

THE UNSTOPPABLE AEGINRST MACHINE

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Previous issues of Word Ways have contained the various transposals of the letters AEGINRST, building on Dmitri Borgmann's initial attempts in *Language on Vacation*. Ross Eckler's superb *Making the Alphabet Dance* presented all known 157 transposals of these letters.

The Unstoppable AEGINRST Machine first appeared in Word Ways of November 1993, when the word TASERING was presented as a newly-discovered transposal of AEGINRST. Thinking it was about time to unearth a new AEGINRST transposal, I recently switched on the AEGINRST machine. And, hey presto! it came up with a previously unnoticed transposal of the eight letters in question.

The word in question is INTREAGS, the -s form of the verb INTREAG, a 17th century variant form of INTRIGUE. There are a number of OED meanings given for this verb (1) to trick, deceive, cheat; to embarrass, puzzle, perplex (now rare); (2) to entangle, involve; to cause to be entangled or involved, to implicate (now rare); (3) to carry on a secret amour or illicit intimacy; to have a liaison; (4a) to carry on underhand plotting or scheming; to employ secret influence for the accomplishment of designs; to make an intrigue; (4b) to plot; to scheme for; (4c) to bring or get by intrigue; (5) to excite the curiosity or interest of; to interest so as to puzzle or fascinate.

I wondered whether Ross Eckler's book had accidentally omitted INTREAGS, suspecting that it might have appeared in various earlier editions of Word Ways. But no, it didn't appear in Jeff Grant's February and May 1994 articles which collected together all previous AEGINRST transposals in Word Ways.

Isn't it strange that after so much searching by logologists that a further AEGINRST transposal can be found in the pages of the original OED? And that it doesn't necessitate the use of a citation form plural, or the plural of a proper name, or an -in' ending, or an incredibly obscure reference?

Okay, the unstoppable AEGINRST machine is going back under wraps for a year or so. But I'm sure that it will continue to be wheeled out on occasions, and will present an expectant world with further new AEGINRST transposals.