

The Reverend William Archibald Spooner Spoonerisms

The Reverend William Archibald Spooner was born in London in 1844 and during a sixty year association with Oxford University, he lectured in history, philosophy and divinity, becoming Dean in 1876.

Spooner was born politically incorrect, being albino, small and with a pink face, poor eyesight and a head too large for his body.

He was a friendly and kindly man and a little absent-minded too.

He once invited a faculty member to tea "to welcome our new archaeology Fellow."

"But, sir," the man replied, "I am our new archaeology Fellow."

"Never mind," Spooner said. "Come all the same."

It was after one of his Sunday services that he returned to the pulpit and informed his student audience: "In the sermon I have just preached, whenever I said Aristotle I meant St. Paul."

Spooner had a mind so nimble, his tongue couldn't keep pace.

The Greeks had a word for it as always, they called it: metathesis, meaning the act of transposing or switching things around.

But the word we use today was named after this scholar, spoonerisms.

Reverend Spooner's tendency to get words and sounds crossed could happen at any time, but even more so when he was agitated.

He told one student off for "fighting a liar in the quadrangle" and another who "hissed my mystery lecture." Adding, "You have tasted two worms."



Before this information age, how did we know what the other ages were?

Eureka!

Strange Astronomical "Object" Discovered

High school student one of the first to find evidence of new objects in space.

An American high-school student, analysing data from a giant radio telescope, has discovered a new astronomical object, a strange type of neutron star called a rotating radio transient.

Lucas Bolyard made the discovery while working on a project in which students are trained to scrutinize data from the National Science Foundation's giant Green Bank Telescope (GBT).

Lucas made the discovery in March after studying more than 2,000 data plots from the GBT and finding nothing.

"I was home on a weekend and had nothing to do, so I decided to look at some more plots from the GBT," he said.

"I saw a plot with a pulse, but there was a lot of radio interference, too. I almost dismissed the pulse as interference", he added.

Ever hopeful, he reported it, and it went on a list of possibilities for West Virginia University astronomers to re-examine.

Astronomers scheduled new searches of the region of sky from which the pulse came, but the follow-up observations showed nothing, indicating that the object was not a normal pulsar.

However, the astronomers explained to Bolyard that his pulse still might have come from a newly discovered phenomenon called a rotating radio transient. Confirmation came recently.

Bolyard was at the Green Bank Observatory with fellow PSC students when University astronomers Maura McLaughlin and Duncan

Queen Victoria wasn't to be spared, in a bout of patriotic fervour, the Reverend Spooner toasted the good Queen with the words, "Three cheers for our queer old dean!"

During World War 1 he reassured his students, "When our boys come home from France, we will have the hags flung out", and praised Britain's farmers in their war efforts describing them as those "noble tons of soil."

"Our Lord is a shoving leopard," he once chanted in a sermon and quoted, I Corinthians 13:12 as "For now we see through a dark glassly".

Encouraging a shy bridegroom our master of spoonerisms urged him, "Son, now it is kisstomary to cus the bride" and to a stranger who had the cheek to sit in the wrong place: "I believe you're occupewing my pie. May I sew you to another sheet?"

All of the professor's mix-ups would appear to be accidental, so examples such as, "a scoop of boy trouts" for "a troop of boy scouts" was probably invented by one of his students.

Spooner is said to have declared, "Which of us has not felt in his heart a half-warmed fish?"

At a naval review Spooner marvelled at "this vast display of cattleships and bruisers."

To a school official's secretary: "Is the bean dizzy?"

Visiting a friend's country cottage: "You have a nosey little crook here."

In 1930 at the ripe old age of 84, and two years before his death, Spooner told an interviewer he could recall only one of his trademark mix ups, which he made announcing the hymn "kinkering Congs Their Titles Tale," meaning to say, "Conquering Kings."

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "spoonerism" began appearing in colloquial use as early as 1885.

Once when a group of students clamoured outside his window for him to make a speech, he called down: "You don't want to hear a speech: you just want me to say one of those...things."

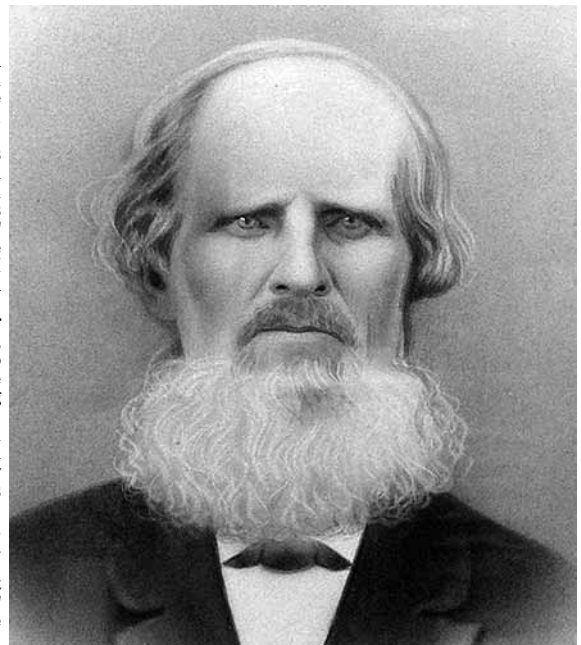
Many have made similar slips, Radio announcer Harry Von Zell once introduced U.S. President Herbert Hoover as Hoobert Heever and Lowell Thomas presented British minister Sir Stafford Cripps as Sir Stifford Craps.

While presenting a proposal for new web site functionality to a banks' decision makers, the account executive said "up-c**t frosts" instead of "up-front costs."

The waitress at a four star hotel was responsible for arrival drinks at the posh weddings held there.

One day, she got her knickers in a twist and offered a guest a glass of Buck's Fizz, using the spoonerism!

The very "proper" radio announcer in an Australian news bulletin (ABC), advised his listeners, "Mrs Sheila Jones, a resident of Newcastle, New South Wales, is reported to be in a stable condition in hospital, after being



admitted and treated after she was bitten on the funnel by a finger web spider".

The woman, trying to come up with the name of a children's book, but couldn't quite remember, when she suddenly announced to everyone in the room, "Now I remember! It's the grant and the assshopper!"

The policeman in 'Ello 'Ello, a UK comedy program, who said, "I was crapping down the tunnel when I heard two shits!"

Around the Horne radio show announced, "And we've just heard from a lady who would like to meet Nicholas Parsons. Also a letter from a person who'd like to meet knickerless ladies."

Anyone else notice that Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt's baby was named Shiloh Pitt!

Then there was the young Chinese guy called Yuk Foo who was a pheasant plucker, it was his young lady who had a sick duck and tool kits.

A tavern sign says "Our customers enter optimistically and leave misty optically" is a good example of using spoonerisms for a bit of fun, as is "I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy".

Thanks to Reverend Spooner's style-setting somersaults, our own little tips of the slung will not be looked upon as the embarrassing babblings of a nitwit, but rather the limsical whapses of a brimble-nain.

So let us applaud that gentle gan who lent his tame to the nerm. May sod rest his goal. **So you think sex is important?**

A man can go seventy years without a piece of ass, but he could die in a week without a bowel movement.

Lorimer showed Bolyard a new plot of his pulse.

It was newly reprocessed from raw data, indicating that it is real, not interference.

This makes Lucas the discoverer of one of only about 30 rotating radio transients known.

Suddenly, Bolyard said, he wasn't tired anymore. "That news made me full of energy," he exclaimed.

Rotating radio transients are thought to be similar to pulsars, super-dense neutron stars that are the corpses of massive stars that exploded as supernovae.

Pulsars are known for their lighthouse-like beams of radio waves that sweep through space as the neutron star rotates, creating a pulse as the beam sweeps by a radio telescope.

While pulsars emit these radio waves continuously, rotating radio transients emit only sporadically, one burst at a time, with as much as several hours between bursts.

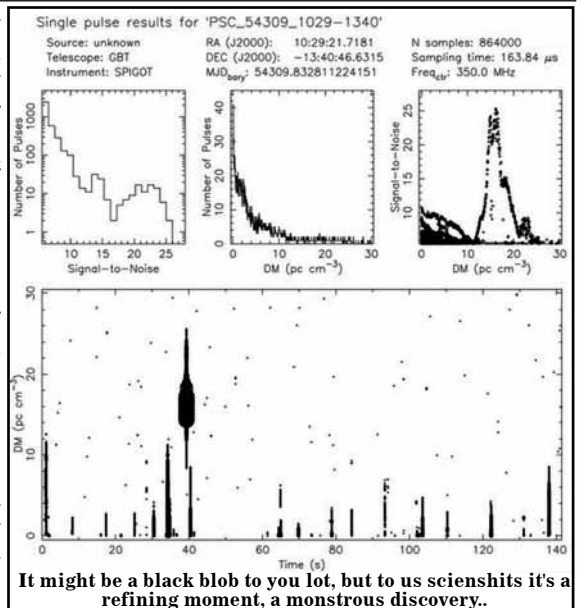
Because of this, they are difficult to discover and observe, with the first one only discovered in 2006.

They tell us there are more neutron stars than we knew about and that means there are more supernova explosions.

This project involves teachers and students in helping astronomers analyse data from 1500 hours of observing with the GBT.

The 120 terabytes of data were produced by 70,000 individual plots of the giant, 17-million-pound telescope and about 300 hours of the observing data were reserved for analysis by student teams.

The student teams use analysis software to



It might be a black blob to you lot, but to us scienshits it's a refining moment, a monstrous discovery..

reveal evidence of pulsars. Each portion of the data is analyzed by multiple teams.

In addition to learning to use the analysis software, the student teams also must learn to recognize man-made radio interference that contaminates the data.

The students get to actually look through data that has never been looked through before and the project will continue through 2011.