THE EVOLUTION OF A TRANSPOSAL SET

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During its two decades of existence, Word Ways has presented transposals in one form or another in almost every issue. These are invariably presented as a given set of words which are mutually transposable, with no description of how they were discovered. I thought it might be worthwhile to examine in more detail than usual how a set of transposals can evolve.

I took as my starting point the straightforward pair DELAYER and LAYERED. It isn't difficult to discover the 'easy' third transposal RELAYED. These three are very well documented. Thus:

DELAYER E2
RELAYED WE
DELAYER and RELAYED NU
DE E, LAYERED and LAYERED BA, CH, CU, E1, HU

(These transposal dictionaries are more fully identified at the end of this article.)

No other sources of transposals (or anagrams) contains any other words made up from the letters ADEELRY. Yet, over the past few weeks I have unearthed a further six transposals. Let's look at them in the order which I discovered them.

1. The first additional transposal I became aware of was RYE­DALE. This is the name of a place in the Scottish county of Kirk­cudbrightshire, listed in Bartholomew's Gazetteer of the British Isles, but it also exists as the name of a street in south London. The commercial telephone directory for London (1988) also lists a company with the name of RYEDALE Trucks.

2. The second additional transposal is EARDLEY. This appears as a surname eleven times in the current (1989) London telephone directory, and it also appears as a surname in Albert Hyamson's Dictionary of Universal Biography. EARDLEY also appears as part of the placename EARDLEY End, which is in the county of Staffordshire, again in Bartholomew's Gazetteer of the British Isles. Finally, EARDLEY exists as the name of several streets in London.

3. The third additional transposal which I stumbled on was ARD­LEYEY. This is the name of a place in Hertfordshire, given in Bartholomew's Gazetteer of the British Isles. It is the name of a small village close to the town of Ware, in Hertfordshire, where my company has a large training centre.
4. The fourth and fifth additional transposals were discovered more or less at the same time. I had decided to search for obsolete variant spellings of dearly in The Oxford English Dictionary. I found two: DEARLEY appears as part of a 1606 Shakespeare quotation under the first dearly, and DEARLEYE appears in a 1550 quotation by the writer Crowley, again under the first dearly.

5. Discovery number six was YEARLED. This is the past participle of the verb yearned. This is a variant form of arled, to bind by payment of money, which is shown in The English Dialect Dictionary.

These are the only six additional transposals I have found so far. I have searched for others, but have failed to find any. I had, for example, hoped to find DEALERY, perhaps meaning 'the world of dealers' or may be as part of the phrase NEW DEALERY, an alternative to New Dealism, but neither DEALERY nor NEW DEALERY could be found anywhere. I have attempted to track down the word LEADY-ER (rather than the obvious leadier) as a comparative form of the adjective leady; it occurred to me that since leady was a fairly recent word, then some newspaper article somewhere might spell out LEADY-ER to better 'explain' it to its readers. No joy, though. I sought DERAYLE as an obsolete variant of derail. Again, no luck. Since the earliest English language reference in the OED for derail is dated 1852, all variant spellings of rail had disappeared before derail came into use. One possibility which I never had high hopes for was DARYLE. I hypothesized that the names Daryl and Lee might have been joined together to form a girl's name DARYLEE. I checked various sources but all to no avail. Various other combinations I searched for were: YEAR-ELD (a variant of year-old?), READELY (an obsolete form of readily?), YEARDLE (a variant of yodel?), and RALEYED (an obsolete form of rallied?). I could go on...

Can anyone add examples to my ADEERLY list? Or perhaps take another group of transposals, which is well-documented yet incomplete, and extend it in the same way?

LIST OF REFERENCES

BA The Wordbook, by Mike Baron and Jere Guin (Wordbooks & List-mats, Albuquerque, 1988)
CH Chambers Anagrams (Chambers, Edinburgh, 1985)
NU The Nuttall Dictionary of Anagrams (Warne, London, ca 1937)