The progress of /ʌ/.

Many Modern English strong verbs have past participles with /ʌ/ in the root; many of those verbs also have /ʌ/ in the root in the finite past. The majority of these pasts and past participles are inherited from Old English (or are early Old Norse loan-words), but some are innovations. They fall into the following classes in terms of when they first appear in the historical record.

1. Inherited from Old English.
   (a) /i/ in the present, /æ/ or /æ:/ in the finite past:
   begin, began, begun < OE begīnna, begann, begunnon, begunnen (the velar g has been levelled into the present; unlike most words with velar g before a front vowel, this verb can’t be a Norse loan because it didn’t exist in Norse)
   drink, drank, drunk < OE drincan, dranc, druncon, druncen
   shrink, shrank, shrunk < OE scrincan, scranc, scruncon, scruncen ‘wither, shrink’
   sing, sang, sung < OE singan, sang, sungon, sungen
   sink, sank, sunken < OE sincan, sanc, suncon, suncen
   spring, sprang, sprung < OE springan, sprang, springon, springen
   stink, stank, stunk < OE stincan, stanc, stuncon, stuncen ‘smell (intrans.)’
   swim, swam, swum < OE swimman, swamm, swummon, swommen
   (b) /i/ in the present, /ʌ/ in the finite past:
   cling, clung, clung < OE clīngan, clanc, clungon, clungen ‘wither, contract, cling’
   slink, slunk, slunk < OE slīncan, slanc, sluncon, sluncen ‘crawl, slink’
   spin, spun, spun < OE spinan, spann, spunnon, spunnen
   sting, stung, stung < OE stingan, stang, stungon, stungen ‘thrust in, stab, sting’
   swing, swung, swung < OE swingan, swang, swuncon, swungen ‘flog, beat, strike’
   win, won, won < OE winnan, wann, wunnon, wunnen ‘labor, struggle, fight, attain’
   wring, wrung, wrung < OE wrīngan, wrang, wrungon, wrungen ‘twist, wring out’
   (c) other:
   run, ran, run < OE irnan, arn, urnon, urnen and (much rarer) rīnna, rann, runnon, runnen
2. Early Old Norse loanwords.

sling, slung, slung ← ON slyngva, slông, slungu, slunginn

fling, flung, flung: first attested ca. 1300 in northern Middle English (we have no earlier northern material); apparently borrowed from ON flengja ‘flog’, but the latter is a weak verb (past 3sg. flengði); the English verb might have been borrowed from an unattested ON strong verb *flenga of which flengja was the derived intensive—or, when [ɛŋ] became [iŋ] in English, the borrowed verb flengja might have become strong, in which case it belongs below

3. Middle English additions.

ring, rang, rung ← OE hringan, hringe, hringde; past ringed survives into the 18th c., but rang appears ca. 1300, and both pl. rongen (where “o” spells /u/) and past ptc. i-rungen already in the 13th c.

4. Early Modern English additions.

string, strung, strung: derived from the noun string in the 16th century; past and past ptc. stringed occur, but past ptc. strung appears by the 1590’s and past strung by the 1630’s

stick, stuck, stuck ← OE stician, sticode, sticod; past and past ptc. stucked survive into the 17th c., but strong forms begin to appear in the 15th c. (past stak in the north), and past and past ptc. stuck appear in the 16th c.

dig, dug, dug: apparently borrowed from French diguer in the 14th c.; past and past ptc. digged are normal into the 18th c., but past ptc. dug appears in the 16th and past dug in the 18th

hang, hung ~ hanged, hung ~ hanged ← OE hōn, hēng, hēngon, hangen (trans.) and hangian, hangode, hangod (intrans.), probably also ON hengja, hengði, hengt (trans.); the development seems to have been:

1) the root-syllable of past ptc. hangen was levelled into the present, and the regular shortening and raising of the vowel in the trans. past gave a paradigm hang, past hing;

2) in the north, the Norse loan regularly became (present) hing, and its regular past hinged was replaced by strong hang before ca. 1300;
3) to the new northern paradigm hing, hang a past ptc. hung was created, which spread southwards and eventually muscled its way into the finite past (like dug, see immediately above); past and past ptc. hung are standard by the end of the 16th c.

The spread of hung at the expense of hanged relegated the latter to specialized use (‘executed by hanging’).

*strike, struck, struck* ← OE strīcan, strāc, stricon, stricen: the ablaut should be *strike, stroke, stricken*, and until the early modern period it was; past ptc. *strucken* appears in the 16th c., and past and past participle *struck* in the 17th

5. Modern English additions.

*sneak, sneaked ~ snuck, sneaked ~ snuck*: the verb first appears in the 16th c. with no obvious source; *snuck* is first attested from New Orleans in the 1880’s as a non-standard form

Philip Baldi (Classics, Penn State) reports hearing *rutch* for reached at a sports event (!).