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DISCOVERING WORDS ON MONDAYS MAY 19th – “BUILDINGS” THEME

The aim of this record is to help you to follow up any points of interest. The order of what we discussed has been changed to make it easier to follow.

BUILDING - c. 1300, "a structure;" late 14c., "act or process of constructing"; noun from verb **BUILD** derived from **Middle English** *bilden*, from late **Old English** *byldan* "construct a house," verb form of *bold* "house," from Proto-Germanic **buthla-* (source also of Old Saxon *bodl*).

EDIFICE – a building, particularly a large or spectacular one. Derived via Old French "*edifice*" and Latin "*aedificium*" meaning "building", from *aedificāre* "to build, establish" – hence also English *edify*.

ORIGINS OF RANGE OF TERMS

HOVEL: small miserable dwelling. Orig. conical building with kiln, or (14th C) an animal shed with smoke vent.

HUT: a small building, French *hutte*, 16th C, German "hutte".

SHACK: N. American but now British also. A rough cabin or hut. Origin prob, Central American Mexican Indian "jacal" or Aztec "xacatl". "Radio shack" known in WW1. "Shack up" known by 1935. (Aztec words in English: avocado, tomato, chilli, chocolate, coyote, ocelot, cacao, chipotle, guacamole.)

SHED: a one-storey structure usually of wood for storage or animals. Industrial meaning can be larger e.g. finishing shed or agricultural e.g. shearing shed. Late 15th C as variant of "shadde", possibly meaning "shade". (Shed as verb, e.g. shed skin or blood is unrelated).

CABIN: Mid 14th C. Small house, prob. rudely built. Old French "cabane" from late Latin "cabanna". Room on board a ship from 14th C. "Cabin fever" is WW1, found earlier but with meaning of a physical illness. Diminutive form "cabinet" leads on to a dedicated room and ultimately to "The Cabinet" as in government.

COTTAGE: dwelling of cottars or serfs. Obsolete form "cot".

HOUSE: All Germanic langs. From around 11th C to mean family (House of..). Also divisions of a school/ a theatre space/ a religious order/ an astrological sign.

FORT/FORTRESS: military stronghold. The latter seems to be larger.

BASTION: (a projection of a rampart) used figuratively to mean a foundation or defence, e.g. "a bastion of the justice system".

MANSION: Latin "mansio" a Roman hotel. Had notion of being temporary e.g. "manse" for a religious minister's duration. Later any large or stately house. "Manor" strictly house and grounds together, but used informally for building alone.

PALACE: official residence of king or bishop. French "palais" ultimately from Latin "palatium", itself from Mons Palatinus, one of the hills of Rome. In Norman England Palatine counties (Cheshire, Durham, Lancashire) had devolved powers from the palace to deal with border issues.

PENTHOUSE: from "pentis"/"pentize" a shed with pendant or sloping roof. Bethlehem stable was sometimes called a penthouse, No notion of luxury until c. 1921 when used to advertise apartments on top of skyscrapers.

RELATED TO RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

ATRIUM - from ater, the Latin for black – specifically a matt or charcoal black. Niger referred to glossy black, as seen in the pupil of the eye. In an ancient-Roman house it referred to an entrance hall or court that usually had an open fire to welcome visitors, the smoke from which turned the walls and ceiling black. Its meaning today is almost the opposite: a large central hall in a modern building, often rising through several stories, and having a glazed roof that allows daylight to flood in.

NAVE - the long, high, central part of a church or abbey, from the west front to the transepts and choir. It's the part of the church occupied by the congregation or laity. Nave comes from the Latin navis, meaning ship – an early Christian symbol for the Church as a whole. It was originally applied to the common part of a basilica; the chancel was reserved for the clergy. The nave and chancel were formerly divided by a wood or stone rood screen, but most of these were destroyed by the Puritans. The word chancel is from the Latin cancellus, meaning lattice, and referring to this dividing screen. The longest nave in England is at Winchester Cathedral, 170m = 560ft. The longest nave in Europe is at the Basilica de la Santa Cruz (Holy Cross) near Madrid, 262m = 860ft but divided up so that it does not exceed the 91m = 300ft nave of St. Peter's in The Vatican

AMBULATORY - the covered passage around usually the four sides of a cloister. From the Latin ambulatorium meaning walking place. It can also refer to the accessible circuit around the east end of a large church, behind the high altar. The first 11th-century ambulatories were in France but were features of many English cathedrals by the 1200s. They were introduced partly to give monks and clergy a covered pathway to walk and exercise in all weathers.

COMPREHENSIVE GLOSSARY OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION METHODS ON ENGLISH FARMS IN THE PAST (with illustrations)

<https://www.henhamhistory.org/app/uploads/2020/12/CompleteGlossary-1.pdf>

Many of these names seem to have evolved in different agricultural regions.

EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING

BARN - From Middle English bern, meaning “barley house.” A building for the storage and processing of grain crops, and for housing straw and occasionally livestock and their fodder.

BASTLE - Fortified house of two or three storeys, the lower floor being used to house animals and the upper for domestic use. Examples are concentrated in Cumberland and Northumberland, and extend southwards into the North Pennines.

BERCERIES (sheep houses)

Medieval name for sheep houses – shelters provided for sheep usually in areas of grazing away from the farmstead (link to French BERCEUSE – shepherdess).

BYRE - Dialect term for cowhouse, commonly used in Yorkshire and the North East.

BYRE HOUSE - This is a term used to describe farmsteads in and around the North Pennines which provided domestic accommodation over cattle, like the much earlier bastle houses. They date from the later 18th and early 19th centuries and have much larger window openings and thinner walls than bastles.

COB - A term used for earth-walled buildings in the south and west of England. Cob buildings are heavily concentrated in Devon and Dorset and are also found in Wiltshire and Hampshire.

GRANARY - A building or room for storing grain after it has been threshed and winnowed in the barn.

Most granaries are of late 18th and 19th century date, the need for more storage for grain often coinciding with the necessity for more cart and implement space at a time when commercial farming and markets were expanding and more implements introduced on farms. Pre-1750 examples are of great rarity.

Granaries are usually at first-floor level to prevent rodents and damp damaging the grain. Complete granary interiors, with plaster walls and wooden partitioning to grain bins, are very rare.

GRANGE - A farmstead belonging to and run by a monastic house.

HEMMELS - Small open-fronted cattle shelters with their own yards, mostly found in the North East.

HOVEL - A dialect term for cow house, formerly common in parts of the Midlands and central southern England.

LONGHOUSE - A building that housed humans and cattle under one roof and in which there was direct access from the accommodation into the cow house (byre or shippon). The byre or shippon was always built down-slope from the accommodation.

POULTIGGERY - A building combining a pigsty at ground level with a poultry house in a loft over.

EXAMPLES OF BUILDING METHODS

CRUCK - one of a pair of naturally curved timbers forming one of several rigid arched frames supporting the roof of a cottage or farm building.

DAUB - A mixture of clay and straw applied to wattle infill of timber-framing to make a wall

MUD AND STUD - Earth walling which uses an inner core of timber stud walling. It is found in parts of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. Many examples of this walling technique may survive behind later brick skins.

QUOIN - The stones or brickwork set at the corner (COIN French for corner) of a building. Where poor quality building stone was used it was difficult to form corners to a building so the quoins would be made out of bricks or a better quality stone that could be worked square.

WATTLE - An interwoven panel usually made from hazel used to infill timber framing. Wattle could be covered in daub or left uncovered if more ventilation was required.

URBAN WALL COVERINGS

STUCCO - Recorded from 1590s, in reference to a fine plaster used as a wall coating, from Italian *stucco*, which probably is from a Germanic source (compare Old Saxon *stukki*, Old English *stycce* "a piece," Old High German *stukki* "crust, piece, fragment," German *Stück* "a piece, patch"). From 18c. in reference to a coarser plaster used mainly for rough work and exteriors. The verb, "apply stucco to, cover with stucco" is attested from 1726.

PARGETING - Recorded in 14th Century: from Old French *pargeter* to throw over, from *par* per- + *geter*, from Medieval Latin *jactāre* to throw. The ornamentation of plastered and rendered building facades that would otherwise be smooth, lined-out or roughcast. The term was once also used to include internal decoration. Pargeting ranges from simple geometric surface patterning to exuberant sculptural relief of figures, flowers and sea monsters, but it is only skin deep, applied onto masonry or a lathed, timber-framed wall.

THE HISTORY OF PARGETING - English plasterwork became increasingly elaborate in the 16th century and the dramatic external decoration of Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace (1538) was contemporary with early plaster friezes in the great houses. Some of the most opulent pargeting was produced over the next 150 years with a high point around 1660 (for example, Ancient House, Ipswich, and the Sun Inn, Saffron Walden), then the technique began to fall out of fashion.



In the last decades of the 19th century architects like Norman Shaw became interested in the 'arts and crafts' skills of an earlier age and there was a revival of interest in pargeting. But it was more controlled, precise and scholarly, better suited to more regular buildings.

East Anglia is the traditional home of pargeting, but it can also be seen in Kent and is documented as far away as York and the West Country. There was plenty of pargeting in London before the 1666 Fire. Neglect, redevelopment, fire and changing taste are the main enemies of pargeting which may simply survive in East Anglia because of a slower rate of change and less industrialisation.

WEIRD WORDS ONLY ARCHITECTS USE (in title of several online sites)

HUNKY PUNK - grotesque carving on the side of a building, especially Late Gothic churches. Such features are particularly numerous in Somerset. Though similar in appearance to a gargoyle, a hunky punk is purely decorative, with no other functional purpose. The phrase 'hunky punk' is thought to be derived from the Old English word **'hunker'**, meaning squatting on haunches ("hunkers"), and **'punchy'** describing short, squat legs and a thick body.

This means it is not derived from "punk", an adjective meaning "worthless" in the 19c or "rotten" in the 16c, nor a noun meaning "prostitute, harlot, strumpet," attested by 1590s, of unknown origin and by early 20c meaning a petty criminal or hoodlum – now used mostly in steam punk and punk rock(er)

CLUNCH - traditional building material of chalky limestone rock used mainly in eastern England and Normandy. Pale stone clunch may be used with dark flint to create a checkerboard pattern on the walls of churches.

BUNGAROOSH - a composite building material used almost exclusively in the English seaside resort of Brighton, the neighbouring town of Hove and in the coastal Sussex area. The etymology of the word is unknown. Its use dates from the start of the Regency period at the end of the 18th century, and into the 19th when Brighton grew from a fishing village into a large town.

Bungaroosh was strong and easy to use with cheap, readily available local materials such as gravel, coarse sand, brick fragments, flint, pebbles and cobblestones, held together with hydraulic lime used to form a mortar. Bungaroosh pre-dated cement-based concrete and was constructed by pouring between shuttering, often made of railway sleepers. To give the bungaroosh strength, timber would be inserted into the wall which also enabled fixings. The bungaroosh was rendered with stucco or plaster to stop erosion and possibly improve its appearance.

RIPRAP - refers to piles of angular rock and rubble placed along mainly coastal areas to protect them from erosion by dissipating the force of the waves. It was recorded in 1822 as American English, perhaps connected with an earlier nautical word *rip-rap* meaning "stretch of rippling water", often caused by an irregular underwater surface.

GROYNES - wood or rock structures built perpendicular to the shoreline, primarily to control the longshore sideways drift of e.g. sand along the coast and beach erosion. They work by trapping sediment and reducing wave energy. Term recorded in 1580s, perhaps from obsolete *groin* "pig's snout" (c. 1300; the wall so called because it was thought to look like one), from Old French *groin* "muzzle, snout; promontory, jutting part," from Latin *grunnire* "to grunt" (compare English colloquial *grunter* "a pig").

GABION - (from Italian *gabbione* meaning "big cage"; from Italian *gabbia* and Latin *cavea* meaning "cage") is a cage, cylinder or box filled with rocks, concrete, or sometimes sand and soil for use in civil engineering, road building, military applications and landscaping. They are stacked up to form retaining walls on banks and slopes, and prevent erosion.

MANY BUILDING – RELATED IDIOMS

house of cards	lay the foundations
build bridges	hit the nail on the head
castles in the air	to be the cornerstone
hit the roof	from pillar to post
raise the roof	bring the house down
darken the door	bet the house
get in on the ground floor	ivory tower

EXPANDED EXAMPLES:

LIVING IN AN IVORY TOWER – “A state of privileged seclusion or separation from the facts and practicalities of the real world”.

The earliest-known use of the term “ivory tower” can be found in Biblical sources. The **Song of Songs**, also known as the Song of Solomon, features the phrase “Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon”.

The **Greek word for ivory and for elephant was *elephas***, probably from a non-Indo-European language, likely via Phoenician (compare Hamitic *elu* "elephant," source of the word for it in many Semitic languages).

Elephas played upon the word meaning to cheat or deceive (*elephairo*).

“Ivory seems classically to have been associated with the notion of fantasy, illusion, if not delusion.”

Basically, it’s a beautiful but impractical substance for a building – valuable because relatively scarce, used for ornaments.

“The artist deceives you, takes you away from the real, but that was not necessarily considered a bad thing,” Steven Shapin, a historian of science at Harvard University, explains in a paper on the phrase’s origins. He believes the Biblical usage of the word came to inspire **the modern phrase “ivory tower”, which truly took off in the early 19th century when it started to be used by several French Romantic thinkers.** In 1837, for example, **Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve wrote a poem that mocked another French poet, Alfred de Vigny**, for becoming too aloof and retiring to his grand estate in Angoulême where he wrote self-reflective poems, totally divorced from the outside

world. The poem reads: “And Vigny, more discreet, As if in his ivory tower, retired before noon.”

This poetic use of “*tour d'ivoire*” may have been an allusion to the rook (or castle) in chess, which is another meaning of the French word *tour*.

The phrase became increasingly more common in the French and English-speaking world, to describe self-obsessed poets and artists who had become impractical dreamers.

By the second half of the 20th century, the term “ivory tower” was associated with the worlds of academia, universities, and scientists. The phrase was essentially an insult thrown at academics to describe how they had become disengaged from the public, too concerned about lofty theories that have little relation to the everyday lives of people. Composers and urban planners have been accused of working in “ivory towers”. This charge could also be applied to “privileged” politicians and civil servants.

There has been a backlash. Sinclair Lewis, Nobel Prize-winning novelist argued that people should be allowed to work in ivory towers away from the world and its cares, where they could think creatively and produce literature, verse, mathematical formulae or whatever they wished. E.M Forster held a similar view.

IVORY TOWER ACTUALLY EXISTS.

Located in Antarctica; it is a small peak rising to about 2600 feet above sea level, between the Harold Byrd Mountains and Bender Mountain. It is so named because the composition of the peak is nearly all white marble, but it is not the origin of the idiom!



BUILDING CASTLES IN THE AIR

To create dreams, hopes, or plans that are impossible, unrealistic, or have very little chance of succeeding.

The idea of *building castles in the air* may go back as far as St. Augustine, who lived 354-430. He created the metaphor which translates from Latin as to build on air with no foundation.

The idiom *building castles in the air* first appeared in the 1500s, as a translation from the French. However, the original French idiom was “*châteaux en Espagne*” - *castles in Spain*. The first translation of the phrase into English came from a work of French poetry known as *Roman de la Rose*, translated in the mid-1300s: “Thou shalt make castles than in Spaine, And dreame of joy, all but in vaine ...” This poem is a treatise on desire, romantic ideas and romantic love.

The idiom *building castles in Spain* was well known at this time to mean **something that is impossible to accomplish. Spain, held by the Moors, was an impenetrable force to the French**, and not a place one could conquer and build a castle in. By the 1500s the reference to *building castles in Spain* was no longer understood, and fresh translations of the *Roman de la Rose* used the idiom *building castles in the air*, instead.

Many practical people believe that *building castles in the air* is a waste of time, though not everyone feels that way. Henry David Thoreau said: “If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.” However, if an idea that one has conceived is brought to fruition, it is no longer a case of *building castles in the air*. Henry David Thoreau was an essayist and poet, a literary philosopher who famously retreated to life in the woods in order to find inspiration in the natural world. Thoreau built a cabin on Walden Pond and concentrated on his dreams and writings.