

Crossed Wires

A light hearted look at language

Phracted Phraseology

Reader **Graham F Norman** asks:

- * A man leaps over a cliff – would he be jumping to a conclusion?
- * Does a person being hung get a suspended sentence?
- * Is a hirsute ceramics worker a hairy potter?
- * Do spiders have websites?

Thanks Graham – something to make us think.

WordPic

Can you tell the word depicted by these pictures? It's something you use all the time.



Wrap Up

Reader **M Gray** has come with an interesting style of portmanteau which we call the Overcoat. The outside letters are taken from a phrase to make a word.

Johnny Cash becomes **Josh**, **Hugh Jackman** is **Human** and **Brad Pitt** is a **Britt**. We came up with **Jude Law** – **Jaw** and **Helen Morse** – **Horse**.

Can you come up with some overcoat words from famous names?

Finny Business

The longest palindrome in any language is **saippuakivikauppias**. It's Finnish and means 'soapstone seller'.

Which was Shot?

A duel was once fought by two men named respectively **Shott** and **Nott**. **Nott** was shot and **Shott** was not. In this case it is better to be **Shott** than **Nott**. There was a rumour that **Nott** was not shot, and **Shott** avows that he shot **Nott**, which proves either that the shot **Shott** shot at **Nott** was not shot, or that **Nott** was shot notwithstanding.

Circumstantial evidence is not always good; It may be made to appear on trial that the shot **Shott** shot, shot **Nott** or as accidents with firearms are frequent, it may be possible that the shot **Shott** shot, shot **Shott** himself.

When the whole affair would resolve itself into its original elements, and **Nott** would be not. We think however, that the shot **Shott** shot, shot not **Shott**, but **Nott**. Anyway it was hard to tell who was shot.

Sent in by M Munro of Bentley WA, this was found in her father's autograph book. He died in 1927, so it is fairly old.



What am I?

Here's one from down on the farm.



Two Hookers
Two Lookers
Four Dilly-danders
Four Up-standers
And One Wigwag
What am I?

The Biggest and Best

Elephants are considered to be one of the noblest creatures. Back in the 1C BC, Roman statesman Cicero recognised that elephants had a fellowship with the human race.

The name **elephant** comes from the Greek *elephas* meaning 'ivory'.

Now there are only two species, the African and the Indian but two other species that are extinct are the mammoth and the mastodon.

There are several expressions involving elephants. A **white elephant** means a troublesome possession and dates from 1851. It came from the practice of the King of Siam showing his disfavour of a courtier by giving him care of one of the sacred albino elephants, a high honour, but ruinously expensive.

Seeing **pink elephants** is a euphemism for hallucinations of the type experienced by people who are drunk.

The **elephant in the room** means the truth that is being ignored.

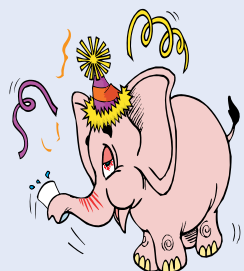
An elephant never forgets refers to the elephant's good memory and an **elephant's graveyard** is a metaphor for the position in life where one has basically reached the end.

"One morning I shot an elephant in my pyjamas. How he got into my pyjamas I'll never know."

Comedian, Groucho Marx

"They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance." **General John B. Sedgwick's last words, 1864**

"I have a face like the behind of an elephant." **Actor, Charles Laughton**



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