KICKSHAWS

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Kickshaws is currently being assembled by a series of guest editors. All contributions should be sent to the editor in Morristown, New Jersey.

Clothes Encounters...

In the February 1979 Kickshaws, Faith Eckler mentioned the names given to various hair-cutting establishments, and said that the editor was sorting them into different types of wordplay for a forthcoming article. That article appeared in May, and readers will undoubtedly be adding their own favorites to an already-comprehensive list. Of course, this mania for peculiar names is not confined to hair-cutting establishments; restaurants, record shops, and boutiques are also affected to a greater or lesser extent. I couldn’t resist the temptation to search the six yellow pages directories for London to see what could be achieved with boutique names. Obviously, my search has not been anything like as extensive as Ross’s search was. However, perhaps an enterprising reader would care to carry on where I left off, and built up a corpus of peculiar names given to American boutiques.

Boobs
Boobs and Braces
Buy and Large
Casual Affair
Clothes Line
Cloud 9
Coquette Boutique
Denim Village
Dress Optional
Fantasque Boutique
Fred Bear Jean Co.
Frocks Etc.
The Frock Exchange
Glad Rags
Greensleeves
Guise
Injeanius
Inside Leg
I was not Lord Kitchener’s
Valet
Jean Genie

Jean Junction
Jean Machine
Jeansville
Long Tail Sally
Mean Machine
Midnight Blue
Mistique Boutique
Nick-Nack
Rag Doll
Raggs
Rags and Riches
Smarties
Stitches
Toggery
Togs
Tops and Bottoms
Tramps
Trappings
Unique Boutique
Zipz
I chose to include the four names ending in Boutique not because they were particularly clever but because they all use an additional letter Q, in an attempt to emphasise the Q of 'boutique' itself. Indeed, three of the names end in -QUE: Fantasque, Mistique, Unique. Midnight Blue is cleverer than it looks; it's a shop selling only denim clothes and stays open until midnight. Denim Village doesn't look too original, until you realise that there is a place just outside London called Denham Village.

Letter Strings

In the May 1978 Kickshaws, Ralph Beaman mentioned the word PROPINQUITIES, which contains all of the letters from N through to U. He seemed somewhat unhappy with the plural form of the word, though, and asked for a citation for it. Unfortunately, I can't offer Ralph the citation he wants; all I can do is proffer an even shorter word using the letters N to U, and one which Ralph will probably be even unhappier with: PROPINQUATES. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) shows PROPINQUATE as an obsolete rare verb meaning 'to approach', the only citation given for the word being Henry Cockeram's 'The English Dictionarie', published in 1623.

I have unearthed a few additional words containing the letters N to U. Webster's Third shows the noun QUADRIPARTITION (division by four), leaving us to infer the plural form as being QUADRIPARTITIONS. The OED lists the hyphenated word QUARTER-PARTITION (a partition whose framework is made of quarters) and QUARTER-POINT (a fourth part of a point on the compass, or 2 degrees 48 minutes 45 seconds). Hence, pluralizing both of these gives QUARTER-PARTITIONS and QUARTER-POINTS. Indeed, the OED gives a citation for the plural of the latter:

The quarter-points of the compass ... are distinguished ... by the word by. ('An Universal Dictionary of the Marine', by William Falconer, 1769)

Better than any of these N-to-U strings is an M-to-U string found lurking in the pages of the OED. Those nine consecutive letters can be found in the hyphenated term QUADRANT-COMPASS (a carpenter's compass with an arc to which one leg may be screwed). Notice that while this is an improvement on the N-to-U strings above, it has not been necessary to use a plural form. QUADRANT-COMPASS appears in Webster's Second Edition only as an unhyphenated, two-word phrase.

However, best of all seems to be two words which display the ten-letter sequence L to U. I mentioned these in an earlier Kickshaws, but they are worthy of repetition: QUASI-COMPLIMENTARY and QUASI-IMPORTANTLY, two hyphenated words in the Random House Dictionary. Any advance on these two?

Hair Puns

The article 'Hair-it-is' in the May Word Ways reminds me of several puns about hair. There's the story of a balding man who, when
being interviewed about some subject, was asked for the bald facts. He replied, "Hair today, gone tomorrow!" And then there was the millionaire who used to refer to his hippie son as "the hair apparent." If you can remember back to the 1950s, you will have realised that in news photographs Eisenhower and Khrushchev stood out in bald contrast. And everyone knows that Samson loved Delilah—until she bald him out! Question: what weighs 2,500 pounds and wears flowers in its hair? Answer: a hippiepotamus. What did Paul Revere say when he passed a London barber shop? "The British are combing!"

Charades

As past issues of Word Ways have instanced, many words can be divided into parts which are also complete words. For example, the word INVENTOR can be divided into IN, VENT and OR. Word divisions of this kind are called charades. Some words can be divided into charades in more than one way. For example:

MARSHALL = MARSH + ALL, MARS + HALL, MAR + SHALL, MAR + SH + ALL
THEREIN = THERE + IN, THE + REIN, THE + RE + IN
HEARTEN = HEART + EN, HEAR + TEN, HE + ART + EN, HE + AR + TEN

Once it is realized that dictionaries list all 26 letters of the alphabet as words in their own right, every word can be split into charades, even if only the constituent letters of the original words are used. However, charades consisting solely of single letters are not particularly attractive.

Question: in how many different ways can the word KICKSHAWS be divided into charades? Allowing individual letters and any other words allowed by Webster's Third, you might be surprised at the total number.

Dyslexia

Some while ago, the British newspaper The Sunday Times carried an article about dyslexia, or word-blindness, and the children who suffer from it. Dyslexic children have great difficulty in recognizing and reproducing letters, figures and words, and are likely to write letters and words the wrong way round or upside-down. Early researchers on the problem at the turn of the century made extravagant claims which were swept away in the thirties, forties and fifties as people realized how seriously poverty, unsettled homes and bad teaching could affect the reading ability of otherwise intelligent children. Dyslexia was also often used as an excuse for low ability, and the very word became suspect. However, since 1970 the tide has been turning, and two recent British government reports have stressed the need for early identification and treatment of the problem. The Sunday Times mentioned the case of one particular 15-year-old who had the graphic ability and three-dimensional understanding of a 17-year-old, who had normal intelligence for his age, and who had a way of seeing written words that led him, after anxious thought, to decipher NEPHEW as HIPPO, GNOME as GAME, and NOURISHED as MESMERIZED. The paper commented, "He is a typical blunder..."

Would reader: attempting to Have a Drink

As most readers will have offered their drinks at parties, the list is long. Some transposals are not particularly attractive.

Folk Etymology

When I mentioned to me that they were a cause they were discovered a pronunciation of which occurred to me. Betelgeuse, for example, is pronounced as 'bételjeus' in the Ypres, in case this was invalid, they have had sufficient Dictionary of

However, the folk pronunciation example, 'spous,' like 'bridegril' names not listed.
"He is a typical dyslexic (sic!)." (That is a memorable typesetting blunder.) The article also quotes the following piece of writing by a nine-year-old boy with a mental age of ten and a vocabulary of many twelve-year-olds:

I hTh a Banin Ion he is dafa he gats my raul and he his % gales bous. From the seabed the bous rna sheul lifts and soufhit.

Would readers care to try and write down exactly what the boy was attempting to write?

Have a Drink on Me

As most readers will be aware, almost any group of words will throw up a multitude of transposals. Previous issues of Word Ways have offered transposals for the US state names, country names, animals, chemical elements, famous people, and so on. Drinks and things to drink are no exception to this rule. I have gathered together here transposals for 30 drink names, some alcoholic, some not. How many of them can you find? How quickly can you find them? Though most of the words occur in Webster's Third, there may be one or two familiar names not listed in that august tome.

Folk Etymology

When I met Faith and Ross Eckler in London last autumn, they told me that they were collecting instances of words and names which, because they were awkward to pronounce properly, had spawned 'folk' pronunciations. The Ecklers had just come back from Wales and had discovered a small village called Betws-y-Coed, the folk pronunciation of which is Betsy Coed. Two further proper name examples occurred to me soon after I had met the Ecklers. There is a star called Betelgeuse, important in astral observation, which is invariably pronounced as 'beetle juice'. A second example is afforded by the town of Ypres, in Flanders, Belgium. Important in the first World War, this was invariably Anglicized as 'wipers'. Both of these examples have had sufficient currency to have earned a place in Eric Partridge's Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English.

However, it's not only difficult proper names which produce these folk pronunciations. The same thing happens with common nouns. For example, 'sparrowgrass' comes from the peculiar-looking asparagus, 'Welsh rabbit' derives from Welsh rarebit, and even an everyday word like 'bridegroom' comes from the odd-looking bridegume. All three of these can be verified by Webster's Third.

Perhaps an enterprising reader would care to put together a com-
prehensive article on folk etymologies for Word Ways. I would certainly be interested in seeing a fuller treatment of the subject.

Barium Meal

The letters of the chemical element name BARIUM can be added to the letters of many other words and the total collection transposed to make a new word or term. For example, if BARIUM is added to POSTAL, you end up with the word PARABOTULISM. Below are two dozen words, each of which can be combined with BARIUM in a similar way so as to produce a new word or term. See if you can discover the 24 new items. Be warned, though, that some of them are two-word terms. All can be found in Webster's Third.

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The AEPRS Quest

For quite some time, these letters have intrigued me. I recognized them, probably like most other word fiends, as being capable of forming at least seven common, everyday simple words. Thus:

pares, parse, pears, rapes, reaps, spare, spear

Eventually, with the odd couple of hours to spare one day, I decided to try and extend this list. Just how many transposals existed for this group of letters?

I began by checking Webster's Third completely, and found five additional transposals, giving me a total of 12. The five new ones were:

apers, ones that ape
après, after (used in the card game rouge et noir)
asper, a Turkish coin
prase, a variety of chalcedony
pressa, a mark or cue

From Webster's Third I went to Webster's Second. Two more transposals came to light, giving me a total of 14. These two were:

asper, a variant of asper, a Turkish coin
sarpe, a pruning hook

After the two big Webster's dictionaries, I went on to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). A cursory check of this revealed four more transposals, putting the running total at 18. The four were:

preas, 'prea' is a 17th century form of 'pray'

The OED didn't find the nigh on impatient, as shown by examples where:

After the Dialect Dictionary, the total to potato', AC transposals

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franglais, fringleish

Hinglish, Japlish, Spanglish

Only the fir 6000 Words

The ter Etiemble, especially in b

raspe, repas, sprae
would certain-

be added to

spposed to

19th century spelling of 'spry'

The OED possibly holds quite a few other AEPRS transposals, but I

I didn't find them. Because of the lack of cross-referencing, it can be

nigh on impossible to say for sure whether a particular letter sequence

is shown as a word or not in the OED. Perhaps readers will find a few

examples which I missed.

After the OED, I turned my attention to Joseph Wright's English

Dialect Dictionary. There I unearthed one more transposal, bringing

the total to 19. That dictionary gives 'prae' as a word meaning 'a

potato'. Accordingly, I added 'praes' to my list. Could I reach 20

transposals, now?

I swiftly checked the Times Index Gazetteer of the World. There

only seemed to be one new transposal there, Separ, the name of a town

in New Mexico. This is in Grant County, in the south-western corner

of the state. Now that I'd reached a total of 20 transposals, I wondered

if I would be able to reach two dozen.

One possibility which did occur to me was 'Earp's', individuals such

as Wyatt Earp, or towns such as Earp, in San Bernardino County, Cali­

fornia. I'm not happy with such pluralized proper names, and I know

that quite a few readers feel the same way.

Any advance on my twenty AEPRS transposals? Can two dozen be

found? Or even more?

English as She is Spoken

In the February 1974 Word Ways, I reviewed A Dictionary of New

English (Barnhart, Steinmetz and Barnhart), a dictionary containing a

decade of neologisms. Many words in the dictionary were instanced in

my article-cum-review. A recent foray into the dictionary revealed an

interesting group of words, and I have been wondering if Word Ways

readers could enlarge it. The group of words:

franglais French containing many English words and expressions

fringlish English containing or spoken with French words and

epressions

Hinglish a blend of Hindi and English spoken in India

Japlish a blend of Japanese and English spoken in Japan

Spanglish a blend of Spanish and English spoken in parts of the

western United States and Latin America

Only the first and last of these, franglais and Spanglish, appeared in

6000 Words, the 1976 addenda to Webster's Third.

The term 'franglais' was popularized in the mid-1960s by Rene

Etiemble, a professor of comparative languages at the Sorbonne, es­

pecially in his book Parlez-Vous Franglais? in which he proposed
French equivalents for Anglicisms to stop what he considered a misuse of the French language.

Mario Pei’s recent book, Words in Sheep’s Clothing, contained a mention of Vietlish, presumably a blend of Vietnamese and English spoken in Vietnam.

Have readers spotted any other similar words, indicating a blend of English and some other language?

An Alphabetic Poser

Readers will have seen the British magazine Games and Puzzles mentioned several times in the pages of Word Ways during the past few years. Though I was once the puzzles, competitions and Scrabble editor of the magazine, I have very little connection with it these days, even though my name still appears regularly as a consultant editor. Back in April 1976, one of the readers of the magazine posed this problem: What is the shortest list of words containing the 26 letters of the alphabet in correct order? Two early solutions were:

ABC, defy, ghi, jak, limn, op, querist, uva, waxy, zo
absconder, fig, hijack, limn, opaque, rust, unviewed, ox, oyez

The first of these contains 10 words and 35 letters; the second manages with 9 words and 46 letters.

Readers then began to send in progressively better solutions, ‘better’ in the sense that fewer words and fewer letters were being utilized, though the words involved were becoming progressively outlandish. Anyway, here are three of the solutions subsequently submitted. Can Word Ways readers better these?

ABC, defyghe, bij, sklim, nop, qris, tu, vow, XYZ
ABC, defyghe, bij, sklim, nop, querist, uvrow, XYZ
ABC, def, ghi, jak, limn, op, qris, tu, vow, XYZ

These solutions use 9 words and 33 letters, 8 words and 36 letters, and 10 words with 30 letters. (I refrain from listing the obvious solution of 26 letters and 26 words.)

Many readers will probably be able to verify these words for themselves, but just to make things easier, a few brief explanations for the odder words might be in order. Webster’s Third contains ABC, ghi, jak, sklim, limn, op (in the Addenda), and qris; Webster’s Second contains def and tu; and the Oxford English Dictionary contains defyghe (at ‘defy’), bij (at ‘buy’), nop, uvrow (at ‘yuffrouw’), and XYZ (at ‘X’, on page 401).

Janus-faced Words

Over the past few weeks, I have noticed four words which are probably just a subset of a much larger group of similar words -- the pro-
The four dictionaries concerned do list a staggering number of unwords, words that lesser dictionaries are quite happy to omit. It isn't difficult to track down items such as the following in these dictionaries:

unalgebraical, unbluestockingish, uncitizen, undevelopable, unentangleable, unattractive, ungentlemanlike, unhobble, uninterwoven, unjudasied, unkoshered, unliquidatable, unmisunderstandable, un-Norwegian, unoverpowered, unpolitocratically, unquizzable, unrepresentedness, unsabbatical, untrickable, ununiversitylike, unvomited, unwatermarked, unyachtsmanlike, unzephyrlike

verbs of the proverbial iceberg! First of all, the words:
PERIODIC, PERSIST, UNCLING, UNIONIZED. Before reading any further, can you define each of these words fully?

What makes these words odd is that each of them has two completely different and unrelated meanings, brought about by considering each of the words in two different ways. Thus:

PERIODIC
- characterized by periods (Webster's 3rd)
- pertaining to the highest acid of iodine and oxygen (Webster's 2nd)

PERSIST
- to go on resolutely (Webster's 3rd)
- one who has a scholarly knowledge of Persian and things Persian (Chambers Twentieth Century)

UNCLING
- referring to an uncle (Webster's 3rd)
- to cease from clinging (Webster's 2nd)

UNIONIZED
- formed into a labor union (Webster's 3rd)
- not electrically charged (Random House)

These words are formed by different constituent parts being joined together, resulting in the same letter sequence. Thus, PERIODIC is both PERIOD + IC and PER + IODIC; PERSIST is both PERS + IST and PER + SIST; UNCLING is both UNCL + ING and UN + CLING; and UNIONIZED is both UNION + IZED and UN + IONIZED.

There must be many further examples, but none occurs to me at the moment. Can readers help in finding some? There may even be a Word Ways article in the offing here.

Un- Words

Some while ago, an American politician (which one, I don't remember) made a speech in which he referred to 'the unyoung, the unpoor, and the unblack'. How many of those words can be found in the dictionary -- any dictionary? Even with their vast lists of un- words, Webster's Third, the Oxford English Dictionary and the Random House Dictionary do not show any of these three words. And with its equally vast list of un- words, Webster's Second only manages to list 'unyoung'. I would have expected all four of these dictionaries to have listed all three words, having a fair degree of familiarity with the extensiveness of their lists of un- words.

The four dictionaries concerned do list a staggering number of unwords, words that lesser dictionaries are quite happy to omit. It isn't difficult to track down items such as the following in these dictionaries:

unalgebraical, unbluestockingish, uncitizen, undevelopable, unentangleable, unattractive, ungentlemanlike, unhobble, uninterwoven, unjudasied, unkoshered, unliquidatable, unmisunderstandable, un-Norwegian, unoverpowered, unpolitocratically, unquizzable, unrepresentedness, unsabbatical, untrickable, ununiversitylike, unvomited, unwatermarked, unyachtsmanlike, unzephyrlike
Beyond these, there is a class of un-words which appear even odder. I checked the entry at UN- in the Oxford English Dictionary and plucked out two dozen items which are not in the other three unabridged dictionaries. While the meanings of these two dozen items are quite clear, it seems surprising that they should have found their way into the OED and none of the other three dictionaries. Anyway, here are my 24 offerings. Savor them!


More Websterian Errors

While checking Webster's Second Edition for various un-words, I noticed a couple more errors which I didn't recall having seen recorded in the pages of Word Ways before. The first one: on page 2796, below the line, in column 1, the words 'unupset' and 'unupholstered' are in the wrong order. The second error: on page 2793, below the line, column 6, 'unsupernaturalise' is given as an adjective; it should quite obviously be shown as a verb. Can you find any further errors in the un-section?

Recommended Reading

When I last took on the authorship of Kickshaws, in February 1978, I offered readers three brief reviews of books having some relevance to word enthusiasts and puzzlers. Here are five brief descriptions of books that have found their way into my reference library over the past few years.

A Dictionary of Rhyming Slang (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London; 2nd edition, 1961), by Julian Franklyn. This well-known and authoritative dictionary became available in a paperback edition in 1975, which is when it was admitted to my bookshelves. The author offers a new theory of the origin of rhyming slang, and traces its progress sociologically, geographically and historically. His extensive list contains no mere one-word definitions; many of the terms are treated in comparatively long essays. The book is easy to read right through, or to just delve into at random. It is the first place I would look for an explanation of terms such as almond rocks (socks), brass tacks (facts), cock and hen (ten), dicky bird (word), elephant's trunk (drunk), flowery dell (cell), and a host of others.

A Dictionary of Sailors' Slang (Andre Deutsch, London; 1962), by Wilfred Granville. This book illustrates the extraordinary richness of seafaring slang as it has been employed from the beginning of the 20th century to the early 1960s. It includes the linguistic elegancies of wardroom speech and the nimble-witted inventions of the lower deck, the descriptive words, fishermen.

Everyman's Word Book (1970), by Alistair T. Knox. This dictionary lists major author from each character, money; the character was an index of author a forgotten, well-represented by Brian Aldiss, Ian Fleming, and other...

A Dictionary of Synonyms (1970), by ALexander Fraser. This book contains a few thousand of examples of synonyms, and is a useful tool for anyone who wants to find the most appropriate word to use in a sentence.

A Dictionary of Rhyming Slang (1970), by Allan Pinker. This book contains a few thousand of examples of rhyming slang, and is a useful tool for anyone who wants to find the most appropriate word to use in a sentence.

The Hamlin & Inglis, 1970), by Alphonse de G. This book contains a few thousand of examples of rhyming slang, and is a useful tool for anyone who wants to find the most appropriate word to use in a sentence.

A Problem of Pronunciation

I am always looking for books on pronunciations, particularly in English, having said that I am always looking for books on pronunciations.
Everyman's Dictionary of Fictional Characters (Dent, London; 3rd edition, 1973), by William Freeman, revised by Fred Urquhart. This dictionary lists the names of over 20,000 fictional characters. No major author from Chaucer onwards has been neglected. Under the name of each character listed is a brief description of the character (for example, money-lender, courtier, racehorse), the novel or play in which the character occurs, the author, and the date of publication. There is an index of authors and titles, which allows for the searching of a character's forgotten name. While Shakespeare, Dickens and Kipling are well-represented, more modern authors who are represented include Brian Aldiss, Stan Barstow, Raymond Chandler, Daphne du Maurier, Ian Fleming, Erle Stanley Gardner, J. D. Salinger, and many others.

A Dictionary of English Phrases (Gale Research Company, Detroit; 1970), by Albert Hyamson. A facsimile reprint of the 1922 edition published in New York by Dutton, this is a collection of phraseological allusions, stereotyped modes of speech and metaphors, nicknames, sobriquets, and derivations from personal names, with explanations and thousands of exact references to their sources or early usage. The book contains entries for a wide spectrum of proper names and phrases. Examples are an Academy Headache, the Back-Lane Parliament, cat-and-dog money, to dig the well at the river, the English Hobbema, and as foolish as a daw.

The Hamlyn Crossword Dictionary (Hamlyn, London; revised edition, 1970), edited by J. M. Bailie. This is a completely revised and updated edition of the work previously published under the title Complete Crossword Reference Book. It is the ideal guide for the crossword enthusiast, presenting in a convenient form a collection of about 130,000 carefully selected and classified words and terms which should prove very useful in both solving and compiling crosswords. The book is systematically divided into a number of main subject categories (for example, famous people, geography, law and government), each of which is split up into subsections. In each of these subsections, all the relevant words and terms will be found arranged alphabetically according to their number of letters.

A Problem of Pronunciation

I am always very wary about raising matters of pronunciation in the pages of Word Ways, for the simple reason that I live the other side of the Atlantic Ocean to most of the readers, and that what seems odd or peculiar to me may well be the norm for a majority of readers. However, having said that, let me now embroil myself in a matter concerning pronunciation.

There are many common words in the English language which end with the letters -OW. Many of these are frequently mispronounced as if they ended with -ER. Many, though, are never pronounced with the -ER sound. Why not? WINDOW is often pronounced as WINDEED, and this
has even found its way into Eric Partridge's Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English. Admittedly, Partridge labels the word 'solescistic and dialect', but the word's mere existence in that dictionary confirms that WINDER, as a pronunciation of WINDOW, does exist. The same dictionary also allows FELLER for FELLOW, YELLER for YELLOW, SPARRER for SPARROW, and SORRA for SORROW. I recall a London musical of a few years back which was called 'Sparrers Can't Sing' (did it ever cross the Atlantic?). Webster's Third lists several words where the -OW ending has become an -ER ending: PIL­LER is shown as a dialect variant of PILLOW, FOLLER is shown as a dialect variant of FOLLOW, HOLLER is shown as a dialect variant of HOLLOW, and WIDDER is shown as a dialect variant of WIDOW. (According to the editor, the last two variants are more commonly encountered in the US than the first two.) Joseph Wright's English Dialect Dictionary confirmed a few more of these pronunciations for me: BARRA and BARROW, MARRA and MARROW, NARRA and NARROW, and TOMORRA and TOMORROW. Though I wouldn't necessarily use these pronunciations in my own speech, I am quite familiar with them in the speech of others.

There are many -OW words, though, where I would never expect to hear the speaker debase the pronunciation to the -ER version: MEAD­OW, SHADOW, FALLOW, HALLOW, SHALLOW, SALLOW, WALLOW, MELLOW, WALLOW, WINNOW, CALLOW, BELLOW. Can any reader explain why some words do undergo this transformation and why others don't? I recall the words of a song which go something like this:

"She'd wheel her wheelbarra
Down streets broad and narra,
Singing 'Cockles and mussels, alive, alive-o."

BUY, SELL, TRADE

Jeff Grant, Waipatu Settlement Road, R.D. 2, Hastings, New Zealand is trying to locate a copy of the Times Index-Gazetteer; can any reader help out?