

News4. [A4 14pp in the printed version. *Underlined words and letters are in italics here.*]



The Simplified Spelling Society. Newsletter November 1983

Patron: H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., K.T.

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I thank Richard Lung for his excellent article, but because of lack of space, reproduction will be delayed until the next issue.

M. Cross — Editor.

[Mona Cross: see [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#)]

1. A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR — MONA CROSS. November 1983.

Dear Members and interested people,

Once more we commence battle to get Spelling Changes accepted. All of the Committee believe that one step towards that is to use the most recently accepted changes in this News Letter. I am odd man out. I don't believe that the *use* of a spelling reform makes converts. I may be wrong. After you've read this News Letter would you write and tell us what you think of "The Big Four" (ref. the Secretary's description) as shown in almost all the articles except Valerie Yule's?

I myself want one thing *now* — I want people to know *why* men and women in and out of the Society, hav given, and are giving, much of their strength, their time, their money — to changing a spelling from which they themselves will gain no benefit but which they believe will benefit all English speaking people.

The comment which George O'Halloran makes on the general work of the Society has often been echoed by other members. But we never get round to preparing for a commission's request for material, or to the television people's possible request for an interesting interpretation of the whole absorbing, exciting subject. Why did Newell Tune devote so much of his life to Spelling Reform publications? Why did Vic Paulsen spend money on a special printing machine for his simple but specialised script? Why did Axel Wijk use his energy to produce a book quite redy for the use of teachers and which he carried around to the various publishing houses of Great Britain? Why did Dr. Walter Gassner use his brilliant mind to create, and pass on to us, a "Consistent Spelling" book? Why did Herbert Wilkinson suffer the greatest sens of frustration after giving his energy and time and money to producing and promoting "Wurld English"? And why does Dr. Reg Deans continue to work for and to foster interest in his "Britic" scheme, altho' now he is beyond the age of ninety?

They all hav given so much because they want to bring about something which is *right*. As Mr. Wilkinson sed to me, "I want English to be a link between men and women of foreign countries and not to continue to be a barrier because of the gap between its spelling and pronunciation. It was the awful fighting in the Great War which made me first feel like that." If you read what Mr. Gogate of India says, you can see how good men still devote their time to fostering ideas which could make English a redily written and a redily *spoken* international language. But when do people hear of simplification of spelling and of the reasons for it? — I am called a "Publicity Officer". I need to reach the public. The committee members believe that by the use of the simple reforms used in this letter, they are proving that change is practical. How can I reach the public to convince them of this? — I need your help! — You are all far away, but isn't there *anything* you can giv? We hav millions of people to enlighten. Without you I can't reach them. Can you help?

About the News Letter

You will see a photostat from the littl 1824 book which I mentioned last time. It is a well worn book which somebody was still using in 1829. As with our own society's reforms, it has been forgotten. Yet it must hav been used somewhere by a teacher, or by a tutor, and his pupils. That ought to hav been the beginning of an acceptable reform. But there was no authority behind it. It must hav been like the complete reforms of this century, expensive to produce, an adventure to use, and a heart-break to see it discarded.

Two reforms are used in this News Letter. One, the "Big Four", has been accepted by the "Better Education thru Simplified Spelling" group of America and by the Simplified Spelling Society Committee. The other is a "cut" spelling which Valerie Yule is using in sum experiments.

Other Matters

I have many pages from an ardent reformer named Raymond Elser of New Jersey, U.S.A. Most were very interesting quotations, for which I thank him. But I feel that you yourselves will be able to realise his aims by looking at the accompanying photostat. He uses an upside down "e" for the "u" sound in "the". The upside down "e" has been recommended by many reformers, including the author of the Society's System 2, compiled by Mr. Sinclair S. Eustace.

*Child's play is learning. The man imaginative the play. the
man is child's play soon.
Make is sandwiches with on old trunks ties - rub seats and around
Choose quick - growing plants for a child: lettuce, beans, radishes,
small marigolds, beets butts.
Tape strips or masking tape over the knives or forks or spoons
and puzzle BIFAU the back.
Make is menu (in Simplified Spelling) or each meal for a
child to read.*

I am sorry to say that I have no facts to give concerning the hoped for 1984 Conference.

As you know the S.S.S. subscription is £5 annually, due in January 1984. Our treasurer is now:
Mr. L. Fennelly, SOUTHAMPTON.

In the next News Letter we expect to send you a report of the doings of BEtSS. Abe Citron will continue to be our correspondent altho' he has resigned from the position of Executive Director for he is the Executive Vice-President now.

Thank you all for your interest and for your correspondence and for your contributions to our News Letter. We all wish you and our members and friends all over the world, the happiest of Christmases and a promising New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Mona Cross, Northampton.

[Stanley Gibbs: see [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#), [Leaflet](#)]

2. SECRETARY'S REPORT

I hav written separatly to thirty teacher-members of the U.K. ita Federation enclosing a recent Newsletter and a copy of "Spelling Reform and our Schools" by W.J. Reed [[Pamphlet 10](#)].

One reply has been received from Mrs. J. Lantern, the General Secretary, in which she suggested that the S.S.S. be represented on an Advisory/Consultativ *Committee which is expected to be formed later this year.*

Several S.S.S. members hav made complaints that our [pamflets](#) and [leaflets](#) ar old, and that they need to be updated.

It is my intention to seek permission from the Committee to reprint some of them using the "Big Four".

I find that in reading our Nue Speling pamflets, too much of my mind is being used in decifering and too little in comprehending.

When enquirers read our pamflets we want them to (a) get the message (b) see that we practise what we preach.

If I may remind our readers:

The Big Four

- (1) Spell short e with an e. e.g. "head" to be spelt "hed".
- (2) Respell all ough and augh words.
- (3) D.U.E. Drop Useless E on the end of short vowel syllables.
- (4) Respell ph words with a singl f.

Stanley Gibbs

[Newell Tune: Editor [Bulletins](#), [Anthology](#)]

3. OBITUARY September 1983.

Dr. Newell W. Tune

Founder and Editor of *Spelling Progress Bulletin* for over 20 years.

Dr. Newell Tune died on July 21 after a brave fight working on for spelling reform despite leukemia and increasing loss of strength. He was still pasting up a last issue of the *Bulletin* three weeks before his death.

Newell put a tremendous amount of time, energy and his own financial support into the *Bulletin* he founded, originally 'dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling' and latterly also to 'eliminating the causes of failure'. It achieved the status to be included in international abstracts of journals in the fields of language and education.

Although with the support of an editorial board, Newell really managed, published and single-handedly produced the *Bulletin* through all its stages. He was a meticulous and conscientious editor and correspondent, with no hesitation in adding his own disagreement with articles he published, and a good friend.

Newell has not lived to see the achievement of English spelling reform for which he gave so much. Last year friends and colleagues all over the world contributed to an expression of their admiration and appreciation of his work, and he was encouraged to make an anthology of what he himself considered the significant pieces from 20 years of the journal's publication. Copies of this work, of nearly 300 pages, "Spelling Reform: a Comprehensive Survey of the Advantages, Educational Benefits and Obstacles to Adoption" are available from the Simplified Spelling Society for £16.

It is now left to us to continue his work with the same determination.

[John Downing: see [Bulletins](#), [Anthology](#), [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#)]

4. NEWS ITEM ON DR. JOHN DOWNING, PRESIDENT OF THE S.S.S.

John Downing, Professor of Psychological Foundations in Education, University of Victoria, Canada, has just returned from a one year sabbatical leave journey overseas. He undertook professional engagements in Japan, The People's Republic of China, U.S.S.R., Austria, England, Ireland, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia.

He conducted research for four months in Papua New Guinea on children's linguistic awareness in multilingual societies with and without formal schooling. Dr. Downing also carried out an evaluation study of an experimental program in reading in the content areas in high schools in Queensland, Australia.

In the U.S.S.R., Dr. Downing completed the arrangements for publishing his book, *Foundations of Reading Instruction in Russia*.

During the year, Dr. Downing earned a higher doctorate from the University of London, England. This was the Doctor of Literature which is awarded on the recommendation of a jury which reviews the candidates' published books and articles.

Dr. Downing taught a course on the psychology of reading for one month at East China Normal University, Shanghai, China. His shorter speaking engagements included presenting papers at the World Congress on Reading, Dublin, Ireland; the annual conference of the United Kingdom Reading Association, Newcastle, England; the conference of the International Council of Psychologists, Southampton, England; and the South Pacific Reading Conference, Auckland., New Zealand.

During the year, Dr. Downing's new publications were:

- (1) "Jack Holmes' substrata factor theory of reading." In Gentile, L. M., Kamil, M. L., and Blanchard, J. S. (Eds.), *Reading Research Revisited*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill, 1983.
- (2) (With Ayers, D.) "Testing children's concepts of reading." *Educational Research*, 24 (November 1982), 277–283.
- (3) "Cognitive clarity and reading disabilities." In Das, J. P., Mulcahy, R. and Wall, A. E. (Eds.), *Theory and Research in Learning Disability*. New York: Plenum, 1982.
- (4) "The Value of Comparative Reading." In Malmquist, E. (Ed.), *Handbook on Comparative Reading*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1982.
- (5) "La Influencia de la Escuela en el Aprendizaje de la Lectura." 1982. In Ferreiro, E., and Palacio, M.G. (Eds.), *Nuevas Perspectivas sobre los Procesos de Lectura y Escritura*. Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, sa., 1982.
- (6) (With Brown, A., and Sceats, J.) *Diccionario Basico*. New York: Jove, 1982.
- (7) (With Ayers, D., and Schaefer, B.) *The Linguistic Awareness in Reading Readiness Test (LARR)*. Windsor, England: NFER-Nelson, 1983.

Educator's record earns doctorate (Extract from an article published in the University of Victoria's newspaper — 'The Ring'.)

Dr. John Downing, chairman of the Department of Psychological Foundations in Education, has received a prestigious Doctor of Literature in Psychology at the University of London, England.

The degree is a higher doctorate, earned by outstanding scholars who must submit a distinguished record of publications and scholarly achievements over several years.

Downing's Ph.D. and B.A. honors degrees in psychology were also earned at the University of London.

Downing is currently serving a three-year term on the board of directors of the International Reading Association, a non-profit organization devoted to the improvement of reading instruction and promotion of a lifetime reading habit among people around the world.

He is a Fellow of the Canadian Psychological Association, British Psychological Society, Royal Society of Arts and the American Psychological Association. His publications include **Evaluating the Initial Teaching Alphabet, Comparative Reading, Reading Readiness** and **Reading and Reasoning**. Downing has spoken on how children learn to read at conferences and universities around the world.

[George O'Halloran: see [Bulletins](#), [Newsletters](#)]

[The 1975 New Sheet mentioned does not appear to be the only 1975 issue ([April](#)) that we have.]

5. FROM GEORGE O'HALLORAN

Editor: In response to my request for material for this News Letter, George O'Halloran sent me a copy of a 1975 News Sheet from which extracts were to be used. As you will see, the substance is right for 1983. Below are a few of the extracts:-

Spelling Reform:

Since the first rationalization of English spelling proposed in the reign of the first Elizabeth — yes, as far back as that — literally hundreds of reform schemes have been put out for consideration. They have included:

1. Use of the traditional letters of the alphabet in their majority pronunciation together with the omission of redundant letters (x, q) and the use of digraphs to fill up gaps.
2. Letters of the traditional alphabet as above with redundant letters used to fill up gaps, e.g. reversion to the late Old English pronunciation of (c) as (tsh).
3. Use of the regular alphabet plus diacritical marks.
4. Use of regular alphabet plus some extra letters, e.g. Daniel Jones' version of IPA or Kingsley Reed's "Spell" or i.t.a.
5. Use of an entirely new non-Romanic alphabet e.g. Shaw's alphabet.
6. Ideographic orthographies e.g. Bliss's semantography.

Preparation for a revival of Official interest.

Comment on the general work of the Society.

One day fairly soon, no doubt inside the next ten years, someone is going to have to make a decision about spelling reform for English and it is good that all the possible alternatives should be available to them for inspection and testing. One of the most useful functions the Society can perform is to have as comprehensive a collection as possible of these scripts ready and waiting for this day, together with all possible records of their functioning in use — if in fact they have ever been used. A rational choice can be made only from full knowledge.

Who will be the makers of the choice? I should think probably an international commission made up of representatives of states which are English-speaking together, perhaps, with some members from states which use English as their official language. Its need will be sparked off probably by some kind of official action in one (or more) of the English speaking states.

Such a commission will examine all the evidence, historical and current, local and international. It will examine orthographies and compare them with all the variant international pronunciations of English. It will probably try to find a script which will cover (diafonically) all of these pronunciations and which will at the same time help to keep the pronunciations of English sufficiently close to remain inter-understandable.

It seems to me that the main function of the S.S.S. is to be a provoking influence for such a commission by promoting research, education, study, collections of records and similar programs. There is no doubt that real evidence put forward by the S.S.S. would be heard with respect.

How spelling reform can be introduced in practice.

- a) Requirements for a *practicabl* spelling reform need to be worked out — which take account of what *people* are like, not just what the structure of spelling or English fonemes is like. Is a perfect spelling possible or desirable? Is the aim a fonetic spelling as an ideal, or a consistent one that takes the weaknesses of human beings into account? (e.g. that can cope with poor auditory discrimination and continental differences in pronunciation). What lessons can be learnt from other countries?
- b) The introduction of dual spelling during a transition. cf. Common Market 4 — language usage.
- c) Methods of getting people used to the idea that spelling can be changed, and interested in it. Gimiks, gajets, marketing etc.
- d) Cost estimates. How much reprinting would actually be necessary?
- e) Comparison of practical benefits of different varieties of spelling proposals. Popular reactions to different varieties.
- f) Some have proposed 'permissive spelling. While this may be quite feasible for private correspondence, what evidence can be found for the likely effects if there were no consistent standards — e.g. for printers, typists, commerce, foreigners learning English, communication between Anglo-Saxon countries, speed-reading which requires a good deal of habit-trained instant pattern-recognition rather than continual conscious decoding.

Editor: The 1983 Committee believe that the use of "The Big Four" in our News Letters will show its readers how easily, and inconspicuously spelling change can be brought about. They hope that this will prove a first step towards official recommendation. However, 'Nue Speling' is still held as a Society recommended scheme if a *complete* one is ever required. Of this Mr. O'Holloran expresses an appreciative opinion.

"The Society's 'Nue Speling' system seems to have been the first scientifically based new alphabet; most subsequent reformed alphabets seem to be based on it. 'Nue Speling' was built on a study of the sounds of English. It is interesting to make comparisons of Nue Speling and some more recent productions.

If one sets out Nue Speling with all its letters and digraphs to represent the sounds of English down the left-hand side of a sheet of paper and then places in parallel the new alphabet (or alphabets) to be compared with it, a number of interesting things will come to light. The first of these is that any differences which occur will usually be mere differences in the shape of a letter or the substitution of some kind of a monograph for a digraph. Nue Speling has clearly been a seminal influence in English orthography, and most more recent orthographies are clearly based on the principles it embodies. Some, like i.t.a., are so clearly based on Nue Speling that even its digraphs are taken and converted into monographs still easily recognizable"

G. O'Halloran.

[Valerie Yule: see [Bulletins](#), [Anthology](#), [Quarterly](#), [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#), [Personal Views](#) 10 & 16, [Media](#), [Books](#).]

6. AN ACCOUNT OF EXPERIMENTS BEING UNDERTAKEN BY VALERIE YULE OF ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY.

This is written in "cut" spelling which is not that used in most of today's "News Letter".

Why bother with research in spelling reform?

Spelling is information technology. All improvements in modern technology need to be tested to see which one works best. All assumptions about what will work and what will not need to be tested also — not just argued about.

I have been asked to describe some directions of my current research, small-scale and unfunded as it is.

The main aim is to find what sort of spelling would not only help learners, but also adults already literate, readers as well as writers, machines as well as humans, foreigners as well as native English speakers — and also remain linked with other European languages and compatible with present spelling. In the future, a radical reform completely different from current orthographies is quite possible, but it is not likely to resemble any spelling reform devised yet.

Two spelling modes are currently being tested, and comparisons are being made with pure 'spelling as you speak'. One of these ideas is 'cut' spelling — finding what letters in words are really not needed at all. The working definition of a surplus letter in a word is:

1. It is not needed to show how the word is pronounced (and may even mislead).
2. It is not needed to clarify the meaning of a word and show its relation to other words. (This function of spelling can help learners to work out new words, and can help all readers to read faster for meaning.)

My series of over 24 small experiments need replication and extending, but they tend to show that when 'clutter' is dropped from English spelling, within 20 minutes good readers tend to read faster, 'average' readers are picking up after initial surprise, and many poor readers are able to read better immediately.

The advantage of removing 'clutter' as a first step in spelling reform is the immediate benefit to those already literate. It makes a 5% economy in ordinary text, which adds up to considerable savings in materials, input, storage and output, and can co-exist with present spelling so that 'the better spellings can win' through popular choice. Cutting out is easier than altering. Writers can adjust as they please, using their own reason to work out which letters have no purpose, and having at least a sensible rule to decide about double letter problems in spelling.

The other spelling mode that interests me is a 'morpho-phonemic' type, which modifies consistent

sound-symbol relationships by consistent representation of grammatical markers (e.g. plural 's'), and similar visual appearance for word roots achieved by a consistent use of the 'magic e' principle to distinguish long and short vowels, placed after a consonant rather than mid-syllable as in New Spelling.

Anyone is welcome to try out this experimental material. Various types of experimental design are being used, and presentation may be in print or on television screens — where I think 'uncluttered spelling' may come in first.

Different texts, spelling modes, subjects with differing degrees of ability are all being tested. Generally, there are three groups of subjects, all tested in normal spelling, but one group also tested in the experimental spelling, and another group reading similar sorts of spelling changes — but made in the wrong words.

Each subject reads a series of passages of a story or article, with each passage timed, and answering comprehension questions.

In another type of experiment, subjects read three parallel forms of a standard reading test — in ordinary spelling and the two changed modes, or other experimental mode, e.g. 'spelling as you speak'.

In a third type, subjects are asked to slash all the odd spellings they can detect on reading a story through once. Other subjects are given the same story in normal spelling, with one example of how to slash 'surplus' words, and then asked to slash out 'surplus' in the rest of the story. These experiments show what sort of changes subjects notice and do not notice in reading when they are looking out for changes and how much people agree on what letters are not really necessary.

The fourth experiment tests the difference in silent and oral reading in schoolchildren, who are asked to slash all *the words they can read* in reading silently, and then the teacher marks all the words they can read aloud. This experiment shows what sort of spelling can benefit learners.

I am now working on ways of testing whether 'cut' spelling could be used as an 'initial learning spelling' for children and foreigners, in a way that gave immediate transition to present spelling on the same page.

More subjects are needed to substantiate findings in these experiments, and I am also looking for — a small grant for obtaining subjects, stationery, photocopying etc.; a larger grant for a research assistant or student; or better still, other researchers to take up this form of study.

Valerie Yule.

Department of Psychology University of Aberdeen.

[Madhukar Gogate: see [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#)]

7. SPELLING REFORM. AN INDIAN VIEWPOINT

By Madhukar N. Gogate, Bombay (India).

In his introduction to his article concerning the use of the English language in India, Mr. Gogate writes:

"Silent letters in words "palm, debt, knight" impress upon us the importance of silence when angered". I thought that sounded rather nice. It shows that even the most useless things can be of value to somebody!

Mr. Gogate continues with an article seven pages long, of which we print the first three. Before you read them, glance at his vocabulary and look at his spelling. Both, you will agree, are excellent, in spite of his native language being so different. You'll realise as you read, that his weakness must be in pronunciation, for we don't pronounce "sail" like "sell", or "Station" as "stetion". The fault is entirely ours, for our spelling is so irregular, so inconsistent.

Many foreigners (honour) (honor) us, by wanting to use our language as the Romans once used Latin — as a link between peoples. We're proud of that. But oughtn't we to work for a spelling which will make the link in *speech*, as well as in writing? Oughtn't we to make our spelling rules consistent for British children's sake? (You may not have noticed that "gave" and "save" and "have" ought to sound alike but don't; or that "doe" and "does" look alike, but have nothing in common but "d"). Instead of admitting that there's a matter to change or "reform", most people think of spelling as a trial of their skill, or as a hurdle to fall down at, as a child's worry thru' the threat of punishment, and often as a horrid bogey, always haunting every piece of official letter writing, or as a simple matter to be ignored.

And judging by two recently received receipts of mine, and individual's notices put up in local shops and post offices, it hasn't even been learned yet! M. Cross, Editor.

"I am interested in spelling reforms for two reasons. Firstly, in India we use English for higher education and higher business. Secondly, I advocate romanization of Indian languages. Many English words have entered our languages and are written in respective scripts as per pronunciation. But there would be problems, if and when romanization takes place. Should we write "cement, station" as in English, and retain links with Western literature, or should we write them as "siment, steshan" as per pronunciation? English language has landed into chaos because it borrowed some foreign words like "colonel" in total disregard of their actual pronunciation. Should we repeat those mistakes? Our problems would be solved if English spellings are themselves reformed.

There is another problem. Which pronunciation is standard? In India, we study various irregularities of spellings and certain shortforms like "can't" in place of "cannot". But, beyond these, we take spellings at their face value. Pronunciations change in every live language. In south England, letter "r" is now silenced in pronunciations of words "perhaps, morning". People over there say "ov" in place of "of". But, in India, we continue to pronounce "r", and also "of". English is not our colloquial language. We do not use it 24 hours in a day. It is like a bicycle, good for fast travelling, but one does not sit on it all the time. Subsequent observations are based on Indian perception of pronunciations.

It would not be out of place to state why I am advocating romanization of Indian languages, now written in ten different scripts. India is a multi-language, multi-religion, multi-costume nation. A common Roman script, with suitable improvements, would help to integrate the people. It would help to reduce illiteracy at a faster rate. Whether we like it or not, English is going to stay in India. With English, all modern equipments like typewriters, teleprinters, computers designed for Roman script are bound to stay and grow. To achieve economies of scale, it would be better if all Indian languages switch over to the Roman script. There is a parallel shining example before us. Actually, all Indian languages have separate numeral symbols. But, by common consent, Indian Parliament

decided that the numerals on all public instruments should be in International forms (0123456789). As a result, all clocks, coins, thermometers, measuring tapes, telephone dials, car number plates etc. bear International forms of numerals, and the country enjoys great benefits due to this uniformity. Individual style numerals are still in vogue, for private letters and some language newspapers, but slowly these too are changing. India has experience of discarding foot-pound system, and adopting metric system too.

If Roman script has advantages, why does not India adopt it? The reason is same why English spellings too are not reformed. Every society has great inertia against making changes. Moreover, like English-speaking countries, India too is a democracy. The comedy of democracy is that it permits free debates. And the tragedy is that there is no conclusion and implementation! Kemal Pasha in Turkey, Mao in China could romanize their languages because they had powerful fists! So, advocates of romanization in India must mark time. Eventually we shall succeed. Fifty years ago, when contraceptives were introduced in India, the pioneers were slandered. Today, Family Planning is our national policy, and we spend enormous funds on publicity and incentives for sterilization.

I may be wrong, but I feel that romanization in India would take place earlier than spelling reforms in English. Our languages have limited literature, and they are spoken in limited regions. On the other hand, English has vast literature and it has percolated to various levels on all continents, and also on the moon! So, the task of reforming spellings looks to me pretty difficult.

I shall now come to specific suggestions for reforms. But where should I begin? If you ask a German friend to make suggestions, he may say that letter "j" be adopted for the sound denoted by "y" in English word "yes". The reform scheme would depend on the starting nucleus, the linguistic experience of the reformers. As said earlier, I have hopes for romanization in India and I have doubts about spelling reforms in English. It would be good, therefore, if I take Indian language as nucleus, consider phonetic elements predominantly required for those languages and then try to show that English spellings too can fit that pattern.

Some English-speaking reformers may not agree with this approach. My request to them is to consider this suggestion, because it comes from an English-language user, who too is entitled to voice suggestions. English is no longer English, it is really Globish. English-speaking thinkers should consider themselves as trustees of the spelling reform movement. Their voice would definitely carry some weight, but they alone are not the masters of this world treasure, the common language called English.

8. FROM HERR SCHMITZ-OP-DER-BECK OF DOLOGNE

"Some ten years ago I had concentrated on teaching English to multilingual children of non-German origin by using a computer-assisted approach along with a special script and the reading scheme, Dr. John Downing had experimented with;" (Editor: Was this i.t.a. I wonder?) "and while the British decided to scrap all for domestic reasons, I found that in nine months my boys and girls struggled better than others in a torrent of foreign (non-English) sounds, and they simply loved English best.

English is an international language spread by new technologies rapidly all over the globe, and now is the time to make decisions simultaneously for both the inland and the foreign markets."

[David Stark: see [Journals](#), [Newsletters](#)]

9. EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER BY DAVID STARK

David Stark is one of a group of three letter writers, namely Robert Craig and Richard Lung, who are thinking out what they believe should be this Society's approach to Spelling Change.

"If one is an idealist, one would start at the ideal and work back to the first practical step; if one is a pragmatist, one starts with the most practical first step and heads towards a roughly defined target.

The big problem, of course, is introducing reform to an existing literate English world. One could wait for a revolutionary social change to slip in a revolutionary reform such as a new information technology revolution. Or one can introduce reform in various stages. Two have been suggested. Firstly, a transitional alphabet as a large step to the ultimate perfect reform. This I would still regard as revolutionary. Secondly, the step-by-step reforms. These, I would argue, are too limited to engender any significant potential for further reform.

What I am trying to do in my paper on Spelling Reform is to conceive a step between using a transitional alphabet and step by step reform, which would be large enough a change to be significantly consistent, and generally phonetically based, but not too large that it scares off existing English literates. It also has the advantage of considerably extending step-by-step reform in the form of syllabic rather than alphabetic translations.

The problem with any transitional reforms is that they might end up as final ones. While they might not be perfect, it might not be worth the bother of changing them.

Editor: The last sentence expresses a problem which can only be avoided by bearing in mind the Society's function as expressed by our President, Dr. John Downing, in the quotation given in my own letter.

10. TOPICAL COMMENTS BY DAVID STARK

During the summer, the Adult Literacy people issued a report stating that literacy problems amongst adults were not being eradicated, as some people had thought they would at the beginning of the scheme. Any simplified spelling reformer could have told them that. As well as being difficult to learn, English spelling also needs constant practice to retain a high level of skill in it.

Today the oral and visual stimuli in the media dominate to the point where written communication for many people is relied on less. A reading age of only 8 or 9 is required to read the mass circulation newspapers, and a large number of people have little or no requirement to write. I have all my letters audio-typed and could well be a poor speller without anyone at work noticing.

The Adult Literacy Campaign does not seem to realize that it is not people who are deficient, but the spelling system, and that the present time is as ripe as any for simplification to be pursued.

Mrs. Thatcher's educational policy could benefit from simplified spelling. If a system were adopted, it could be argued that one year of schooling could be omitted from the present basic eleven, with the same result in terms of educational learning. Think of the savings possible in the educational system. Why not abolish 'primary one' and start a child at the age of six? Less teachers would be needed and the wage bill consequently reduced.

11. Orthographical Exercises. 1824

ORTHOGRAPHICAL
EXERCISES:
IN A
SERIES OF MORAL LETTERS.
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A SELECTION OF ESSAYS, &c.
TAKEN FROM
THE BEST ENGLISH WRITERS.
—
BY THE LATE
JAMES ALDERSON.
—
THE EIGHTEENTH EDITION
Carefully revised and corrected
BY THE REV. THOMAS SMITH.

LONDON:
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SCOTTE.
1824.

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The principal design of these Lessons (as originally stated by the compiler) is to assist the pupil in the attainment of Orthography: they are written, therefore, agreeably to the most approved rules for pronouncing the English language; and by each letter or essay being read to the teacher, prior to its being given as a spelling exercise, it is presumed that, while the main object is kept in view, the pronunciation will also be materially benefited. It is further to be hoped, the moral and religious lessons they are meant to inculcate, will have some effect upon the minds of those for whom they are particularly intended.

A 2

iv ADVERTISEMENT.


The very favourable reception which this little work *has* met with, and the rapid sale of many thousand copies, have afforded ample and pleasing proofs of its real utility; and, from the peculiar attention paid to its *improvement*, in *comparing* the orthography with the dictionaries of Messrs. Walker and Sheridan; in *inserting* some extracts from the justly-admired letters of the Right Honourable Sir John Eardley Wilmot, published in the Memoirs of his Life; in *appending* two interesting articles from the histories of Rome and Great Britain, by the Rev. John Adams, A.M.; and in rendering the whole as *accurate* as possible; the editor and proprietors flatter themselves they will be found to have rendered an acceptable service to the rising generation.

T. SMITH.

ORTHOGRAPHICAL EXERCISES.

LETTUR I.

NY DEER CHARLES,


Yoo ar arriv'd at an nje kapabl ov distinggwishing the luvlenes ov vertshu and the deformete ov vise. I hav bithurtoo, with the most ankshus solissetude and at-tenshun, endevar'd so to form yoor yung ideaz-oz to make them bekum insensible attatsh'd to the formur. For the komple-shun ov yoor edukashun, I hav now plas'd yoo undur the kare ov Mr. H. ———, a most warthe man, and eksellent skollar. I hav rek wasted him to inform me, from time to time, hwotever he ma diskuvur lawdabl ar blenabl in yoor kondukt, and hope, from his reports, I shal hav mutsh to up-plawd, littl to kondem. Farewel, my sun; remeenbur, To be happe iz to be good.

A 3

Footnote by M. Cross: It is surprising to see how well used this little book has been. Surprising too, that "many thousands" of copies wer sold. Maybe its publication led to the formation of spelling reform groups. We hav much mor consistent "reforms" to offer to anyone interested. How can we ourselves reach "many thousands" who would read *our* literature?

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1982
have been omitted.