



The Horologicon: A Day's Jaunt Through the Lost Words of the English Language

Mark Forsyth

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The Horologicon (or book of hours) gives you the most extraordinary words in the English language, arranged according to the hour of the day when you really need them.

Do you wake up feeling rough? Then you're *philogrobolized*. Pretending to work? That's *fudgelling*, which may lead to *rizzling* if you feel sleepy after lunch, though by dinner time you will have become a sparkling *deipnosophist*.

From Mark Forsyth, author of the bestselling *The Etymologicon*, this is a book of weird words for familiar situations. From *ante-jentacular* to *snudge* by way of *quafftide* and *wamblecropt*, at last you can say, with utter accuracy, exactly what you mean.

The Horologicon: A Day's Jaunt Through the Lost Words of the English Language Details

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From Reader Review The Horologicon: A Day's Jaunt Through the Lost Words of the English Language for online ebook

Cheryl says

Too many of the words, imo, are jargon still in use by medical and other professionals (but I imagine that's my impression, and the actual count reveals only a few).

I do know that too many never were known, and are too long to have ever been in common use. I was hoping for more words simply archaic, and not truly 'lost.' And many of the lost words are synonyms for better words we have now.

That being said:

Scuddle - to run with a kind of affected haste or precipitation.

Fisk - to run about hastily and heedlessly.

(Do you want to accuse your colleague of scuddling, or would it be kinder to say she's just fisking?)

Guttle - to eat greedily, companion to 'guzzle.'

Nullibiquitous - existing nowhere, companion to 'ubiquitous.'

"What I tell you three times is true," is apparently from The Hunting of the Snark... I should already know that but I don't, so I'll have to check.

(Pratchett fans, look up the Codex Gigas, a real-life big scary book.)

Kim says

Mark Forsyth has given us several entertaining books about words, reading, drunkenness, and turning a phrase. He's a committed fan of dictionaries and this book digs deeply into wonderful words, going even beyond the Oxford English Dictionary into old studies of dialects and specialized books on jargon used in some professions.

It's the type of book that might best be taken in small bites to learn and take notes, but Forsyth is an interesting enough writer to keep the book entertaining for an end-to-end gulp. To maintain a theme he has divided a day into several parts to collect words into topics like mornings, work, meals, evening entertainments, to bedtime.

Many of these words seem like they'd be incredibly useful even today. Take "Uhtceare" (oot-kee-ar-uh) as an example. Uht is an old word meaning the twilight before dawn, and ceare is a word for cares and sorrow. So now you have a word for that mind-wandering restlessness one does while in bed before the sun rises. If you are a person who manages to be cheerful when waking up, even before coffee, you are "matutinal", a useful word for people who, for me, can be quite irritating.

Every page is filled with words like this, pulled along with humor by the author. It can almost be

overwhelming at times, and I may run through the book again just to make notes on the ones worth making a permanent part of my own vocabulary. It's a great book for any writer or reader who loves finding a new word while reading.

Bob Hartley says

I went against Forsyth's suggestion and read this front-to-back, so the only hour I was reading at the appointed time was midnight, when I finished it. I don't care that it's a newspaper endorsed bestseller because the culture sections are heavily opinionated (in the Guardian the report about the new out-of-town wing of the Louvre said it was a mistake) and I don't read them. I also can't be arsed to review it using obscure words because I'm going to bed soon and it's gimmicky.

That's the ungimmicky thing with Forsyth though; instead of compiling words and making a book too painstaking to bother with, he comes up with nice themes that are only loosely related to the subject. Obscure words are obsolete given time, so the theme here is times of day. I can't remember all the words, maybe two or three, but there's a glossary in the back if I want to look them up again. It's like he's thought of everything; he even apologises to equatorialists for assuming the average reader lives in the northern hemisphere, where the sun's always in the south and therefore moves clockwise.

A good follow-up to Etymologicon. He didn't fuck up.

Jo Bennie says

A thoroughly entertaining romp through rare and obsolete words that are appropriate for different times of the day. Forsyth arranges his 19 chapters chronologically from waking to turning in for the night, taking the reader from 6am to 12 midnight, from dawn, dressing, breakfast and commute through work, lunch and procrastination to tea time, food shopping, going out and returning home to bed. This book was to me a delight, light and witty in tone but erudite in knowledge. Forsyth readably conveys his passion for words that beautifully express more exactly our daily mundane experiences. Thanks to him I can now confidently forecast that post Christmas lunch my husband will pass out wamble crompt on the sofa, a word that perfectly rolls in the mounth to onomatopoeically speak of overindulgence and concomitant lethargy.

Kris says

I love Forsyth's other books, but this one didn't quite hit the mark for me. It felt like it was trying too hard. The last third of the book is definitely the most entertaining, and it did introduce me to the term "wonderwench", which is now the only form of address that I will respond to, so it was worth it. Lovers of words should still read this, but if you are strapped for time, stick with his other two books.

Bettie? says

[Review Here](#)

James says

Mr Forsyth does it again. If you liked the *Etymologicon*, or you're just the kind of person who likes tons of out of use or foreign words for everyday things, liberally sprinkled with dry British wit and jokes about being drunk or going to the toilet, then this is the book for you.

Whereas the *Etymologicon* was a roundabout trip through a sequence of words, each one linking to the next. This is the *Horologicon*: the book of hours. Each chapter is dedicated to an hour in the life of the mythical, idealised, reader – from the crack of dawn at 6am, through to finally falling asleep at midnight. And, each chapter provides an array of useful words to meet any potential occasion in that hour. Forsyth isn't quite sure if the reader is a man or a woman, single or married, etc. so he tries to cover as many bases as possible. Especially a number of the baser bases – there's an entire appendix of words and phrases to describe being drunk for example.

The book's advice is to not read it cover to cover, but instead to treat it as a reference work and read only the chapter relevant to the hour of the day that you find yourself in, and there are some strong warnings as to what might befall the brave reader who ignores the warning. But, in the interest of science, this review, my reading challenge target, and the fact that I was loving it I read on fearlessly. So far there have been no suicides, or gun rampages and only a little crazed nudity.

The only real problem I ever have with books of this nature is having read through laughing, and willing myself to remember the words I like the most, I generally find myself just about remembering that there was a word for the situation I find myself in, and that it was hilarious, but not a hint as to what the word was. The only one which has stuck with me though is: Dysania – an extreme difficulty in waking up and getting out of bed. It's a proper medical condition, not just laziness!

^ says

Here is a book subtitled “**A Day’s Jaunt Through the Lost Words of the English Language**”; a “*papery child of the Inky Fool blog*” (2009) (<http://blog.inkyfool.com>). In 2016, this is a book which might well be thought to be looking for a selling point in 2016. The author emphatically and unsurprisingly recommends a carefully considered reading of his book of weird words for unusual situations, one ‘day’ at a time. Of course he’s right, his aim is to quomodocunquize (make a living).

Initially, a swift scanning of the pages by eye bypassed my brain and speedily rendered me into a state akin to hapless confusion as to its purpose. Who needs a book of obsolete English words? Isn’t our vast current everyday lexicon of British English, American English, Indian English, Australian English, Canadian English, NZ English, Caribbean English, etc, words more than perfectly adequate?

When delicately savoured, like a gastronomic treat of fresh lobster, this is a fascinating book. Even should those you converse with lose your thread, they surely cannot fail to be impressed by your deipnosophistry. Words which have gone out of usage do so for good reason, don’t they?

Forsyth draws attention to *Bellibone n.* “A woman excelling in both beauty and goodness”: as defined by Dr

Johnson. The OED observes that the word “*Bellibone*” was last used in 1586. I speculated that maybe now the time is ripe to apply “*Bellibone*” to the ridiculously dangerous Western practice of “size zero” models in the high-fashion industry.

Gratingly annoying niggles are relatively rare. One appears on the first page of this book: “*There are two reasons that these words are scattered and lost like atmic fragments.*”

.... “*atmic*”? “atomic”? “atmospheric”?

Overall, this is a collection of the compulsively unusual; to be dipped-into purposefully, as when seeking the irresistible pleasures of chain-sucking sucking aniseed balls.

Ron says

Drawn largely from the author’s The Inky Fool blog, *Horologicon* explores the varied terminology English speakers have used the last several hundred years to describe the events and things around them. The book’s title refers to the ancient practice of carrying a “book of the hours” with prayers and readings appropriate for reflect throughout the day.

Revealing some of the unique and humorous terms would spoiled the fun, besides most of us wouldn’t know how to pronounce many of the words. “Yule hole” was my favorite. That’s the last notch in one’s belt, used (hopefully) only after Christmas.

Former colonials from this side of the pond may occasionally puzzle over Forsyth’s English. As Oscar Wilde (or G. B. Shaw?) observed, we’re two nations divided by a common language.

Still, a fun read.

Kent Winward says

If you haven't read Mark Forsyth, you are missing out. His self-deprecating humor combines with linguistic reveries so that any lover of the language will relish his thoughts. I don't know if I'll be using many of the lost words in this volume in any of my writing. David Foster Wallace did in *Infinite Jest* when he brought back "eschaton" to describe the tennis academy's Armageddon game. The arcane words are thick and plentiful and if you need a reference book to keep track of ways to say someone is drunk, I can't recommend the book more highly.

Mara says

Author, Mark Forsyth, warns readers against consuming *The Horologicon: A Day's Jaunt Through the Lost Words of the English Language* start-to-finish, cautioning that:

If you do, Hell itself will hold no horrors for you, and neither the author nor his parent company will accept liability for any suicides, gun rampages or crazed nudity that may result.

However, given that the words are organized by hour of the day (hence the title), as opposed to alphabetically, this should be taken with a grain of salt. [*I read it through, and I'm fine...ish*]

I love words: learning about them, using them, reading them— and, though this wasn't my favorite volume of lexicographic delight, there are some real gems in there. Since I'm short on time, I'll just give you three terms that I hope to see (hear?) resurrected within my lifetime— they certainly seem relevant these days...

Paralipsis is the practice of mentioning that you're not mentioning something, and saying what you're not saying (p. 234).

The technical term for a dishonest politician is a **snollygoster**. Well, all right, it may not be the technical term, but it is the best one. The OED defines snollygoster as 'A shrewd, unprincipled person, esp. a politician' (p. 9).

Ultracrepidarianism is 'giving opinions on subjects that you know nothing about', and is thus a terribly useful word (p. 59).

Kim says

I loved this author's other language book, The Etymologicon, so once I heard about this one I knew I had to read it.

This is a different sort of book though and doesn't quite hit the mark. The previous book, as the title suggests, is about the origins behind words, a topic I find fascinating. I like to know why we use words the way we do and how they evolved to current standards.

This book though is less about origins, though some are included, and more about obscure and forgotten words for various things. Each chapter is linked to an hour of the day and things associated with that hour. It was a good way of tying together different words and worked well.

Overall though this book just wasn't as interesting. There were a lot of funny words but there were also a great deal of words that were just a Latin version of an ordinary word. I find those rather boring as you can take almost any word and translate it into Latin. I'm more interested in the words that sprang from other sources.

If you like language I'd still recommend this book but I think you'll have a more enjoyable time reading The Etymologicon.

Richard Newton says

Well researched, gently amusing and oddly interesting.

However, I suggest you occasionally dip in and out of the book rather than read it end to end in one go. Forsyth's humourous style of writing is fine in small doses, but if you read too much in one go I find it tends to start to irritate.

Deborah Pickstone says

An amusing look at obsolete English words set in the context of the reader's day. Almost fiction! Very readable and could be used as a reference book too. I love words and linguistics - Mark Forsyth is a very clever man!

Nikki says

Somewhat unfortunately, I read this at the same time as the new **QI** book of 1,227 facts, which included many of the words in this volume, obviously not by total coincidence. It's a fun book, though, with Mark Forsyth's humour as much as or more in evidence than in *The Etymologicon*. I don't think I'm going to remember many of these words, if any, but they are indeed satisfying and odd, and some of them are undeservedly defunct.
