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THE ANZACS AND THEIR WORDS

BRUCE MOORE

The First World War suddenly threw together people from vastly different backgrounds, people who had no other reason than the fact of war itself for living together in extraordinarily close and intimate circumstances. It also had a profound effect on Australian English.

In the Introduction to his *Digger Dialects* (1919) W.H. Downing comments: 'By the conditions of their service, and by the howling desolation of the battle-zones, our men were isolated during nearly the whole of the time they spent in theatres of war, from the ways, the thoughts and the speech of the world behind them.' This sentence is interesting because it demonstrates the lexical inventiveness of wartime experience (this is the earliest recorded occurrence of the term **theatre of war**), and because it explains the reason for that inventiveness—since warfare is a new experience, those involved in it need a new language to adapt to their new situation and to construct ways of coping with it. When Tom Skeyhill in 'Soldier Songs from Anzac' (1915) wrote: 'We've forgotten all our manners/And our talk is full of slang', he similarly points to the break between civilian and war experience and the need to find new terms that are able to express this experience.

It is inevitable that most wartime terms do not survive their wartime contexts, for the end of a war brings to an end the need for such terms. This is illustrated by the following terms from Downing's *Digger Dialects:* **belly-ache** 'a mortal wound'; **boy-with-his-boots-off** 'a shell which bursts before the sound of its passage through the air is heard'; **broken-doll** 'an inefficient staff-officer returned to his unit'; **camouflaged Aussie** 'an Englishman serving with the AIF'; **to go into cold storage** 'to be killed during the 1916 winter'; **lance-corporal bacon** 'bacon consisting of fat through which runs a thin streak of lean'. Most of the terms picked up by the soldiers from foreign languages likewise did not survive after the war. Yet whereas these terms have been lost, the First World War produced a number of major Australian cultural icons, especially the terms **Anzac**, **digger**, and **Aussie**.

The term **digger** in the military sense is a transferred use of the meaning 'a miner on the Australian goldfields'. Throughout the twentieth century it retained the military associations established in the First World War (it was widely used during the Second World War, and during the Vietnam War the Americans still knew the Australians as 'diggers'). The term has also undergone a widening of meaning: in many contexts 'digger' and its abbreviated form 'dig' are used devoid of their military connotations (as a synonym for 'cobber' or 'mate').

It was the First World War that produced the term **Aussie** for 'Australia' (1915: 'A farewell dance for the boys going home to 'Aussie' tomorrow'), and for 'Australian soldier' (in 1918 the Sydney *Truth* writes: 'We consider the term Aussie or Ossie as evolved is a properly picturesque and delightfully descriptive designation of the boys who have gone forth from Australia'), and more generally for 'an Australian' or 'Australian' (1927: 'Our much prized Aussie hats').

Many other common Australian terms had their origin in the First World War. The firm J. Furphy & Sons Pty Ltd operated a foundry at Shepparton, Victoria, and water-carts were included among their products. These water-carts, bearing the name 'Furphy', were used in the First World War. Very quickly the term **furphy** came to mean 'a rumour or false report, an absurd story'—perhaps because drivers of the carts were notorious for bringing rumours into the camps, or because the conversations which took place around the cart were sources of gossip and rumour. The term **oil** in the sense 'information, news' (a transferred use of 'oil' as the substance essential to the running of a machine) and its compounds **dinkum oil**, **straight oil**, and **good oil** all gained wide currency as services slang. The term **possie** for 'position of

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EDITORIAL

GOLD! GOLD! GOLD! is the title of Bruce Moore's book which has just been published by Oxford University Press. The gold rushes of the nineteenth century, especially those of the 1850s, were a crucial defining point in Australian history, bringing with them far-reaching social and economic changes. They also brought with them a new language. In 1851 one newspaper reported: *The excitement in Sydney continues to increase. A glance at the advertising columns of the newspapers will give you a little idea of the universal mania. 'Gold, gold, gold' is the standing head of every shopkeeper's advertisement.* Here was a new linguistic world of cradles, long toms, and puddling machines; of cockatoo rushes, dodgers' rushes, and storekeepers' rushes; of grog-shanties, sly-grog tents, and tippling booths; of bottoms, second bottoms, and false bottoms; of shicers, duffers, and blanks; of bushrangers, Pentonvillains, and Vandemonians; of hatters, night fossickers, and shepherds; of gold fever, gold mania, and yellow fever; of cradlers, puddlers, and sluicers. The language of gold is the subject of this book. It takes the form of a dictionary, with detailed supporting quotations from contemporary texts. The quotations have been chosen not only for the historical information they provide, but also for their readability, for the ways in which they evoke the living pulse of the golden era. *All that glisters,* said Shakespeare, *is not gold.* This book glisters but it is not pyritic. It is a nugget of exceptional value.

Frederick Ludowyk

Frederick Ludowyk
Editor, *Ozwords*

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL DICTIONARY CENTRE
A JOINT AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

supposed advantage to the occupant; a place; a job' is now so entrenched in Australian English that few realise it had its origin in trench warfare as the term for an individual soldier's place of shelter or firing position. It is in First World War Australian military contexts that **souvenir** in the sense 'to appropriate; to steal; to take as a souvenir' first appears. The term **plonk** (probably a corruption of French *blanc* in *vin blanc* 'white wine') appears to have begun its Australian career during the First World War. It is also in First World War Australian military contexts that many Australian idioms are first recorded: **his blood's worth bottling**, **give it a burl**, **hop in for one's chop**, **come a gutser**, **rough as bags**.

The term **Anzac** appears in 1915 (in C.E.W. Bean's diary) as an acronym formed from the initial letters of *Australian and New Zealand Army Corps,* originally used as a telegraphic code name for the Corps. In the same year it was used as an abbreviation for 'Anzac Cove' at Gallipoli, and then as a term for the 'Gallipoli campaign'. In 1916 it was first used to refer to a member of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps who served in the Gallipoli campaign. In honour of the fact that they fought at Gallipoli, the Anzacs were commanded in 1919 to attach a small brass 'A' above the colour patch on their sleeve.

During the war the term 'Anzac' was used in various compounds: an **Anzac button** was 'a nail used in place of a trouser button', **Anzac soup** was 'shell-hole water polluted by a corpse', **Anzac stew** was 'an urn of hot water and one bacon rind', and an **Anzac wafer** was 'a hard biscuit supplied to the AIF in place of bread'. These terms did not survive their wartime contexts, although the **Anzac wafer** survives transformed into the **Anzac biscuit** (and, more recently, the **Anzac cookie**).

One of the most recent widenings of the word **Anzac** has enabled it to take in someone who is not a soldier at all. Anything but. This is the stereotypical (and largely stereomythical) lean bronzed Aussie male, perceived as the successor of the dinkum **Anzac** (who, by the laws of mythologising, must surely have been lean, bronzed, and handsome too). Aussie lifesavers are at the crux of the stereotype. The nexus between the myth of the dinkum Anzac and the myth of the bronzed and burnished lifesaver is caught allusively by that old warhorse Bruce Ruxton: 'RSL president Bruce Ruxton called gay servicemen fairies at the RSL State Conference. He said it was 'unbelievable' that the Australian Defence Force allowed an army float in this year's [Sydney Gay and Lesbian] Mardi Gras. Ruxton added, "The **big bronzed Anzac** is now turning into a fairy" ' (*Brother Sister News,* 11 July 1996).

It was during the First World War that an extremely important compound was formed. This was **Anzac Day**. The first Anzac Day was proclaimed by the acting prime minister George Pearce to be held on 25 April 1916, and some 60,000 to 100,000 people took part in Anzac Day activities in the Domain in Sydney. In Egypt, Australian soldiers commemorated the day with a religious service followed by sports and entertainments. In London, 2000 Australian and New Zealand troops marched through the streets to a service at Westminster Abbey attended by Lord Kitchener and the King and Queen. The tradition continued, with marches of AIF troops in various cities, from 1917 on. The term **Anzac march**, however, is not recorded until 1945, and **Anzac parade** is first recorded in 1966. Preparations for the first **Anzac Day** are reported in *Truth* (Sydney) 9 April 1916:

> What? We're going to have an **Anzac Day**,
> A night of Fireworks and Illumination.
> For which ratepayers they will have to pay
> To hold high revelry and jubilation,
> Strange conduct this is, truly be it said,
> To hold a picnic o'er Australia's dead.

This earliest quotation points to an ambivalence in the concept of celebrating death, and it is the beginning of a complex series of ambivalences that have surrounded the day, expressed most clearly in Alan Seymour's 1962 play *The One Day of the Year.*

The term **dawn service** (sometimes called **dawn parade**) is much later than **Anzac Day**. Our earliest citation appeared in the *Annual Report of the WA Branch of the Returned Services League 1929:*

> Anzac Day, 1929, will be historic, for on that day the first commemoration took place at the unfinished State War Memorial beautifully situated in King's Park. It was in the breaking dawn of April 25th, 1915, that Australian troops landed on the beaches of Gallipoli. Afterwards, both at Gallipoli and in France, the hours preceding sunrise were usually chosen by the High Command for the launching of some great enterprise. It was, therefore, appropriate that the first duty of the day should be to lay a wreath on the unfinished State Memorial at dawn in remembrances of our dead comrades. ... The moon hung low in the West whilst the grey dawn peeped above the dim outline of the Ranges. Eerie figures stumbled over boulders strewn at the base of the Monument, now discerned against the crimson sky. Below the sleeping city, and from across the peaceful river a chill Easterly wind. There is a hush, and the first wreath is laid, followed one by one until the loving task is done. Momentarily heads were bowed, and then the crashing shot from a gun near by. The Reveille completed the simple **dawn service**.

Whereas **dawn service** was a relative latecomer on the scene, it has grown in popularity, such that in some parts of Australia the numbers attending the dawn service rival those attending the **Anzac march.**

MAILBAG

Letters are welcome. Please address letters to: Frederick Ludowyk, Editor, *Ozwords*,
The Australian National Dictionary Centre, Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200
Email: Fred.Ludowyk@anu.edu.au Fax: (02) 6249 0475

We welcome readers' comments on their recent observations of Australian usage, both positive and negative, and their queries, particularly those not easily answerable from the standard reference books.

HACKLING THE HECKLERS

At 7.15 or so on this beautiful morning of the 27th of October in the Year of Our Lord 1999, I happened to hear the ABC Radio talkback host [name provided] say to a distinguished guest (whose name I now forget) that something or other (which escapes my mind) would **raise people's heckles**. I can't remember her exact words, but **heckles** is what she said. Is this a new meaning of the word? Are my **hackles** being needlessly raised?

Ken Phillips
ACT

No and no. Next time she raises your hackles, just you heckle her. By the bye, in case you don't know, ***hackles*** *are the feathers on the neck of certain birds (the domestic cock comes to mind) which rise when the bird is roused or about to fight; they are also the erectile hairs atop a hound's neck which bristle when the beast is fighting mad—when it is about to kill a fatigued fox, let us say, for its master's aesthetic delight. The word comes from Middle English* hechele *(c. 1300),* hekele *(c. 1440), which in turn come from a putative Old English* *hacule. ***Heckle*** *is merely a dialectal variant of* ***hackle****. Aren't words fun?* **Ed.**

WHEN THE COW KICKED AUNTIE

My mother and her siblings are between seventy and eighty years old and were born and grew up near Sale, East Gippsland. In about 1939 they moved to Geelong. As long as I can remember they have used a curious and, I think, funny expression that I have never heard used by anyone else. If something has not happened for a very long time, they say that it hasn't happened 'since the cow kicked auntie'.

Now, I think this unusual expression must have originated earlier than the previous generation, because none of my mother's aunts was ever called 'auntie'. Indeed, they were quite formidable (and interesting) women, who either had nicknames like 'Mungie' and 'Mim' (on her mother's side) or were called by the more formal 'Aunt Jean' or 'Aunt Kath' (on her father's). As far as I know, none of them was ever kicked by a cow. Moreover, I am told that it would be almost impossible to be kicked by a cow unless you were milking it, because the hind legs of cows can only kick forward.

I see that there is a reference to 'auntie' in the *Australian National Dictionary*, and wonder if this strange bit of folklore is worth noting in case someone else reports it.

Angus Trumble
Adelaide

Were there any among our readers who have heard this engaging expression, I should be delighted to hear from her or him. It is too good to be a one-off. **Ed.**

LOANING A LEND

My daughter, who is fourteen, has this ... grating expression: 'Can I have a **lend** of this or that?' ... She isn't the only one. Her friends do it also. ... Is this just a fad of teenspeak, or is it acceptable now to use **lend** as a noun? My dictionary is no help (perhaps it's out of date).

Jenny B
NSW

Your daughter's usage is not acceptable as yet, although it is widespread in Australia (and not just among teens). If the trend persists, and your daughter comes to edit Shakespeare when she is in her twenties, she may well make Mark Antony say, 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, give us a lend of your ears!' *Yes, it does grate, doesn't it? Persuade your daughter (until she has her day) to avoid using* **lend** *as a noun in anything approaching formal writing or speech (unless she is writing a story in which the main character is a contemporary Australian girl of fourteen, in which case it will be mandatory for her to make that character say 'Hey Sue, give us a lend of your lippie!').*

I chuckle to think that **lend** *was a noun as well as a verb in bygone days. Your teenage daughter is on speaking terms with the ancients, whereas you and I are not at all with it or them. The* **-d** *of* **lend** *was added in the Middle English period so that* **lend** *and* **loan** *are much the same word. Your daughter would approve of this: 'Quhat is ane lenne, and of the restitutioun thairof' ['What constitutes a* **lend** *and its repayment']* (marginal annotation in *Balfour's Practicks* c.1575). **Ed.**

WHY IS ALRIGHT ALWRONG?

What is wrong with the spelling 'alright'? My poker mates and I know it is wrong because my dictionary says so, and dictionaries are infallible like the pope. But WHY is it wrong? This is what we are arguing about.

J. Cook and Several Friends
Queensland

Dictionaries may pontificate as if ex cathedra *but, unlike the fisherman of Rome, they are* not *infallible. Being involved in the endlessly fascinating business of dictionary-making, I can vouch for this as a fact.* Alright *is quite definitely (and illogically)* alwrong *at present, but give it another ten years or so and it is almost certain to be alright. I say 'illogically' because we have* **already** *as canonically correct (not* all ready, *which is something quite else),* **altogether** *(not* all together*),* **almost** *(not* all most*),* **also** *(not* all so*), and so forth.*

The vexed issue of **alright** *is tackled by the editors of the* New Oxford Dictionary of English *(1998), and I am lazy enough to quote them. They point out:* The merging of **all** and **right** to form the one-word spelling **alright** is not recorded until the end of the 19th century (unlike other similar merged spellings such as **altogether** and **already**, which date from much earlier). There is no logical reason for insisting on **all right** as two words, when other single-word forms such as **altogether** have long been accepted. Nevertheless it is still considered by many people to be unacceptable in formal writing. In the British National Corpus around 5 per cent of citations for the two forms are for the one-word form **alright**.'

The British National Corpus is a carefully balanced selection of 100 million words of written and spoken English text in electronic form, available for computational analysis. At the Australian National Dictionary Centre we have our own corpus of contemporary Australian English, and it shows that the incidence of ***alright*** *in Australian English is running at about 20%. Controlled analysis of documents on the Internet confirms the 20% figure for Australia, and demonstrates that* ***alright*** *is more common in Australia than in Britain or the United States. I hope that all this info helps you and your poker mates.* **Ed.**

IS A CHEF'S HAT A SOUFFLÉ?

A thorough search through Concise and Oxford Complex on CD has not revealed a special word/words describing a chef's or cook's hat. ... Do you know such a term, which I feel I may have come across but can't recall?

Kishor Dabke
Melbourne

I too have this vague feeling that there is a specific name for the silly hat that a chef wears, but I cannot pin it down. Why this form of hat anyway? What is its history? Can any cluey chef (or non-cheffish person into headwear) help? **Ed.**

FROM THE CENTRE

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL DICTIONARY CENTRE

The Australian National Dictionary Centre is jointly funded by **Oxford University Press Australia** and the **Australian National University** to research all aspects of Australian English and to publish Australian dictionaries and other works.

THE CONFERENCE

The conference 'Who's Centric Now? The Present State of Post-Colonial Englishes', held at the Australian National University last October, was highly successful. The papers presented at the conference will be published by Oxford University Press later this year. During the conference Gough Whitlam launched the new *Australian Oxford Dictionary*, describing it as 'the best dictionary we've had in this country'. It is the largest dictionary the Centre has produced, and it differs from most of our other dictionaries in including detailed encyclopedic entries. John Simpson, chief editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, gave a public lecture on the Thursday evening of the conference. In a ceremony that immediately preceded the public lecture, John was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters by the Chancellor of the Australian National University.

VALE PETER ROSE

Peter Rose has been Trade and Reference Publisher of Oxford University Press for ten years. He has overseen the publication of many of the Centre's dictionaries and other books, and has been a driving force behind the publication of *Ozwords*. He resigned from OUP in March. He will be greatly missed both at the Melbourne headquarters of OUP and here at the Dictionary Centre in Canberra. We wish him every success in his writing career and his new life in Adelaide.

VOLUNTARY READERS

We have a small but enthusiastic team of people who do voluntary reading for us, collecting quotations from printed material as part of the research that will help us produce a new edition of *The Australian National Dictionary*. These readers keep an eye out for interesting uses of Australian words and meanings, and especially for new words. Country newspapers are a good source for these, but we find it difficult to gain access to them. If you would like to join the team, or would like more information about the reading program, write to Julia Robinson at the Centre, or email her at <Julia.Robinson@anu.edu.au>.

GOOSE CLUB

The **goose club** is an English tradition, a forerunner of the Christmas club. Members contributed to a fund that provided them with a goose at Christmas time. In Australia at the end of the nineteenth century there were **goose and bottle clubs**. In 1898 the *Bulletin* reported: 'Goose-and-bottle clubs are popular in Melbourne. Members pay in every week, and at Xmas get a goose and so much drink to take home. The affair is held at a pub.' At some stage in Australia the goose club transformed itself into a raffle. Our evidence shows that goose club raffles are especially common in Queensland clubs, although they have also been held in New South Wales. But we are not entirely sure what they entail. Can you help us out? And is the term used outside Queensland and New South Wales?

WINDSOR, BELGIAN, AND EMPIRE

Windsor, **Belgian**, and **Empire sausages** were discussed in the May 1999 number of *Ozwords*. The anecdotal evidence is that these terms arose during the First World War to replace the German associations of *German sausage* and *fritz*. **Windsor sausage** is a Queensland term, **Belgian sausage** is Tasmanian, and **Empire sausage** belongs to the Newcastle area. Brisbane-born poet Rhyll McMaster refers to 'sliced Windsor' in her 1986 poem 'Holiday House', but printed evidence for these terms is proving extremely hard to find. Can any readers help us out? Even newspaper advertisements would be useful to us.

SUICIDE NET

A **suicide net** or **suicide dilly** is a cone-shaped net made of fine mesh, used for catching crabs. The net is attached to a metal ring about a metre in diameter. Bait is placed in the net, and the ring is set firmly on the sea or estuary floor. The crabs try to get at the bait, and become enmeshed in the net—thus 'suicide net'. We believe that the term is used in Queensland, but would be interested to know if it is used elsewhere. The corresponding term in some parts of Australia is **witch's hat**. Again, any early printed evidence for the term would be helpful.

DROP BEARS

The Centre recently completed a project for the new Australian National Museum, which opens in February 2001. It is an exhibition of forty-five Australian terms, with a brief account of their meaning and history. We included this definition (aimed very much at overseas visitors) for **drop bear**: 'An animal similar in appearance to a koala, but about 1.5 metres in height, with very sharp claws and teeth. They eat other animals, but they also have a taste for humans, especially overseas tourists. Their name derives from the fact that they lurk in trees, and drop down on their unsuspecting victims.' Our earliest evidence for **drop bears** is in Nancy Keesing's *Lily on the Dustbin* (1982), and she claims that they were invented during the Second World War to frighten American servicemen. But we have no evidence for the term before 1982. Can anyone help?

BROGGY

Do you know the phrase **doing a broggy**? It means producing a skid mark on a dirt road when riding a bicycle, **broggy** being the mark produced. When the driver of a car performs the same senseless manoeuvre, he or she is **doing a doughnut**. Most of our evidence for the term **broggy** comes from Western Australia. But what is the origin of the word? Some have suggested that it is a corruption of **broadie**, a shortening of **broadside**, but this seems implausible. Any ideas?

TWO CONFERENCES

AUSTRALEX, the Australasian Association for Lexicography, will hold its next regular conference on Monday 10 July 2000 at the University of Melbourne. You may obtain details at <http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/alex/> or get in touch with the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

In July 2001, the 13th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) will convene in Melbourne. This is the first time in the forty-year history of the Society that it will meet in the southern hemisphere. The theme of the congress is *Traditions and Transitions: Folk Narrative in the Contemporary World*. Papers from Australia are now being sought. For further details contact Susan Faine, Director, Victorian Folklife Association, PO Box 1765, Collingwood, Vic. 3066, or email her at <folklife@connexus.net.au>.

BRUCE MOORE
DIRECTOR

IT'S ONLY A PIPE: IT'S NOT A WORD LIKE FEDERATION

THE RESULT OF A FIELD TRIP MADE TO THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL DICTIONARY CENTRE IN OCTOBER 1999

DYMPHNA LONERGAN

I suppose lexicographers are well aware that when a new dictionary is published those of us with a particular focus are eager to find out how our area fares. So it was with great interest that I viewed the about-to-be-released *Australian Oxford Dictionary* (1999) at the Australian, National Dictionary Centre (ANDC) in Canberra last October. My own interest is in the Irish language as it occurs in an English setting and in the etymological accreditation it receives in English language dictionaries.

For centuries now, Irish Gaelic words have contributed to the richness of English. Until recently many of these words had rarely appeared in print and, when they did, they were written according to English phonetics, losing their Irishness in the process. By the time the first English dictionaries focused on etymology, Irish Gaelic words had been anglicised to such an extent that they were often mistaken for English words. Furthermore, even when the Irish Gaelic origin was known, etymology was sometimes recorded as *Anglo-Irish* and not as *Irish.*

Times have changed. Revisionism has forced us to challenge some of our previously held assumptions. The result has been a gain for the recognition of Irish Gaelic's contribution to the English lexicon. With this in mind, I happily perused the *Australian Oxford Dictionary (AOD)* at the ANDC, where I was undertaking research. I was delighted to see that the origin of the Australian colloquialism **kip** (the piece of wood from which coins are spun in two-up) included a reference to Irish *cipín* 'a little stick' and that **gombeen** ('usury') was now of Ir. etymology and not 'Anglo-Irish'—as had been the case with the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1968). Similarly **gossoon** ('a lad') has been correctly identified as *Ir.* in Bruce Moore's *AOD* (from Irish Gaelic *garsún*). The colloquialism **gob**, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* had cited as 'obscure' and 'possibly Gael. & Ir. *gob*' in 1968, has made some progress in the *AOD.* It is no longer 'obscure', and the word 'possibly' has been replaced by 'perhaps'. The word **spree**, however, is still 'origin unknown'. It is likely that the *Oxford English Dictionary* will assign it an Irish origin in its next revised edition in the light of Irish Gaelic *spraoi* 1. 'fun, sport' 2. 'drinking bout' and our knowledge of the spread of the Gaelic-speaking Irish diaspora to the new colonies in the nineteenth century. The word **spree** as used in nineteenth-century Australian literature is certainly Irish in spirit. Those early settlers could only take so much hard work and isolation. So a couple of times a year they headed into the nearest town for a good spree. The word **spree** has been a favourite of nineteenth-century Australian writers, including Rolf Boldrewood. There are ten occurrences of **spree** in his *Robbery Under Arms.*

Of course general dictionaries cannot include all the words of a language.

> *For centuries now, Irish Gaelic words have contributed to the richness of English*

Criteria are set, and words accepted or rejected in accordance with their adherence to such criteria. When the good people at the Australian National Dictionary Centre kindly gave me free rein to examine their databases, I was instantly drawn not to the collection of cards that formed the basis of their published dictionaries, but to the two ten-drawer filing cabinets located in the tea room and labelled REJECTS. I suspected that I might find many of my 'Irish' words in here, labelled 'obscure' or 'unknown'. Many reject words have suffered that fate for being unique—that is, only one citation has been found. For my own research I was happy enough to find the single occurrence of 'Bendigo *Faugh-a-ballahs*' in the 'reject' file. William Howitt in his *Land, Labor and Gold: or Two Years in Victoria* (1855) noted this as a name given to thieves. More than likely the Bendigo *faugh-a-ballahs* were highwaymen or bushrangers. Were they Irish highwaymen I wondered. The phrase *faugh-a-ballah* is a disguised Irish phrase *fág an bealach,* literally 'leave the road' but usually used in the sense 'get out of the way'. It is also an Irish war-cry of sorts. It was written on the banner of Irish regiments in the American Civil War. Thomas Keneally has entitled one of his chapters in *The Great Shame* (1998) 'Faugh-a-Ballagh', the chapter providing an account of the origin of the Irish American regiments that fought under this named flag. However interesting the history of this phrase may be, and however intriguing to speculate on its particular use in Australia during the gold rushes, unfortunately it does not qualify as a dictionary entry.

Whereas evidence in the form of a number of citings is part of the criteria for the inclusion of a word in a dictionary, it does not necessarily follow that many citings will take a word over the line. Such is the case with the word *doodeen*—Irish *dúidín* 'a short pipe'. My current research includes the compilation of a glossary of Irish Gaelic words in use in Australian literature. The entry for *dúidín,* to date, is as follows:

> **dúidín** n. A short smoking pipe. Also in forms **dhudeen, dudeen, dudun. 1845** James Tucker, *Ralph Rashleigh* 103: who only opened his oracular jaws to emit the smoke of his dhudeen. **1847** Alexander Harris, *Settlers and Convicts* 5: and the dudeen ... was in everybody's mouth. **1851** John Henderson, *Excursions and Adventures in New South Wales* vol. 2, 112: and sometimes an old clay cutty, or dudun. **1859** William Kelly, *Life in Victoria* 140: a short pipe of the true 'dudheen breed'. **1998** Thomas Keneally, *The Great Shame* 42: convict women ... smoking Brazil twist in dudeens, clay pipes sometimes scarcely half an inch long.

The short pipe brought by the Irish made a small but significant contribution to the distinctive 'look' of the Australian colonials. Nineteenth-century English travellers and writers in the colony took detailed notes on what the colonial male wore: the short smock, dungarees, the cabbage-tree hat, and (it appears always) a short clay pipe in his mouth. The 1851 entry in my glossary is a description of Aboriginal use of the *dúidín* as a substitute for the traditional bone through the nose. I was explaining all this to a young editor at the Dictionary Centre, and attempting to put forward a case for the inclusion of *dúidín* in future Australian National Dictionaries, when he suddenly blurted out: 'But it's only a pipe, it's not a word like Federation.' With that I felt the might of an imperialistic giant foot squashing my small Irish ego. *'Fág a bealach,'* I said to myself. 'I'm off on a spree.'

BRASS RAZOO: IS IT BUT A BREATH OF WIND?

FREDERICK LUDOWYK

[**BRASS RAZOO** (also **RAZOO**): an imaginary coin of trivial value; a jot, a farthing (almost invariably used in negative constructions): *I haven't a **brass razoo** to bless my name with. I don't give a **brass razoo** for your opinions! I'm down to my last **razoo*** (a rarish formulation, this).]

Etymologists hazard theories about the origin of this Aussie (and Enzed) phrase and word, but in the end they are forced to fall back on the formulation which indicates (but certainly does not even begin to sound the deeps of) their frustration: 'origin unknown'.

Eric Partridge in his *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* makes the tentative suggestion that **razoo** is 'apparently a corruption of the Maori *rahu*'. Harry Orsman in his *Dictionary of New Zealand English* (1997) says quite firmly: 'Origin unknown: the connection of Maori *raho* "testicle" with *(brass) razoo* is most unlikely.' G.A. Wilkes in his *Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms* (1996) has another tentative suggestion: '[?from *not a sou*]'. *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (1998): 'of unknown origin'. *The Macquarie Dictionary* (1997): '[origin uncertain]'. *The Australian National Dictionary* (1988): '[Of unknown origin]'. *Collins English Dictionary* (1991): '[of uncertain origin]'. *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1997): '[origin unknown; perhaps a corruption of SOU]'.

Given this universal nescience, it is quite a relief to be given an explanation of the origin of **brass razoo** which seems to make perfect sense. The explanation comes in the form of an affidavit from Russell L. Henry of Victoria, sworn on 22 December 1994:

> As a 14-year-old, late 1929, at my Uncle William Ross's party I embarrassed the gathering by breaking wind inadvertently. My Uncle took me into the hall, clipped my ear and as far as I can recall said words to this effect: 'If you have to let go an **ARSE RAZOO** you should always go into the garden before it happens.' When I enlisted in the Volunteer Militia with 4 Field Brigade on 1 November 1933 and [was] placed in 10 Battery in that unit, we had a lot of 1st AIF returned soldiers serving, aged in their late 30s, and I once heard them use the word **RAZOO**. This was the first time since four years back I had heard this strange word. I then asked my Uncle from which language this foreign word was derived. He told me that it was confined to Australian soldiers serving in France, and was a joke word between Australian infantry and American troops in the trenches circa 1918 based on the Yankee **RASPBERRY** also called a **RAZOO**—a blurt or mouth-sound made to sound like a fart. ... I was an official World War 2 Unit Historian to assist Messrs (A.W.M.) Gavin Long and David Dexter with my history, published 1950 and reprinted 1987. During research of World War I unit histories, not one prints the expression **razoo**, which indicates that it was not widespread until just after the armistice 1918, until 1919 in Australia, but mostly in the erroneous manner that it was actually thought to be a brass coin.

It is perfectly understandable that **ARSE razoo** should have been bowdlerised into **BRASS razoo** in 1918 or 1919, especially if brass razoo was thought to refer to a coin, as Mr Henry avers. The use of the word 'brass' for a coin of small value goes back centuries. Langland uses the word (probably in that sense) as early as **1362** in *Piers Plowman*, and in **1526** William Tindale translates Matthew X.9 as 'Posses not golde, nor silver, nor **brasse** yn youre gerdels'. And there is too, of course, the analogy with **brass farthing**, an emphatic equivalent of *farthing* in depreciatory expressions: **1642**: 'As bare and beggarly as if he had not one **brasse farthing**' (Daniel Rogers, *Naaman the Syrian, his Disease and Cure*, p. 32); **1880**: 'I care not one **brass farthing**' (Sir Walter Besant and James Rice, *The Seamy Side*, X. 78).

To add further weight to Mr Henry's etymology, the 20-volume Oxford English Dictionary has this to say of the word 'razoo': '**razoo**, var. **razzoo** ... [probably alteration of RASPBERRY, which is an elliptical use of *raspberry tart*, a derisive sound.] ridicule; the arousing of indignation or the like, provocation; a sound of contempt, a "raspberry". Also in the phrase ***to give the razoo***: to ridicule.' *OED* is too polite to spell it out, but *raspberry tart* is rhyming slang for 'fart'. *Webster's ... Dictionary of the English Language* (1989) gives one meaning of *raspberry* as a 'Bronx cheer' and defines **Bronx cheer** as '*U.S.* a vulgar spluttering noise made with the lips and tongue to show contempt or disgust'.

Given all this,—Mr Henry adds in an advertisement in the *Age* (early 1995) 'Re: RAZOO as coin. Its origin in war trenches, France, 1918, was from diminutive of American raspberry, mouth sound like a fart. ... Diggers changed "Not worth a fart" to "Not worth a Razoo"'—Mr Henry's etymology would seem to be watertight.

But I have a niggling worry. Or it may merely be a brass razooish cavil. All the early citations (the earliest we have is from 1919) use **razoo** by itself. The collocation **brass razoo** does not appear until 1968, nearly half a century later:

> **1919**: ' "Did you have any bank to kick off with?" "Not a **razoo**," returned his companion' (C. Drew, *The Doings of Dave*, p. 28); **1932**: 'The town shrieked money, yet Ginger had not a "**rahzoo**" to his name' (W. Hatfield, *Ginger Murdoch*, p. 35); **1942**: ' "I thought you might allow a little more under the circumstances, Joe!" "Not a **razoo**." ' (L. Mann, *The Go-Getter*, p. 39); **1955**: 'There's not one amongst them worth a **razoo**' (D. Niland, *The Shiralee*, p. 69); **1965**: 'My main worry was that when I did leave hospital ... I wouldn't have a **razoo** to my name' (R.H. Conquest, *Horses in the Kitchen: True Tales of Outback Australia*, p. 61); **1968**: 'But I reckoned you'd never get a **brass razoo** out of the Commos' (G. Dutton, *Andy*, p. 92); **1973**: 'They didn't get any rain for three years, and the lousy government never gave them a **brass razoo**' (F. Moorhouse, *Australian Stories*, p.30); **1982**: 'For all their pestering they never got a **brass razoo**, she shrieks triumphantly' (Rodney Hall, *Just Relations*, p. 487); **1986**: 'Two children knocked on the door ... with some cornflakes and milk and bread and butter. ... The constable ... thought we didn't have a "**razoo**" between us' (A. Bushell (ed.), *Yesterday's Daughters: Stories of our Past by Women over 70*, p. 101).

The sequence **ARSE RAZOO** ('a fart') deodorised into **BRASS RAZOO** and then shortened to **RAZOO** plain and simple seems improbable to me. To give Mr Henry his due, however, he did say in his affidavit: 'It appeared that the "arse" part was seldom used, as Razoo had been misunderstood by most hearing it as a so-called "brass" coin, a myth, to indicate worthlessness or derision.'

The jury is still out on this one. It frustrates me to have to say of (**brass**) **razoo** 'origin (*pace* Mr Henry!) still in doubt'.

SHE'S *FULLY* INTO RAP ... AND OTHER THINGS

ROLY SUSSEX

Roly Sussex reports on words and expressions collected from the language talkback programmes which he runs with the ABC in the Northern Territory, Queensland, and Tasmania.

REALLY IS NOT ENOUGH

Two new words for the intensifier really are **fully** and **majorly**. Examples from Australian teenagers include: *she is fully sick of the whole thing; he is fully in trouble; she is so fully tired that she crashed out at 9 pm; he is majorly infatuated with the idea of owning a Harley-Davidson.* **Majorly** has been around for about five years and is an Americanism. **Fully** in this sense is very recent, and its origin hasn't yet been determined. There have been other words for *really,* like *seriously* in *seriously rich—also* an Americanism. Some groups of teenagers eschew **fully** and **majorly** as lacking in style. But they are very widely used in the schools. Although **fully** is sometimes used by teenage males, it is especially used by teenage females. My data suggest that this is linked to the fact that teenage females are more expressive, or more exclamatory, than their male contemporaries.

POLLING IS REALLY ANGRY

For about the past two decades Queensland has been harbouring a strange neologism. The word is **polling** in the sense of 'seething with anger'. It can be used in two main ways: intransitive: *He's really **polling,*** i.e. 'he's really seething'; transitive + preposition: *He's **polling** after her,* i.e. 'he's angry with her'. **Polling** in this usage is strange because it doesn't have any obvious links to other uses of the verb *poll,* and in addition it seems grammatically odd: there are no other obvious expressions of anger which would fit. And the expression seems mainly restricted to the *-ing* form of the verb. Odder still. There aren't any reports of this usage outside Queensland.

ECHO PHRASES

Echo phrases—the term isn't universally accepted, but it is the best there is—are phrases or two or more words where one or more sounds of the second part echoes one or more sounds in the first. Some echo phrases are full rhymes: *namby pamby, ant's pants, bee's knees, duck's nuts, itsy bitsy, nitty gritty, lame brain.* Some echo phrases are alliterative and repeat only consonants or vowels with imperfect matching of consonants: *full as a fairy's phone-book, wham bam thanks Ma'am, jungle juice, rat race, road rage, Wild West.*

Echo phrases are very old, probably at least as old as proverbs such as *A stitch in time saves nine.* They are found in many languages—indeed, I would be surprised if they didn't occur in all languages. In English they number in their thousands. With the help of the radio listeners I have collected well over 3500. Some, like proverbs, are part of the perpetual fabric of the language. So are clichés like *crystal clear* or *pull your punches.* Others occur once and then fade away.

There doesn't seem to be a definitive listing of echo phrases for English, so it is difficult to establish which of them are Australian contributions. Likely candidates include: *laughing at the lawn* (we are good on alcohol and its effects), *full as a goog, full as a footy final, ridgy didge, happy as Larry, good grab* (a mark in AFL), *Foster's fart, fridge on the ridge* (a girls' school in Brisbane), *park the prawn, Romper Stomper, shaggin' wagon, sheikh of tweak* (the cricketer Shane Warne), *bangs like a dunny door, vee wee* (the VW car), *Oarsome Foursome, rare as rockinghorse manure.* And dozens more.

The exact functions of echo phrases are a topic for another day. What we do know is that they represent one aspect of creativity in language. We play with language, and one of the most fundamental forms of play involves patterns. Just think of nursery rhymes and skipping rhymes. Merely by making patterns, including echo phrases, we join up with some very ancient and visceral meanings of language.

BANYAN NIGHT

Some families in Australia have a **banyan night,** when the regular cooks down tools and the rest have to make do. The phrase comes from the navy. Several navies, in fact. In the RAN a **banyan** or **banyan party** involves putting a boat ashore and organising a barbecue, perhaps under the banyan tree, which is a large subtropical species of *Ficus.* In the Royal Navy a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

banyan day is now more usually taken in a bus, according to the RN's Web site and its honorary lexicographer, Commander Covey Crump. The RN used to have Monday, Wednesday, and Friday as meatless days by way of an economy measure. The sailors used to hoard their meat rations for banyan days, when they would go ashore to gather fruit and fresh produce. Meatless days were discontinued by the RN in 1884.

PLACE NAMES

Australia has its share of aristocratic and royal British names: Adelaide, Victoria, Queensland, Queenstown, Albert Park, King George Square. Palmerston, once the name of Darwin, is now the name of a suburb there.

But the oddest capital name history is Melbourne's. The city was formally named after Lord Melbourne in 1837. Before that time, however, a number of strange names were used for the capital of the Cabbage Patch: Batmania (after Batman; just as well it didn't take, in view of Batman and Robin), Bearbrass, Bareport, Bareheep, Barehurp, and Bareberp. Those names are not the stuff of which Olympic cities are made. The Bareberp Cup in November? I don't think so.

Roland Sussex is Professor of Applied Language Studies in the Centre for Language Teaching and Research at the University of Queensland (Brisbane 4072, Queensland). He is an Honorary Research Associate of the Australian National Dictionary Centre. His language talkback programmes are on local ABC stations on Tuesdays, in the Northern Territory at 10.30, in Queensland at 11.30, and in Tasmania at 2.30. The URL of the web site which supports these language broadcasts is <http://www.cltr.uq.edu.au/languagetalkback>.

OZWORDS COMPETITIONS

Ozwords Competition No. 12: results

For this competition readers were asked to neologise wittily and well. And so they did. Our panel of expert coiners at the Australian National Dictionary Centre tested the incoming coins by biting them and pronounced the following to be worthily false:

Honourable mentions (in alphabetical order): **Lianwe Evans** of WA for SOCOGNISANCE *n.* the desultory manner adopted by certain people in power in the mistaken belief that they alone know what the masses really want; **Carolyn Gordon** of SA for EUCALIFTUS *n.* the uplifting nationalistic feeling Australians get when they see depictions of 'the Bush'; **Colin Hinrichsen** of Tasmania for PROSTERICAL *adj.* (of men) affected by a functional disturbance of the nervous system characterised by excitability and lack of emotional control. (Mr Hinrichsen adds: 'My word is to counter the use of the word "hysterical" with the same definition but attributed predominantly to women and erroneously attributed to a disturbance of the womb [Greek *hystera* womb]. "Prosterical" acknowledges hysterical behaviour in men and also erroneously attributes it to a disturbance of the prostate.')

Second prize (books worth $50 from the OUP catalogue): **Roger Dettman** of SA for ROGETTHESAURUS *n.* the last extant member of the dinosaur family, but still enjoying a wide distribution. Characterised by a sturdy spine, a grossly enlarged but functional appendix, 1000 bold heads, yet only one brain.

First prize (books worth $100 from the OUP Catalogue): **Martin Pikler** of Canberra for OUTCORE *v.* to redefine a promise from 'core' to 'non-core' to avoid breaking a core promise (see corruption). -ING *n.* the process thereof. **Ed.**

Ozwords Competition No. 13

You are to imagine that a plethora of parliamentary pollies in Canberra, fed up with the words of our national anthem *Advance Australia Fair,* has set up an Australia-wide competition for poets and poetasters to submit new words to fit the old tune as silk sock fits the foot, the winner to be declared Australia's first Poet Laureate. The pollies' gringe against the old words, by the bye, is against one line in particular: 'Our home is girt by sea'. To tell you why, let their spokesperson have the floor (courtesy of the ABC's 7.30 Report, 30 February 2000):

spokesperson: Girt by sea? Now what, I ask myself bemusedly, is so special about that? It is an ineluctable attribute of islands that they *should* be girt by sea. It's the surrounding seaishness of islands that makes them islands and not something else. One could with equal portentousness praise our country by singing with awe: 'Our home is capped by sky.'

So there you are, readers. Scrape your quokka parchment, sharpen your emu quills, have ready your Fraser Island sander, and scratch away! Be as jingoistic as you like—although I doubt anyone could match the inspirationally bloody jingoism of the second stanza of *God Save the Queen* in which God is not only an Englishman but a blue-blood to boot:

O Lord our God arise,
Scatter Her enemies
And make them fall!
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On Thee our hopes we fix–
God save us all!

Quite! **Ed.**

Entries close 30 June 2000.

Entries sent by email should also contain a snail mail address.

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