

# KICKSHAWS

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*Susan has amassed a large collection of Kickshaws for the delectation of Word Ways readers. Dave Morice will resume his regular Kickshaws column in the next issue.*

## Alphabetically-Progressive Invariants

A letter is deemed to be invariant if it occupies its alphabetical position in a word, as does the letter C in ONCE. The supreme example is ABUDEFDUF in which 5 of the first 6 letters are invariant. Incidentally, *Abudedefduf saxatalis*, the Sergeant Major fish, has another claim to fame. It has the ability to change its colour according to the depth of water in which it finds itself. But I digress!

I wondered if it would be possible to find a word and replace its first letter with the letter A to make another word, then go back to the original word and replace its second letter with B to make another word, and so on. Here is an example. Can you find others?

ORES

ARES (web2)

OBES (web2)

ORCS (web2)

ORED (OED)

## Homophonic Antonyms

HERE and THERE are antonyms. Below, I pair words which sound like antonyms but which do not have opposite meanings. Thus HERE and THEIR are homophonic antonyms, as are HEAR and THERE, and HEAR and THEIR. The 2 words in each of these phrases are replaced by homophonic antonyms to make another 2-word phrase.

THEIR TWO - HEAR FROM

INN WARE - OUT THERE

EYE COURT - YOU MISSED

FOUR HOLES - HIND PARTS

The words of a 2-word phrase can sometimes be homophonically joined. The 3 words may even make a phrase, as in RICH FAT PAULINE.

## All About Eve

'Please release me, let me go'. So sang EVE who, carelessly, had managed to get herself involved with four words at once, her suitors being FEVERED, BEVELED, REEVED and SIEVER.

So let's do the chivalrous thing and extricate her...

Fred bled red sir

No wonder she was crying for help!

## His And Her Words

The christian names BILL and ED can be joined to make BILLED, a word which has nothing to do with christian names. Here, I offer an A to Z of these words which I call **his and her** words. The two names can be girl + girl, boy + boy, girl + boy or boy + girl. I am indebted to you all, especially ED, NED and TED:

ADATOM (an adsorbed atom), BASILDON (in Essex), CLONED, DANMARK, ENAMEL, FERNDAL (in Wales), GUSTY (Ty Hardin - actor), HALTED, IRISED, JACKAL, KITTED, LONDON, MOBEN, NORMAL, OWENIAN, PHILANDERS (Anders Celsius), Q-----, RUSSIAN, SIDLES, TABBING (Tab Hunter - actor), URINED (OED 'urine' v. 1705 citation) VICTIM, WINSTANLEY (near Wigan in Lancashire), XAVIERIAN (alternative *Xaverian*), YAWNED (*Yaw* is the Ashanti West African boys' 'day name' for Thursday - in the Guinness Book of Names), ZONATED

Three christian names can be similarly joined to make words:

ABNORMAL, CONFESSED, DILUTED, JOVIAL, ROSLINDALE (in Massachusetts)

## Inmates

What do these letters and groups of letters have in common?

A HA I NO O WI

Answer in *Answers and Solutions*.

## Country Centos

This country-oriented poetry is of a somewhat unusual nature (pun unintended). The verses below have been created by bringing together passages taken from the works of a variety of poets. Such works are called **centos** (C17: from Latin, literally *patchwork garment*). Any reader who aspires to constructing their own centos will need a remarkable memory (or a dictionary of quotations), a rhyming dictionary and endless patience!

With, heigh! with, heigh! the thrush and the jay (Shakespeare)

Sweet is the breath of morn (Milton)

All the live murmur of a summer's day (Arnold)

Breast high amid the corn (Hood)

A little noiseless noise among the leaves (Keats)

Crieth unto me from the ground (Bible)

Orpheus with his lute made trees (Shakespeare)

Measures of delightful sound (Shelley)

I once more smell the dew and rain (Herbert)

In the forests of the night (Blake)

The moping owl does to the moon complain (Gray)

Against the dying of the light (Thomas)

Where the light woods go seaward from the town (Leigh Hunt)

Where the nightingale doth sing (Keats)

When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs (Tennyson)

Headlong joy is ever on the wing (Milton)

## Alphabetical Ailment

I recall, as a child, meeting a friend of my parents' called Harry Abe (pronounced AB as in the alphabet). Now I realise that, when Harry wasn't feeling well, it must have been a case of ABCD.

## Molecular Transposals

Certain molecular formulae provide the raw material for simple transposals:

AgF = FAG; BrNO = BORN; ClO<sub>2</sub> = COOL; HbFeO<sub>2</sub> = BEHOOF; HClO = LOCH; H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> = HO!  
HO!; MnO<sub>2</sub> = MOON; NaCl = CLAN; NaOH = NOAH; Na<sub>2</sub>S = ANNA'S; NbO<sub>2</sub> = BOON;  
NbO<sub>2</sub>I = BONIO (brand name of a dog biscuit); NiSbS = SNIBS; N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> = NOON; NiO = ION;  
OsP<sub>2</sub> = POPS; PdO = POD; SbOCl = BLOCS; SnO<sub>2</sub> = SOON  
CaF<sub>2</sub> spells out a word, CAFF, as it stands, as also do ClO<sub>2</sub>F = CLOOF; CO<sub>2</sub> = COO; CoP =  
COP, CuF<sub>2</sub> = CUFF; OF<sub>2</sub> = OFF and WO<sub>2</sub> = WOO  
NaF = FAN is a reversal, as is NiS = SIN

## A Problem Of Communication

When horrific shots of a famine-struck area suddenly appeared on TV, the child was quickly told to look away. As she was normally so obedient, her parents could not understand why she remained with her eyes glued to the screen. Can you? Answer in *Answers and Solutions*.

## A Palindromic Gift

Wanting to order a basket of fruit for my friend in hospital, I rang up the fruiterer, Emil, and made the following helpful suggestions:

GIFT: E.G. NO MELON EMIL, A MUST A SATSUMA, LIME, NO LEMON, GET FIG

## Over She Goes

Even in this age of so-called progress, where Sunday opening is now the norm, certain factions are beginning to rebel, and not only on Sundays. The swimming baths, until recently open seven days a week, now displays a notice which reads:

NOW NO  
SWIMS  
ON MON

That's really upsetting!

## One Phrase Sounds Much Like Another

These are homophonic phrases. They sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings:

WAYS MEET - WEIGHS MEAT	EIGHT MEET - ATE MEAT
BEECH ROOT - BEACH ROUTE	PLEASE HERD - PLEAS HEARD
BUOY BLEW - BOY BLUE	I READ - EYE RED
PRIZE DRAW - PRISE DRAWER	MY GRATE - MAI GREAT
WHERE TO? - WEAR TWO - WARE TOO (Ware is in Hertfordshire)	
EYESIGHT AILS - I SITE ALES	WEIGH ICECREAM - 'WAY', I SCREAM
I KNEW DAMN BARD - AYE, NEW DAM BARRED	

### Living In Sin

It transpires that father, in the company of certain celebrities, has been living in SIN. In order to avoid libellous action, I'm afraid I can only divulge part of the name of each celebrity involved: MIA, with little effort, has adopted a SIMIAN appearance (miaow!), PA has emigrated to SPAIN, BERIA has taken on SIBERIAN citizenship, whilst ANTON has undergone a chemical transformation and is now called SANTONIN.

### Nine, Eight, Seven, Six, Five, Four, Three, Two, One

Highflyer Richard's written German final exam got an 'A'.

### AEIOU Pyramid

The words of which this topless pyramid is built are all AEIOU heterograms, that is to say they contain one each of the 5 vowels A, E, I, O and U, and no letter in a word is repeated. It is seemingly impossible to build such a pyramid of this size using familiar words. However, all the words of this particular pyramid come from a single source: they are all creature names found in *Nomenclator Zoologicus*:

IOUEA  
EOUSIA  
SOULIEA  
LEUCOSIA  
APOECILUS  
OLEICARPUS  
MELIOCARPUS  
CHORISEPALUM  
MYRIOCEPHALUS  
BRACHYPOLEMIUS

### Shapely Synonyms

Here is an addition to *Reverse Homophonic Charades* (99109), a genre of wordplay which splits a word at one or more points into groups of letters, then reads the letter groups by their sound in the word, but starting with the letter group at the end of the word. In this manner B.ARRACK.S makes SCARAB.

My addition is special in that the original word and the resulting word are synonyms:

M.OR.PH = FORM

## Poles Apart

Alphabetically-speaking, the letters A and Z are poles apart, separated by 24 letters. At first sight, therefore, they seem unlikely to get together with any degree of privacy. But appearances can be deceptive. Cunningly avoiding the 24 intervening letters, A and Z have teamed up on more than one occasion. Here are the results of their trysts:

AAZ	At the Office of the Commissioners in Dublin, Ireland, Case number 98073 was: Mr AAZ and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
A'AZZ	a male name of Indian origin
AZ	the abbreviation for Arizona
AZA	a name in the Douay Bible
AZAZ	a name in the King James Bible; A'ZAZ is a location in Syria
'AZAZA	a location in the Sudan
AZZ	Bad AZZ is the name of a Long Beach rapper
AZZA	a wadi in Iran
AZZAZ	a Cape in Libya
AZZAZA	El Azzaza is in Jordan
ZA	a musical term-B flat
ZAA	the name of a plant belonging to the mainly tropical family Bignoniaceae
ZAZ	ZAZ is the name of a food manufacturer in New York
ZAZA	the title of a 1938 British film starring Claudette Colbert and Herbert Marshall; also a name in the King James Bible
ZAZAZ	in the 7th century BC ... one of the conspirators against Assurbanipal, the last of the great kings of Assyria
ZAZZ	Zig Zazz is the name of a French quintet

## An Elemental Square

This double word square (rows and columns make different words) is constructed from chemical element symbols. The horizontal words are RECASE, SIESTA and TEARS; the vertical words are RESITE, CAESAR and SETAS (two places called Seta, in Japan and Uganda):

Re Ca Se

Si Es Ta

Te Ar S

## Corny Street Names

In a 1994 issue of *Country Life* magazine, I came across a letter which tells of some strange street names to be found in Cornwall. They include Squeeze Belly Alley in Port Isaac, Squeeze Guts Alley in Truro, Salubrious Place, Teetotal Street and Virgin Street in St. Ives, No Go By Hill in St. Just in Penwith, and Hard To Come By in St. Agnes.

## Russian Dolls

My first type of Russian Doll takes the form of a word (ASS) **inside** a second word (RASSE) inside a third word (WRASSES). All three words just happen to be the names of creatures, and all can be found in Webster's Third Edition:

W R A S S E S - marine fishes of the family Labridae, related to the parrot fishes  
 R A S S E - the lesser civet  
 A S S - a member of the family Equidae

My second type of Russian Doll is slightly different. It consists of a word (RON) **surrounded by** a second word (TELL) surrounded, in turn, by a third word (in this case, an abbreviation - CIA).

C I T R O N E L L A - a type of fragrant grass  
 C I A  
 T E L L  
 R O N

Read from the outside-inwards (top down), the three words make the phrase *C.I.A TELL RON*

The next two examples makes the phrases *WE'D AIR VERB* and *'MISS' AM I?* respectively:

W E A V E R B I R D	M I S A I M S
W E D	M I S S
A I R	A M
V E R B	I

But MISAIMS can also be read from the inside-outwards (bottom up) to make *I AM 'MISS'*.

Here are more inside-outwards examples:

I D I O T A D J U S T A B L E	E X H I L A R A T E S	E S
I T A L E	E X	E S
D O D A B	H I	T
I J U S T	L A R A	
<i>I DO IT</i>	<i>JUST DAB ALE</i>	<i>LARA HIT EXES!</i>

F L U O R I D A T E	C O L O U R A B L E
F A T E	C A B L E
L U R I D	O U R
O	L O
<i>O LURID FATE</i>	<i>LO, OUR CABLE</i>

Anyone reading Word Ways cannot but fail to be impressed by the 'Grams'. Their lightweight name belies the power entrusted to this ever-expanding family. Its matriarch, seemingly, is Ana though, over the years, there appears to have been a certain discrepancy as to her exact status. Nowadays, most of us (with the conspicuous exception of crossword compilers), accept that **Ana** is an apposite creature and therefore superior to her cousin the **transposal** who, far from having an inferiority complex, positively abounds in the pages of Word Ways. So what can we glean about the characters of some of the other grams?

BI-	a bisexual addicted to shopping
CHRONO-	a capital Roman who likes dating
CRYPTO-	a bit of an enigma
EPI-	an advocate of the brevity of wit
HETERO-	his aim in life is to kill off that misnomergram (a new addition to the grams?) <b>iso</b> .
ISO-	a bore who's fighting a losing battle with <b>hetero-</b> , except when preceded by Pair or Trio.
LIPO-	an overweight, and the moving force behind Miguel de Cervantes's five novels each of which omits one of the five vowels
PAN-	thinks he's God's gift to the alphabet
POLY-	her lines belie her age
SHIFT-	a compulsive mover and shaker
TETRA-	always looking for letters
TRI-	makes an effort to write his letters in threes

### Perm One From Three

The alphabetically-consecutive letters K, L and M can be interchanged in CHIRK, CHIRL and CHIRM, all illustrating the CHIRP noise made by birds.

### The Owl And The Pussycat

The owl and the pussycat went to sea (Lear)  
 Would you know how first he met her? (Thackeray)  
 Behold, we know not anything (Tennyson)  
 But to see her was to love her (Burns)

She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh (Walter Scott)  
 The winds were love-sick with them (Shakespeare)  
 It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries (Masefield)  
 And he sighed for the love of a ladye (Gilbert)

### New Agamemnons

Agamemnon words are so-called because, like AGAMEMNON, they are made of three 3-letter palindromic groups. So scarce are they that, to date, only seven have appeared in Word Ways. Edward R Wolpow listed six in May 1980 and a seventh in August 1987. Of these, AJANENSIS (*Pinus ajanensis*) is the species name of an East Indian Pine tree, MIMULUSES is the plural of the mimulus plant, whilst COCCACEAE and ILICACEAE are plant families. SUSUHUNAN is the native ruler of the principality of Surakarta in Java, and MIMICISMS are morbid tendencies to mimicry. So, what of Agamemnon itself? Agamemnon is the king of Mycenae who led the Greeks against Troy and whose quarrel with Achilles provides the opening theme of Homer's *Iliad*. But AGAMEMNON is also the generic name of an orthopteran insect.

I can now offer three new agamemnons, bringing the grand total to ten:

NANNONAIA is the name of a mollusc (*Nomenclator Zoologicus*)

ANALALAVA is in Madagascar, and Rio MOMBEBACA in Fernando Po. I believe these last two are the only agamemnons to be found in *The Times Index Gazetteer of the World*, but I stand to be corrected.

**When?**

*Here in the UK, there used to be a newspaper called 'Today'.*

Today is yesterday's tomorrow and tomorrow's yesterday and, although you probably read yesterday's *Today* yesterday, you can also read yesterday's *Today* today or tomorrow, today's *Today* today or tomorrow but not yesterday, and you can't read tomorrow's *Today* today or yesterday, only tomorrow.

**Wobblies**

This is a rather nauseating transaddition:

OW BOW BOWL BLOWS BOWELS WOBBLES...

Each of these 6 words follows meaningfully on from the previous word so that the whole presents a rather disgusting picture. It was after adding the last word, WOBBLES, that I 'threw a wobbly'. I wanted to add a seventh word, WOBBLIES. After all, it sounds as though it has the required meaning, or so I thought. But no!

Apparently the word WOBBLIES is a collective noun for the Industrial Workers of the World, a group of radical labour unions, largely made up of itinerant workers, which enjoyed its greatest support in the western US during the early part of the 20th century. Alternatively referred to by some as 'I Wobbly Wobbly' and 'I Won't Work', would the I.W.W., I wonder, have appreciated the meaning required to be assigned to it here? I guess not!

**Sentenced**

What is special about this sentence? It concerns an ardent communist called Don, photographer extraordinaire, who has just visited his favourite country. Answer in *Answers and Solutions*.

Don Evert, working with reels of film galore, told his friend Geoff, our dedicated word buff, "I've sixty more shots of the troikas event as well as several of the sleigh trip" and, wistfully, "but it was the Lenin excursion I most enjoyed".

**AE.IOU**

Helping Kipling with cash

A.E. Housman, the poet,

Said to his friend

"No, of course you don't owe it".

But Kipling wasn't willing

To say 'just so',

So, instead, he replied

"AE.IOU - yo!"



**Warning!**

Transposing the letters of the individual words of a phrase can make another phrase which is the result of the first phrase in more ways than one:

SIREN TONE ALTERS

RISEN NOTE ALERTS

**Food For Thought**

Did certain persons die before they sing, (Coleridge)

Hereafter, in a better world than this? (Shakespeare)

But headlong joy is ever on the wing, (Milton)

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss. (Marlowe)

But who hath seen her wave her hand, (Tennyson)

She that was young and fair? (Wilde)

Between a splendid and a happy land (Goldsmith)

The gate is strait; I shall not be there. (Swinburne)

**Honey I Shrunk The Words**

Words waste too much paper, take too long to type and too long to read. So what can we do about it? Here is a solution which uses shorter words to replace longer words. George Bernard Shaw would have approved! It's really very simple. Groups of letters which are pronounced exactly the same as a letter of the alphabet are replaced by that letter in CAPITALISED form. Thus Fort replaces effort, a saving of 2 letters. To start with, here are 26 examples which make capital use of the 26 letters of the alphabet. In order to avoid confusion with these capitalised letters, the initial letters of proper names are given in lower case. The equals sign indicates 'replaces':

wAs = weighs; loB = lobby; Cling = ceiling; caD = caddie; kEd (sheep-tick) = keyed; Fluent = effluent; Gum = geum (a plant); Hes (has) = aitches; hlt = height; Jole (jowl) = jaiole (jail); Knite (knight) = cainite; sLing = selling; Mir = emir; Nervate = enervate; dO - dough; naP = nappy; Qs = queues; Ria = aria; State = estate; loT = lottie; hUn - hewn; eVan = evian; Ws (use) = double yews; Xeme = exeme; tYne = twine; 2 pronunciations for the letter Z, both words in Web2: (a) UK: Zonk - zedonk (male zebra x female donkey) (b) US: Zin (Bible) - zein (a prolamin allied to gluten - OED).

We can achieve relatively fewer letters by using two, rather than just one, capitalised letters:

FiG = effigy; bUT = beauty; gOT = goatee; dOT = dhoti; BIA = belay; bEsT = beastie; mIT = mighty; nIT = nightie; mAB = maybe

The same word may be used to replace more than one word, by capitalising different letters. The implication of this is that, as well as using shorter words, we also need fewer different words:

*not..* nOt = note, noT = knotty, nOT = the phrase 'no tea'

*pet...* pEt = pete, peT = petty, pET = peaty\*

*nut...* nuT = nutty, nUt = newt, nUT = new tee

*set...* sEt = seat, and seT = setee, the two words being near synonyms

I also encountered a versatile *lad* who not only replaces 3 different words but gleefully strings them together: laD lAd lAD (laddie laid lady!).

### ... Then I Shrunk Them Even More

Take a second look at the word 'peaty' (above\*). It was shortened to pET. But why stop there when it can be represented by only 2 letters, PT? This is an example of the ultimate type of replacement in which all the letters are capitalised. Here, we start with 2-letter replacements. Each of these letter pairs begins with a different letter of the alphabet and they replace the longest non-hyphenated examples I found:

AD = adie (Kate Adie is a highly-regarded British war correspondent); BT = beatty (a surname); CD = seedy; DL = dalziel and dalyell (both surnames); ED = edie; FE = effie; GG = geegee; IV = ivy; JC = jaycee; KN = cayenne; LC = elsie; ME = emmy; NV = envy; OP = opie (a surname); PK = piquet; QT = cutie; RT = artie; SX = essex; TP = teepee; UN = yewen; VJ = veejay; XS = excess.

Other words can be replaced by 3 or more capitalised letters: SKP = escapee. You are probably already familiar with XLNC = excellency.

Phrases, as well as single words, can be wholly replaced by capitalised letters. These examples have a built-in bonus, the capitalised letters themselves also form a word:

ICY = I see why; NET = any tea?; CURED = see, you are edie; DICK = dee, I see kay; TOP = tea, opie?; YON = why owen?; QUAD = cue you adie; DICED = dee, I see edie

Reluctant to be replaced, certain words cling onto their capitalised replacement in order to form a phrase: SAME essay Emmy; JED FED jay, edie, effie, dee...

Unfortunately, shrinking words by these means also has its down side. Only recently we learnt of a camper who had taken the road signposted 'bEst site' and was never heard of again!

### Zoolodromes

A **zoolodrome** is my name for a zoological palindrome. This quatrain is made of zoolodromes:

See bees?  
Wasp saw.  
Gnat stang.  
Swan gnaws

### New Anagrams

As far as I am aware, these anagrams have not appeared in previous issues of Word Ways, nor are they taken from an anagram generator:

TRANSPOSAL = PLANS A SORT

ROSETTA STONE = NOTES, OR A TEST?

CHAUVINIST = HIS VAIN CUT

GOT MINUTES! - I MUST GET ON

ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE = FIT, OR GONE TO HEAVEN?

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS = ITS N. - HOW WELL IT WHINED

READY, WILLING, ABLE = LAY IN BED I'LL WAGER!

DEMOCRAT? REPUBLICAN? = AMERICAN CULT PROBED

..and an antigram:

SCRABBLE PLAYER = A CRABBY (bad-tempered) SPELLER

## Names To Die For

My local telephone directory lists a D.F.BACHE living in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. I like to think of him as being one of the GIs who settled over here after the Second World War.

“The electric train, running on rails, was pioneered in the provinces, Birkenhead leading the way in 1860; again this was the inspiration of a foreign engineer, an American with the felicitous name of George Train”... from J.H.Clapham’s *Early Victorian England* vol 1 p62.

One of the resident panellists on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Gardeners’ Question Time* is called Bob Flowerdew.

An American high jumper, Nathan Leeper, and a Ukranian triple-jumper, Olena Hovorova, both participated in the Sydney Olympics.

## The Surgeon’s Z to A

“Zooks, yon X-rays were very unusual” the surgeon, Ray Quinn, pronounced on noticing matron, “look - knee joint is high, gullet’s forward, elbow’s damaged, chin’s below arm!”.

## Alternative Definitions

Words can easily be misinterpreted when spoken rather than written:

GROUPIE - cultivated a pea plant

NEUTERED - fresh dung

SORELY - spotted Lee

APARTITE - a tight-fisted father

METRONOME - a little creature who travels on the French underground.

WAISTBAND - refuse not permitted

MIGHTY - my afternoon cuppa

SCENIC - perceive Nicholas

IMPAIL - he’s not looking too well

AVAIL - partake of alcoholic refreshment

TOUCAN - not confined to one

DOORMAN - this is where you sleep Anne

THEREBY - what they purchase

BALMY? - exclude me?

SUPERB - soup made from herbs

SERMAN - a Knight

CAMPAIGN - the result of Oxford winning the annual University Boat Race

KHARTOUM - graveyard for cars

SAURKRAUT - miserable German

## Scramble!

Take a word or phrase, shift each of its letters the same number of places along the alphabet (jumping over from Z to A), and then rearrange the letters to make a **shiftgram**. I dealt with shiftgrams at some length in *Shiftgrams: My Deft Ruse* (96035). Here is an addition:

## It Comes To Pass

COMES and PASS are a truly remarkable combination of words. Replace the -ES of comes with PASS and you have COMPASS. Now replace the COM- of comes with the same word and you immediately make PASSES. Should you feel inclined to place one of these PASSES inside COMES, you'll end up with a pair of COMPASSES!

## Elementary My Dear Watson

"I can't solve it Holmes", he protested.

"But it's elementary my dear Watson". This was, allegedly, a familiar repartee in the household of the great detective.

By now, Watson was becoming noticeably agitated, "I really can't", he said.

"My dear fellow", Holmes said in exasperation. "I've given you a clue: Rubik's Cube is elementary".

"Alright, I give in", Watson replied.

"Give me a pencil and a piece of paper, there's a good fellow" and, puffing away at his pipe, this is what Holmes wrote:

<b>Ru - B - I - K - S</b>	<b>Cu - Be</b>
(Ruthenium - Boron - Iodine - Potassium - Sulphur	Copper - Beryllium)

Watson was at once impressed and suitably chastened. "I see", was all he could muster. Then, inspired, he wrote **O - H, Y - E - S** (Oxygen, Hydrogen, Yttrium, Einsteinium, Sulphur) and, "Holmes", he said, "how about **W - At - S - O - N?**" (Tungsten, Astatine, Sulphur, Oxygen, Nitrogen).

For once it was Holmes's turn to be at a loss for words, hoist with his own petard! Then, puffing madly and frowning in concentration, he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "Watson, go and look in that chemistry book on the shelf and tell me the name of element number 67".

The reader might like to do the same.

## Pseudosynonyms

Examples of this particular genre will be familiar to readers of Word Ways. Here are some additions:

WATER JUMP	MAJOR MINOR	HIGHRISE	LIGHT JET	CAST OFF
ICE BOUND	TALLBOY	UPLIFT	LAMP BLACK	CREW CUT

## More Helpings Of Liverwurst

I thought LIVERWURST was the only word to contain the six alphabetically-consecutive letters RSTUV and W. Then I came across a second such word, albeit hyphenated, in the book *Strange Places, Questionable People* by John Simpson, the BBC World News Editor who, for more than thirty years has travelled the world to report on the most significant events of our times.

PIET-MY-VROUWS is the strange name of a South African bird. This encouraged me to search for further examples. These can all be found in the OED:

ADVOWTEROUS (adulterous), COUNTERVIEWS, OVERWROUGHTNESS, SCURVY-WORT (a plant), VULTURE-WISE.

The prime example has to be VERTWUS (virtuous) as it contains only one additional letter (E).

## Homophonic Spoonerisms

Most of us are familiar with the spoonerism in which the initial letter(s) of two words are exchanged to make two new words: SHE'S HOT - HE'S SHOT; FIFTY NINE - NIFTY FINE. However, of considerably greater interest are apposite examples such as PEAL RINGER - REAL PINGER; GRUNTING HOG - HUNTING GROG; FEAST LULL - LEAST FULL; WEARY BLOKE - BLEARY WOKE; MANDY RAN - RANDY MAN (which could also be a reference to a British politician); FRIED DISH - DRIED FISH, and WEDDING BELL - BEDDING WELL.

The four words may form a phrase: MISSED KAY, KISSED MAY!; CLEVER SAWS SEVER CLAWS; TRAGIC MICK'S MAGIC TRICKS; NURSE CAN CURSE NAN (perhaps because NAN'S PASTY PAN'S NASTY).

On the whole, I prefer **homophonic spoonerisms**, which are not so restrictive. These include at least one letter group which is replaced by a different letter group having the same sound, as have the groups -AIS and -AZ in DAISY LAY - LAZY DAY. Other examples include: WED BURL - BED WHIRL; LETTER BOX - BETTER LOCKS; LOAD'S WRONG - ROAD'S LONG.

Once again we can make phrases: BLUE FLY FLEW BY; TINY SHOE, SHINY TOO; SHIP'S RAIL RIPS SHALE; MAKE TOR TAKE MORE; NANCY'S FAN FANCIES NAN; HEAR GNOME NEAR HOME; HE'S TIM, TEASE HIM; BARRY'S CLAIM CARRIES BLAME; RUDE ONE WOODED RON; NUNS SAID "SON'S NED"; GUESS WHAT WES GOT.

In the *New Scientist*, I came across a FRED NEUD at the University of Toronto. Does anyone know a NED FREUD?

## ZZZZZZZZ Without Snores

Buried in the OED is a remarkable hyphenated word string which uses 9 Zs! Under the head word **zizz** ('the noise made by the rapid motion of a wheel') is an 1824 citation from Scott's *Redgauntlet* ch. xi ... "I carried a cutler's wheel for several weeks, ... there I went **bizz-bizz-whizz-zizz** at every aulde wife's door".

## To And Fro Words

Searching for words whose first half letters progress forwards along the first half of the alphabet, and whose second half letters regress backwards along the second half of the alphabet is rather like looking for a needle in a haystack, especially when no doubled letters are allowed and a minimum of 6 letters is required. I call these **to and fro** words. The search is obviously restricted to words with an even number of letters and I found no examples longer than 6 letters which adhered to these rules. Several of this rare breed are UK place names:

AIKTON (in Cumbria), ACKTON (West Yorkshire), BELTON (in several counties), BILTON (Northumberland), DILTON Marsh (Wiltshire), ELMTON (Derbyshire), FILTON (Avon), GILSON (Warwickshire) and HILTON which, as well as the hotel name, can be found in at least nine counties.

Non-place names:

CHIRON (1) in Greek Mythology, the name of a teacher; (2) a body (either a minor planet or a very large comet) with an orbit between Saturn and Uranus

CHITON a genus of mollusc

CHIUSO stopped (of a musical note)

## Palindromic Straddles

Straddling the phrase BLOOD DONOR is the 4-letter palindromic group ODDO. I call ODDO a **palindromic straddle**. Other 2-word phrases which embody 4-letter palindromic straddles include: ALTAR RAILS, MAKES SENSE, SHORT TRACK, BONDED DEBT, CHANGE GEAR, COMMON NOUN, INSIDE EDGE, COAT TAILS, DIRT TRACK, YELLOW WOOD, GEAR RATIO, TAIL LIGHT, SHOT TOWER

5-letter straddles: APPLE JELLY, CIDER PRESS

6-letter straddles: SITS STILL, HARD DRAWN

7-letter straddles: DIRTY TRICK, MOBILE LIBRARY

8-letter straddles: CART TRACK, SKELETON NOTES

9-letter straddles: SPORTS TROPHY, JUVENILE DELINQUENT

## Tense Words

**Tense Words** is the name I give to words made of two different tenses of the same verb. Examples are SEESAW, WASIS (a name in a 1925 citation under 'goo-goo int.', OED), HASHAD (Dr Mohammed Naguib Hashad was the 9th Rector of Cairo University from July 1964 to September 1966), WASAM (in Pakistan) and GOWENT which appears to be the name of the vendor of a second-hand 1990 Scorpio car in a Russian web auction! Also to be found in [www.netvigator.com.tw/~gowent](http://www.netvigator.com.tw/~gowent).

## You Had Left

The complexity of the English language in terms of stress is often confusing and a simple-looking phrase can embody several meanings, depending largely on where the emphasis is laid. YOU HAD LEFT is a prime example, especially as the word LEFT has two meanings: *gone*, and *left* as opposed to *right*. Emphasised words are underlined:

- YOU HAD LEFT - you had gone  
YOU HAD LEFT - you had gone but others remained  
 YOU HAD LEFT - you may have forgotten, but you really had gone  
YOU HAD LEFT? - are you sure you weren't still there with the others?  
YOU HAD LEFT! - no argument, you had most definitely gone  
YOU HAD? LEFT? - no, go on, not really, I can't believe you'd gone
- YOU HAD LEFT - it was definitely LEFT you had, not RIGHT  
YOU HAD LEFT? - certain? Surely someone else had LEFT and you had RIGHT  
 YOU HAD LEFT! - well I am surprised, I thought it was RIGHT you had

## Final Musings

HER labour was HISTORY

The DEBIT means that I am in DEBT

TANNOYS speak for themselves - they ANNOY

Is it possible to be IN FRONT in the OUTBACK?

and a real poser... when do you indulge in FOREPLAY? Why, AFTER WORK of course!