

A SPOONER-ASSISTED TEN-SQUARE

JEFF GRANT

Hastings, New Zealand

"In Search of the Ten-Square" in the November 1990 *Word Ways* featured a manually-constructed square with reasonable 10-letter terms in every position. The ASTRALISED 10-square is arguably the finest of its type so far discovered. Now, five years on, thanks to the venerable Reverend Spooner, an interesting variation on this square is possible.

V A S S A L I S E D
 A N T E L A R I T Y
 S T Y R A C I N E S
 S E R E N A D E R S
 A L A N B R O W N E
 L A C A R O L I N A
 I R I D O L I N E S
 S I N E W I N E S S
 E T E R N N E S S E
 D Y S S E A S S E S

VASSALISED reduced to the position of a vassal; subdued or subjugated. 'It marked the deep bondage of vassalised man' (OED)

ANTELARITY a blend of 'antelation' (preference, precedence) and 'priority' attributed to the Reverend William Spooner when mixing up the words of 17th-century Spanish scholar James Mabber (see OED, antelation, 1623 quot.). 'Alleging the antelarity of time, and priotion of his debt' (Word Ways, May 1995, p 73)

STYRACINES plural of styracine, variant of 'styracin' (plural in Webster's Third), a white crystalline substance obtained from storax and balsam of Peru (OED)

SERENADERS plural of serenader, one who serenades, entertains with music: 'A barca with serenaders was slowly approaching' (OED)

ALAN BROWNE there are hundreds of males named Alan Browne throughout the world, the most well-known of whom is probably the American bank consultant born in 1909 (Who's Who in America, 45th Edition, 1988-89)

LA CAROLINA a commune on the southern slopes of the Sierra Morena mountain range in Spain (Webster's New Geographical Dictionary, 1972)

IRIDOLINES plural of iridoline, an oily liquid compound derived from coal-tar, having the same molecular formula as its isomer lepidine (Webster's Third; Funk & Wagnalls unabridged)

SINewINESS the state or quality of being sinewy; firm strength, toughness (Webster's Third)

ETERNNESSE variant of eternness, a rare 17th-century synonym for 'eternity': 'What impossible mixtures? vice and vertue, corruption and eternnesse' (OED)

DYSSEASSES plural of dysseasse, a 16th-century spelling of the noun 'disease' (OED)

Forwards, the journal of the New Zealand Association of Scrabble Players, reports (Jun 1995) the dismay accompanying the addition of QI to the third edition of *Official Scrabble Words*, the British version of the OSPD. Appearing in the OED2 and the latest edition of *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*, it is a Chinese borrowing meaning "life-force" with a use citation from 1978. The concern is that it will change the strategy of the game by making Q far easier to use. Barbara Berlin writes in *Across the Board*, the Australian Scrabble magazine

In all our thick comprehensive Thesaurus
 None was so mischievously sent forth to plague us
 Than the ten-point-rich awesome lone "Q"
 Who without her slavish and elusive companion "U"
 Could startle our tiles, loose teeth a-chattering,
 Chicken our hearts in fierce sabre rattling,
 For we had to conjure up strange words,
 Chat up Arab and Middle-Eastern birds--
 QANAT, QIBLA, TZADDIQ, MUQADDAM, TALAQ
 --All of which have now lost some flak,
 Since little "queue-eye" hit the horizon
 --That tiny little speck we'll have to keep our eyes on;
 An imp of a life-force held by two letters
 Had the imposter respect for her elders and betters,
 She'd not have devalued the sterling-rich "Q"
 --Like ex-eye and ex-you, she'll trounce me and you!...
 Where majesty used to haunt our racks,
 Flaw our victory, stab our backs,
 There now toothless tiger leers and grins,
 A commonplace tile to assist our wins;
 A friendly face both hearty and hale;
 Big round zero with pussy-cat tail!