Ye Olde Medieval English Terms

A

1. **Acclumsid**: numbed, clumsy.
2. **Aceasecomic**: One whose hair was never cut.
3. **Acopon**: A soothing salve, poultice, or plaster to relieve pain.
4. **Adam’s Ale**: A humorous term for water, the only drink for Adam and Eve.
5. **Afterling**: An inferior
6. **Agrum**: A swelling of the cheeks or mouth.
7. **Agauw**: To horrify, to cause shuddering.
8. **Aimcrier**: An applauder or encourager; the person who cried “Aim!: to encourage an archer; the one who stood near the target to report the results of each round.
9. **Aletude**: Obesity, bodily fatness.
10. **Ataballes**: Kettle-drums.

B

11. **Back-slang**: The technique of pronouncing words backwards.
12. **Backstress**: A female baker.
13. **Barilla**: A marine plant used in manufacturing soap.
14. **Bawdreaming**: Bawdy misbehavior.
15. **Bedswerver**: A person unfaithful to the marriage bed.
16. **Beek**: to bask in the sun or before a fire.
17. **Bellibone**: A lovely maiden, pretty lass.
18. **Bell-penny**: Money one saves for his own funeral.
19. **Bellytimber**: Food.
20. **Blashy**: Thin or weak, as applied to tea or beer.
21. **Blob-tale**: A tattle-tale or gossip.
22. **Blonk**: A large, powerful horse.
23. **Blore**: To cry out or bleat and bray like an animal.
24. **Blutter**: To blurt out.
25. **Boose**: A cow stall.
26. **Brangle**: To squabble or brawl.
27. **Breedbate**: A person or something that creates strife.
28. **Bubble-bow**: A lady’s pocketbook.
29. **Bugle-beard**: A shaggy beard like buffalo hair.
30. **Bulse**: A package of diamonds or gold dust.
31. **Butter-teeth**: The two upper middle incisors.

**C**

32. **Calliblephary**: A coloring for eyelids.
33. **Carked**: Fretfully anxious.
34. **Chair day**: The evening of life, that time when a person is old and usually infirm but passes his time in ease and comfort.
35. **Chinkers**: money, coins.
36. **Chitty-face**: A person with a thin, pinched face; a term of contempt.
37. **Corsned**: The ordeal by bread, a medieval test to determine guilt. The accused was ordered to swallow an ounce of bread consecrated by a priest with an exorcism. If he went into convulsions he was pronounced guilty, but if he had not reaction he was proclaimed innocent.
38. **Cosh**: A small cottage, hut.
39. **Crinet**: A hair.
40. **Cruck**: Peasants lived in cruck houses. These had a wooden frame onto which was plastered wattle and daub, which was a mixture of mud, straw and manure.
41. **Crug**: Food

**D**

42. **Daggle-tail**: An untidy woman.
43. **Darg**: A day’s work.
44. **Dentiscalp**: Toothpick.
45. **Dimpse**: The dimming of daylight, twilight.
46. **Donge**: A mattress.
47. **Downsteepy**: Steeply descending, precipitous.
48. **Drassock**: A drab, untidy woman.
49. **Dretch**: torment.
50. **Dringle**: To waste time in a lazy manner.

**E**

51. **Earthapple**: A cucumber or potato.
52. **Eldnyng**: Jealousy or suspicion.
53. **Erendrake**: A messenger.
54. **Eyethurl**: A window.
55. **Eyndill**: Jealous.
56. Fadoodle: Nonsense, something foolish.
57. Faffle: To blow in sudden gusts.
58. Fairhead: Beauty.
59. Fanger: A guardian, one who protects, as do fanged animals.
60. Farnet: A company of attendants.
62. Fearbabe: A thing designed to scare a baby.
63. Feat: A dangling curl of hair.
64. Feather-head: A silly, lightheaded person.
65. Fellowfeel: To share another’s feelings, to sympathize with.
66. Felly: Harshly, destructively.
67. Firefanged: Scorched, overheated.
68. Fizgig: A frivolous person, especially a woman.
69. Flag-Fallen: Unemployed.
70. Flactchet: A sword.
71. Fleak: An insignificant person.
72. Flerd: Deceit.
73. Flesh-spades: Fingernails.
74. Fliperous: A proud gossip, a prattler.
75. Floccinaucinihilipilification: Belittling others’ achievements.
76. Flockard: A veil floating from a headdress.
77. Flosh: A swamp or stagnant pool overgrown with weeds.
78. Fnast: To pant or snort.
79. Fonkin: A little fool.
80. Fopdoodle: A simpleton.
81. Frush: To crush, strike, or break.
82. Fucus: Rouge made from rock lichen, which produced a red dye. This false color became a cosmetic cover-up.

G

83. Gang-teeth: Projecting teeth.
84. Gaptoothed: Having teeth set wide apart.
85. Gardyloo: A warning cry before throwing dirty water from windows into the street.
86. Givel: To heap up.
87. Gleed: Squint-eyed.
88. Glop: To swallow greedily.
89. Gofe: The pillory.
90. Graff: To dig.
91. Gundygut: A glutton.
H

92. Hadivist: To express regret at making a mistake.
93. Ha-Ha: A sunken trench or ditch not visible until someone steps into it.
94. Handband: A covenant made by joining hands.
95. Hardshewer: A stonemason.
96. Heanling: A humble or base person.
98. Hoful: Careful.
99. Hoodpick: A miser or skinflint.
100. Hudder-mudder: Secrecy, privacy.
102. Hum: A strong liquor, a mixture of ale or beer and spirits.

I

103. Ilimp: To happen, befall.
104. Inwit: Conscience.
105. Iqueme: Pleasing, agreeable.
106. Istink: Transitive verb – to smell.
107. Iswonk: Toil, to work.

J

108. Jubbe: A large vessel for liquor.
109. Juvament: Aid!; Help!

K

110. Keak: To cackle.
111. Kell: A woman’s headdress, cap.
112. Kerchief-of-pleasance: An embroidered cloth presented by a lady to her knight to wear for her sake. He was bound by the code of honor to upt it on his helmet.
117. Kiss the Hare’s Foot: To be so late as to miss dinner; to eat left-over scraps.
118. Kissing comfits: sweets to make the breath pleasant.
119. Knosp: An architectural ornament in the form of a bud or knob.
120. **Landcheap**: A fine paid to the lord of a manor when leaving his land.
121. **Lennow**: Flabby
122. **Lickspigot**: One who fawns or behaves in a servile manner.
123. **Lip clap**: Kissing.
124. **Lovecup**: a local market duty or tax.
125. **Lubber-word**: Food of no nutritional value, “junk food”

126. **Magsman**: A swindler.

127. **Maw-wallop**: A badly cooked mess of food
128. **Melpomenish**: Tragic.
129. **Mentimutation**: A change of mind.
130. **Merry-gall**: A sore produced by chafing.
131. **Merry-go-down**: Strong ale.
132. **Mildful**: Merciful
133. **Misgloze**: Misinterpret
135. **Mubblefubbles**: Melancholy
136. **Muckender**: Bib or handkerchief
137. **Mumper**: a beggar, one who sponges off others.
138. **Mung**: A crowd of people.
139. **Murfles**: Freckles or pimples

140. **Nabcheat**: A hat or a cap.
141. **Nesh**: Fresh, delicate, soft, as applied to fruit, vegetables, and foliage.
142. **Nickpot**: A fraudulent innkeeper.
143. **Nithe**: envy, hatred
144. **Nose of Wax**: A fickle personality.
145. **Nott-headed**: Having hair closely cut.
146. **Nyle**: Fog or mist.

147. **Odam**: A son-in-law.
148. **Oddwoman**: A female umpire or arbitrator.
149. **Okselle**: Armpit.
150. **Ongle**: Claw.
151. **Ong-tongue**: a gossip, a tattle-tale. Same as blob-tale.
152. **Outwit**: Knowledge, information, or learning that one gains.

P

153. **Paggle**: To bulge or hang loosely.

154. **Pancart**: A placard with public notices.
155. **Pash**: Forehead.
156. **Penistone**: Course woolen cloth woven in the town of Penistone, England.
157. **Philotimy**: Love of honor.
158. **Pingle**: To eat with very little appetite.
159. **Pitchkettleled**: Puzzled.
160. **Poop-Noddy**: A fool or simpleton.
161. **Poplolly**: A little darling; a female favorite; or a mistress.
162. **Porknell**: One who is as fat as a pig.
163. **Pumpkinification**: Pompous behavior or exaggerated praise.
164. **Purflle**: to decorate or adorn.

Q

165. **Quetch**: To moan and twitch in pain.

R

166. **Reaks**: Pranks or practical jokes.
167. **Recooper**: Recovery.
168. **Redmod**: Hasty or rash action.
169. **Reelpot**: One who makes a drinking pot go around.
170. **Ribble**: A wrinkle, furrow.
171. **Ringo**: A treat; a sweet made from the candied root of the sea holly.
172. **Rixle**: To rule, or have dominion over others.
173. **Roaky**: Hazy, nebulous, not clear.
174. **Roberdavy**: A kind of wine in the 16th and 17th centuries.
175. **Rooped**: Hoarse, as with bronchitis or a throat cold.
176. **Rutterkin**: A swaggering gallant or bully.

S

177. **Samded**: Half-dead.
178. **Sanap**: a strip of cloth placed over the outer part of a tablecloth to keep it from being soiled.
179. Scrogglings: Small, worthless apples left hanging on a tree after the crop is gathered.
180. Scrool: The sky.
181. Shab: To get rid of, or to put something over on someone.
182. ‘sheart: Shortening of the phrase God’s heart, meaning to make an oath.
183. Shongable: A tax on making certain shoes.
184. Slibber-sauce: A nauseating concoction that is used for medicinal purposes.
185. Sloomy: Lazy, dull, sleepy.
186. Smellsmock: A licentious man.
187. Snapauce: Pilfering food; or licking one’s fingers after a meal.
188. Snawk: To smell.
189. Snirtle: To snicker.
190. Snotter-clout: A pocket handkerchief.
191. Spitchcock: Eel cooked with bread crumbs.
192. Spit-frog: A small sword; or a term of contempt.
193. Spuddle: To assume an air of importance without reason; or to make trifles seem important.
194. Squiddle: To waste time with idle talk.
195. Squint-a-pipes: Slang for a squinting man or woman.
196. Steven: The voice, a loud outcry; a set time, or appointment.
197. Stoop-gallant: Something that humbles the great and makes one a mere man.
198. Storge: A natural love, especially of parents for their children.
199. Straight-fingered: Thoroughly honest.
200. Suggill: To beat black and blue.
201. Swerked: To become troubled, gloomy.

203. Teenful: Troublesome, irritating.
204. Tenterbelly: A glutton.
205. Theek: To cover a roof with straw thatch; or to protect.
206. Theow: A servant or slave.
207. Thibble: A stick used to stir porridge.
208. Thigging: Begging.
209. Thrip: To snap one’s fingers.
211. Tidliwink: A tavern.
212. Tipsycake: Cake saturated with wine or liquor, stuck with almonds, and served with custard.
213. Tirliry-puffkin: Light-headed, flighty woman; or a flirt.
214. Trantles: Articles of little value.
216. Turngiddy: Dizzy
217. Tutmouthed: Having protruding lips or a projecting lower jaw.

U

219. Ug: Fear or dread
220. Umbecast: To consider or ponder.

V

221. Vasquine: A petticoat
222. Vecke: An old woman.
223. Vellication: A twitching or convulsive movement.
224. Venenate: To poison

W

226. Waghalter: A rogue likely to swing in a gallows.
228. Wam: A scar
229. Wang-tooth: A molar (tooth)
231. Wheeple: An ineffectual attempt of a man to whistle loudly.
233. Whipperginnie: An abusive term for a woman.
234. Whistersnefet: A blow to the ear.
237. Widdershins: Unlucky, prone to misfortune.
238. Wind-sucker: An envious, covetous person.
239. Wink-a-peeps: eyes.
240. Woodness: Madness, insanity.

X

243. Xenodochial: Hospitable to strangers.
244. Xiph: A swordfish.
Y

245. Yarken: To prepare.
246. Yerd: To beat with a rod.

Z

249. Zegedine: A drinking cup.
250. Zopissa: An old medicinal application that was made from the wax and pitch scrapped from the sides of ships.

Resources:
Susan Kelz Sperling, Poplollies and Bellibones, A Celebration of Lost Words, 1977
Manorial Language: http://home.olemiss.edu/~tjray/medieval/manorial.htm