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5 The womb, LME.

SHAKES. LLL. She's quick; the child brags in her belly already.

†6 The internal cavity of the body. U15–M17.

R. BERNARD It made my heart cold in my belly.

► III Of things.

7 The internal cavity or interior of anything, whether material or abstract. M16.

POTTER Ships of Burden . . . having large and capacious bellies. J. A. FROUDE A . . . candle lighted in the belly of a dark dead past.

8 The bulging part of anything, e.g. of a pot or bottle, a vein of ore, etc.; a concave surface; the front, inner, or lower surface of anything. U16.

SPENSER Leaning on the belly of a pot. R. H. DANA To fall from aloft and be caught in the belly of a sail. G. JONES Put the belly of your hand here on my heart and swear it.

9 spec. ►a The surface of a violin etc. across which the strings pass. U16. ►b The thicker part of a muscle. E17. ►c The soundboard of a piano. M19. ►d The under part of the fuselage of an aircraft. E20.

— COMBS. bellyache noun & verb (a) noun pain or discomfort in the abdomen. colic; slang a querulous complaint; (b) verb intrans. (slang) complain whiningly; grumble; bellyband a band around a horse's belly for holding carriage shafts etc. in place; slang a wide belt or corset; belly button colloq. the navel; belly dance a Middle Eastern solo dance by a woman, involving the rippling of her abdominal muscles; belly dancer a woman who performs belly dances; bellyflop noun & verb (colloq.) (make) a dive landing flat on the belly; belly-god (arch. exc. Jamaican) a glutton; belly landing the crash-landing of an aircraft on its belly without the use of the undercarriage; belly laugh colloq. a deep unrestrained laugh; belly-timber (obsolete exc. dial.) food, provisions; belly-up adverb & adjective in or into a position with the belly uppermost, esp. (of a fish) in or into such a position as a result of death; fig. (of businesses, projects, etc.) in or into a state of bankruptcy; belly-wool: see sense 3b above.

belly /'beli/ verb. E17.

[ORIGIN from the noun.]

1 verb trans. & intrans. (Cause to) swell out (usu. of sails). E17. †2 verb intrans. Become corpulent. M17–U18.

bellyful /'belɪfʊl, -f(ə)l/ noun. M16.

[ORIGIN from BELLY noun + FULL.]

As much as the belly will hold; a sufficiency of food; slang as much as or more than one wants of anything.

SMOLLETT never once had my belly-full, even of dry bread. S. BECKETT Will you stop whining! I've had about my bellyful of your lamentations.

†belock verb trans. rare (Shakes.). Only in E17.

[ORIGIN from BE-1 + LOCK verb.]

Lock firmly, clasp.

belomancy /'beləʊmænsi/ noun. M17.

[ORIGIN from Greek belos dart + -MANCY.]

Divination by means of arrows.

belong /bɪ'lɒŋ/ verb intrans. ME.

[ORIGIN Prob. intensive of LONG verb²: see BE-1.]

► I. Foll. by to, †unto.

1 Be rightly assigned or appropriate to as an adjunct, function, duty, etc. ME.

AV DAN. 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercies. GEO. EUROT He . . . works with all the zest that belongs to fresh ideas.

2 Pertain or relate to. arch. ME.

AV 1 Cor. 7:22 He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord.

3 Be the property or rightful possession of. LME. ►b Be a property or an attribute of. M17.

M. MCCARTHY Around one tan wrist was a gold bracelet that had belonged to her grandmother. b. LOCKE This way of containing all things can by no means belong to God.

4 Be connected with as a member, part, inhabitant, dependency, etc. LME.

ADDISON The great Yard that belongs to my Friend's Country-House. O. SHREVE Its flat spread dome belongs to an exceedingly primitive type. L. HELLMAN I belonged, on my mother's side, to a banking, storekeeping family from Alabama. JAN MORRIS Every undergraduate [in Oxford] belongs to a college.

► II. absol. & with other constructions.

5 Be right or appropriate to do, be. Usu. impers. in (it) belongs etc. arch. M17.

KEATS Here . . . it doth not well belong To speak. C. CAUSLEY And a Cornish man with a Cornish maid is how it belongs to be.

6 (With other prepositions and with adverbs.) Be related or connected; be naturally or rightly placed; be classified, Orig. US. E19.

W. WHITMAN He was not a closet man, belonged out-of-doors. P. C. WODEHOUSE I looked as if I belonged in Whipnade. J. ACEE He had lost their contempt and could belong among them if he wanted to. J. HELLER A woman belongs with her husband always.

7 absol. Be a member; fit a specified environment, not be out of place. E20.

D. H. LAWRENCE He belonged [to the choir] just because he had a tenor voice, and enjoyed singing. M. MCCARTHY It was the Moscow trials that made him know . . . that he did not really 'belong'.

belonging /bɪ'lɒŋɪŋ/ noun. E17.

[ORIGIN from BELONG + -ING; pl. perh. from pres. pple. = 'things belonging'.]

► I. In pl. (sing. rare).

1 Circumstances or relations connected with a person or thing. arch. E17.

BROWNING All my belongings, what is summed in life, I have submitted wholly . . . to your rule.

2 Possessions, goods, effects. E19.

W. S. CHURCHILL It struck me as rather grim to see the intimate belongings of one's comrade of the day before . . . thus unceremoniously distributed among strangers.

3 One's family or relatives. colloq. M19.

DICKENS I have been trouble enough to my belongings in my day.

► II. 4 The fact of appertaining or being a part; relationship; esp. an individual's membership of, and acceptance by, a group or society. U19.

W. PLOMER He had little sense of belonging.

► belongingness noun †(a) the state of having properties appropriate to something; (b) the state or condition of belonging. M17.

belord /bɪ'lɔ:d/ verb trans. U16.

[ORIGIN from BE-3 + LORD noun.]

Call 'lord', address as 'lord'.

Belorussian /bə'lɔ:ʃiən/ adjective & noun. Also Byelo-

/bjɛləʊ-. M20.

[ORIGIN from Belorussia (see below) from Russian Belorossiya, from belyi white + Rossiya Russia, + -AN.]

► A adjective. Of or pertaining to Belorussia (now Belarus), a country in eastern Europe, its people, or their Slavonic language; Belarusian. Formerly also called WHITE RUSSIAN. M20.

► B noun. A native or inhabitant of Belarus; their language. M20.

belote /bə'lɔ:t/ noun¹. Also belotte. M20.

[ORIGIN French, perh. from F. Belot, a Frenchman said to have developed the game.]

A card game like pinochle, played with a 32-card pack, popular in France; the combination of king and queen of trumps in this game.

belove /bɪ'ləv/ verb. ME.

[ORIGIN from BE-1 + LOVE verb.]

†1 verb intrans. Please, be pleasing. Only in ME.

2 verb trans. Love. Now only in pass. (foll. by by, of). LME.

SHAKES. Mids. N. D. I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia. BYRON I loved, and was beloved again. G. B. SHAW The master beloved by masters, Mozart.

beloved /bɪ'ləvɪd, less usu. -'lʌvd/ ppl adjective & noun. LME.

[ORIGIN from BELOVE + -ED.]

► A ppl adjective. Dearly loved. LME.

SHAKES. Lear Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved if all could so become it. LD MACAULAY Impatient to be once more in his beloved country.

► B noun. A beloved person, a sweetheart. LME.

below /bɪ'ləʊ/ adverb & preposition. LME.

[ORIGIN from BE + preposition + LOW adjective.]

► A adverb. 1 gen. At or to a lower position relative to another, lower down. LME. ►b Lower down a slope or the course of a river, downstream. M17. ►c Lower on a sheet or page; at the foot of the page; later in a book or article. U17.

GOLDSMITH The child . . . leaped from her arms into the flood below. TENNYSON From below Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow. K. AMIS The slamming of the car doors below made them both jump.

2 a Under heaven; on earth (often preceded by here), arch. or poet. U16. ►b Under the earth; rhet. in hell. E17.

a KEATS Finer spirits cannot breathe below in human climes. b SHAKES. Temp. Night kept chain'd below. SOUTHEY The fiends below were ringing his knell.

3 On or to a lower floor; downstairs; esp. (NAUTICAL) below deck. U16.

SHAKES. Merry W. There's one Master Brook below would fain speak with you. R. H. DANA It being the turn of our watch to go below.

4 fig. In or to a lower rank, position, station, etc. E17.

D. M. WALKER The result of an appeal may be to affirm, modify, or reverse the decision of the court below.

5 Lower than the zero of a temperature scale. U18.

P. THEROUX This is the worst winter I've ever seen. Ten below in Chicago.

► B preposition. 1 gen. Lower in position than, at less elevation than. U16. ►b Lower down a slope than; downstream from; further south than. E17. ►c Lower down a page than; later in a work than. M18.

SIR W. SCOTT He never counted him a man Would strike below the knee. T. S. EUROT At dawn we came down to a temperate valley. Wet, below the snowline. b SHAKES. Meas. for M. Meet me at the consecrated fount. A league below the city. Publishers Weekly In the desperately poor South, the country below Naples.

2 Directly beneath; covered by, underneath; deeper than. E17.

TENNYSON Some dolorous message knit below The wild pulsation of her wings. LD KAVIN The necessity for study below the surface seems to have been earliest recognised in anatomy. A. S. J. JESSIMOND The still green light below tall trees.

3 Lower in rank, position, etc., than. E17. ►b Lower in some quality than; inferior to. E18. ►c Lower in amount, value, weight, temperature, etc., than. E18.

STEELE He . . . gives his orders . . . to the Servants below him. J. HELLER In marrying your father, I married very far below my station. b LD MACAULAY How far my performance is below excellence.

4 Unworthy of, unbecoming to, lowering to (more freq. expressed by beneath). M17.

STEELE It was below a Gentlewoman to wrangle. R. A. PROCTOR Too far below contempt to be worth castigating.

— PHRASES (of adverb & preposition): below deck(s): see DECK noun¹ 2. below ground: see GROUND noun. below one's breath: see BREATH noun. below par: see PAR noun. below stairs: see STAIR 1. below the belt: see BELT noun. below the gangway: see GANGWAY 3b. below there: warning to beware of a falling object. below the salt: see SALT noun¹. from below from a lower place. watch below: see WATCH noun.

Bel Paese /bɛl pa: 'eɪzi, foreign bel pa:'eɪzə/ noun phr. E20.

[ORIGIN Italian, lit. 'beautiful country'.] (Proprietary name for) a rich, white, creamy cheese of mild flavour orig. made in Italy.

Belshazzar noun see BALTHAZAR.

†belswagger noun. U16–U18.

[ORIGIN Perh. a contr. of belly-swagger 'one who swags his belly'; see SWAG verb, -ER.]

A swaggering bully; a pimp.

belt /bɛlt/ noun.

[ORIGIN Old English belt, corresp. to Old High German balz, Old Norse belt (Swedish belt, Danish bælt), from Germanic from Latin balteus girdle, of Etruscan origin. In branch II from the verb.]

► I 1 A flat encircling strip of cloth, leather, etc., worn around the waist or from the shoulder to the opposite hip to support clothes, weapons, etc., or as a decorative accessory. OE. ►b spec. Such a belt worn as a mark of rank or distinction by an earl, knight, boxing champion, etc. LME. ►c spec. Such a belt used to support the figure; a suspender belt; a corset. U19. ►d (W. specifying colour.) Such a belt indicating by its colour the wearer's level of proficiency in judo or karate; a person entitled to wear this. E20.

C. BOUTELL The sword . . . hung from a belt that passed over the shoulder. A. POWELL He wore a loosely made camel's-hair overcoat, the unfastened belt of which trailed behind him. J. STEINBECK His jeans were held up by a wide harness-leather belt with a big square brass buckle. fig. SHAKES. Macb. He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause Within the belt of rule.

b THACKERAY They fight each other for the champion's belt and two hundred pounds a side. c R. LEHMANN Etty wears . . . just her belt and knickers.

chastity belt, suspender belt, etc. d black belt, red belt, white belt, etc.

2 A broad strip or stripe of any kind, or a continuous series of objects, encircling something. M17.

SOUTHEY A level belt of ice which bound . . . The waters of the sleeping Ocean round. R. W. EMERSON A belt of mirrors round a taper's flame. P. MOORE Through a small telescope Jupiter shows as a yellowish, flattened disk, crossed by the streaks which we term belts.

3 A broad flexible strap. U17. ►b A flexible strip for feeding a machine gun with ammunition. U19. conveyer belt, safety belt, seat belt, etc.

4 An endless strap passing around wheels, rollers, etc., for communicating motion or for conveying articles or material. U18.

C. S. FORESTER The belt bore the peas steadily along to the farther drum. Reader's Digest Automobiles leaving the belt as finished products.

5 A broad band or stripe crossing a surface (esp. that of the earth) from which it is differentiated in some way; a zone or region of distinct character or occupancy. E19.

A. B. HART Illinois is divided into a wheat belt, a corn belt, and the city of Chicago. TOLKIEN A belt of tall and very ancient oaks. J. LE GUIN The Green Mountains where it rained up to forty inches a year, the rain belt.

Bible Belt, green belt: see GREEN adjective.

► II 6 The wool sheared from the hindquarters of a sheep. Now rare or obsolete. M17.

7 A heavy blow or stroke. U19.

— PHRASES: belt and braces fig. a policy of twofold security, hit below the belt: see HIT verb. SAN BROWNE belt. tighten one's belt fig. (a) bear hunger philosophically; (b) introduce economies. under one's belt (a) (of food) eaten or otherwise absorbed; (b) securely acquired. VAN ALLEN BELT.