READING & SPELLING

A Magazine for Parents & Teachers
Published by the Simplified Spelling Society

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[The A5 beige cover has a very dark picture of three witches at a table, with the word "Spelling" behind them, and entitled "Witch's Brew".]

C O N T E N T S

SIMPLIFIED SPELLING SOCIETY
(Patron: H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., K.T.)

1. EDITORIAL

I hope members will welcome the appearance of READING & SPELLING, and will do all they can to help us to get orders for the magazine — especially standing permanent orders from libraries and institutions. When we reach a circulation of about 300 it should be economic for us to go over to type-set print with all the possibilities that this will open up for the magazine.

READING & SPELLING will appear alternately with NEWS SHEET. The most appropriate dates for NEWS SHEET seem to be December/January (to report the A.G.M.) and May/June (to provide information, etc. for the approaching new A.G.M.). This should also help us to economise a little on postage. This would make it convenient for READING & SPELLING to appear in March/April (Spring issue) and August/September (Autumn issue) in time for the Society's Conference.

NEWS SHEET is the confidential internal journal of the Society devoted mainly (but not necessarily exclusively) to the domestic affairs of the Society. READING & SPELLING will contain only articles of a serious nature connected with some aspect of spelling reform. It will be offered to the public as well as to members of the Society. This will start with the Autumn issue this year.

I had hoped to be able to offer free copies of this edition to colleges, libraries, etc. as an inducement for permanent subscriptions but have decided instead to submit the first number to the judgement of members who will surely be able to help us by their advice as they have so often done before. If you have any ideas which you feel might improve READING & SPELLING in any way: format, layout, content or in any other way, please tell us about them as soon as you can.

We need articles of about 2,000 words in length and shorter items having a bearing on spelling reform for our Autumn number. We will be glad to publish original (in both senses of the word) items but please send them in soon. We need also drawings, pictures, designs for our cover in future and will welcome these also.

We will have a competition as a regular feature. We would appreciate suggestions for future competitions. These suggestions ought to have a connection with spelling reform.

Letters to the Editor will be welcome and, we hope, will arrive in sufficient numbers to appear regularly. Please type letters in single spacing on A5 size paper in black.

Questions for our Question and Answer page should also be typed in black on A5 size paper.

We hope also to include book reviews. We will welcome offers from members to write reviews — and also new books from publishers for review.

Our present Editorial Advisory Board is small in numbers but we hope to increase its strength in future. I have already written to several distinguished scholars and hope that they may honour the Society by agreeing to allow us to call on them also for advice in their own specialisations in the near future.

This is a crucial time for READING & SPELLING. Please do all you can to get us off to a good start.

EDITORIAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

The Editor of READING & SPELLING is always prepared to consider for publication articles of a serious nature related to some aspect of simplified spelling. The most favoured length for such articles is up to about 2,000 words (i.e. 5 pages of this journal). Longer articles of an exceptional nature will also be considered but it may be necessary to spread them, if accepted, over more than one issue. Articles of the right kind will be accepted from any source — not necessarily from members of the Society only. Articles will be reproduced by photography directly from contributors' typed scripts. Such scripts should therefore conform to the following layout details:-

Proposed items should be carefully typed on A5 size (8¼" x 5⅞") paper — the same size as these pages. A margin of about half an inch should be allowed on all edges. The typed area will therefore be about 7¼" x 4⅞". The type size should not be larger than pica nor smaller than elite.

The first page of the article should have the title on top in capital letters.
The author's name should be two spaces underneath in normal typescript.
The first line of the article should be three spaces underneath the author's name.
The whole article should be in single spacing — no double spacing between paragraphs.
Articles should be typed on one side only of opaque paper.
Underlining may be used conventionally instead of italics.

References should be indicated by a number in brackets: thus (6) in the text and gathered in serial order at the end of the text. It is hoped they will be brief.

It will be possible to reproduce, in black only, pictures, diagrams, non-Roman scripts, etc. which are submitted in black only.

No payment can be made for articles submitted but the editor will provide the author, when requested in advance, with twelve free copies of the issue in which his article appears. This applies only to articles and not to letters and smaller items.

Unsuitable articles will be returned to their authors with a short explanation of why they were not accepted and, if it applies, suggestions for rewriting.

Where the editor is in any doubt about an article he may sent it to a suitable member of the Editorial Advisory Board (see page 3) for advice, after he has conferred with the author.

READING & SPELLING will accept advertisements for which a charge of £6.00 per full page and £3.00 per half page will be made. It may also accept as advertisements only, descriptions of new alphabets, reformed scripts and similar matter. The charge for this service will be as little as £5.00 per page.

2. i. t. a. — An Exercise in Futility
D. Stafford

The creation of committed organisations and societies is a process that is based an the perception of a problem (or problems). The Simplified Spelling Society is certainly not an exception in this respect. It was established is 1908 by a number of learned scholars who shared a common concern for the disastrous effects of our irregular spelling. For these founder members, their problem (and ours) can be summarised as follows:

Our spelling 'system' is unsystematic. In traditional orthography (t.o.) a particular phoneme (or sound) is generally symbolised is more than one way. Moreover, a particular letter of the alphabet (or combination of letters) can usually be pronounced (or 'realised') with more than one phoneme, the choice of phoneme being often very arbitrary and requiring 'rote' learning **(1).**

A Linguistics specialist would probably add that the suprasegmental phonemes of *strew* and *pitch*, which are such a vital feature of the spoken language, are never symbolised in t.o. The same applies to *juncture* (which refers to the different types of 'gaps' in sequences of phonemes).

The consequences of this situation are very unfortunate and on a massive scale. The catastrophic effects of t.o. have been analysed by a number of authors and it is not my intention to examine these effects in any detail **(2).** I intend instead to consider the possible solutions that could be advanced for the problem that is stated above. In fact, it some that all significant, would-be solutions belong to one or other of the following two categories:

(a) Permanent spelling reforms. The numerous systems that belong to this category are intended to replace t.o. permanently. Some of them are essentially rationalised versions of t.o., but this is certainly not the case for all systems of proposed spelling reform (s.r.)

(b) Initial teaching media (i.t.m.) In this context, the abbreviation i.t.m. refers to alphabets that are designed for the initial teaching of reading and writing to young children in their first years at school. Subsequently, the children must make the transition back to t.o. There is no attempt at any kind of permanent spelling reform.

It should be apparent that there is a wide separation between the underlying attitudes and assumptions that are .implied by these two categories. The design criteria and axioms of i.t.m. and s.r.'s are different. Spelling reformers are those whose sympathies are directed toward the systems of category (a). Theirs is a radical approach. Many of them favour those systems of s.r. that would retain a close visual resemblance to the forms of t.o., where this would not affect the efficiency of the reform, but others are not deeply concerned about close visual links with t.o. in the spelling reforms that they currently favour.

The supporters of i.t.m., however, are forced to choose systems that have a close resemblance to t.o. 'on the page'. This is essential for an i.t. medium if a severe check to educational progress is not to be experienced at the time when pupils effect the transition from their initial teaching texts to normal reading material employing t.o. This points immediately to the dilemma that faces the would-be designer of an initial teaching medium for reading and writing. Such a person is in thrall to the idiocies of t.o. however tempting more rational: spellings may be. He or she is often forced far from the ideal of a one-to-one correspondence between sound and symbol, even where this is attainable, because the result of adopting such an ideal system of symbolism would be too logical and distant from the weird and irrational conventions that the pupils who use an i.t.m. must be able to recognise at the time of the (dreaded) transition to t.o. Similarly, the designer of an i.t. medium is not generally free to introduce those developments that are so desirable from the viewpoints of many spelling reformers. For example, the extra vowel symbol (or symbols), and the combined symbol for main stress and intonation **(3)** that form, or could form a feature of some systems in category (a). Where a given system of category (b) appears to incorporate significant innovations,

these are almost always adopted to ensure that there is a close mimicry of idiosyncrasies in t.o., and are rarely the sort of modifications that a spelling reformer would bother to consider.

The situation can be expressed in anthropomorphic terms, as follows: The spelling of t.o. is 'sick'. Spelling reformers wish to cure the sickness, but the supporters of i.t.m. are quite content to toss a few aspirins in the direction of the patient. In short, s.r. implies a permanent cure, i.t.m. imply temporary palliative measures, and they cure nothing.

More objectively, one can say that the existence of various system of i.t.m. for reading and writing is a symptom of the need for a thorough s.r. When our spelling is effectively reformed the 'need' for i.t.m. will vanish (as will the schemes themselves). A well reformed orthography should function as its own initial teaching medium.

This last point should help to explain why many distinguished proponents of initial teaching alphabets are often vociferously opposed to the very concept of a spelling reform. In blunt terms, their systems would become totally irrelevant if the inanities of t.o. were eliminated (as they would be by a competent s.r.).

Incidentally, the very large financial investment that is involved in the development and marketing of an initial teaching medium is worthy of note in this context.

It should now be obvious that a deep gulf separates systems of s.r. from schemes of i.t.m. There is, however, a certain general relationship of a one-sided nature between the two, for an initial teaching medium can rarely be considered as constituting more than a third-rate substitute for a bad spelling reform, but a spelling reform that is worthy of the name should have the potential to serve as its own (very effective) i.t. medium — in the sense that pupils should not require auxiliary aids when learning to read and to write with such a regularised system. Of course, the question of a transition to t.o., in this instance, does not arise.

The most widely known example of an i.t. medium for reading and writing is, of course, the initial teaching alphabet (i.t.a.) of Sir James Pitman **(4)**. Of all the systems in category (b), this is certainly the best researched and the most widely used. Same very fine scholars and administrators have been involved in the development and testing of i.t.a., and notable success has been achieved with the system at the stage before the transition back to t.o. This illustrates the fact that almost any simplification of t.o. can speed the initial learning process — a fact that has been known and accepted by several generations of spelling reformers. Unfortunately for i.t.a. and its proponents, their system has been far from an unqualified success in aiding pupils to withstand the shock of the transition to traditional spelling, and the early gain has to be balanced against the considerable check to program that occurs at this point.

In many respects, it could be argued that i.t.a., like other systems of i.t.m., is an exercise in futility. It is an attempt to dodge the main issue (which is the question of a permanent spelling reform). "At the end of some two years learning in the Infants School all of the difficulties of traditional English spelling still lie ahead of the i.t.a. learner and still have to be mastered before he or she can read functionally in traditional English spelling. I.t.a. does not remove difficulties; it merely delays them. I.t.a. has, in fact, a delaying effect on reading fluency in t.o. (the ultimate aim) since many of these difficulties would have been met and mastered earlier if traditional spelling had been the medium of instruction" **(5)**.

These unfortunate facts are reflected in the statistics relating to the number of British schools that stil1 employ i.t.a. Figures published by, or assembled for the i.t.a. Foundation reveal that fewer than 1 000 schools are still using i.t.a. in Britain. This statistic should be compared with the corresponding value for the period from 1967 to 1971 when up to 4 000 schools were using the system.

It seems to be fairly certain that part of the reaction (that is implied by these figures) against i.t.a, developed in the first instance among those teachers in Junior schools who had seen the stresses

of the transition from i.t.a. to t.o. at first hand. This reaction now appears to have filtered into infant schools.

Certain studies purport to show that the 'average' standard of spelling among i.t.a. pupils cannot be distinguished from that of pupils whose studies involve the use of t.o. only. (Presumably, one is required to overlook the remarkable fact that i.t.a. methods have failed to produce any statistically significant improvement in spelling attainment.) It is difficult to know how one is expected to react to these results, particularly in view of the fact that most of these studies have been done by supporters of i.t.a. or by authors who have i.t.a. texts to their credit!

It is irritating to hear that certain apologists for i.t.a. have referred to the system as a foundation for the reform of our present orthography. An s.r. should be designed as such from the outset. Is this requirement satisfied by the design criteria of the Initial Teaching Alphabet?

There appears to be a growing conviction among supporters of spelling reform that category (b) systems (including, of course, i.t.a.) are collectively the antithesis of spelling reform, for they imply the preservation, not the reform, of traditional spelling. I suspect that this conviction is likely to spread to an increasing number of those who still advocate the use of i.t.m. as potential 'foundations' for a spelling reform. The S.S.S. is almost certain to gain from such an evolution, and even now the Society is privileged in having among its members some of the distinguished scholars who have been associated with the i.t.a. movement. Their knowledge and experience could do much to speed the reform of one of the main sources of illiteracy in the anglophone world — traditional orthography.

Notes and references
(1) In an unpublished Ms., I have expressed the concept of the (unattainable) 'perfect' spelling system in terms of one-to-one reading and writing 'mappings'. Such mappings are sets of one-to-one reading and writing 'maps'. In the same terms, t.o. gives great trouble because many of its component maps are one-to-many (both for reading and for writing) and there is no clear guide as to the choice of 'image' under the mappings. In short, ambiguity (which can be defined as a set of one-to-manor maps with largely unguided choices for the images) reigns supreme.

(2) The Society has prepared a short list of publications relevant to s.r. A copy can be obtained by writing to the Publications Secretary and enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope (large enough to take two folded sheets of A4 paper).

(3) Some spelling reformers favour the introduction of a symbol for the unstressed mid-central vowel (number 12 on the listing of the late Prof. Daniel Jones). For my part, I wish to suggest the possibility of an optional symbol for marking the syllables that carry the main (or 'strongest') stress, and for giving a (very) rough indication of intonation. Such a symbol could have a threefold form. I suggest: \ − / for the falling, level and rising intonation, respectively. Perhaps such a system could be elaborated a little (not too much!) to show pitch 'level' as well.

(4) See: 'A Short Account of Simplified Spelling and the Simplified Spelling Society' (particularly page 8 onward), by Maurice Harrison, M.A., M.Ed., B.Sc. Eton.; **S.S.S. Pamphlet No. 11**; published by the S.S.S. in 1971.

(5) Quoted, with permission, from a letter to the author. The same letter provided the data relating to i.t.a. usage in Britain, the comments concerning the reactions of Junior school teachers to i.t.a., and notes on spelling attainment with i.t.a.

3. PERFORMANCE INVENTORIES IN E.F.L. (1)
George O'Halloran

This inventory took its origin from a device I used during the war years in West Africa to allocate African soldiers for training. It was easy enough to assign those with recognised certificates in English or those who were completely illiterate but in between those two groups there was a number who were literate in varying degrees. To fit these men effectively into training schemes it was necessary to find out reasonably accurately the level of their attainment in English. From the beginning I used a Free Essay **(2)** type test to make this assessment. I scored these essays on general impressions as most school teachers do. After some time I began to be aware of the dangers of this kind of subjective evaluation — I think I had read Ballard **(3)** — and began to seek for a more objective method. I evolved something resembling the Performance Inventory which follows a little later on.

More than 30 years later I took up this train of thought again. I had instigated the setting up of a large scale Comparison Trial **(4)** between two methods **(5)** of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (T.E.F.L.) in The Gambia in West Africa. One of these methods involved the use of a form of Simplified Spelling. I was, arrogantly enough, not very happy with current modes of assessment which I felt had many weaknesses and so I set about recreating and modifying the objective tests **(6)** I had used many years before.

I drew up a schedule which I sent off to Professor Laurence Kasdon (Ferkauf Graduate College, New York) for his advice. In the course of our correspondence Prof. Kasdon made several suggestions which were incorporated into the Inventory. Later other modifications were made during consultations with the West African Examinations Council.

The West African Examinations Council had this to say about the Tests in the final report of the trial **(7)**. "A *free-essay* test was used. It was believed that for testing English at this rather low level, a 'free essay' test in which children could write on whatever they liked, has important advantages to recommend its use, in preference to the objective (multiple-choice) type test. It is believed that the free-essay reveals the child's real knowledge of the language — he is not unduly stimulated or adversely inhibited or constricted by problematic linguistic materials that the examiner may unwittingly include in a questionnaire or multiple-choice type of test. Besides, it is easy to administer, even a non-literate may supervise **(8)**. But perhaps more importantly, the usual difficulties associated with the scoring of essay tests are almost completely obviated by the use of a scoring schedule which a relatively unskilled clerical worker can handle since it involves largely very simple, if sometimes tedious, counts and calculations. And although quite highly skilled personnel are needed to make the evaluation, they arrive at the task fresh and unbedevilled by having had to make the initial counts and calculations.

"For the purposes of a comparative evaluation a list of forty-nine variables had originally been proposed, grouped into five categories — essay, kinds of words, sentences, punctuation and general. These were finally pruned down to produce the list (in the Inventory).

"The variables under essay are believed to be a valid measure of verbal fluency; those under kinds of words are taken as indicators of relative sophistication of vocabulary, while those under sentences are measures of overall maturity of language. In general, all the variables are believed to contribute to the assessment of a pupil's proficiency in English as a Second Foreign language."

I as inventor should at this point emphasise that no norms have been established for this kind of test and I am doubtful if a 'norm of universal validity could be established. There are so many factors (age, environment, years at school, etc.) which would have to be considered. It should however be possible to establish local norms for areas such as U.S.A., Great Britain, West Africa and similar territories.

However the inventory, as it is now, is quite suitable for comparing objectively several groups of learners or, indeed, also for establishing objectively the relative position of single learners inside a group.

(1) The learning, teaching or study of English as a Foreign Language.
(2) Free Essay tests are essay tests in which no subject for the essay is set by the examiner and in which the learner may choose his own subject.
(3) Ballard, P.B., *The New Examiner*. Univ. of London Press, London, 1946.
(4) A comparison trial is one in which usually two or more groups of learners have their scores as groups compared.
(5) Taylor, A., *New Nation English*. Nelson, London, 1963. Insley, N. and O'Halloran, G., *Dynamic English.* Pitman, London, 1969.
(6) An objective test is an examination whose results are not influenced by anything except the testee's knowledge.
(7) Osanyimbi, J. et al. *Evaluating The Dynamic English Programme*. S.S.S. Conference, London, 1975. Photocopies available at £1.00 ($2.50) including postage.
(8) Especially important in a country where distances are great, personnel scanty and schools far between each other.

NOTE TO FUTURE CONTRIBUTORS
To help future contributors who may wish to present phonetic material and who do not have the I.P.A. characters on their typewriters we provide [**in article 5**] equivalents to I.P.A. in the form of the 1948 version of New Spelling. We have chosen the 1948 New Spelling because it uses only the characters of the normal keyboard and because other available similar scripts are not closely phonetic and need the use of diacritical marks to make them so.

O'HALLORAN PERFORMANCE INVENTORY FOR E.F.L.
(Version Agreed with W.A.E.C. (1)) This is a suggested check list or inventory for evaluating the performance of children or groups of children in the use of English. This list is related to a Free Essay type of Timed Test. Only items which may be counted objectively are included. No assessments of the literary merits of the composition are made with this test.
A. *Essay*
1. Average length in words of essays.
2. Length in words of longest essay.
*3. Percentage of essays with more than ___ words.
**4. Percentage of essays with less than ___ words.
5. Average number of different words per essay.
6. Greatest number of different words per essay.
*7. Percentage of essays with more than ___ different words.
**8. Percentage of essays with less than ___ different words.

B. *Kinds of words*
9. Average number of substantives (nouns, pronouns) per essay.
10. Average number of descriptives (adjectives, adverbs) per essay.
11. Average number of operatives (verbs) per essay.
12. Average number of constructives (prepositions) per essay.
13. Average number of words of one syllable per essay.
14. Average number of words of two syllables per essay.
15. Average number of words of three syllables per essay.
16. Average number of words of 3+ syllables per essay.

C. *Sentences*
17. Average number of sentences per essay.
18. Average number of simple sentences per essay.
19. Average number of subordinate clauses per essay.
20. Average number of sentences with 1+ subordinate clauses.
21. Essays without any recognisable sentence.

D. *Punctuation*
22. Number of commas correctly used.
23. Number of full stops correctly used.
24. Number of question marks correctly used.
25. Number of capitals correctly used.
26. Number of commas incorrectly used.
27. Number of full stops incorrectly used.
28. Number of question marks incorrectly used.
29. Number of capitals incorrectly used.
30. Number of quotes not used where they should have been.

E. *General*
31. Number of mis-spells.
32. Number of syntactic mistakes.
33. Number of groups of words without meaning.

*The number to be inserted in the blank space in Nos. 3 and 7 is that number which is the mean of the number of words of the top 10 essays in each group.
**The number to be inserted in the blank space in Nos. 4 and 6 is that number which is the mean of the number of words in the bottom 10 essays in each group.

(1) W.A.E.C. is the abbreviation for West African Examinations Council which is the statutory examining and research body for the four West African States: Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and The Gambia.

4. THE READING & SPELLING SYMPOSIUM

To be published soon by the Simplified Spelling Society by photographic reproduction. c. 200 pages. 8¼" x 11¾" (29.5cm. x 21cm.) Price £4.00 ($10.00) including postage. Orders to Publications Secretary, London.

This book is the first major publication in recent years of the Simplified Spelling Society. It is made up of a set of 28 papers presented at the First International Conference on Reading & Spelling of the Society.

It is truly international in scope. Papers were contributed from Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, Spain, Switzerland and Africa-Nigeria and The Gambia. All of the contributors as experts in their own fields — many of them are already acknowledged as such internationally.

One important piece of new research — the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language trials in The Gambia — is described by one of the investigators, Or. John Osanyinbi, Research Controller *of* the prestigious West African Examinations Council.

The remaining papers form an interesting miscellany on written communication through time and space. There is an informative account of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics from David Seton and also an interesting proposal for extending the use of hieroglyphics in the modern world by Prof. T. Hofmann. Other nations problems in representing their speech in writing are described by Prof. Daniels (Japanese), A.R.G. Burrows (Spanish) and Rolf Landolt (German). These allow us to see by comparison how relatively unlucky English speakers are. And, of course, there are the remedies — the reformed alphabets put forward by experimental orthographers.

There are also some valuable items by teachers who have had to take more orthodox roads out of the English spelling problem by adapting their teaching methods to the language as it stands.

There are in addition several thought provoking items on various aspects of the English language and its study. This book will be of both great interest to all those concerned with the language, whether as teachers or students.

THE READING & SPELLING SYMPOSIUM — CONTENTS
[See **First Conference 1975** for the articles marked in Bold, which were published in Bulletins]

* Teaching English as a Foreign Language

5. EQUIVALENTS IN SYMBOLS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET
J. Windsor Lewis

	1948 New Spelling	International Phonetic Alphabet	Traditional Orthography
VOWELS			
1.	see	si	see
2.	sit	sɪt	sit
3.	ten	ten	ten
4.	hat	læt	hat
5.	arm	ɑm	arm
6.	got	gɒt	got
7.	sau	sɔ	saw
8.	poot	pʊt	put
9.	tuu	tu	too
10.	kup	kʌp	cup
11.	fur	fɜ(r)	fur
12.	agoe	əgəʊ	ago
13.	paej	peɪdʒ	page
14.	hoem	həʊm	hone
15.	fiev	fɑɪv	five
16.	nou	nɑʊ	now
17.	join	dʒɔɪn	join
18.	neer	nɪə(r)	near
19.	haer	heə(r)	hair
20.	puer	pjʊə(r)	pure

	1948 New Spelling	International Phonetic Alphabet	Traditional Orthography
	CONSONANTS		
1.	pen	pen	pen
2.	bad	bæd	bad
3.	tee	ti	tea
5.	kat	læt	cat
6.	get	get	get
7.	chin	tʃɪn	chin
8.	Juun	dʒun	June
9.	faul	fɔl	fall
10.	vois	vɔɪs	voice
11.	thin	θɪn	thin
12.	dhen	ðen	then
13.	soe	səʊ	so
14.	zuu	zu	zoo
15.	ship	ʃɪp	ship
16.	vizhon	vɪʒn	vision
17.	hou	haʊ	how
18.	man	mæn	man
19.	noe	nəʊ	no
20.	sing	sɪŋ	sing
21.	leg	leg	leg
22.	red	red	red
23.	yes	jes	yes
24.	wet	wet	wet

6. BOOK REVIEWS

BIRDS: Oxford University Press, 61" x Bill Hardcover, 23 pages. An interesting book suitable for top juniors and early seniors. A sufficient number of native birds in included to provoke children into, at least, noticing them. There is a map of migrations on the inside cover.

THE RED STORY HOUSE: Oxford University Press, 61" x 81", flexible cover, 96 pages. Suitable for 9–11 year olds, and perhaps lower or backward seniors. A miscellany of stories, verse and oddments.

A SUDDEN LINE: Oxford University Press, 6½" x 8½", flexible cover, 23 pages, price 0.95p. A volume of verse which many children will enjoy; some may even learn 'by heart' some of the poems. It is, on the whole, a good selection of modern and rather older (early 1900s) material. For some schools (and parents) it is rather spoiled by the inclusion of a few words: 'ass' in the anatomical sense and 'shit' in the physical sense.

ALPHABETS FOR ENGLISH: Ed. W. Haas, Manchester University Press, 51" x Bill, €2.50. Boards, 120 pages. This is not a new book but ought to be noticed in this journal. It is made up of a first chapter by Prof. Haas on spelling and spelling reform. This is followed by a paper by Sir James Pitman with the cumbersome title 'The late Dr. Mont Follick — An Appraisal. The Assault on the Conventional Alphabets and Spelling', which is largely a plug for Pitman and i.t.a. There is an interesting account by Prof. Axel Wijk of his 'Regularised English'. Peter MacCarthy's paper on New Spelling is well worth the price of the book alone. His piece on the G.B. Shaw alphabet (which was composed by the late Kingsley Read) will satisfy a kind of nostalgia for older days. It is also a scholarly piece of work. I wonder why every alphabeteer puts the Gettysburg address into his system? There is a short index.

PHONOGRAPHIC TRANSLATION: W. Haas, Manchester University Press, 5½" x 8¾", c.100 pages, Board cover, good index and bibliography. This is not an easy book for those without training in phonetics but there are adequate explanations and, if one persists, it can be rewarding.

THE CASE FOR SPELLING REFORM: late Dr. Mont Follick, M.P., Manchester University Press, 51" x 81", 330 pages, board cover. A very interesting work by the man who very nearly saw spelling reform in his own lifetime. It is a mine of information for all of those interested in English spelling, its origins and curiosities. There is a great deal also of information about spelling reformers and their sometimes strange activities. Did you know, for example, that the first spelling reformer was a gentleman called Ormin who lived in the 13th century? The book, unfortunately, has no index.

(Signed reviews are welcome for future issues).

7. COMPETITION 1: The Silent Alphabet.

Almost every letter in the English alphabet is sometimes used in a situation where it is not pronounced at all, e.g. thumb. We should like our readers to send us as nearly complete a silent alphabet as they can giving one word to illustrate each silent letter. Foreign words with extensive use in English are acceptable.

Address the envelope to Competition 1. The best complete solution received will be winner. The winner's name will be published in our next number. There is a prize of £2.00 to the solution opened first. The editor's decision is final.

8. LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Syllabic /l/

The first step in simplifying the relationship between spoken and written English is to establish how the language is spoken. One aspect of pronunciation needing investigation is the phonetic contexts in which a contrast between syllabic and non-syllabic /l/ survives.

Several good dictionaries, the most recent being C.T. Onions' *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, show a contrast of syllabic and non-syllabic /l/ in the following pairs:

A	A'	B	B'
maple	papal	candle	scandal
principle	principal	little	acquittal
apple	chapel	title	vital
pabble	rebel	apostle	colossal
bible	libel	nestle	vessel
thimble	symbol	coddle	model
bugle	frugal	idle	idol
eagle	legal		

In his *English Pronouncing Dictionary* Daniel Jones recorded such a contrast as optional in Received Pronunciations for the pairs in columns *A:A'* where the contrast follows labial and velar consonants, but not for the pairs in columns *B:B'*, where alveolar consonants precede the contrast. From my own observations I cannot confirm the existence of any spoken English in which the word pairs in columns *B:B'* fail to rime. I should like to hear from anybody who has observed a contrast in these pairs.

Edward Smith, Beckenham, Kent.

9. ASSISTANCE TO SPELLING VIA PRONUNCIATION
by Ralph Cropper

When two items are not aligned and we want to bring them into harmony, it is as well to look at both items to see what can be done. We are interested in spelling reform because spelling is out of harmony with speech. Looked at the other way, this means that speech is out of line with spelling and ought to be re-examined on this basis.

We know that speech is the more ancient of the two aspects of communication. Speech is more elusive and variable. It is complicated by the variations of dialects and the numerous changes which are constantly proceeding, even to the extent of the creation of new dialects or languages. Until recent years, there was no permanent record of speech, whereas the very nature of spelling is that it is immediately set down on the permanent record. Speech is part and parcel of our human nature and existence. Many of us are scarcely aware exactly how we make our speech sounds and how satisfactorily we get our speech over to the listeners. Moreover, we are usually very touchy on being checked or corrected on any item of enunciation; this takes on the nature of an affront, because speech is regarded as being so intensely individual and something which is both our inherent birthright and personal prerogative.

These are some of the inherent difficulties in approaching any attempt at reform of speech. But they do not deny that the problem ought to be looked at and this, in my view, is within the scope of this Society. My objective is to get spelling as closely in line with speech as is achievable. So far as speech can be reformed, this makes the problem of spelling reform less immense.

One of the important purposes of spelling is to guide us on pronunciation. There ought not to be any need for dictionaries to have to give guidance on pronunciation. Therefore, when we can, why do we not attempt to pronounce the words as they are spelled. Maybe there is only limited scope for progress in this direction, but every step helps. I have always been a pragmatist on the problems of language, keen to make small improvements when they can be achieved, but always keeping in mind the long inheritance and tradition of the English language and the views of the public generally.

In many ways, I do not mind which words we 'play with' in attempting some modest steps for corrected pronunciation. Frequently, when pronunciation is out of line with spelling, this is due merely to slovenly speaking, because we are too lazy to form all the sounds which are required for that word. We all want to speak quickly, and so elision, particularly of consonants, occurs. The medial 'T' is a frequent sufferer, because it requires a very sharp movement of the tongue in the middle of the word, which must tend to slow down the speed of the speaker.

Whilst there is little hope of getting all the medial 'T's pronounced (a course which in any case would be undesirable for many other reasons), I suggest that the word 'often' provides a useful example. Many speakers still pronounce the 'T'; it can fairly be contended that those who do not are just being lazy. Where there is any alternative, let us pronounce in the way of the spelling. The same principle might well be extended to parallel words, such as 'listen', 'soften', 'hasten', even though the 'T' is more frequently dropped. With each such word where we succeed on pronunciation, the task of spelling reform is made easier.

The acme of absurdity with pronunciation is with certain names. There is the wine where the adverts go on to declare: 'pronounced … … '. What an enormous waste of time and effort. These manufacturers should be laughed out of court. They have the option of allowing the pronunciation in accordance with the spelling, or changing the spelling. I suggest that if we desire that kind of

wine, we should boldly insist on asking for it as Cockburns. When I have done this, I have been castigated as an ignoramus, but we should have the courage to persevere.

Then there is the story of Lord Chalmondley. When the plumber arrived asking for Lord Chalmondley, the butler haughtily replied: "Lord Chalmondley, pronounced CHUMLEY, is in; who shall I say desires to see him?" The reply came: "Tell him Mr Bottomly, pronounced BUMLEY, wants to do his pipes. After all, Chumley is no more than the lazy speech form of Chalmondley, spoken too quickly.

There are many town names where only a small change in pronunciation would help towards alignment with spelling. It is the cockney vowel sound which accounts for the current mispronunciation of 'Lundern'. The first vowel is more frequently misformed than the second. But is there any reason why we should not say 'London'?

Another frequent lost letter is 'W', which again requires the lips to be brought forward and so becomes a bother in the middle of a word. Thus people slide over the sound and it becomes the accepted practice to lose it completely. Two examples are Woolwich, in southeast London, and Southwell in Nottinghamshire.

These are practical changes which could easily be encouraged. But I want to go on to consider whether there are any theoretical foundations for pronunciation, — indeed, to ask whether there is any rationale behind speech, in a way parallel to all the scientific logic which support the various schemes of spelling reform so skilfully produced by other members of this Society.

It is only recently that I saw the new letterhead of the Society. Amongst the list of 'former officer-holders and members', printed at the side of the notepaper, is one that agreeably surprised me: Sir Richard Paget. He has been dead for 20 years and I have no idea what part he played in the Society. He was a remarkable man, mainly known as a barrister and physicist and as chairman of a number of important commissions. But his most original contribution to knowledge lay in his investigations into the nature of language, particularly phonetics and the techniques of vocalisation.

I first met his work when browsing (of all unlikely places) through the library of an unemployed men's club in Gateshead. The book I found was his summary entitled 'This English', published 1935. His primary work entitled 'Human Speech' had been published in 1930. What has amazed me in the intervening years is that I never see his work quoted nor does anyone seem to pay heed to the discoveries which he revealed. With his name appearing on our letterhead, I feel fully justified in bringing them to your notice because I regard them as an outstanding contribution to the central problem with which we are faced, the dichotomy between spelling and speech.

His contribution has been summarised as the theory of the pantomimic action of tongue and lips. He provides the explanation of speech as being basically gestural, with the mouth as the actor, instead of hands and other parts of the body. We all make use of gesture at certain times. It can, indeed, be developed into a full scheme of communication, as sign language. The signs used tend to become formalised, but they are fundamentally based on the appropriate gesture for the idea involved. The mouth, says Paget, follows a very similar pattern of formalised signs, using lips, tongue and other parts of the mouth.

As such, there is no emission of sound. Proof that sound is not the first essential of speech is shown by the facility of lip-reading, which is reasonably capable of attainment for those who persevere. However, the benefit of adding phonation to the mouth movements is that we no longer need to use our eyes to watch the lips, but can use our ears which offers far greater scope for flexibility of positioning.

Paget made a close study of the exact movements performed within the mouth and was able to correlate them with appropriate gestures in an astonishing number of instances. He also minutely examined many sign languages throughout the world, both of the deaf and dumb as well as primitive tribes, and was able to show how the gestures and symbols adopted in these sign languages offer a close parallel with the mouth gestures used in many spoken languages.
I have not seen his theories contradicted, nor replaced by any more convincing theory, to explain the nature of speech sounds and their endurance in language. If his views are sound, then I would submit that there cannot be any satisfactory presentation of a scheme for spelling reform which does not continue to reflect the gestural activity within the mouth upon which those words rest.

One of the troubles about any thorough-going scheme of spelling reform, however skilful and refined it may be at todays date, is that it assumes that speech and pronunciation are going to remain constant in the future. With all the pulls in English from many parts of the world, it is more than likely that speech and the pronunciation of words will change considerably over the coming years. So that is another reason why we should all endeavour to undertake spelling reform in reverse, whenever we can, in order to encourage the closest parallelism between speech and spelling. In addition, assuming the introduction of some scheme of spelling reform, whether limited or comprehensive, there is a much greater likelihood of the sounds remaining in line with spelling if the mouth gestures which underlie each and every word are carefully preserved in any such scheme. That is the importance of the contribution made by Sir Richard Paget.

I have a final point to submit, a particular bete-noir of my own. I did put the point to the President and he felt it was outside the scope of this Society. However, if our purpose is to link spelling with speech so that in speaking we reflect the written form, then I think my odd point is within our ambit. I refer to the use of 'Esq' in the written form of address so often used when writing to men. We never say 'Esq' or 'esquire'; those who persist in writing to men in this way should be prepared to speak in the same form. I hope that some of those present will join me in protesting against this archaic form which does not conform with the way we speak. It is spelling reform in reverse.

SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Our **Second International Conference** is planned for the last full week in August 1977. Last year's Conference was highly successful. We now invite all those who wish to do so to send us advanced notification of presenting papers at the 1977 Conference — either to be read or tabled. Please write to the Education Secretary.