

1 Kissing Crust

- a) Another name for chapped lips. People were ribbed for having chapped lips; they had been kissing so much that their lips became sore.
- b) Simply, that part where loaves have touched in the oven forming a joining crust.
- c) The feeling of hunger. You are so hungry that you would love even a crust of bread. You are kissing crust, or as we might say "Hank Marvin" for "starving".
- d) An unpleasant result of ringworm infection. The round crusty skin lesions looking like a round kiss mark.
- e) An empty plate, especially if the diner licked his plate. Thought to derive from earlier times when platters were made of hard baked dough.

2 Hickenbotham

- a) A northern term for a skin blemish, a wart, probably after a famous fairground character who exhibited himself, who was covered head to toe in large blueish warts.
- b) A device for turning a spit over the fire, powered by a small terrier. In the same way as we now have a "Hoover" or "Wellingtons", in the c18th kitchen you had a "Hickenbotham" or "Hickey"
- c) "Mr Hickenbotham" a ludicrous name for an unknown person - like Thingammybob, or Whaddyacallit, or Whatsisname.
- d) "Mr Hickenbotham" was a nickname for the public hangman. C18th century parents would scare their children with "fetching Mr Hickenbotham" if they were naughty.
- e) A Hickenbotham, a glass blower's Pontil. The tube that you blow down to inflate glass to make a bottle. Named after a firm of blacksmiths in Bolton.

3 Minor Clergy

- a) A "priest" was a small club for killing fish- it delivered the "last rites". Minor Clergy referred to nets used for poaching, so you went out to catch fish with your "priest and minor clergy".
- b) A term for young ladies of "uncertain virtue", managed by a "Mother Superior", or madam.
- c) In the c18th "Minor Clergy" referred to a pocket full of small change, what we would call "shrapnel". A guinea was known as a "bishop" and a half guinea a "dean and chapter", hence minor clergy for small change.
- d) A nickname for young chimney sweepers. Probably because clergy were dressed in black. The smallest chimney sweeps were needed as climbing boys to reach to the tops of chimneys.
- e) Small nails, or tacks. Many poorer people were scathing about the clergy. A "Pope" was a six inch blacksmith made nail for example. When you banged in a tack, you were hitting the "minor clergy".

4 Puff, or Puffer

- a) A nickname from the c18th racing world. A Puff or Puffer was a broken winded horse, an old horse not worth betting on.
- b) A nickname for an elderly gentleman of corpulent figure. Someone who got out of breath walking up hill.
- c) A Puffer Job, was a slang term for a character witness in court who lied about the good attributes of criminals. You could hire a "Puffer" who would talk "puff" about you to the jury.
- d) Petticoats and underclothing. A "Puffer" was a young lady who would flounce her "Puff" or petticoats at gentlemen. Also referred to what was underneath the petticoats....
- e) Someone who bids at auctions, not with an intent to buy, but only to raise the price of a lot. They were hired by the seller of the goods to raise the price.

5 Toad Eater

- a) A toad eater or sin eater, would be present at funerals. He or more commonly she, would agree to take on the sins of the departed, with the symbolic eating of sins, usually in the form of a toad, or in later days a "toad cake" made of bitter herbs and wheat chaff.
- b) A poor female relation, a humble companion or a "reduced gentlewoman". The standing butt of all jokes. "Swallowing toads" in this context meant putting up with insults or bullying.
- c) "Swallowing a toad" was slang for believing a lie, or being cheated of money. If your gullibility became public knowledge, you were shamed by being called a "toad eater" - in the same way that people were called "cuckold" for being the victims of adultery.
- d) You used to be called a Toad Eater if you suffered from bad breath or loud wind or a combination of both. You were presumed to have "eaten toads".
- e) An Irish expression for a priest who took confession (Catholic Church). He had to sit and listen to people's sins, and basically suck up all the "toads" in people's lives.

6 Mine Aunt

- a) A Mine Aunt was a senior woman in a mining community. Mine "aunts" or "Aunty Black" would organise relief for families who had lost family members in mine accidents, and be chief mourners at funerals.
- b) "A letter from mine aunt" was a letter from a lover or any other secret letter whose purpose was to be hidden from prying eyes. It came into popular usage after a prominent politician, Lord Egremont, was caught reading a letter from his young (male) lover and tried to pass it off as a "letter from Mine Aunt"
- c) A procuress, one who procured young ladies for immoral purposes, one who taught the trade to new recruits. Also a midwife, and one who taught midwives.
- d) A magpie. People were superstitious about Magpies, linking them to witches. They would salute magpies with "greetings to mine aunt".
- e) "Paying a visit to mine aunt" was a polite way of excusing yourself from company, when visiting the lavatory. d) You used to be called a Toad Eater if you suffered from bad breath or loud wind or a combination of both. You were presumed to have "eaten toads".
- e) An Irish expression for a priest who took confession (Catholic Church). He had to sit and listen to people's sins, and basically suck up all the "toads" in people's lives.

7 Quick and Nimble

- a) Was the c18th equivalent of "Fibb and Lies" that well known firm of solicitors... A joke name for a firm of Lawyers, known to be notoriously slow and inept. Later used by Dickens as a protagonist in his novel "Dombey and Son".
- b) "Quick and Nimble" was a children's game at Christmas which involved plucking currants from flaming Brandy. It fell out of popularity following a case where a young child's clothes caught fire, burning the infant to death.
- c) "Quick and Nimble cakes" were a form of shortbread in the shape of fans. Also called "petticoat tails", falsely assumed to be named from their shape, but instead from the French "petit gâteaux".
- d) A term from the c18th bare knuckle boxing world. Josiah Quick and Jem Nimble fought a 24 round, four hour bout on Hampstead Heath in 1796. The match was fought to a standstill, and was declared a draw, which caused rioting because of the huge bets placed. A "quick and nimble", later shortened to "a nimble" became slang for an unpopular decision.
- e) "Quick and Nimble" was jeeringly called out to anyone who moved especially sluggishly on an errand calling for speed or dexterity.

8 Hum Box

- a) c18th slang for a pulpit. Probably because sermons were exceptionally long, and the ministers droned on for hours.
- b) A Norfolk term for a "modern" wooden beehive which replaced traditional woven straw "skeps". Initially unpopular and derided as "hum boxes", but later universally adopted as bee husbandry techniques improved, and bee colonies were overwintered.
- c) A close stool, or lavatory bucket. So called because of the presence of flies. Scented bushes were often planted near outside privies in an attempt to mask the smells.
- d) A derogatory term for a Hurdy Gurdy street musician's organ, which produced a humming or buzzing sound. The player turned a handle which rotated a rosin coated wheel against the strings.
- e) A c17th child's toy or pursuit. Stag beetles were captured by children and kept in mica sided boxes which resonated loudly as the beetles attempted to fly. They were also kept in houses by chimneys and tied to door posts to confuse witches and devils who were thought to enter houses by these routes. Fireflies were also captured in a similar way to provide light.

9 Clack Loft

- a) From "cluck loft". Quite simply, a chicken house, when animals were kept inside houses alongside the people. A clackloft was a small enclosed area at table height, within a medieval house, supposedly secure from rodents.
- b) c15th term for a human head or brain; "Brainbox" would be a modern equivalent. "Clacking" referred to talking, and so a clackloft was the seat of language or thought. Thought to be from the Old Norse "Klakken", or chatter.
- c) A shelf or opening within a dry stone wall. A Cumbrian term. Clack lofts enabled sheep to pass through walls when required. Clack boards were placed in the holes when the wall was to be sealed. An eighteenth century term.
- d) A pulpit. A derogatory term in c18th in Non conformist chapels.
- e) A London term from the c18th for an Opium Den, thought to derived from the shivering and teeth chattering suffered by addicts in withdrawal.
- f) A theatre Box, derived from Claque Loft. A theatre "claque" was a group of supporters for a particular actor, or performer, who would applaud, groan, cheer etc as called for during a performance. Clagues could be hired to support actors, and riots occurred between different clagues; one resulted in the burning down of the Drury Lane theatre.

10 Married

- a) A blacksmith's term for two pieces of iron, beaten together to form one piece.
- b) Thieves cant term for stealing a watch and its chain together. "I dipped it married and all" is said by the Artful Dodger to Scrooge in "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens. Mid c19th London slang, also recorded in Mayhew in 1861.
- c) "Married" was a term for persons chained or handcuffed together in order to be taken to gaol. A chain gang.
- d) A term for traditional boiled beef and carrots. A pot of "Married" or "Married with taters" was a common term in C18th chop houses and the cheaper kind of eating establishment.
- e) Cockney rhyming slang shortened from "Married Life/ Wife" actually referring to death. "Ee got married last Tuesday" meant "he died last Tuesday". Less common than "Trouble and Strife/ Wife".

11 Mumchance

- a) A posset, or flummery, made from eggs, milk and dates or raisins, with added spices. Served as a sauce for lamb or mutton in Elizabethan houses.
- b) A Mumchance chair, was a high backed arch topped chair, largely made in the Orkneys, and woven from "Mumm" (spelt M U M M) which is a Scots term for osier or rush. Different settlements had different weaving patterns and the chairs could be identified by them.
- c) "Mum's chance" meaning no chance at all, extremely unlikely, as we might say "not a hope in hell". Unknown derivation but possibly from "perchance" (perhaps). Eighteenth century London usage.
- d) A c18th game of chance, played with dice, probably derived from the silence observed whilst playing it. "Keeping Mum" is an old term for keeping quiet, used as late as WW2 in the propaganda phrase "be like dad, keep mum".
- e) From the Urdu "Mamchanna". A form of daal served as a staple food to East India Company Soldiers in the late C 18th. The term was taken up into common military usage as "mumchance" and arrived back in England with returning troops.

12 Queen Dick

- a) A slang early Victorian name for a masculine woman, sometimes dressing in male attire. A ladies lady. Very much hush hush and not talked about in polite society, an underworld term.
- b) Cockney back slang for "Pope Joan/ loan". "I went to 'im for a Pope and 'ee turned me dahn", became "I went to 'im for a Queen Dick..." and if refused, "ee Dicked me aht".
- c) A slang c18th term meaning "Never", as in "it happened in the reign of Queen Dick" or "sung to the tune of the life and death of Queen Dick". The phrase "all my eye and Queen Dick" became "all my eye and Betty Martin" in Victorian times.
- d) Rhyming slang for sick, ill, out of sorts. "He was Queen Dick and snuffed his candle" was a phrase in thieves slang which has come down to us in shortened form in modern times as "feeling dicky".
- e) An eighteenth century Pirate and Privateer, Richard Hanson, who operated in the Caribbean and around the island of Cuba. He was known as Queen Dick from his habit of wearing women's attire in battle, the more to discomfit his opponents. He was caught and hung, after capture by the Spanish Navy, and was allowed to die wearing his favourite dress and cloak

13 Titter-Tatter

- a) A Dorset term for a Dormouse. Probably c17th, and used widely until their virtual extinction in the c20th in rural Dorset.
- b) Another name for a see-saw. The childish amusement of riding upon the two ends of a plank, poised upon a point of balance. Also, a reeling person, ready to fall at the least touch.
- c) A lazy woman, a slut, a slattern. Samuel Pepys in his diary (6th July 1667) says of his maid "she is naught better than a common Titter Tatter, and uncommon filthy in her habit and dress".
- d) A term from the Industrial Revolution relating to the weaving industry. "Titter Tatters" were the children employed to clean and maintain weaving machines whilst in operation. They were small enough to remove lint buildup, and to repair the warp and weft strings without halting production. Child labourers.
- e) Titter tatters; the costumes worn by early C 19th participants in Mummer's plays. Typically, the characters were Saint George, the dragon, The Turkish Knight and the Doctor. The Titter-Tatter costumes and blackface makeup were designed to disguise the participants.

14 Aristippus

- a) One of the names for the devil; a fallen angel, as Satan, Beelzebub, Mephistopheles etc
- b) Said with the emphasis on the second syllable AriStippus. A common name for a cat in c17th England associated with witch trials- as in Pyewacket, Skimbleshanks etc.
- c) A medical term for diseases of the heart in the eighteenth century, supposed to be caused by thickening of the blood and an imbalance of the humours. First described by Galen and repeated in numerous herbals including Culpeper.
- d) An eighteenth century diet drink made from sarsaparilla, sold at coffee houses as an alternative to coffee.
- e) A type printing font used in the mid c18th. Following a dispute between printers, the entire stock of the font was thrown off London Bridge over a period of three months, and the dies destroyed. Mudlarks and divers recovered large quantities and melted it at the time for scrap, but pieces still appear on the Thames foreshore.

15 Thingstable

- a) A derogatory term for the supposedly unfashionable seaside town of Whitstable, coined by visitors to Herne Bay and Margate in the late eighteenth century. "Zounds, methinks one cannot think favourably of "Thingstable" when Margate is so bracing".
- b) An engineering term from the earliest days of locomotive engines. The Thingstable was what we would now call a footplate on a steam engine, ie. where the driver, fireman and an engineer stand.
- c) Mr Thingstable; said for "Mr Constable", a ludicrous affectation of delicacy to avoid saying the first syllable in the title, which sounded indecent. C18th
- d) A very early children's boxed balancing game, where various wooden shapes were balanced upon others, with the intention of using all the components to make the tallest structure. A die or dice were thrown to determine which piece was to be selected next. The V & A Museum has the only existing complete set.
- e) The Thingstable method: Urania Brooke-Thingstable was the proprietress of a notorious dame school in the early nineteenth century. Her methods of juvenile education became wildly popular, and she became extremely wealthy. Her name became synonymous with strict discipline and religious fervour. Queen Victoria's children were educated by Thingstable tutors