wisp', to rub (a 1598 quotation)
30. TPRWS imitation of horn sounds
31. WIREPA a Maori surname (there are eight listed in the 1983 Auckland, New Zealand telephone directory)
32. PRAWT variant of 'prowt', rubbish (EDD)
33. RIPSAW to saw wood in the direction of the grain (Web 3)
34. WARPIT early past tense of the verb 'warp', shown in various OED citations
35 PITSAW a type of large saw worked by two men (Web 2)
36. SPRAWT to sprawl (EDD)
37. WERPIT 14th- to 16th-century past tense of the verb 'warp'
38. TRAWPSE variant of 'trapes', to trudge (EDD)
39. PRISTAW variant of 'pristaf', a police officer
40. PWIREST superlative form of 'pwir', an early Scots form of 'poor'
41. WIRETAPS devices for tapping telephones

All the definitions given above are from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) unless otherwise stated. Undefined terms can all be located in the OED.