

We love SCRABBLE™

An omnibus edition of *OnBoard*,
the magazine of the ABSP
(Association of British Scrabble Players)

Foreword by Gyles Brandreth

TOP TIPS FROM EXPERTS
SCRABBLE in Thailand
PUZZLES

... and lots, lots more!



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WELCOME TO ... WE LOVE SCRABBLE!



The OnBoard editorial and design team for the period October 2015 – December 2016, from which the articles in this omnibus were sourced, were (left to right): Kay Möller (copy editor and graphic designer), Paul Coyle (graphic designer), and Natalie Zolty (editor)

ABOUT THE ABSP

The Association of British Scrabble Players (ABSP) was founded in 1987 as a non-profit organisation to promote interest in playing Scrabble. There are over 250 registered Scrabble clubs in the UK. If you would like to take your Scrabble a step further than the living room, or you fancy a social evening with new friends, why not give one a try?

The ABSP also maintains a ratings system for players and co-ordinates Scrabble

tournaments around the UK, with events happening almost every weekend. Membership of the ABSP includes benefits such as the regular *OnBoard* magazine, either electronically or delivered direct to your door, and discounted access to tournaments.

To find out about clubs near you, to see the full tournament calendar, or to join the ABSP to get the magazine, go to: absp.org.uk.

FROM THE EDITOR ...

Scrabble. It's a couple of friends finding words over tea and a chat, or a family together on a Sunday afternoon with exclamations of, "That's not a word!" But it can be so much more. Eight years ago, when I started playing online,



I had no idea it would open up a new world. I've made numerous friends, travelled the country, and more recently to France, for wonderful weekends of fierce competition and camaraderie. The Scrabble community transcends politics, religion and other barriers to bring people together and forge lifelong friendships. All this from a board game.

In July 2014, an appeal went out for someone to help with the ABSP magazine OnBoard. Undeterred by total ignorance and an incurable volunteer, my hand shot up. "I'll do it!" Luckily, two friends had vast experience and joined me to help. Together, Kay Möller, Paul Coyle and I launched forth. We had a huge laugh most of the time, and occasionally tore our own and each other's hair out.

This omnibus edition gives you a flavour of what the ABSP does and of our wonderful eclectic community, from the different and colourful scene experienced by expat Gerry Carter in Thailand (page 24) to Scrabble weddings (page 4). Enjoy. And then, why not join us?

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FOREWORD

I love Scrabble! And I have loved the game for as long as I can remember, which, I am appalled to reveal, is more than 60 years.

I come from a family of word-lovers and board-game enthusiasts. In 1936, my father (a lawyer) bought one of the first sets of Monopoly sold in Britain. He met my mother (a teacher) playing Monopoly. After the Second World War, when Scrabble was introduced to Britain, my parents bought one of the first sets to be sold here. In the early 1950s, almost from the age I could walk and talk, I was playing Scrabble. Much of my life-long love of words I owe to this extraordinary game.

When I was 13, I was sent to Bedales, a boarding school in Hampshire. The founder of the school, J H Badley (1863-1965), lived in the school grounds and on Wednesday afternoons I was sent to play a game of Scrabble with him. He was in his late nineties then, and played a mean game. He invariably won. I told him he was cheating because he used words that were obsolete. He claimed they had been current when he had first learnt them. He was a remarkable man. In the 1890s he was a friend of Oscar Wilde. In the 1960s he was playing Scrabble with me. At 100, he believed Scrabble kept his mind alive. It did. It does. (And for further proof of that, see the wonderful story of Isla on page 23.)



A writer, broadcaster, actor, entertainer and former MP, Gyles Brandreth is also president of the ABSP

By the time I left university, at the beginning of the 1970s, I had become a Scrabble obsessive. I would go so far as to say I had become a Scrabble evangelist! I wanted to spread the word of the world's most wonderful word game. That's how I came to found the National Scrabble Championships in 1971. I was writing a book about prison reform at the time. I had visited Bristol Prison and seen some inmates

playing Scrabble. I knew that The Queen played Scrabble. I thought, "This is game enjoyed by Her Majesty and those detained at Her Majesty's pleasure: it's a game for everyone. We need a national competition to find the best player in the land!"

And the rest, as they say, is history. From that first national championship, the Scrabble movement grew and grew – competitions proliferated, standards rose, sales soared. We had Scrabble on TV, Scrabble clothes (I had several Scrabble jumpers), Travel Scrabble, computer Scrabble ... You name it, we found a Scrabble angle to it! Yes, there have been and are other enjoyable word games (check out Daniel Stemberidge's entertaining survey on page 14), but none can rival Scrabble.

The Association of British Scrabble Players (of which I am the proud president) was formed in 1987 as an organisation to oversee UK tournament Scrabble and its associated rating system. There are now one-day or weekend tournaments somewhere in the British Isles nearly every weekend,

organised by local clubs and individuals with results rated by the ABSP.

The Association's magazine was just a newssheet in the early days, but became an A5 booklet in 1992, and from there grew in standard and presentation, being renamed *OnBoard* in 2010 when it was relaunched with a colour cover. It became full colour publication last year, when funds allowed. For me, it's a must-read publication.

OnBoard appears every two months or so and is produced by a brilliant but small and dedicated team, with regular contributors. You will find the best of it in the pages that follow. From words to take your breath away to a unique Scrabble masterclass, from tasty snacks for Scrabble foodies to the secrets of how to play the game in Thailand, this is a fabulous compendium of entertaining, arresting, intriguing, surprising articles about the world's greatest game. Scrabble? We love it! But you've probably got the message by now.

Enjoy.

Gyles Brandreth, 2016



SARAH-JANE HOLDEN

Though Sarah-Jane's demanding work and young family keep her very busy, she still finds time to enjoy Scrabble. Here, she chats about her upbringing during troubled times in Ireland, and her unique wedding to another Scrabble fanatic



PERSONALITY



As the eldest of three girls born at the height of The Troubles to what would have been seen as a mixed marriage, my childhood and teenage years were filled with what you might call interesting experiences! It seemed entirely normal to have your handbag searched every time you went into a shop, for your mum to call herself Bridget or Pat depending on who she was talking to, and for strangers to have an abnormal interest in finding out your religion by asking your name, which school you went to, and how you pronounced the letter H.

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Northern Ireland has changed beyond recognition in the last 30 years, and I wouldn't choose to live anywhere else. I have lived in Northern Ireland my whole life, firstly in Londonderry/Derry, then just outside of Belfast, aside from a short stint as an au pair in Kilmalcolm, near Glasgow, where I looked after the niece and nephews of Rocky Horror actor Richard O'Brien. The difficult background of our wee country has given us a determination to make the future better, along with a unique sense of humour and approach to life that visitors never fail to appreciate.

My elder daughter, Amber, was born in 1999. She is now studying for her GCSEs at the local grammar school, and is a credit to me in every



tournament scene through online play, a medium that seems to produce most of our new players these days but was still in its infancy when I entered my first real-life event at the Easter Matchplay 2005 in Exeter. I had already 'met' Rik Kennedy online, and he said if I was ever in Waterstones in Belfast, I should drop in, so I greeted him over the counter one day with, "Hello, are you aphasiac? I'm mistress8", and we've been great friends ever since.

Together with fellow newcomer Celine McCart and a young upstart named

respect – a budding Mary Berry in the kitchen, and a loving big sister, she is currently deciding between veterinary and medical science for career options. Her only fault is her total absence of interest in Scrabble; I wish I had a photo of the horrified look on her face when I bought her a round board and Protiles at the age of nine!

PIPE BANDS AND SCRABBLE

I had dabbled with Scrabble when playing my mum as a teenager, although was more interested in playing the bagpipes in pipe band competitions for much of my youth. Scrabble became a serious interest when I discovered ISC not long after it started. I was probably one of the first people to come into the





Paul Gallen, we formed the Belfast Scrabble Club, and later created an official Scrabble Association for Northern Ireland to allow us to send a player to the World Championship. I have never been a serious word learner, but have notched up some lower division wins over the years and had a lot of fun along the way.

DEDICATED TO CARING

Nearly a decade of caring for patients with late-stage dementia, as a care assistant in a specialised residential unit, had given me a lifetime's worth of stories to tell before I decided to take the huge step into social work. I was fortunate enough to be supported by the Health Trust I worked for to complete this course, and I qualified in March 2005, being the first person from my family to gain a professional qualification. I have been in my current post as a family and childcare social worker for almost ten years. I have managed a range of cases over the years, including family support and child protection. My work is now mainly with Looked After Children – children who are in foster or prospective adoptive placements or in kinship placements.

It is certainly not a job for the faint-hearted and is often very challenging and stressful. There is no shortage of variety – you could find yourself relationship-building with a teenager by going fishing and digging for worms in a dung-heap one day, and the next day be in High Court, giving evidence and being cross-examined by several barristers. The paperwork and volume of work is relentless. However, I am motivated by having the ability to make a positive difference to the lives of the children I work with. It is difficult and frustrating to be working so hard in a profession that is subject to constant criticism and character assassination by the media, particularly as we never have the opportunity to publicise the success stories due to confidentiality issues.

ANOTHER 'SCRABBLE COUPLE'

The list of 'Scrabble couples' seems to grow with every year, and in 2008, Stewart and I became an item, both of us having emerged from unhappy marriages and found we had a lot more than Scrabble in common. By the end of that year, he had relocated to Northern Ireland in order for us to be together.



Our son Max arrived in 2010, although Stewart was lucky to see the birth after beating me at Scrabble nine times while I was in the early stages of labour – for some men, ‘chivalry’ is nothing but an eight-letter bonus! I regained some credibility when he asked me to anagram “MAXHOLDEN without the X” a few minutes after the baby arrived, and I solved it immediately. Gas and air works wonders for the brain!

A VERY SPECIAL WEDDING

We held our Scrabble-themed wedding in January 2012, two days before the Northern Ireland Championship, and were privileged to be joined by friends from the Scrabble community from around the world. The Irish ceilidh was a particular highlight, especially for the present ABSP chairman Steve Perry, who (along with Elisabeth Jardine), took part in every single dance in a 90-minute set! The tournament that followed had a wonderful atmosphere, even when Stewart and I were paired in the very first round (I have conveniently forgotten the result). Toh Weibin’s record-breaking 850-point game was the icing on the cake of a very special four days.

Max was joined by Tabitha later that year, and it is a joy for us to see them growing up together and charming everyone they meet. Stewart stays at home as a devoted full-time father and ‘support service’, as my work frequently occupies 50+ hours per week. The chances of us escaping to weekend Scrabble tournaments are almost non-existent these days, but Stewart is now chair of the All Ireland Scrabble Association and plays an active role ‘behind the scenes’, while I keep my hand in with Facebook



Scrabble and have made many new friends around the world. We continue to host and play in the popular Northern Ireland Championship every year, and love seeing friends old and new whenever the opportunity arises. Max has recently started playing Scrabble with Stewart, so perhaps the next time the name Holden appears on a trophy, it won't be either of us ... ■





For those new to the ABSP and lower-rated players

By Allan Simmons

MORE OR LESS?

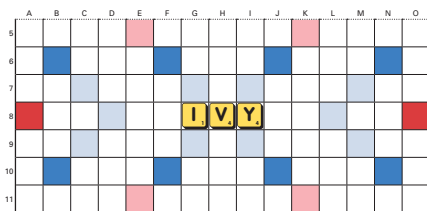
Firstly, see how many words you can make from this rack:



You probably began by looking for long words and, among others, found two common fives ending in -ED. There are also quite a few three-letter words in that rack that enable you to keep back the E. The most useful are those containing two of the higher-scoring tiles (BFKM), to avoid having a clunky rack the next turn. Five that might be unfamiliar to you are:

BAM	to cheat or hoax
KAB	ancient unit of measure
KAF	Hebrew letter
KAM	awry, crooked
MAK	make (Scots)

Armed with the set of words you now have available to you from this rack, have a think what might be your best play going second on the board sample shown opposite:



You may have spotted that FAKED can be played at i7a (31), c7a or c9a (24). BAKED can also be played in any of those positions for fewer points. A significant downside of all those plays is that they place a vowel next to the double-letter square at d8 or l8, which could give away a great score in conjunction with the associated triple-words at a8 or O8.

For that reason, much safer plays are threes such as KAB, KAF or KAM i7a (28 or 29). Of those, the best is KAF because of the synergy of the retained MB combo, compared with FM or BF.

Surprisingly perhaps, the ultimate play here is to keep the board tight with KIF (a state of dreamy repose) G7d (19). This retains a well-balanced ABDEM, which still fits

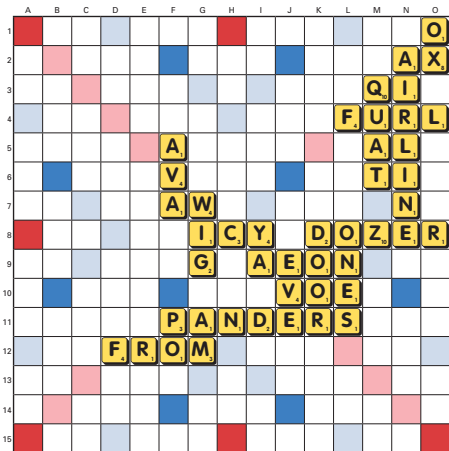


well with the Y at i7. Furthermore, the play makes it difficult for the opponent to score well, such that their next play is likely to open up the board for you to benefit from.

Now, using the board diagram shown below, can you find a couple of different worthwhile two-letter plays from this rack:

D₂ E₁ H₄ M₃ O₁ S₁ W₄

Such moves avoid having to open up with longer words, for example, down column e to the e5 double word.

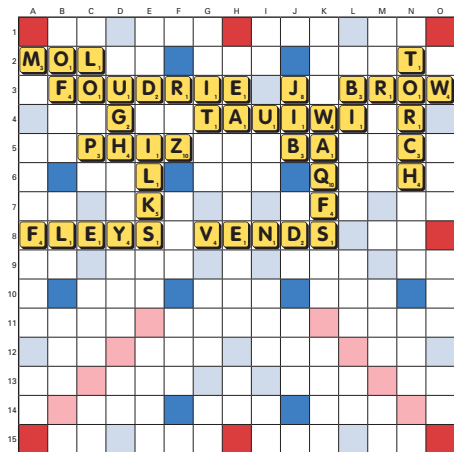


WHAT BUT WHERE

The board position shown right is from a tournament. Imagine you are one of the players. Your previous move was FLEYS (flees, frightens) keeping EP, and your opponent

has replied with TORCH creating access to the o8 triple word (tw), and making the scores level at 217 apiece. You pick an S and four other consonants. What would you play with:

E₁ G₂ G₂ P₃ R₁ S₁ T₁



In examining the board, you may have noticed some unusual and useful words. For example: TAUIWI (a New Zealand term for anyone who is a non-Maori), a great word to resolve a vowel-heavy rack or to deal with the awkward UW combo, perhaps playing through a letter on the board, and FOU (a bailiff or magistrate in Shetland and Orkney). Such a seven-letter word with six one- or two-point tiles, one higher-value tile and no duplicates has a reasonably high probability of turning up naturally on a rack.



However, sometimes in a game, vocabulary takes a back seat and strategy becomes paramount, as with the position presented above. Word knowledge does not play a direct part in helping you play the best move in this instance. An obvious reasonable-looking play is EGG o6d (20).

But to make the best move, you need to recognise that EPRST, combined with any vowel, has very strong bonus prospects, and there are plenty of As, Es, Is and Os unseen. But such a strategy is worth pursuing only if there is scope to play a bonus word. Thus, you should not play EGG at c8d (7) but play it at h8d (5) instead. Note how the latter provides a flexible bonus opening along row 11 and also leaves a helpful floating E at c8 for possible eights. You also have the triple-word (tw) opening available. The opponent can't damage all of those.

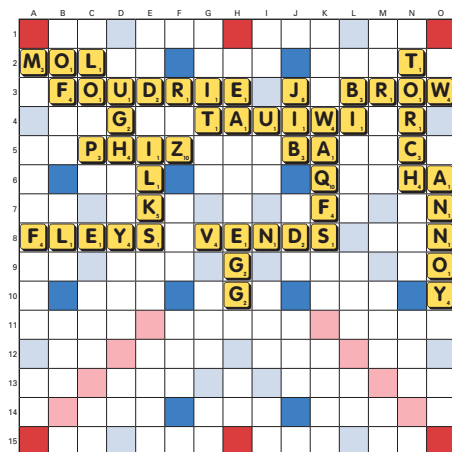
Making such a brave play is wisest when scores are close, to try to gain a midgame advantage, or if you are desperately behind with nothing to

lose. If you have a comfortable lead, grabbing the 20 for EGG on the tw would be the sensible choice.

Assume you have played EGG h8d and your opponent takes the tw with ANNOY o6d (29). You pick a C and I and now have:

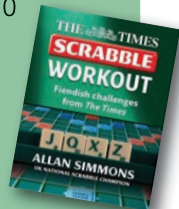
C E I P R S T

Can you see the playable seven?
What about an eight using the E of FLEYS?



Scrabble articles like these can be found each Saturday in *The Times*. There is also a book, published by Collins, of a collection of over 90 of such Scrabble tips and articles by Allan Simmons that have appeared in *The Times*: *(Collins) The Times Scrabble Workout* – ISBN 978-0-00-730303-8 rrp 7.99.

If you have any comments or feedback on these articles, Allan is happy to receive them. Email him at onwordsltd@aol.com



Spot the

PHONEY

In the last of the current series, **Andy Becher** tests your knowledge of valid Scrabble words related to Dickens, Dahl and Disney

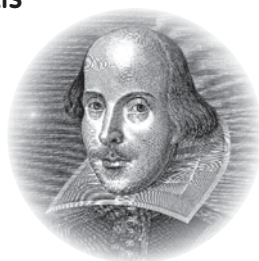
In each of the following sets of five words, four are valid Scrabble words (CSW12) and one is not. Simply spot the one word in each group of five which is NOT allowed.

- 1 Famous artists: **DALI DEGAS VANDYKE Renoir Manet**
- 2 English counties: **SURREY SOMERSET Devon Kent Suffolk**
- 3 Pop groups: **ABBA SLADE TRAVIS COLDPLAY Nirvana**
- 4 Dickens: **FAGIN SCROOGE COPPERFIELD MICAWBER Pickwick**
- 5 US states: **COLORADO TEXAS Florida Alaska MICHIGAN**
- 6 Wimbledon champions: **STICH MURRAY Laver Nadal Evert**
- 7 Islands: **GUERNSEY CYPRUS MINORCA Bermuda Shetland**
- 8 Disney: **BAMBI THUMPER FANTASIA Cruella Dumbo**
- 9 Golfing greats: **CRENSHAW FALDO LANGER Norman Tiger Woods**
- 10 Roald Dahl: **MATILDA GEORGE JAMES DANNY CHARLIE**
- 11 Great leaders: **BISMARCK CLEOPATRA WELLINGTON ALEXANDER Napoleon**



- 12 France: **PARIS ROUEN RENNES MARSEILLE Calais**

- 13 Shakespeare: **OPHELIA ROMEO Juliet SHYLOCK TITANIA**



- 14 Mountains and hills: **ETNA FUJI Pennines DOLOMITES Juras**

- 15 Cartoon favourites: **PIXIE and DIXIE, POPEYE, YOGI, BOOBOO, SCOOPY**

Solutions are on page 53

How did you rate?

0–3 Beginner	10–12 Expert
4–6 Improver	12+ Grandmaster
7–9 Average	



CSW15: A LITTLE FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In another in our series of the new *Collins Scrabble Words* (CSW15), which was published on 21 May 2015, **David Sutton** looks at some more food-related terms that will make your mouth water ...

Given the fact that every other programme on television seems to involve cooking, it is perhaps not surprising that a significant number of the words in the latest update to the Scrabble list involve food and drink. Here are a few to whet your appetite:

Hungry? Try a JALEBI or JALLEBI, an Asian snack of deep-fried dough covered with syrup. You can cut out a few calories by substituting a TOUTON, which appears to be just a deep-fried round of dough, *sans* syrup.

JALEBI – An Asian sweet treat



Also inadvisable for dieters may be a PACZKI, a round, filled doughnut, and PANFORTE, a kind of hard, spicy cake. Better go easy on the new desserts



PANFORTE – An Italian dessert

too, like BARFI (or BURFI), an Indian dessert made from milk solids and sugar, KACHORI, an Indian snack of pastry with a spicy filling, HALWA, another sweet Indian dish, and CROSTATA, a fruit tart.

I'm not sure about the waistline effects of SHUMAI, which are Japanese dumplings – this is already plural, so no S – or the LUMPYA, an Indonesian spring roll, which does take S. And cheese can be pretty calorific too, so go easy on the BURRATA, an Italian cheese made from mozzarella and cream (the word is Italian

LUMPAI – Indonesian spring rolls



for 'buttered'), the FRIULANO, another Italian cheese, and the TYROPITA, which is a kind of Greek cheese pie. And I'm afraid even the new salad contains cheese: CAPRESE, a salad containing mozzarella, basil, tomatoes and olive oil.

A sausage fan? Try a MERGUEZ, a spicy North African sausage, or a FOOTLONG, a hotdog one foot long. Or maybe you like rice, or ARROZ as we may now call it; note that the plural can be ARROZES or ARROCES. If so, try a PONGAL, a dish of cooked rice in Tamil-speaking India.

TYROPITA – A Greek cheese pie



Also on a savoury note, ZUPPA is an Italian soup, while a FRICOT is a stew made of potatoes and meat or fish. Seafood dishes include CRUDO, sliced, uncooked seafood often served with a sauce, and SCUNGILE (plural SCUNGILI), which is conch used as food. Other meat dishes include DONAIR, sliced lamb rolled in pita bread, MECHOUI, a Canadian meal of meat roasted on a spit, TASSO, which is spicy cured pork, and TOUPIE, a round boneless smoked ham.



CAPRESE – An Italian salad

New alcoholic drinks include MOSCATO, a sweet dessert wine, BELLINI, a cocktail consisting of prosecco and peach purée, SOJU a Korean vodka distilled from rice or sweet potato, SHOCHU, a Japanese liquor, and HAPPOSHU, another Japanese drink, similar to beer. The more abstinent may like to compromise on CORRETTO – espresso coffee with a shot of booze.

Well, I think I have now earned myself at least a NIBLET, a small piece of food, in particular a kernel of sweetcorn. And just for a few extra calories, I might even smother it in COADY, a sauce made from molasses. MMM, as one of the less-useful new threes has it.

BELLINI – A cocktail



Which maybe leads on next time, once you've digested this lot, to looking at some of the new interjections ... ■

CORRETTO – A boozy espresso





AN EXCEEDINGLY BRIEF HISTORY OF WORD GAMES

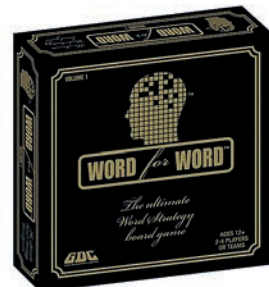
As **Daniel Stemberge** contemplates the coming festive season, he takes a sneak peek into what we can expect to find in our Christmas parcels, and into the background of some of the pastimes we know and love

As Christmas approaches and panic buying begins in earnest, and with you being what society gleefully proclaims to be a Word Nerd, you can probably guess that the rectangular shaped object neatly gift-wrapped under your tree is a lexicon-based board game or puzzle of some description. Prepare your best 'It's just what I always wanted' faces now, although I don't doubt that from Boggle to Nab It, from Upwords to Scribbage, you probably have seen them all. If you unwrap Words With Friends, do feel free to inform the friend involved that you really would have preferred socks this year.

But where did all these games originate, and what was the first? When Alfred Mosher Butts invented Scrabble in 1938, after originally calling it Lexico, then Criss Cross Words (he briefly considered calling it 'It'), he was enriching a pastime already thousands of years old, for WORD GAMES have been around seemingly for as long as has language. Perhaps the oldest known form of wordplay is the PALINDROME

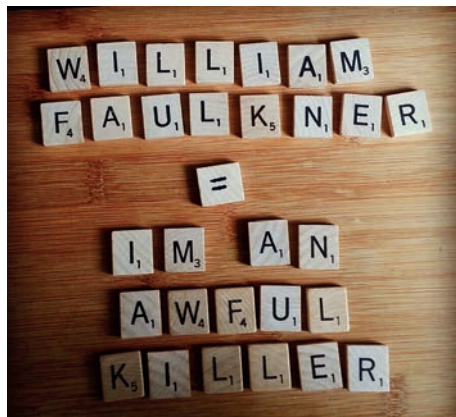
(a sentence that reads the same backwards as it does forwards), which dates back over 2000 years. The Ancient Greeks often put *Nispon anomimata mi monan opsin* on fountains. It translates as 'Wash the sin as well as the face'. The Romans admired them, too, as demonstrated by *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni* (We enter the circle after dark and are consumed by fire), which was said to describe the action of moths.

Some of the most famous palindromes include: *Was it Eliot's toilet I saw? Are we not drawn onward, we few, drawn onward to new era? Sex at noon taxes, and Satan, oscillate my metallic sonatas.*





One form of word game much closer to our hearts is the ANAGRAM, which can be traced back to at least the 3rd Century BC, but is likely to be thousands of years older.

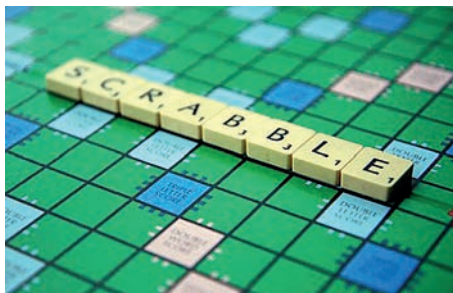


Mother-in-law becomes *Woman Hitler*; **The Morse Code** is *Here come dots*; **Circumstantial evidence** turns into *Can ruin a selected victim*, and finally the genius: **Two plus eleven** can be rearranged to make *One plus twelve*.

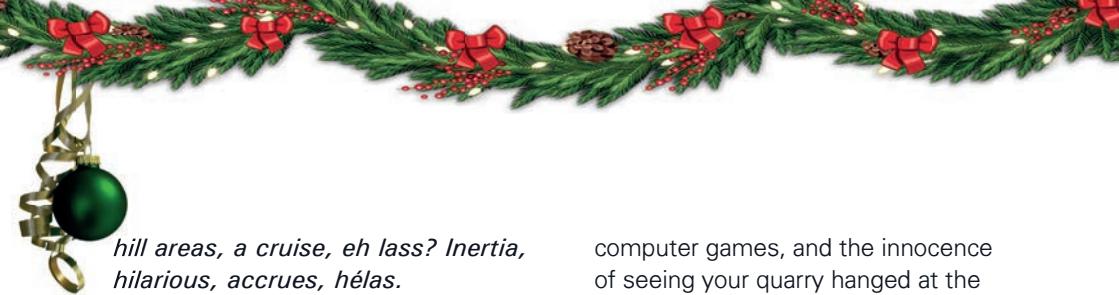
The Romans also enjoyed Anagrams, turning '*Quid est veritas?*' ('What is truth?') into '*Est vir qui adest*' ('It is this man here'). LIPOGRAMS (a kind of constrained writing or word game where paragraphs or longer works in which a particular letter or group of letters is avoided – usually a common vowel) may be older still. There are works from the Greek Lasus, from the fifth century BC, in which the poet intentionally avoided using the letter S. Perhaps he suffered a lisp?

WORDPLAY and PUNS in English are as old as our literature. In the eighth century AD, Cynewulf, one of our earliest known poets, wrote four otherwise-serious religious poems into which he successfully wove acrostics of his own name, presumably for no other reason than that it amused him.

Verbal japes of one kind or another have been commonplace ever since. Shakespeare included over 3000 of them in his plays, even to the extent of inserting them in the most seemingly inappropriate places, as when, in King Henry IV, Part 1, the father of Hotspur learns of his son's tragic death and remarks that Hotspur is now Coldspur. He and Richard Whiteley would have no doubt got along famously.



The HOLORIME (a homophonic pair of sentences, where the second sounds like the first, though using different words) are an ancient, but much rarer, variant on wordplay. Perhaps the most famous exponent of the holorime was the late British journalist Miles Kington, a wonderful example being: *In Ayrshire*



hill areas, a cruise, eh lass? Inertia, hilarious, accrues, hélas.



Leaping forward in time to the Middle Ages sees the origination of the CRYPTOGRAM, a type of puzzle that consists of a short piece of encrypted text. Generally, the cipher used to encrypt the text is simple enough that the cryptogram can be solved by hand.

Originally, these were used for the encryption of military or personal secrets, but were also used for entertainment purposes by monks, and were later popularised in the 19th Century by Edgar Allan Poe. Perhaps inspired by the darker works of Poe, in the 1960s and 70s the 'Zodiac Killer' sent four cryptograms to police while he was still active. Despite much research and many investigations, only one of these has been translated, which was of no help in identifying the serial killer.

On a lighter note, who hasn't attempted to entertain a child with a game of HANGMAN? Ah, yes, the days before ultra-violent

computer games, and the innocence of seeing your quarry hanged at the gallows. This has been played since Victorian times and has altered very little since. According



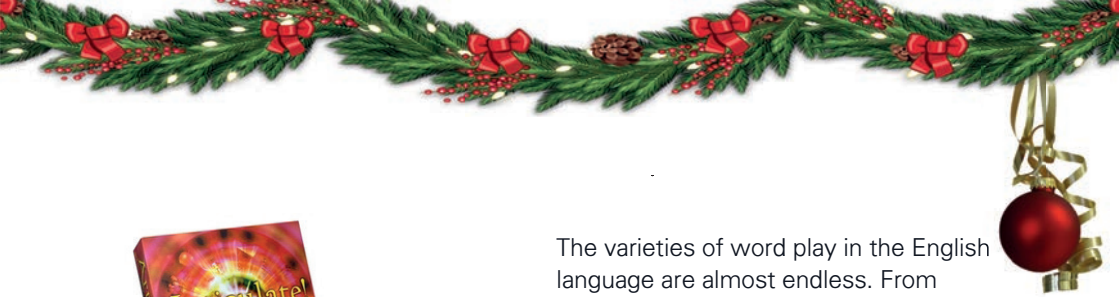
to research, the most difficult words to guess include jazz, buzz, hajj, faff, fizz, fuzz and variations of these. If you really want to stump the little 'uns, suggest Romanian footballers as a topic.

Another favourite with players of all ages is BOGGLE, which originated in the early 1970s and remains as popular as ever. A 4x4 grid of letters is used to make words constructed from the letters of sequentially adjacent cubes.



Using the 16 cubes in a standard Boggle set, the list of longest words that can be formed includes *inconsequentially*, *quadricentennials*, and *sesquicentennials*, all 17-letter words made possible by q and u appearing on the same face of one cube. I must have played 10,000 games, and have never been remotely close to any of them.





The varieties of word play in the English language are almost endless. From Palindromes, Anagrams, Lipograms, Puns and Acrostics, to Tongue-twisters, Riddles, Cryptograms, Clerihews, Rebuses, Crosswords, Spelling Bees and Spoonerisms.

By playing Scrabble, you are part of a very rich heritage, but never forget that it is one that was borne solely from the desire to amuse. Everyone wants to win, but never at the expense of having fun in the process.

So when you unwrap 'Articulate' this Christmas, pour yourself a sherry, sit back and relax. And let the kid win. ■



The Nonagram

D	I	E
T	U	B
E	T	A

The Nonagram is a popular word puzzle featured in many magazines and newspapers. This one however has CSW12 as its word judge. Using just the letters in the grid make as many words of four letters or more as possible. All words must contain the letter in the centre square. Words for this puzzle, 4-letter - 20, 5-letter - 13, 6-letter - 8, 7-letter - 2, 8-letter - 2, 9-letter - 1. Deduct a point for each phoney you include. Pass mark 35/46 with at least one word of each length.

MACKAY'S MASTERCLASS

Grandmaster **Lewis Mackay** has been playing tournament Scrabble since the age of ten. His titles include the 2010 Masters, 2011 BMSC, 2012 NSCT team championship and BEST 2012. He won the ABSP Highest-Rated Trophy twice, and was briefly rated No 1 in the world. Here, in the fourth of a series, he offers some valuable insights to help players improve their game

LESSON FOUR

SCRABBLE SETUPS



One of the key skills in Scrabble, is learning how to manage your rack. Knowing which tiles to play off, and which to keep, is something that proficient players learn early on. A lesser-known but equally important ability is making the board more amenable to your rack for subsequent plays. Memorising thousands and thousands of words is all very well, but it's of little use if you can't play them anywhere. Learning how to control and

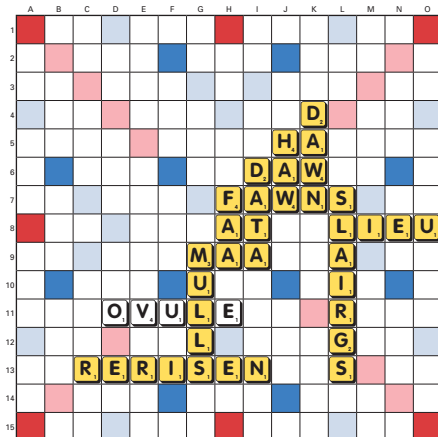
develop the board will improve your play vastly.

Setups are one of the ways to develop the board in your favour. A setup occurs when you play tiles in such a way as to create one or more lucrative scoring opportunities for subsequent turns, and you retain one or more tiles capable of exploiting such opportunities. You can also make speculative setups, when you don't have the right tiles to exploit the openings at that moment, but could well draw them at a later stage. This is particularly useful when you are trailing. An obvious example would be playing a word that takes an S hook on a TWS line, with the final S still unplayed.

Setups can be blatant, or they can be more subtle. The most powerful kind of setup is a move that looks as though it is achieving something else – which may actually be the truth – but still provides lucrative



opportunities for you. These kinds of move can be the most satisfying, since they may not be the most obvious play available to you, but they give you a chance to display your creativity. Here is one such example from a game I played against Quackle, with the score standing at 192–90 in my favour. It appears to be a simple rack-balancing play, but it also achieves something far more insidious.

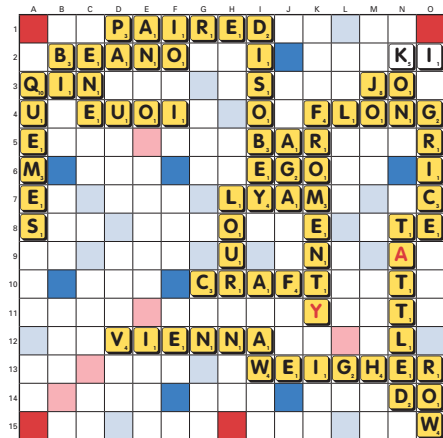


E₁ I₁ O₁ O₁ U₁ V₄ X₈

The X is not especially useful on this board, and the one decent X play available (VEX under RERISEN) leaves four vowels on the rack while providing easy counterplay with the DWS above EX. A better play here is OVULE through the L of MULLS, which not only resolves the vowel

problem but leaves XU/XU for 50 points next turn. This is a great example of a setup play, since it is very unlikely to be blocked thanks to the V. If your opponent does block it by playing YU/YU, say, you can at least play EXO for 30 from the second E of RERISEN as a worst-case scenario.

It would be easy to overlook this kind of move, since you are already 100 ahead and it is easy to lose focus in that situation. That does not diminish the power of this move. You should always be on the lookout, too, for low-risk ways to increase spread, even if the game appears to be already won. Here is another example of that principle in action, this time from a game where I was leading 386–264:

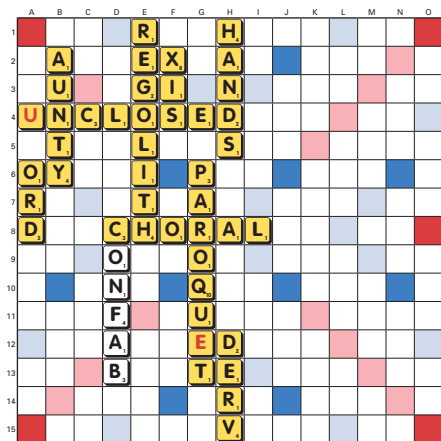


I₁ I₁ K₄ S₄ U₁ X₈ Z₁₀



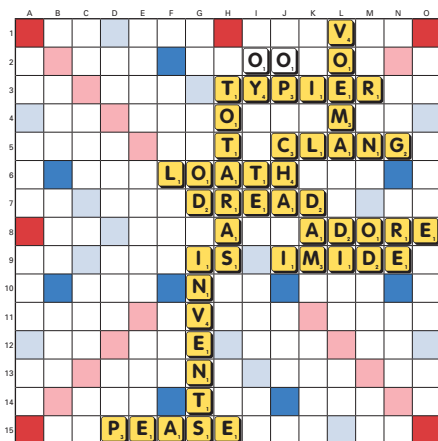
Playing KI here sets up SIX/IKON/XI for more than 60 points. There are no more Is left, so the opponent cannot use the spot lucratively. If it does get blocked, there is still a good chance of drawing an A for AX/AWA/EX for over 50 points. This kind of aggressive thinking can make the difference when it comes to winning tournaments – the extra spread might propel you right to the top.

The X is particularly good for setups, since it combines with every vowel to form a two-letter word. However, it is not the only power tile that can be used for setups. The J usually comes with a bit of a health warning – it is not as powerful as the X or Z, but can still be useful if handled correctly. Here we have a case in point. Again the opponent is Quackle, and I am leading 223–199:



A, A, B, F, J, N, O

The J is not especially useful on this board, and any plays immediately using it result in inflexible rack leaves. Hence, CONFAB is a very strong move. Not only does it score reasonably well and clears out some clunky consonants, but it also sets up two remunerative spots for the J: JA/JO/ON and JA/JA/AB, both for more than 30 points. Your opponent is unlikely to use both, and if they do, there is always JA/AA for 29 next to AUNTY as a bailout play.



E, O, O, Q, R, S, U

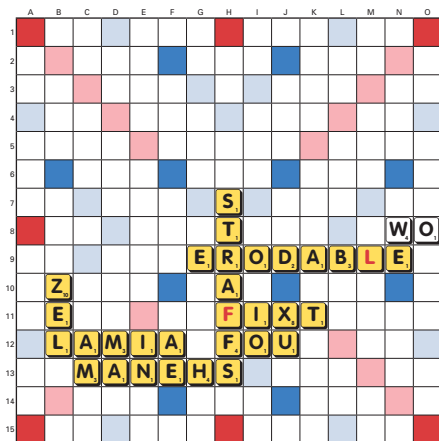
Setups involving the Q are pretty rare, since it is an awkward tile that requires high-quality supporting letters. However, you should still be on the lookout for such opportunities if they arise. Here is another Quackle game where I am ahead 184–163. The setup is slightly speculative, but still has a good chance of succeeding.



While there are some reasonable Q plays available – the best of which is probably QUOP for 30, keeping EORS – a better play here is OO atop TYPIER. Picking an I gives QUIRES/SOY for 81 or REQUIRE for 72 from the RE on the right-hand side of the board, while picking an E gives the similar plays of QUEERS or REQUERE. In addition, the leave of EQRSU is powerful in itself, and could yield a bonus through the floaters of INVENTS. In this case, this is a two-way play: not only is it setting up the Q for 70+ next turn with the right pick, it also leaves the chance of another big play elsewhere, and the opening distracts your opponent from the floaters in question.

Setups are not limited to the four highest scoring tiles. The likes of H, Y and M can also be useful for these sorts of play, since they make many two-letter words and can hook on either end of short words. To the right is a subtle example, drawn from a game between Nigel Richards and Pichai Limprasert in the first round of the 2009 World Scrabble Championship. Nigel is leading 151–121.

The rack is not the best, but there is still some scoring potential available, thanks to the Y. One option here is play WO/WE, which is kind of a waiting move.



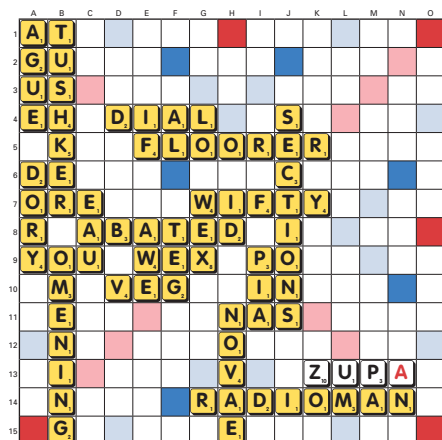
A, O, O, R, T, W, Y

It scores only 20, but increases the potential of the Y by creating a spot for WEY, which will score at least 30. The Y is already quite useful, thanks to the layout on the left-hand side of the board, above LAMIA. Picking up a P, L or N allows a high scoring play for almost 40 points involving the pattern RE?AY in that position. While this example is somewhat advanced, it shows the kind of thing that can be achieved with flexible and positive thinking. In the actual game, the player involved (Nigel Richards) did pick up a P and was able to exploit the LAMIA hotspot.

Finally, setups can be used to overturn desperate situations when



you need something huge to get back into a game. Again, flexible thinking is necessary to see this kind of play. Here's one good example of that, from a game where I am behind 262–373:



N₁ P₃ T₁ U₁ Z₄ [] []

Trailing by 111, but holding both blanks and the Z, something drastic is needed here. Burning one of the blanks to play ZUPa for 52 gives a great chance to catch up in the next few turns. It sets up two dangerous hooks, for ZUPAN and ZUPAS, and two of the three tiles remaining that will hook there, are retained on the rack. It is also very hard to block, so even if your opponent could see your entire rack, there isn't much they can do about the opening. In the actual game, I picked up AEIO and was able to play EIATION in that very spot, eventually winning the game by just 9 points.

Hopefully, this article has given you plenty to think about. Scrabble isn't all about playing bonuses – there is plenty of scope for subtle and creative play, as demonstrated here. Happy Scrabbling! ■





ISLA TURNS 100!

The Edinburgh Scrabble Club celebrated a very special birthday recently, and **Margaret Harkness** was there ...

I ndependent, intelligent, indomitable, inimitable – these were some of the words used to describe Isla Wilkie when she came to the Edinburgh club to celebrate her hundredth birthday. Isla was a founder member of the club and was still attending when in her nineties.

Born in Fife, she moved, when very young, to the outskirts of Edinburgh, where her parents had a farm. On leaving school, she worked briefly for a wholesale ironmonger in the Grassmarket, which was far from the trendy place it is today, before obtaining a post with the civil service which took her to London in the late thirties.

Isla had always enjoyed attending concerts, and was pleased to be able to join the promenaders at the Queen's Hall, where she vividly remembers Sir Henry Wood making an announcement about the coming war.

On her return to Edinburgh in 1940, she worked for the 'Ag and Fish' department of the civil service, and later transferred to St Andrew's House.

Still attending concerts, now in Edinburgh's Usher Hall, she tells of one occasion when

she sat beside a pleasant young man who told her he came from Iceland. When she expressed interest, he said he would send her some books about the country. And true to his word, Magnus Magnusson duly did.

Throughout her life, Isla has had a keen interest in birdwatching, and also played curling. In retirement, she took up Bridge and Scrabble, enjoying club, tournament and league games.

She has travelled extensively in Hungary, Portugal, France, Costa Rica, Sri Lanka (a few months before the tsunami) and Spain, where she had some interesting experiences, including spending hours being ignored in a Seville police station when her purse was stolen, and finding out one morning in Barcelona that her room for the night had been in a brothel!

Nowadays, she lives independently in her flat in sheltered accommodation, and enjoys doing crosswords, and reading books 'she can get her teeth into', and is looking forward to joining an exercise class. ■



THAILAND

A VISIT TO THE LAND OF
'HARMONY AND UNITY'



In the second of our Travel Scrabble series, in which we shine the spotlight on Scrabble round the world, **Gerry Carter** talks about his adopted country, Thailand – in particular, Crossword Game, which has won a place as one of the foremost pursuits in the Kingdom.

Gerry has represented Thailand in six world championships and is the reigning champion of Asia and the Pacific. He is currently working on a major book about international Scrabble, due to be published towards the end of 2016

Thailand is a country of incredible contrasts, from its famed glittering temples and culture, to its renowned cuisine and vibrant nightlife. In recent years, its political turmoil has contrasted with the great sense of peace that prevails in a land visited by millions of tourists every year. Yet few outside of the Crossword Game community would believe that it is famous for the game we

all play and love. And not just famous; in the opinion of this writer, the Kingdom of Thailand ranks as one of the best places in the world to play our game, enjoying a level of promotion and variety that is second to none.

You won't find the 'S' word written or spoken of by Thais. The game we play here is called Crossword Game and is to



all intents and purposes the same as played in English-speaking and other countries the world over. But here it is written about in Thai, analysed in Thai, and played with the customs and politeness of a population I am proud to call my own and among whom I have lived for over 30 years.

THE HISTORY OF THE GAME

There has been a thriving Crossword Game community in Thailand since the first national championships were held in 1986. The club – there is only one in Thailand – was started then by Amnuay Ploysaengam and other enthusiasts, who realised the potential of the game at university. He started a business making the game. The regular sets were far too expensive to sell in the department stores, and sales would have been almost nil. Since then, his business has expanded to include jigsaws, crossword puzzles,



dictionaries, innovative educational games, Thai Crossword Game in the local language, quiz books – you name it! His organisation has enjoyed sponsorship that literally runs into hundreds of thousands of pounds every year with huge corporate deals, many involving the food- and drink-producing giants of Thailand. All events are attended by top-ranking local dignitaries, and once or twice a year the





flagship Thai events, the summer's King's Cup and the autumn's Princess Cup, are graced with the presence of the country's revered Royal Family. One simply cannot have a greater stamp of approval than that glorious honour.

Crossword Game is featured in the University Games, and has had regular slots on national and cable television networks and regular columns in the country's sporting press. Under Amnuay's guidance, a veritable army of volunteers and top players take a roadshow to schools and educational institutions nationwide to conduct seminars to promote the game. Always, it is promoted as both educational and *sanuk* – the ubiquitous Thai word that means fun.

HOW TOURNAMENTS ARE RUN

Tournaments are held once or twice a month – nearly always comprising 15 games over two days, except the previously mentioned flagship events, which are three- or four-day extravaganzas. Every event has a two-game final. All are held in shopping centres with complete public access. They are noisy, lively, and enormously enjoyable.

Crossword Game championships are held in huge halls in a nationwide tour to the north, north-east, eastern seaboard and south, with upwards of 2,000 participants at each, with an average age of well under 20, and many children under ten years old taking part. Elaborate opening ceremonies with dancing girls and displays of local culture accompany the speeches from the dignitaries about the value of this game in young people's development. Products associated with the game are on sale everywhere; the public





constantly encouraged, inclusivity being the watchword. The message: buy a set, play a game, get hooked, come to tournaments, give your children the best chance to learn English, have fun, and develop. Simple, straightforward, and dynamic.

CHAMPIONS APLENTY

The professional Crossword Game community in Thailand features hundreds of ranked players. This, of course, includes players who are among the top ten of global ranking. Thailand is the only non-native speaking country to produce a world champion – in fact, two world champions, in Panupol Sajjayakorn, who was still a teenager when he won, and Pakorn Nemitmansuk, who won in 2009 after finishing second twice. Komol Panyasophonlert finished second in Warsaw to Nigel Richards. Many others have come close in the USA's top events. It is probably true that all of the top ten in Thailand have won, or could win, major championships throughout the world. Two youngsters have been crowned World Youth Champions, testament to Thailand's amazing programmes for young people.

COURTESY IS THE WATCHWORD

So how is the game played? Very politely! Disagreements are virtually unheard of,

and there has never been a need for a rulebook, as rules are passed from the experienced to the uninitiated in a spirit of friendliness. Most of the internal Thai tournaments are played using the American lexicon, though qualifiers for international Collins events are played using that dictionary. Sometimes, Collins and TWL events have been held on the same day, with competitors switching from one to the other! The King's Cup and Princess Cup are Collins events featuring participants from dozens of countries.

Apart from those events, the time on the clock has always been 22 minutes, unless you are playing on the giant stand-up board for public viewing, in which case it is 25 to allow time for the walking to place your letters! Clocks are now produced by the club and supplied for use to everyone at tournaments, getting





on for 1,000 timepieces at the bigger ones. In fact, all equipment is provided by the club, from boards to scoresheets, and entry fees for even major events are kept to an affordable minimum. iPads and computers with Zyzyva checking are everywhere for self-determination. All prize winners, from the smallest kids to the high-ranking adults, get gifts, cash, trophies and medals in immaculately conceived closing ceremonies in front of hundreds of shoppers or other onlookers. Competitions are held not just for Crossword Game but also for Sudoku, A-Math (an equations game invented here), crossword puzzles in Thai as well as English, Thai Crossword Game (Kham Khom), and many others. All events have many divisions, including Primary, end of Primary, early Secondary, end of Secondary, Amateur and Professional



Open categories. Many events feature up to 100 trophies for first second and third, with so many proud children winning something to show mum and dad. Top prizes include air tickets to attend pro and youth events abroad.

THE KING'S CUP

But any story about the wonders of Crossword Game in Thailand, a community I have been proud to be an integral part of since I first bought a dictionary here in 1991, would not be complete without reference to the King's Cup. It is quite simply the greatest crossword gaming event on earth, and not to be missed by anyone serious about playing the game. Participants are always about 10,000 strong. The Open Division has a top prize of US\$ 10,000, and of course this has been won regularly by the world's foremost master, Mr Nigel Richards.

It has an incredibly well-organised opening ceremony in a vast hall, with representatives of various nations





parading in front of the presiding member of the Thai Royal Family. Speeches and cultural shows vie for attention. Admiring Thai children ask foreign participants for autographs, treating them like superstars and super sportsmen and women. Giant video displays showcase the history of the game in the Kingdom. On top of this enormous promotion, the game itself is played to the highest standard and the winner will have earned his

place in history. I rate my third place two years ago as one of the proudest achievements of my entire life. The King's Cup is simply awesome!

Potential promoters would do well to visit Thailand and see how the game is organised here. Some of it, for sure, could not be repeated elsewhere, but many of the innovations practised here could be repeated in countries where the game is languishing. ■



24-HOUR SCRABBLE MARATHON

It was an attempt by one person – current World Champion Craig Beevers – to play a record number of 30 Scrabble games in 24 hours ... and of course our intrepid editor **Natalie Zolty** was there on behalf of OnBoard, to offer an opponent's eye view

It's 13 April – National Scrabble Day – and World Champion Craig Beevers arrives at Mindsports International HQ in Plymouth to attempt to set a new world record. Mattel and MSI are sponsoring a unique, 24-hour Scrabble marathon of 30 games against opponents from around the world.

The ten-minute games are to be played using Skype, and it's open to anyone who is ready for the challenge. The entire day is to be broadcast online on Mindsports TV, with Phillip Nelkon providing the commentary. Shuffling a little nervously, I am watching, as I'm one of Craig's intended victims.

World Champion Craig fought off 29 of his 30 challengers over a 24-hour period



9am

Craig is seated at the smart board. First up is Allan Simmons, who beat Craig in the 2008 final of the National Scrabble Championships. Following an exchange, Craig roars off with BEASTIE, followed later by VAGRANTS, MURLAINS and OUTHIRE. Allan's letters are less than co-operative and, unsurprisingly, he can't catch up. First blood to Craig.

1-0

He storms on with victories over Brian Galebach from the US, and Powell Cheruiyot of Kenya.

12 noon: Game 5

Deep breath; I'm next up. Following an initial chat with Chris Keeley, who is making the moves on behalf of Craig's opponents, we're off. It really does feel like playing Craig face-to-face, and it's fast. I have my tiles laid out beside me and load them onto my rack to shuffle, but tracking proves impossible.

With the help of an early bonus, I manage to keep up for a while. Could I actually win this? Then, inevitably, things start to slide, and Craig's impressive tRAIL(HE)AD (challenge!) seals it.

I'm a terrific loser, of course, and happy to be have been part of the challenge.
5-0

Craig shows no sign of flagging through the afternoon and into the evening, as he remains undefeated. It's highly compulsive viewing. By 11pm, I am wilting and really should go to bed, but after this one ... Just one more ...

Midnight: Game 19

The LSL's Sandie Simonis takes the chair to face the Champion. Despite looking tired, Craig doesn't hesitate as he opens with NOWHERE for 84. Two bonuses from Sandie take her into the lead, which Craig erodes with a C hook onto the front of HAZAN. As Sandie's third bonus goes down, Craig finds himself around 50 behind with one minute 21 on his clock. Can Sandie break his run?

Two more moves and some calculated rack management give Craig (D)ISAGREE with 29 seconds to go. He's done it.
19-0

Craig vs Sandie – the final board



***Jesse Matthews,
the only
contender
to win
a game
against
Craig Beevers***



14 April, 7am: Game 29

I stagger out of bed to find that, unbelievably, Craig has been playing for 22 hours and remains undefeated. So much for those who say it's a game of luck!

Next, it's Jesse Matthews, ranked 66 in the world and bound to give Craig a tough challenge. ARMREST and HERETIC put the scores at 254-161 to Craig, but he's down to three minutes on his clock. TaNDOORI and BOXCAR from Jesse narrow the gap. With the scores level, Jesse finds MELTAGE with seconds to go. Despite being left with the Q, it's enough. Jesse 436, Craig 424
28-1

It's a mere blip, as Craig wins his final game 562-296.

It's an incredible achievement. Some games were easier than others as relative newcomers took to the board, but, irrespective of the opponent, Craig maintained an enviable standard, finding optimal plays and never going over time.

It was fantastic to be a part of it.
Congratulations, Craig! ■

CSW15: INTERJECTIONS!

In another in our series of new words from the new *Collins Scrabble Words* (CSW15), **David Sutton** looks at some of the things you might feel moved to exclaim the next time your games have said their ADDIOS ...

CSW15 sees the arrival of a plethora of new interjections, most of them courtesy of our rather more excitable American cousins for whom the use of a British, 'Oh, I say', or in extreme circumstances, 'Gosh', clearly fails to cover the spectrum of emotion. Many of the new words have a distinctly ephemeral air – for how long are people going to use AMAZEBALLS, and does anyone really say FANDABIDOZI?

But the new arrivals do include some words that look distinctly useful from the Scrabble point of view, however much



one might be inclined to eschew their use oneself. It is true that most people will find better use for their Es than by playing EEW or EEEW, expressing disgust. But at last we can play GRR (though not GRRR*), while AIYEE, expressing great alarm, could be a useful vowel dump. IXNAY appears to mean 'Not!', and THANX, for people in too much of a hurry to say thanks, gives us another X word and a nice hook to boot.

JEEZE provides a useful hook to the existing blocker JEEZ. You can now put a Y on INDEED. The existing ZOWIE is joined by ZOWEE, the existing OMIGOD gets a variant MIGAWD, and for what it's worth, the existing WHOA can now be spelt WOAH. WOTCHER gets variants WATCHA and, less usefully, WHATCHA.





LOOKIE, LOOKIT and LOOKY draw attention. CAPEESH or CAPISCHE ask whether the person addressed has understood. YESSIR, YESSIREE or YESSUM (the last to a woman) express ready agreement. BRAP simulates the sound of a gun. KABLOOIE or KABLOOEY represent an abrupt happening. I think these last derive from comic books, though I am sad to see that YARROO*, the favourite exclamation of that podgy antihero of my childhood comics, Billy Bunter, still hasn't made it.

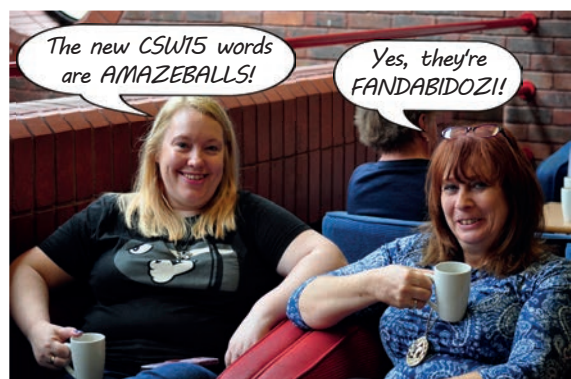
Tournament directors can now say SHHH, rather than simply SH, and when this has its usual lack of effect can try the more forceful SHADDUP.

Many of the new interjections may be found particularly useful in expressing the varied emotions that assail one during a Scrabble game. AUGH and YEESH express frustration, as when

drawing three Is. YEOW expresses pain or shock, as when changing three IS and drawing two Is and a U; a suitable alternative at this point may be WAAH, a wailing sound, though this may invite your opponent to comfort you with the new DIDDUMS. WHATEVS expresses indifference, as when you realise the game is irretrievably lost. BLECH or NYAH can then be used to sum up the whole stupid game in disgust or contempt, and there is also the curious word TUNKET, an American interjection equivalent to 'Hell!', possibly a corruption of the biblical Tophet.

Some interjections now take plurals: we have ACHOOS, ADDIOS, ADIOSES, CHUTS and also ATTABOYS, though by a curious bit of gender discrimination one can't say ATTAGIRLS*.

In the next issue, I'll cover some of the many new words occasioned by the development of social networking. Oh joy – or as the Spanish apparently say, ALBRICIAS. ■





LET'S PLAY SCRABBLE!

Online player **Daniel Stembridge** envisages a time when Scrabble takes to our television screens as a fully fledged contact sport ...

In recent years, I have had many heated debates about whether Scrabble could be successful as a TV format. I have always believed that it could. With the right presentation and a little expert guidance, there is a product that should appeal to many millions. But then, I can also imagine the 'powers that be' getting it very, very wrong ...

does things by halves. We're talking fractions, but things could get fractious. There's real history between these two Gaming Gladiators: The 'Dream of Cheam' himself, Terry 'Captain' Kirk, and staring him out across the table we have 'The Cove from Coventry', Evan 'Almighty' Simpson. There's going to be a real ding-dong when the bell goes here. How do you see this match going, Sir Geoffrey?

LET'S PLAY SCRABBLE!

Thanks for joining us this evening for Premier League Scrabble at its high-octane best. All the action is brought to you live from tonight's packed-to-capacity venue – Sidcup's magnificent Municipal Hall. It really is standing room only. What do you think of the atmosphere tonight, Sid? Electric, isn't it?

"If Nigel Richards walked in holding a bag of chips, you could hear the vinegar sizzle!"

This one promises to be a bruising battle over the board, no quarter will be asked and neither competitor

"They need to play it tight. That's all, nothing fancy. Some of the games I've seen this season have been downright shocking, they really have. They need to learn to block. Some of the boards lately, my old granny could score a bonus with her eyes shut. I don't want to get all misty-eyed, but it was different in my day. We had only 65 valid words, and most of those shouldn't have been allowed. Eee, I remember one game, I played in t'library at Bacup, with a leaky roof and no ..."

BONUUSS! Sorry to interrupt, Geoffrey, but the Captain has opened with a devastating display of dynamic decisiveness, and he's out of his chair and whipping this crowd into a fervent





frenzy. The theme from Star Trek is booming out, and just look at his fans! They've come from as far as Reigate and Woking, some dressed in their Romulan outfits, some with their pointy Vulcan ears, and they're all dancing the Klingon Conga down the aisles. Let's look at the overhead replay: absolutely no messing about – give me an E, give me a P, give me EPIDOTE and 76 points. Eat my Bonus! Look at Simpson's reaction! Not a flicker of emotion. Barely a blink as he stares at his rack. He's looking at EEG LORV. See anything, Aggers?

"Well, I don't think it's valid, so he can't quite get his LEGOVER."

Stop it, Aggers, stop it! Wait, what's he doing here? This is Liquid Scrabble! BONUUUUUSS! Watch this again from every conceivable angle, he's only gone and put GROVELE(D) down for 67. He rushes over to his fans, arms outstretched like the Messiah himself, and they are absolutely on their knees in worship. So what do you think of that, Sid?

"They're on their knees, but they'll be dancing in the streets of Coventry. If Lady Godiva rode naked through the town centre holding a bag of chips, you could hear the vinegar sizzle!"

That's 27 big bonuses in 10 games for Simpson, which moves him closer to 'Hell's Belle' Helen Gipson on the Bonus Board. Over to our Queen of

the Stats, Rachel, for a breakdown of those figures.

"I make it 2.7 bonuses a game, Jeff."

And it's that point-7 that could make all the difference between being the bridegroom and being the groom.

"They're the same thing, Jeff."

Look at this on RackCam – is that a blank I see on Kirk's rack? Over to our man at the table, Stuart. I'm sure he has something suitably Shakespearian for us.

"Err ... I'm afraid Stuart won't be with us for some time, Jeff. Maybe another six months if he behaves. This is Chris at tableside. It's unbelievable, Jeff: he's not drawn one blank, he's drawn two. And I think that's both of them."





He's got more jam than Hartley's, has 'Captain' Kirk! He's going to set his phasers to stun and beam himself up a bonus. He's boldly going where no one has gone before ... BONUUUUUUUSSS! UNCAu(G)hT right along the Treble-izer for 140. And the crowd have quite literally gone through the roof! This could be the Final Frontier for Simpson. Have you ever seen a start like this, Sir Geoffrey?

"Shocking. Really, really shocking, is that. Simpson has only got himself to blame. Fancy leaving that Treble-izer wide open. It's asking for trouble. They might think he's the Messiah where he comes from, but where I'm from, he's just a very naughty boy."

He did the same thing in his last match against 'Stone Cold' Steve Perry and ended up throwing it all away. Will he make the same mistake here, Murray?

"If history repeats itself, I should think we can expect the same thing again. I should think the thoughts going through his head are unimaginable."

From a cacophonous cauldron of clamorous clattery, the silence in the auditorium is suddenly deafening.

Sum it up for us if you can, Sid.

"Two words, Jeff. Vinegar. Sizzle."

I've been told we're heading over to Susie in the Dictionary Zone for an update on the word EPIDOTE. What does it mean, Susie?

"It's Scrabble, Jeff. Nobody cares what it means."

And quite right, too. But I know what it means for Simpson: he's a ton-fifty down and looking down the barrel of relegation from the Premier League, sponsored by Beeswax – your number 1 product for stain removal.

TV Scrabble could work. It's been tried in the past, and very enjoyable it was, too, when they stuck to the familiar, trusted concept of 'real' Scrabble. When they resurrected it in a 'dumbed-down' game show guise, I didn't think it was nearly as watchable. Perhaps we should be extremely careful what we wish for? ■



Spot the



The questions are once again devised by the OnBoard team. We threw in a few festively themed ones to complement our subtle seasonal look

In each of the following sets of five words, four are valid Scrabble words (CSW15) and one is not. Simply spot the one word in each group of five which is NOT allowed.



1 Birds: **FATBIRD**
FIGBIRD **GAOLBIRD**
KINGBIRD
OVENBIRD

2 Russian revolution:
BOLSHEVIK **CHEKA**
COMMISSAR **IZVESTIA**
MENSHEVIK

3 Philosophers: **ARISTOTLE** **CICERO**
PASCAL **ROUSSEAU** **RUSSELL**

4 Harry Potter: **DUMBLEDORE**
HAGRID **MUGGLES** **TENTACULA**
QUIDDITCH

5 Fairytales: **BLUEBEARD** **CINDERELLA**
GOLDBLOCKS **HANSEL** **REYNARD**

6 Football managers: **ADVOCAAT**
BUSBY **GREENWOOD** **REVIE**
WENGER

7 Superman:
BIZARRO
BRAINIAC
KRYPTONITE
LUTHOR
METROPOLIS



- 8 Christmas: **YULETIDE** **MINCEMEAT**
BRUSSELS **ELFS** **CHRIMBO**
- 9 Chanukah: **MENORAH** **DREIDL**
SHAMASH **LATKE** **KUGEL**
- 10 Pantomimes (One of these is a phoney – OH YES IT IS):
PANTOMIMICALLY **MALEFICENT**
STEPSISTER **TWANKEY** **BEANSTALK**
- 11 Gangsters: **CAMORRA** **KRAYs**
MAFIA **YAKUZA** **YARDIES**
- 12 Cats: **SIAMESE**
RAGDOLL **BOBTAIL**
MUNCHKIN
ANGORA
- 13 Clothing: **DUFFEL**
UGGS **BERMUDAS**
WINDCHEATER
LEVIS
- 14 Interjections: **UMPH**
YIKES **ARGH** **BLEAH** **YEOW**
- 15 Peanuts: **LIONEL** **CHARLIE** **SNOOPY**
WOODSTOCK **FRANKLIN**



Solutions are on page 53

How did you rate?

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 0–3 Beginner | 10–12 Expert |
| 4–6 Improver | 12+ Grandmaster |
| 7–9 Average | |

KAREN RICHARDS

Karen reflects on her early life, and how her determination to succeed led her to train other young, sharp minds on how to develop their potential and excel in the dynamic world of Scrabble tournaments



PERSONALITY



I was raised a dirt-poor country kid (dependent on handouts, prior to advent of 'benefits'). Mine was a dysfunctional family. My father was weird, embarrassing, and emotionally absent (he was autistic, but no one explained that to us). He couldn't hold a job, but designed fantastic motors, which he never built. He wasted his brilliant mind. My mother won a university scholarship, but was forced to reject it to care for her widowed mother. It saddens me that they both 'wasted' their intelligence, when they could have contributed so much to the world.

SIGNS OF AN INNATE DRIVE TO SUCCEED

Without electricity, TV, computer, or neighbours, we entertained ourselves. I devoured books and dictionaries until the wee hours, by torchlight. Highlights of my childhood were my grandmother's visits – she played cards and taught me Scrabble. However, she forgot the lesson on sportsmanship, and stopped playing when I started winning (aged nine). The fire was lit, to be rekindled many years later when I honeymooned on Norfolk Island with Paul.

Aged four, I started school. I loved it, and excelled for the first three years. Then my parents separated. We moved to a large city, where the principal forced me to repeat third grade, because of my age. I was resentful and disruptive.



Karen and her husband, Paul

In hindsight, I understand why some turn to crime, as a way to exercise their intelligence. Fortunately, my mother believed in me.

Two years and two schools later, my fifth-grade teacher asked my mother about my poor performance. My mother responded, “She’s just bored”. The teacher replied, “Great – take this pile of books home, and if she completes them in three weeks, I will promote her”. Three weeks later, I was back to gaining top marks, in sixth grade. I never looked back.

SHE COULD – AND SHE DID

Much later, as maths was my best subject, I started a degree in economics – still only 16, and the only vocational guidance offered was, “You can do anything you want”. By the time I had finished this degree, I decided I was more a people person than a numbers person, so I followed it up by enrolling in an MBA (majoring in organisational psychology).

After joining the public service (telecommunications), I was eventually offered a position training managers and supervisors. This was both challenging and fulfilling, and I now use this experience to train young people. The ‘downside’ is that I don’t know how to train ‘children’, so they are all treated like responsible adults – which actually works well for them and for me.

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

When my career was cut short by health problems, one positive outcome being able to stay home with my younger children (we had five children and two foster children). It also meant I was able to follow my civil engineer husband around the country and overseas. When his first interstate move isolated me from family and friends, I needed to make new friends. We lived in Bunbury, WA – a small town, where people knew each other. When I asked the librarian if there was a Scrabble club, she told me of a lady who travelled to Perth (two hours away) to play Scrabble.

Karen and members of her family during a trip to Singapore





In her element, teaching new kids (in preparation for WYSC 2015) – Karen with husband Paul and Tuppy the dog

Thus I met Dianne Ward, who encouraged me to start a local club. Having done so, I needed to learn about tournaments, so Paul drove me to Perth for my first foray. Coming home with three trophies, I was hooked. My husband decided that, if he had to drive me, he might as well also compete.

At home, we had a five-year-old wanting to copy his parents. Alastair joined us at the club, where there was a gentleman with a brain injury who lost every game, but these wins kept Alastair coming back for more. Two years later, aged seven, Alastair started competing against adults in Adelaide, South Australia.

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY!

Our unconventional lifestyle, moving every year or two, and the flexibility of home-schooling, meant that we enjoyed frequent travel. Alastair made friends all over the world, and competed in the first World Youth Scrabble Championship in Wollongong in 2006, aged 14.

40

After that, he helped me teach other youngsters to play Scrabble. He reached a high ranking of seventh in the world a few years ago, and placed tenth in the World Scrabble Championship as a teenager (2011).

Seeing the pleasure it gave Alastair, as well as preventing educational boredom, inspired me to share Scrabble with others. Skills Alastair gained from Scrabble helped him succeed at university – the depth of concentration required to perform your best at all times, the ability to study and recall vast amounts, and the problem-solving and logic skills so essential in his chosen medical career. Every school, worldwide, should offer Scrabble to students.

My best Scrabble moment was in Penang Open (2010). With both blanks, I beat Pakorn (422–382). For my punishment, my next opponent was

One of Karen's finest moments was beating Nigel Richards (seen chatting to her, below, in 2013) at the Penang Open in 2010, with a score of 466–452





Karen with (back) Radheya Jegatheva, Lewis Hawkins, and (front) Ronnie Bennett, Tim Mason, Shekinah Giffen

Nigel. Another two blanks saw me defeat him also (466–452). I will never repeat that feat – the two best players in the world, beaten consecutively.

PASSING DOWN THE BATON

My best moment as a Scrabble coach? I have these annually, when over 100 interesting young people arrive at World Youth Scrabble Championships, and I watch them battle it out with such finesse and enjoyment. On an individual basis, I recall being asked to train a six-year-old. This young lad didn't say much; just watched Alastair and me with wide-open eyes, and 'seemed' to be absorbing everything we said (or was he just overawed?).

For two days, I thrashed him repeatedly, while Alastair told him what he could have done better. Next day, he embarked on his first tournament (two days, 15 rounds). After four games, he had won only one. Alastair and I were devastated, wondering if we had done the right thing in encouraging him so young. However, he then consolidated all we had taught

him, winning ten of the next 11, to finish second in the section. This was Lewis Hawkins (NZ), currently the best under-12 player in the world. Moments like these, and children like that, keep me battling on for the youth in Scrabble.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

It has been exciting to chair the Youth Committee of WESPA since its inception. From now on, I will also be working with MSI (Mind Sports International) as part of their advisory committee (led by Craig Beevers) to get Scrabble into schools worldwide. The last ten years, since we started running WYSC, have been very rewarding, with countries such as Pakistan and Hong Kong building up large numbers of competent young players.

Growth in the youth sector will now be exponential. It is my mission to offer intelligent young people the opportunity to use their brains and challenge themselves. They will become world leaders in their chosen fields, and I will have left the world a better place. ■

The WYSC in Perth, 2015. Karen is proud to be fulfilling her stated mission in life – to offer intelligent youngsters the chance to realise their potential



TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Glasgow

3 October (7 rounds)

A		
Amy Byrne	6	206
Alan Sinclair	5	401
Ross Mackenzie	5	248

B		
Kenneth Ross	5	217
Margaret Armstrong	5	153

C		
Paul Dobson	7	532
Fiona Shoesmith	6	565

Diaspora

3 October (8 rounds)

Austin Shin (GM)	7	562
Rafal Dominiczak	5	587
Evelyn Wallace	5	-12

Cock of the North

2-4 October (three sessions of 7 rounds each)

Session 1 A		
Jackie McLeod	5	460
Steve Balment	5	253

Session 1 B		
Syd Berger	6	296
Stany Arnold	5	179

Session 2 A		
Jackie McLeod	5½	471
Colin Northmore	5	327

Session 2 B		
David Shenkin	6	629
Juliet Green	5	377

Session 3 A		
Adrienne Berger	6	355
Jackie McLeod	4	237

Session 3 B		
Jill Parker		
Rose Kingdon		

Coventry Triple

5-7 October

Session 1 A		
Victoria Kingham	7	304
Neil Rowley	6	416

Session 1 B		
Marlene Skinner		
Steve Balment		

Session 2 B		
Jill Parker	6	
Stephen Wintle		

Oxford Invitational

**RESULTS
PAGE**

The Tournament Results page shows the top two or three players in each division, and how any games they have won. Most tournaments are split into two or more divisions so that you are likely to be playing people with roughly the same level of ability. Sometimes there is a single division open to all, so even beginners might have the chance to take on the World Champion! Forthcoming tournaments are listed on our diary pages, as well as on our website: www.absp.org.uk/calendar. Tournaments are held all over the country, and may take place over a single day or a full weekend – usually seven or eight games each day. Why not give it a try – you will be sure of a warm welcome!

RATINGS SNAPSHOT

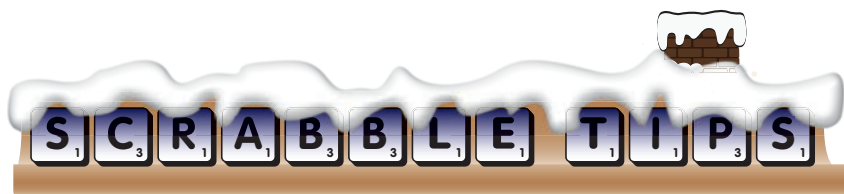
This is a snapshot of the ratings as at 2 December 2015. Players listed have played at least 30 ABSP-rated games on that date, and at least one since 2 December 2014.

There are rated games taking place every week, so for the most up-to-date list, go to the ABSP website: <http://www.absp.org.uk/results/rankorder.shtml>

203		Chris May (GM)	176	1196	Andrew Goodwin (Exp)	166	116	Martin Thompson
203	774	Brett Smitheram (GM)	176		Ed Rossiter (Exp)	166	49	Bob Violet (Exp)
200	1355	Craig Beevers (GM)	175	1693	Rafal Dominiczak	165	1170	Paloma Raychbart
200		David Eldar (GM)	175	1491	Stephen Hunt	165		Andrei Russell-Gebbett
197	1618	Paul Gallen (GM)	174	1814	Rik Kennedy (Exp)	165	2076	Martin Thomas
196	1713	Alastair Richards (GM)	174	362	Gary Oliver (GM)	164	103	Danny Bekhor
195		Mark Nyman (GM)	174	1510	Jessica Pratesi	164	1486	Ash Coldrick
195	846	Austin Shin (GM)	174		Howard Wilde (Exp)	164	59	Simon Gillam (Exp)
194	764	Lewis Mackay (GM)	173	1116	Paul Bassett	164	814	Jared Robinson (Exp)
192		Kevin McMahon (GM)	173		Mark Goodwin	163	1679	Toke Aka
190	338	David Webb (GM)	173	1362	Graham Haigh	163	1375	Mike Chappell
188	1942	Piotr Andronowski	173		Winter Winter	163	38	Jackie McLeod (Exp)
187	1220	Theresa Brousson (GM)	173	1971	Natalie Zolty	163	479	Andrew Roughton (Exp)
186		Evan Cohen (Exp)	172		Ben Tarlow	163	1732	James Squires
186	158	Ed Martin (GM)	171	2024	Chris Cummins	163		Jin-Chor Tan
186	1497	Azu Ogbogu (Exp)	171	773	Chris Vicary	162		Olakunle Ajayi
185	1368	Phil Robertshaw (GM)	170	1631	Jack Anscorb	162	1855	Jack Dunn
184	751	Paul Allan (GM)	170	45	Barry Grossman (Exp)	162		Chris...
184	147	Helen Gipson (GM)	170	368	Chris Hawkins (Exp)			
184	7	Allan Simmons (GM)	170	165	Cecil Muscat			
183	823	Wayne Kelly (GM)	170	101	Robert Richland			
183	482	Neil Scott (GM)	169	880	Femi Awolowo			
181	2112	Suresh Chinnaiyah	169		David...			
181	60	Terry Kirk (GM)	169		Nick...			
180	478	Elie Dangoor (Exp)	169		Nick...			
180	1428	Martin Harrison (GM)						
179	1016	John Ashmore						
179	1163	David Sutton (Exp)						
179	41	Gareth Williams (GM)						
177	1202	Jason Carney (Exp)						
177		Gerry Carter						
177	1423	Calum Edwards						
176	58	Russell...						
176	202	Penny...						

**ABSP
RATINGS**

All tournament players in the UK receive a rating based on their relative performance. Ratings range from just over 200 to 50, and are calculated using a weighted rolling average system. All ABSP-rated tournaments appear in the online database which keeps track of player performances. Members can log on to check their latest results and past tournaments, plus other stats such as average scores and head-to-head matches versus other players.



For those new to the ABSP and lower-rated players

By Allan Simmons

NOW OR NEXT?

If you have a rack with several higher-scoring tiles, don't feel you have to use them all at once. Inspect the board and note whether there are any attractive scoring spots for each of them. It may be worthwhile keeping one of them back on the rack for the sake of a few points this turn, in order to have some insurance for scoring well the next turn – and be less at the mercy of the pickup.

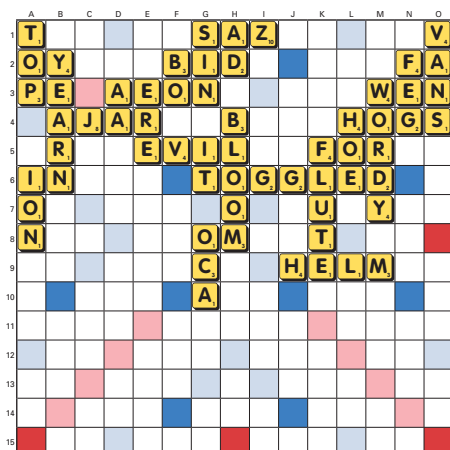
Similar thinking can apply if you have a power tile (JQXZ) on your rack, plus a collection of one- and two-point letters. If you can retain the power tile and score nearly as much by playing five or six of your tiles, not only could the increased turnover be beneficial (if other goodies are still to come), but you also retain the scoring asset of the power tile for a subsequent turn. Note that this strategy works better with the X and Z than the J and Q, and is only worthwhile if you can

see some potential for the power tile on the board.

Here are a couple of example racks. Using the board position shown below, have a think about what you might play before reading on.

A₁ D₂ I₁ K₃ N₁ T₁ W₄

A₁ D₂ I₁ O₁ R₁ T₁ X₅



With the first rack, plays such as KAW F10d (36) or WINK I9d (32) are attractive, but only one of the W and K is raking in the bulk of the score in each case. If you just played KIND F10d (35) you'd be keeping back some good scoring insurance with the W to play at I9 on the next turn. For example, irrespective of your pickup, you already have WAT there for 27.

With the second rack, it's natural to be drawn towards plays with the X. You may have spotted AX M10a (29), MATRIX M9d (30), TAXI H10d (21), and maybe even the neat AXOID G10a (32). If the X were to be kept back for scoring insurance, what's the best score that can be achieved using as many of the other letters as possible? See if you can find such a play that scores 26, and places a vowel to create a potential profitable spot for the X. But what if the rack had been slightly different, thus:

A₁ D₂ I₁ N₁ O₁ X₃ T₁

What would your play be now?

Some definitions

AXOID type of curve
FEG segment of an orange
SAZ stringed instrument
WAT Thai Buddhist temple
WEN cyst normally found on the scalp

CONSONANT-BOUND

On many occasions, this column has covered how to deal with vowel-heavy racks, but there has been less coverage on the difficulties that can be faced when you have an abundance of consonants. That's because it is generally easier, using everyday vocabulary, to dump three or four consonants – perhaps making use of a vowel on the rack or available on the board. The challenge arises with consonants when they have very little synergy with each other. A selection of soft and hard consonants will often fit well together in combinations (for example, BLPRT), but less so a handful of hard-sounding consonants (for example, BCGPV). When you have racks featuring the latter, ideally you would want to use at least three of the consonants so you don't carry the problem over to your next rack – and yet it is harder to do so.

In isolation of a board position, see if you can find any words that use four consonants from these awkward racks, then read on:

A₁ B₃ C₃ D₂ H₁ P₃ U₁

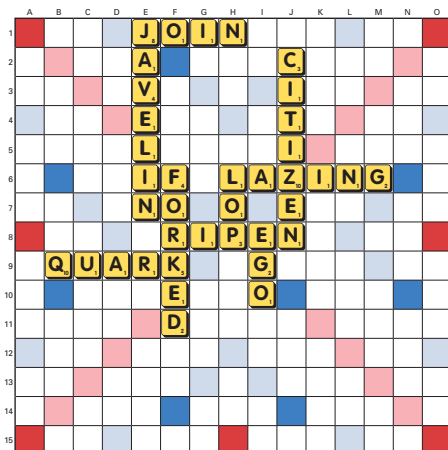
A₁ G₂ J₁ K₁ L₁ M₃ O₁



A₁ D₂ F₄ G₂ L₁ O₁ P₃A₁ B₃ E₁ G₂ H₂ P₃ T₁

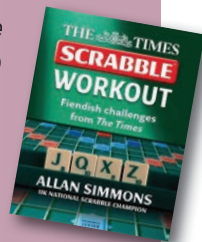
If you had trouble finding any words to meet the criteria given, try looking for compound words that are made up of two three-letter words. That may help you discover HUBCAP with the first rack. See the solutions for the other words.

You can imagine similar words being solutions for racks with six clunky consonants if there are also vowels available to play through on the board. Use the board position on the right and the following four racks to find plays that use at least four consonants in each case:

B₃ B₃ C₃ F₄ O₁ P₃ W₄B₃ C₃ E₁ G₂ M₃ V₁ W₄C₃ D₂ G₂ H₂ O₁ T₁ W₄A₁ B₃ F₄ G₂ K₃ P₃ T₁

Scrabble articles like these can be found each Saturday in *The Times*. There is also a book, published by Collins, of a collection of over 90 of such Scrabble tips and articles by Allan Simmons that have appeared in *The Times: (Collins) The Times Scrabble Workout* – ISBN 978-0-00-730303-8 rrp £7.99.

If you have any comments or feedback on these articles, Allan is happy to receive them. Email him at onwordsltd@aol.com



SCRABBLE: THE GREAT MEDIA BREAKTHROUGH!

David Sutton imagines a scenario in which the game of Scrabble becomes a popular TV reality show ... with all the drama, thrills and spills that that would entail



I think we all agree that Scrabble needs a lot more media coverage, but the problem is how to make this unashamedly intellectual and slightly slow-moving game appeal to a mass audience. Fear not, for I have a brilliant concept. It is for this TV programme called *Strictly Come Scrabble*, which will run for three months each year from September to Christmas.

The idea is that you get a dozen or so top Scrabble players and partner each with some celebrity from sport or show business. It is the job of the top player to turn their celebrity into a decent Scrabble player over the period of three months, and each Saturday night there is a tournament, at the end of which a panel of judges votes for the celebrity who has played the best Scrabble, and the great British public vote for whomever they fancy the most.

There is ample scope for drama – imagine the tears and tantrums as the participants struggle to master the three-letter word list and the 11 anagrams of RETAINS ... and that's just the top players I'm talking about. Then there is the dramatic week when one of the

celebrities is injured with a sprain to the tile-plonking finger, with endless close-up shots of said finger, and much cheering as said celebrity nonetheless comes gamely out to play on the Saturday night. And of course there is the great 'it's not fair' controversy when it turns out that one of the celebrities actually spent their childhood reading *Official Scrabble Words* under the bedclothes.

The composition of the panel of judges is, naturally, very important. First, you need a much-respected genial elder statesman figure – I am thinking Allan Simmons in a suit. Then you need a very excitable but lovable foreign judge – your nominations are invited. Then you need one female expert, very slightly ageing but still glamorous – surely we need to look no further than our own Natalie Z?

Finally, you need a Mr Nasty, who marks everyone down and makes a lot of acid comments, but under it has a heart of gold: I don't think this should be too hard to find, particularly if we relax the heart-of-gold requirement.

I just haven't figured out how to get an ice rink into it yet. ■

AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

David Sutton takes a look at some of the unusual words that have been used in literature, and explains their meanings



Susanna Clarke's *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*, is a highly original fantasy novel, marrying a cool ironic style with a wild dark poetry – it is as if Jane Austen and Emily Brontë had sat down to collaborate under the tutelage of Neil Gaiman. It could perhaps have done with a little cutting, and the writing is slightly arch in places, but that said, I think it is certainly the best thing in the fantasy field since Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea* trilogy.

The recent television adaptation was, I thought, a creditable effort with some remarkable special effects, but inevitably it failed to capture much of the book's style and texture. The language is not difficult, but it is flavoured by a number of archaisms and unusual words. Here is a selection.

AUREATE

gilded, covered with gold: here used of magicians who belong to the Golden Age of magic. Not to be confused with AURATE, which is a noun and means a salt of auric acid.

BRUGH

can mean a mansion or large house or a borough; used by Clarke for the dwelling of the fairy folk.

CHUSE

an old variant of CHOOSE, one of several obsolete verb forms that Clarke uses to give a period flavour to the book. Gives CHUSES, CHUSING, CHUSED.

DRUGGET

a coarse woollen fabric, used as a floor covering, etc. Derives from French drogue, trash, and has a variant, DROGUET.

FABULIST

an inventor of fables.

FAMULUS

an assistant to a magician or scholar: the word is Latin for servant. The plural is FAMULI. Not to be confused with FUMULUS, which is a kind of thin cloud.

FLAUGHTER

a Scots word with the basic meaning of 'flutter', but can also refer to a thin paring of turf, and can be used as a verb meaning to cut turf.

LAUDANUM

a tincture of opium, much used in Victorian times, before its addictive properties were recognised,



for a whole range of ailments and even given to children as a sleeping draught. It has been suggested that the Victorian obsession with lurid dreams may have derived from this practice.

MANTICORE

a mythical monster with head of man, body of lion, tail of dragon or scorpion.

Has a variant, MANTICORA.



PARLOUS

an archaic form of perilous.

PELISSE

originally a short fur-lined jacket worn over the shoulder by hussars, light cavalry soldiers, ostensibly as a protection against sword-cuts, but also, as here, used of a kind of woman's coat fashionable in the early 19th century.



RUTTER

as used by Clarke, refers to a spade for cutting turf. Can also mean a type of cavalry soldier, a swindler, and a lumberjack's plough.

SARSENET

a fine soft silk fabric. Has variants SARCENET, SARCONET and SARSNET. The word derives from Saracen, referring to its exotic eastern origin.



SENESCHAL

the steward of a mediaeval prince or nobleman, who took charge of domestic arrangements. One legendary seneschal was Sir Kay, steward to King Arthur. The word goes back to the Old High German senescalh from sene, old, plus scalh, a servant.



SHEW

an archaic form of show, giving SHEWS, SHEWING, SHEWED, SHEWN.

SIDHE

(an Irish word, pronounced 'she') the fairy people, in Ireland also known as the Tuatha Dé Danann, the tribes of the goddess Danu, who lived in underground dwellings. The singular is SIDH.



STOPT

an obsolete past tense of stop.

SURPRIZE

an obsolete spelling of surprise.

TUSKER

can mean an animal with tusks, like an elephant or wild boar, but as used by Clarke refers to a kind of spade for cutting peat, in which sense it has variants TUSHKAR, TUSHKER, TUSKAR and TWISCAR. The word is Old Norse in origin. ■

CRISS-CROSS

Try this puzzle submitted by **Barry Grossman**. At first glance it may seem simple – but is it as easy as it looks?

In each of these situations, there is only one letter that can replace the blank in order to make valid words both across and down. What is the blank in each case?

1 C₃ R₁ O₁ S₁ S₁ W₄ O₁ R₁

E₁

A₁

R₁

I₁

E₁

R₁

2 T₁ E₁ A₁ O₁ Y₄

C₃
R₁
U₁
M₃

4

3

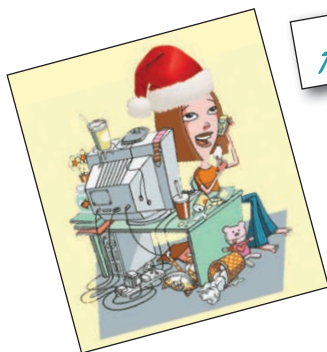
L ₁	U ₁		C ₃	H ₄
		E ₁		
		S ₁		
		C ₃		
		E ₁		
		S ₁		

A word search grid with the following letters and indices:

B ₃						
	M ₃	P ₃	I ₁	N ₁	G ₂	
R ₁						
L ₁						
A ₁						
D ₂						
Y ₄						

A crossword puzzle grid is shown. The horizontal word '5 Across' is 'B E _ F A S T' and the vertical word '1 Down' is 'C A T H O L I C'. The empty cell is the third letter of '5 Across' and the fifth letter of '1 Down'.

Solutions are on page 53



Ask

Auntie Antliae

Is something troubling you? A problem shared is a problem halved. If you are having difficulties with any aspect of your Scrabble life, the ABSP's **Auntie Antliae** is here to help you



Dear Auntie Antliae

What is your view on Scrabble superstitions? Some people have lucky racks or pens. Others like to sit on a certain side of the table or don't like black tiles. Some even have rituals to follow before the game starts. Is there any basis for this? Or should I just carry on trying to improve my play and learn more words?

Yours
Bev Ridge

Dear Bev

I am a firm believer in these superstitions. It's the power of positive thinking, which may be brought about by a certain item. Feel lucky and you will be lucky! But some players are taking it too far with a variety of items and mascots. I just stick to my lucky underwear.

Dear Auntie Antliae

I bought two lovely gold racks from Tilefish. Should I wrap both for my girlfriend, or keep mine and just wrap hers as a gift? Such a dilemma!

Jack Pott

Dear Jack

You should just give her one at Christmas.

RIGHT THAT WRONG – TODAY!

Have you lost rating points through no fault of your own?

It can happen at any tournament, when you are least expecting it. Your rating plummets and your opponents simply get away with it. Let us take on your burden of outrage and disappointment. We will negotiate directly with the ABSP ratings officer to get your points back.

"I had a terrible tournament. The tiles wouldn't co-operate, and after endless runs of vowels and duplicates like AEEEINT, I was devastated to drop

three points. I made one simple call to SILFY. A week later, I was told that my precious ratings points would be restored (after I win my next six games). Thanks so much, SILFY." **Helen Back.**

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Have your say

Something on your mind? We want to hear about it

Credit where credit is due

This letter was prompted by the switching on of our local Christmas lights. It is definitely time for me to gush praises and celebrate the wonderful community that I am part of.

Firstly, I want to thank the team who produce the ABSP OnBoard magazine. It is phenomenal how well they manage to mix such a variety of articles and Scrabble news together, and still have space left for the anagrid puzzle. I would love to report that I have assimilated Lewis's and Allan's advice, but do now know that ZOLL is a phoney.

Secondly, I must commend and congratulate the tournament organisers and directors. This year alone, I have seen quick-thinking solutions to competitors dropping out at last minute, and have also seen the players rallying with tremendous support when an organiser had to completely work out pairings at the end of each round.

In the Yorkshire Scrabble League, there was a hiatus in the first half of the year, but Andrea has stepped in to help out, and now there is a flurry of players rapidly arranging fixtures. Of course, it goes without saying that Scrabble comes into its delightful own

when the WI supply fruit cake – and you get to leave the venue with a bushel of fallen apples.

Two other things need a quick note, too: Perth and all the excitement throughout, and the adoption of CSW15. The latter has been surprisingly smooth. Many thanks to JG Miller and Jason Katz-Brown et al for their work on the software that I use.

– **Derek Sergeant**

'Scrabblers Got Talent'?

It was great to see Colin Nicol and his team winning a recently aired edition of the TV quiz show, Eggheads. I know that some other players have done well on TV game shows over the years. There are clearly quite a number of Scrabble players who have other talents that perhaps never get exposed within the world of Scrabble (Robert Richland's excellent impressions may be a notable exception!).

It occurred to me that, among our fraternity, we could probably run a decent talent contest at one of the weekend events. Or perhaps OnBoard could have a small feature on players and their lesser-known talents away from the board? Just a suggestion.

– **Allan Simmons**

SOLUTIONS

Scrabble Tips: 1 (pages 8–10)

More or Less

WHO m1a (20) and **WO** g10a (22)

What but Where

TRICEPS b11a (78) and **RECEIPTS** c7d (82)

Scrabble Tips: 2 (pages 44–46)

Now or next

ADROIT H10d (26), uses six letters, (improving the chances of getting any of the unseen blanks and Ss). The O creates an X spot such that an E pickup (seven remain) would enable you to play EX I12d (36) if the spot is left. With ADINOXT play **OXIDANT** B8d (86)!

Consonant-bound

Initial racks: **HUBCAP**, **LOGJAM**, **LAPDOG**, **HATPEG**.

Board plays: **COBWEB** A4a (36),

WEBCAM A2a (52), **WATCHDOG** D8d (98), **KITBAG** I3a (36) also **BAKGAT** (great, fine: South African slang interj.) D8d (32)

Spot the Phoney: 1 (page 11)

1 RENOIR 2 SUFFOLK 3 COLDPLAY
4 COPPERFIELD 5 FLORIDA 6 NADAL
7 BERMUDA 8 CRUELLA 9 FALDO
10 GEORGE 11 BISMARCK 12 CALAIS
13 OPHELIA 14 JURAS 15 POPEYE

Spot the Phoney: 2 (page 37)

1 FIGBIRD 2 MENSHEVIK 3 RUSSELL
4 HAGRID 5 CINDERELLA 6 WENGER
7 LUTHOR 8 CHRIMBO 9 SHAMASH 10
TWANKEY 11 YARDIES 12 RAGDOLL 13
UGGS 14 BLEAH 15 WOODSTOCK

Nonagram: (page 17)

BEATITUDE, beautied, dubitate, abutted, auditee, battue, butted, dautie, duetti, tabued, tatued, tauted, tubate, adieu, audit, battu, beaut, butte, daube, debut, duett, etude, taube, tubae, tubed, tutee, abut, aitu, baud, beau, bedu, buat, buda, budi, bute, butt, daub, daut, duet, duit, etui, tabu, tatu, taut, tuba, tube

Criss-Cross: (page 50)

1. T; 2. P; 3.A; 4.Y; 5. D

PHENOMENAL!

Alastair Richards of Australia played an amazing game at the South Australia Championships in Adelaide on 7 March 2015, playing no fewer than eight bonuses, and with a final scoreline of 727–235.

With only three non-bonus moves, Alastair's bonuses were HEROINE (78), LORRIES (74), LEA(R)NING (74), (O)EDEMATA (94), (G)AsIFIER (83), ETIOLIN (75), Dr(O)PLOCK (82), D(E)BATING (64).

This is what the board looked like at the end of the game:

