EDITORIAL

When we think of the history of English lexicography, two names inevitably come to mind. The first is Dr Samuel Johnson, who published his *Dictionary* in 1755. The second is James Murray, the main editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, who produced the historical dictionary that would replace Johnson's. The *Australian National Dictionary*, published in 1988, does for Australian English what the *Oxford English Dictionary* does for international English.

The predecessor of the *Australian National Dictionary* was E.E. Morris's *Austral English*, published in 1898. Before Morris's historical dictionary, there had been some smaller Australian dictionaries of a popular kind that focused primarily on the colloquial elements of the language, and these have been examined in recent editions of *Ozwords*. In response to the publication of Morris's *Austral English*, A.G. Stephens, the literary editor of the famous Red Page of the *Bulletin*, and a *Bulletin* journalist, S.E. O'Brien, embarked on a project to fill in the lexicographical gaps they felt that Morris had left. Dr Judith Robertson, whose PhD thesis dealt with aspects of Australian lexicography in the period 1880 to 1920, discusses the Stephens and O'Brien project in our lead article.

The editor of the 1988 *Australian National Dictionary* was Dr W.S. Ramson, and we are delighted that he has provided an article on some of the early processes of naming in Australia.

The article on the origin of Buckley's chance is based on a chapter in Bruce Moore's book *What's Their Story: A History of Australian Words* (OUP 2010)—a reminder that it should be in your library!

BRUCE MOORE
DIRECTOR

AN UNPUBLISHED DICTIONARY OF AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH
Judith Smyth Robertson

In previous editions of *Ozwords* some significant contributions to the history of Australian lexicography have been examined: James Hardy Vaux's 1812 *New and Comprehensive Dictionary of the Flash Language,* Cornelius Crowe's *Australian Slang Dictionary* of 1895, and the anonymous *Sydney Slang Dictionary* of 1882. These dictionaries were all published. This time we look at an interesting Australian dictionary that was not published.

Alfred George Stephens was a Queenslander who became apprenticed in the printing trade in Toowoomba at the age of fifteen. He moved to Sydney to finish his apprenticeship and studied French and German at the Sydney Technical College. In 1888, at the age of twenty-three, he entered the newspaper industry and had several positions as editor, columnist, part newspaper owner, and literary contributor. Stephens left Australia to travel to America, Canada, and Europe, and worked for the London *Daily Chronicle*. On his return to Australia in 1893 he became subeditor of the Sydney *Bulletin*, and became its literary editor.

Stephen Edward O'Brien was a housepainter, journalist, Labor writer, electioneering agent, and for a time editor of the *Eagle Weekly* in Charters Towers. O'Brien was a freelance writer for the *Bulletin* between 1898 and 1907. Between 1898 and 1910 Stephens and O'Brien worked together on a dictionary of Australian slang, which was never published, but which survives in three lengthy manuscripts with three different titles: *Dictionary of New Zealand and Australian Slang by Stephens A.G. and O'Brien S.E.*; *Materials for an Austrazealand Slang Dictionary by A.G. Stephens & S.J. O'Brien Sydney*; *Material for Dictionary of Australian Slang by S.E. O'Brien and A.G. Stephens 1900–1910.* Although this work was never published, it has an important place in the history of Australian English and the history of Australian dictionaries.

The material that is contained in the dictionary can be seen as a manifestation of the *Bulletin*'s nationalistic interest in Australian bush writing. Stephens played an important role as literary editor of the *Bulletin*. Stephens' correspondence, which is held at the Mitchell Library in Sydney, shows that he nurtured and advised many Australian writers such as Barbara Baynton, Miles Franklin, and Steele Rudd. Stephens has been labelled 'the godfather' of Australian writing, and Chris Wallace-Crabbe argues that he

was 'the most influential literary critic in Australia's history'. There is no doubt that Stephens' interest in creating a dictionary of Australian colloquialisms was part of his general promotion of Australian literature. But the production of the dictionary must also be understood as a reaction of the Sydney-based 'journalist' Stephens to the work of the Melbourne-based academic Professor E.E. Morris. Morris published *Austral English: A Dictionary of Australasian Words* in 1898, and the Stephens–O'Brien dictionary was very much a response to Morris.

Edward Ellis Morris, a Melbourne University academic and literary critic, published *Austral English* after collecting Australian terms for James Murray's *New English Dictionary*, later the *Oxford English Dictionary*. *Austral English* is a large work and contains 929 Australian words. Morris explains that the dictionary is illustrated by quotations (in the style of the *Oxford English Dictionary*) from

> all parts of the Australasian colonies–
> from books that describe different parts
> of Australasia, and from newspapers
> published far and wide. I am conscious
> that in the latter division Melbourne
> papers predominate, but this has
> been due to the accident that living
> in Melbourne I see more of the
> Melbourne papers.

Nine percent of the words in *Austral English* could be described as 'slang', and the majority are the names of Australian flora and fauna. Even so, Morris was the first to provide Australians with a wide-ranging record of English as it was spoken in the colonies.

The Sydney-based journalist Stephens and the Melbourne-based academic Morris clashed over politics, literature, and language. Morris was an Empire Nationalist. In a speech to the Imperial Federation League in 1885 he said: 'Englishmen overseas have no desire to meddle in purely English matters' and should form a federation of British colonies in order to keep 'England strong' and provide the world with a force for good. Morris's belief in a federation of British colonies is reflected in his enthusiasm for James Murray's challenge to collect English words entering the language via the colonies. Morris's motive in producing *Austral English* had nothing to do with Australian nationalism: Morris saw Australian words as part of the great family of words that made up the British Empire.

Stephens was an anti-British Nationalist

who, through the *Bulletin*, helped develop the Australian bush identity, and was also determined to bring Australian colloquial language into mainstream English. Through the Red Page of the *Bulletin*, Stephens had requested discussion of Australian words, and one significant contributor to this discussion was 'Jack Shay', the pseudonym of Stephen Edward O'Brien, who collaborated on the dictionary project. Stephens and his friends from Sydney University, John Le Gay Brereton and Christopher Brennan, used reviews in the *Bookfellow* and the *Bulletin* to encourage nationalist writing. Morris, on the other hand, was the literary editor of the Melbourne-based *Australasian Critic: A Monthly Review of Literature, Science and Art*. In this magazine Morris often criticised those who judged authors according to nationality rather than on the quality of their work as judged by international standards.

A series of exchanges between Stephens and Morris in 1896 over the poetry of Henry Lawson demonstrates the differences between the two men. In an article called 'More Australian Poetry' in *Review of Reviews*, Morris suggests that Australian poetry relies too much on the world of action exemplified by the horseman and the bush, and that there is a place for more reflective poetry. Even so, he describes Paterson's 'The Man from Snowy River' as 'excellent', demonstrating that he does not object to all bush poetry.

Morris focuses on the feud between the poets 'Banjo' Paterson and Henry Lawson:

> In the good old feud of town versus country there has been a duel between Mr. Paterson and Mr. Lawson. The latter's 'Up the Country' came first, anti-bush in tone. Then appeared the former's 'In Defence of the Bush', and in reply to that, 'The City Bushman'. I read these poems consecutively in this order, and I award first place to the middle poem though, personally, I prefer the town, and am only sentimentally a lover of the bush, merely as a place of holiday resort. … Mr. Lawson is not consistent; when with all his might he is crying down bush life, its glories break upon him. … The verse is more admirable because of the inconsistency.

In the review Morris gives constructive criticism, acknowledges Lawson's youth, and encourages his writing:

> There is much that is pleasing and interesting in the volume, with a good deal that is immature. … The best things in the book are the verses written in the vein of humour. Let us leave Mr. Lawson, with the hope that he will give us more and better poetry, and with great hopefulness that in future days

he will look back on much that he has written as only a promise of good things to come.

Stephens responded to Morris's relatively mild criticism of Lawson with a savage attack on Morris, in an article called 'The Literary Fish' in the *Bulletin*, 23 May 1896:

> What have we here? – a man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like smell; a kind of not the newest Poor-John. A strange fish.

> The impulse is Prof. Morris's notice of Lawson's poems in the Review of Review [sic] for April–so dated because it comes to hand late in May. This paper isn't fee'd to defend Lawson, though much of Lawson's work has originally appeared in this paper. Taking him by and large, Lawson is a second-rate poet–with gleams, gleams. But he is Australian–and one likes to have a little land-plot and a little poetry-plot to call one's own; he is sincere; and he has a spark of divine fire.

The defence of Lawson is surprising, since two months before the Morris review, Stephens had criticised Lawson on the Red Page of the *Bulletin*, 15 February 1896:

> His [Lawson's] mental scope is narrow, he is completely uncultured; he iterates the same notes, and rarely improves his thought by elaboration; he wants harmony and variety of metre; his work is burdened with many weak lines and careless tags.

So why was his defence of Lawson now so vitriolic? It may have something to do with another section of Morris's review, when he compares Lawson to Robert Burns. Morris, like Burns, has 'strong sympathy with the cause of many rebels, but not with all rebellious causes', and comments that Lawson appears to support all rebels and their causes. Morris questions Lawson's logic in the poem 'In the days when the world was wide':

> But does the wideness of the world involve the idea of defiance of authority? What does that mean? Surely not that Great Britain, having granted the colonies the freest constitution in the world, is responsible for shearers being shorn, or for labour troubles in the west of the United States. To my mind, Mr. Lawson's fault is his unreasonable tone. He is a rebel; he is anti-rich; he wants a war; and, strangely enough, he is fiercely hostile to the bush.

In reference to Lawson's poem 'The Star of Australasia' Morris wrote:

> The poem in which there sounds a passionate cry for war, labelled 'The Star of Australasia' is a fine vigorous poem. The drawback is the uncertainty who is to be Australia's foe. If the war is to be a sort of repetition of the American War

of Independence, then the poet reckons without a host. England certainly will not play the part of enemy. Australasia has only to ask for independence, but what irritates the few who want it is, that their number is so small. So few desire to be relieved of tyranny that does not gall; the many are satisfied with the independence already won.

The political differences seem to be the most likely cause of Stephen's anger. In 1897 he reviewed Morris's favourite poet, Burns:

> The average Scotchman does not know how good or how bad Burns's verses are, and he does not know how much Burns plagiarised. … And Burns was a type of his nation. The Scotch are the least poetical of the nations allied as Great Britain and Ireland, but they have the highest illegitimacy rate. Two and two make four.

Given these differences of literary and political viewpoints, it is perhaps not surprising that when Morris's *Austral English* was published, Stephens' criticism was virulent:

> Pity the author hasn't a little more fire and force and illuminating power! ... He is a rather narrow, and rather learned, and very conscientious man who has heaped so many books on his brain that its capacity for original impetus and stimulus lies squashed as a damper. … As a guide to Australian language, the Dictionary is worthless except to an Australian expert who can supplement with local knowledge the makers' numerous errors and omissions.

Stephens thought Morris included too many entries for flora and fauna and neglected slang and colloquialism. So in reaction, Stephens set about producing a dictionary that filled in the colloquial (read 'real Australian') element that is supposedly lacking in Morris's dictionary.

There are 810 words in the dictionary as it now exists. Of these, 428 are Australian, and 86 percent of these can be regarded as slang or colloquial. Like most dictionary compilers, Stephens and O'Brien are not shy of a little plagiarism. Of the 810 entries, 88 are taken from Barrère and Leyland's *A Dictionary of Slang, Jargon and Cant* (from the edition of 1889) and 136 are in fact from Morris's *Austral English*. Eighty-eight words in the material have no previous dictionary evidence, and while supporting evidence can be found for fifteen of these, there is none for the rest. It is likely that these 'unknown' words had an existence in parts of regional New South Wales. They include:

> CATCHUP: *bush slang* beer. Used by New South Wales bush cadgers. Catch up to him, he's going to shout. Similar to

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ketchup–a sauce. Sauce is often drunk by bushmen after a spree to put them right.

SHOOTING OYSTERS IN A CAB: when a man who has been away on a debauch or spree says he has been away fishing, shooting or hunting, a sarcastic comment is: 'Yes, shooting oysters in a cab'.

SHINGLE OFF THE ROOF: *slang* a person who refuses a drink in a public-house is said to take a shingle off the roof.

Most of the Australian material is known from other sources, but the material will provide evidence for six entries in the new edition of the *Australian National Dictionary*: *bait-layer* 'a cook on a sheep station', *baked* 'drunk', *cockies clip* 'shaving a sheep', *frog bell* 'a bell for a bullocks neck', *Old Australian* similar to *old chum*, and *suck arse* 'a low-down cringing sycophant'.

The entry for *bait-layer* has a very detailed commentary on how the term arose and how it was used:

BAIT-LAYER *station slang* a cook (cross reference to poisoner). In common use on stations throughout New South Wales and Queensland. A baitlayer proper is a boundary rider or other station employee whose duty it is to distribute pieces of poisoned meat, about the station as baits for dingoes, wild cats, or dogs. Particular opprobrium attaches to this word when used by travellers or drovers, whose dogs often die of poisoning through picking up these baits which malicious station owners and employees, exceeding their legal right, often throw about on stock routes and public roads. Considering the value of good dogs to drovers and the attachment that often exists between a traveller and the dog, the epithet has in this sense a meaning equal to the use of 'informer' in Ireland in this century.

A bait-layer, a mean and despicable scoundrel who, working unseen, lays a bait for a dumb animal. Within the station boundaries a squatter is within his rights in laying baits. Vagrant dogs from camps and townships and travelling dogs often go into paddocks and worry large numbers of sheep. Dogs of any kind are therefore a natural enemy of the sheepbreeder, and the more unscrupulous of the owners anticipating the breaking-in of the dogs by laying baits outside have given this word point.

By a kind of grim humour this word has been applied to cooks. Firstly to bad cooks, ultimately to all cooks. A cook may be a bad 'bait-layer' or a 'good poisoner'. At different times in the Australian Press there have appeared accounts of serious tragedies through the use by mistake of poisons for baking powder. Many deaths have ensued. Poison on stations carelessly left about kitchens in tins, jars or bottles falling into the cooks' hands have no doubt first earned the cooks the name of poisoner or bait-layer. A bad cook who turned out sour bread, sodden dough, or other unpalatable food caught the title, and now all cooks are the butt of this word used jokingly.

The combination here of linguistic and social history gives an indication of what might have been achieved in the dictionary, but this quality and detail is not sustained.

The material was not published because Stephens did not have the resources or the ability to turn the notes into a dictionary. His method of collecting words was haphazard. For whatever reasons, the dictionary was never pulled into final shape, in spite of a number of attempts at so doing (as indicated by the three surviving manuscripts). It is also very likely that there was little interest in publishing another dictionary of Australian English so soon after *Austral English*.

The importance of this work, however, is that it is the only collection of nationalistic language to supplement the nationalist writers of the 1890s. Perhaps the edition that I have produced as an Appendix to my PhD thesis on Australian lexicography will find an audience in a way the efforts of Stephens and O'Brien, one hundred years ago, did not.
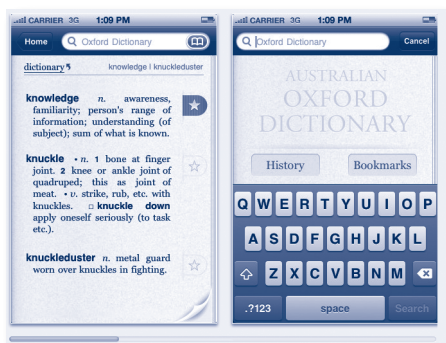
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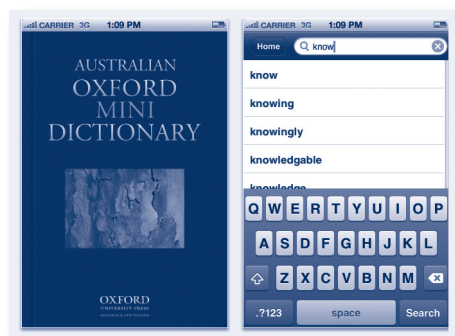
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MAILBAG

Letters are welcome. Please address letters to: *Ozwords*,
The Australian National Dictionary Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200
Email: andc@anu.edu.au Fax: (02) 6125 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.

ANYMORE?

Prompted by B. Grant's letter in your last issue [on the running together of 'at least' as 'atleast'] I draw attention to 'anymore', very commonly seen in print. 'Sometime' is another word used wrongly, as in 'I'll get around to it sometime'. Surely 'sometime' here should be two words: 'some time'. If it is one word, it means 'former'.

M. Travis, ACT

An Australian *Style Guide* from 1993 says firmly: 'In Australian and British English the expression *any more* is two words in all senses: *If he eats any more cake he'll feel ill. The trees grow so big that she could not prune them any more. Anymore* as one word is sometimes used in US English to mean any longer: *I can't stand it anymore.*' Robert Burchfield, in his revision of Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, endorses this for British English, but notes that the one-word form is sometimes found in British English. We would all agree that in the first sentence—*If he eats any more cake he'll feel ill*—two words are absolutely necessary when the construction is specifying quantity. In adverbial uses, where the sense is 'to any further extent; any longer', the solid form is becoming more acceptable in all Englishes. One usage that surprised me was this in the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*: '(N. Amer. informal) nowadays; at the present time (*almost everyone has a computer anymore*).' The solid form of *sometime* has a longer history than *anymore*. It is always solid, as you say, as an adjective meaning 'former' (*my sometime friend*), but it has also commonly been solid as an adverb when the sense is 'at some unspecified or unknown time': *I'll tell you about it sometime.* Burchfield points out that the two-word form is used when *some* and *time* retain their separate meanings: *Do you have some time to spare? The job will take some time to finish.*

SCOTCH FILLET

The 'rib eye' or 'ribeye', also known as 'Scotch fillet' (in Australia and New Zealand), is a beef steak from the rib section. Can you tell me why a ribeye is called Scotch fillet in Australia? It is not Scottish nor does it have any connection with other Scotch terms such as broth, eggs, tape, thistles or whisky.

S. Jennings, Tas.

We are uncertain about this one, but hope that some of our readers may have some ideas. Between 1910 and 1950 *Scotch fillet* is commonly advertised in Australian newspapers, but these are fillets of smoked fish from Scotland. The fish fillets disappear in the 1960s, and at the very end of the 1960s the first references to the 'beef' *Scotch fillet* appear in the *Australian Women's Weekly*. On 7 May 1969 there is a section devoted to 'Home Cooking from Abroad', and a recipe for 'Hungarian braised steak' calls for '6 scotch fillets or any other tender steak'. On 29 October 1969 there is a dictionary of beef cuts, and *Scotch fillet* is described: 'Small oval slices of steak cut from "eye" of ribs of beef animal. Dear. Approximately 2–3 slices per lb. No selvedge fat; marbling of fat in flesh. Grill, fry.' Note that *Scotch fillet* is 'dear' whereas *eye fillet* and *rump* are 'very dear'. If you look at present-day advertisements in English newspapers, you will find an occasional reference to *Scotch fillet*, but this is clearly eye fillet from Scotland. The Australian *scotch fillet* is from a different part of the beast.

Scotch broth, Scotch eggs, Scotch thistles, and *Scotch whisky* are certainly called 'Scotch' because they originate in Scotland. The exception in the list provided by S. Jennings is the term *Scotch tape*, which comes from an American company, and was patented in 1945: '1945 *Official Gazette* (U.S. Patent Office) 16 Oct. 373/1 Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Company, St. Paul, Minn. Scotch for pressure-sensitive adhesive tape. Claims use since January 1928'. There is a widely told account about the origin of the proprietary name *scotch tape*, which may or may not be true, but which potentially contains a clue about the origin of the Australian *scotch fillet*. Here is one account:

> Scotch tape, a lowly product invented in a St. Paul, Minn. workshop 75 years ago that became a cornerstone of 3M's industrial empire. In 1930, the company was still known as the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co., a maker of sandpaper and not much else. Richard Drew was a mechanical engineer for the company who five years earlier had invented masking tape. He stumbled across cellophane, a new moisture-proof wrap that DuPont had invented. Drew's eureka moment occurred when he figured adhesive could be bonded to the cellophane, creating what the company's official history calls 'the first waterproof, see-through, pressure-sensitive tape'. Drew's earlier invention of masking tape provided the new tape with the name that would become synonymous with cellophane tape. A customer complained that 3M was manufacturing its masking tape on the cheap and told Drew to 'take this tape back to your stingy Scotch bosses and tell them to put more adhesive on it'. Ethnic slurs notwithstanding, 3M embraced the Scotch name and sent its first shipment of the tape to a customer on September 8, 1930.
> <www.seattlepi.com/lifestyle/224209_tape75.html>

This account plays on the traditional stereotype of the Scots person as frugal, thrifty, and even mean. Since *scotch fillet* is cheaper than eye fillet, is this perhaps the origin? The difficulty with this argument is that although scotch fillet is not eye fillet, it is nevertheless a fairly expensive cut of meat. We are therefore very open to suggestions about the possible origin of the term.

IN TACT

B. Grant complained in the last Ozwords about two-word compounds becoming solid. Errors such as 'alot' are common, and often receive comment. I have been noticing one example of the opposite trend, when the properly solid 'intact' appears as 'in tact'. I thought for a while that these were just typographical errors, but I suspect it is something much more serious.

K. White, WA

It is certainly more usual for two-word forms to become solid than for a solid form to split in this way. But you are right to point out that the split seems to be on! Here is the *Bowen Independent*, 16 February 2011: 'Bowen Hospital hosted a barbecue lunch to thank hospital, Queensland Ambulance Service and State Emergency Service staff and personnel for their help and support throughout the duration of cyclones Anthony and Yasi. Director of Nursing Pauline Maude said it was an opportunity for those who banded together during a testing time and came out of it in tact at the other end, to enjoy a relaxing moment.' Here is the Melbourne *Herald Sun*, 31 January 2011: 'How she sustained the criticism for two years and emerged with her sanity in tact is a miracle.' Here is the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, 8 January 2011: 'Plenty of punters are licking their wounds after launching into Australia with TAB Sportsbet Fixed Odds, believing it was a mere formality that we could win back the little urn and keep our 24-year home streak in tact.' And here is the Adelaide *Advertiser*, 29 November 2010: 'The scans show the ligament is in tact, which is great news. ... There doesn't seem to be any damage to it all.' Perhaps not much damage to the ligament, but damage aplenty to the language! In fact (or is it infact?) once you start to look for it, it is clear that the error is becoming very common.

WORD OF THE YEAR 2010

The first group to announce a 2010 Word of the Year was Oxford University Press in the United States, and they chose Sarah Palin's *refudiate*, a confused blend of *refute* and *repudiate*. Most dictionaries comment on the fact that, strictly speaking, the core meaning of *refute* is 'prove (a statement or theory) to be wrong', although in the second half of the twentieth century, a more general sense developed from the core one, meaning simply 'deny', as in *I absolutely refute the charges made against me*. In this sense many people would insist that *deny* should instead be used. While Sarah Palin's solecism might seem to provide an alternate way, it is unlikely to find any widespread acceptance. Soon after this, Oxford University Press in the UK chose *big society*: 'a political concept whereby a significant amount of responsibility for the running of a society's services is devolved to local communities and volunteers'. This was part of the British Conservative Party manifesto in the 2010 election, and was subsequently taken up by the governing Coalition.

Refudiate and *big society* were certainly known in Australia, but they had only minor resonance here. These choices point to the dilemma that confronts arbiters of the Word of the Year—should you choose an international term, or a term that has significance to the local or regional culture? In past years the Dictionary Centre has generally chosen international terms—*podcast* (2006), *GFC* (2008), *twitter/tweet* (2009)—but in 2007 chose the politically charged local term *me-tooism*.

The tradition of choosing a Word of the Year has been closely associated with the American Dialect Society, which holds its annual conference in January, and announces its choice at the end of the conference. Its choice has sometimes been specific to American culture: 1996 *mom* (as in *soccer mom*), 2000 *chad* (from the presidential election controversy in Florida, where the 'chad' is the piece of waste material removed from a card when punching, in this case a punched ballot card), 2004 *red state, blue state, purple state* (from the 2004 United States presidential election, when colours were used to indicate the way a state was voting). Occasionally the choice has been a bit eccentric, as when in 2006 they chose *plutoed*, from the verb *pluto* 'to demote or devalue something or someone', deriving from the scientific downgrading of Pluto from *planet* to *dwarf planet* (and, incidentally, a good example of how pronouncements from scientific bodies have little influence on the actual language: most people steadfastly continue to describe Pluto as a paid-up planet in their speech). More typically, their choices have had international significance: 1993 *information superhighway*, 1997 *millennium bug*, 1999 *Y2K*, 2001 *9-11*, 2002 *weapons of mass destruction*, 2003 *metrosexual*. For 2010

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 American Dialect Society chose *app*, the abbreviated form of *application*, a software program for a computer or mobile phone.

It is certainly true that *app* seemed to be everywhere in 2010, and it was one of the terms considered by the Australian National Dictionary Centre. Its disadvantage was that it partakes of that dull uninventiveness that has characterised the history of computing terms. The Australian Federal election gave us the phrase *moving forward*, and its aftermath popularised the term *paradigm shift*. Towards the end of the year the word *wikileak* ushered in a true paradigm shift in world politics. The 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa introduced us to the sound of a very loud musical instrument, and to its name—the *vuvuzela*. While there is still some uncertainty about the precise origin of the word (it perhaps comes from a dialect of Zulu), it has the virtue of being a 'new' word, and one that demonstrated how quickly a new word can become widely known in this global age. Within a few months of the World Cup, the word *vuvuzela* had begun to find its way into the dictionaries! We have chosen it as our 2010 Word of the Year.

DATED

In January 2011 the McCrindle Research organisation published the results of a survey of Australian attitudes to Australian words and phrases. The five words that people were most proud of were *mate, g'day, arvo, tucker*, and *snags*. The five words that people felt most uncomfortable using were *cobber, sheila, strewth, dunny*, and *crikey*. The word *cobber*, first recorded in Australian English in 1893, has been in decline for some time. The standard story about the word's origin is that it comes from a British dialect word *cob*, which the *English Dialect Dictionary* lists for the dialect of Suffolk with the meaning 'to take a liking to any one; to "cotton" to'. The editors of the dictionary point out, however, that

this word was 'not known to [their] other correspondents', suggesting that even in Suffolk its use was not widespread. A more likely origin for *cobber* is the Yiddish word *khaber* or *khaver* meaning 'comrade, friend'. *Cobber* was in competition with *mate* during the twentieth century, and since they are largely synonymous, it is not surprising that one of them would lose out, and *cobber* is clearly the loser. *Sheila* has lost popularity because many people feel it is a derogatory term. It was something of a surprise to see *dunny* on the list. Perhaps its appearance in the 'uncomfortable' list derives from the traditional taboo weighting on words associated with bodily functions. The real surprises on this list were *strewth* and *crikey*, since they are not specifically Australian words. Interestingly, they have origins in taboo, this time in the taboo associated with using religious terms in oaths in the nineteenth century. *Strewth* is from *God's truth*, and *crikey* is a euphemistic alteration of *Christ*. It was no doubt Steve Irwin's use of *crikey* that has led many to believe that it is an Australian word.

CHOOKAS

The expression *break a leg* is used by actors and the like to mean 'have a good performance; good luck'. There are numerous theories about the origin of the term, and the most likely is that because of a superstition associated with the wishing of good luck, the opposite is expressed. Similarly, *merde* is French for 'excrement', but it too is used to a performer to say in effect 'good luck'. *Toi, toi, toi* is used in operatic circles, and theories about its origin are as varied as the *break a leg* stories—one common account has it that *toi* is from German *Teufel* 'the Devil'. So what are we to make of the Australian way of saying 'good luck' to a performer: *chookas*! Various Web accounts argue that this goes back to a time when chicken (Australian *chook*) was something of an expensive delicacy, so that if a play or other performance attracted a large audience the performers could expect to be paid well—and therefore eat well. This sounds very close to one of the many theories of origin of *break a leg*: that there was a time when an audience showed its appreciation of a performance not with bravos or by throwing flowers, but by throwing coins to the performers, who could retrieve the coins from the stage floor only by bending or kneeling down i.e. *breaking their leg*. Any other information about *chookas* would be greatly appreciated.

AUSTRALEX

Australex, the Australasian Association for Lexicography, will hold its biennial conference at the Australian National University on 28–29 November 2011. For further details see <www.australex.org>.

BRUCE MOORE
DIRECTOR

In the beginning was the word. And this was literally true, as the Romans, and before them the Greeks, made a space on the map of the world for a *Terra Australis incognita*, 'the unknown land of the south', primarily because they thought there ought to be a balance between the known world and the unknown, the northern hemisphere countries and their antipodes, the continent they believed was 'down under'. It is this sense of being on the edge of the world that we need to try and envisage, as other factors of time, distance, and development, for instance, which made the world 300 years ago very different from the world we live in.

A glimpse of a voyage going beyond the limits of the known world can be gained by sailing in the replica of the *Endeavour*, but a false sense of security is given by a floor of toilets, showers and other luxuries that Cook had never heard of. The world as we know it is now a very small place, with few geographical nooks and crannies still unexplored or unexplained. By comparison, the world of 300 years ago was huge and about a third of it was uncharted. Distances were great and, even if covered by the fastest means available and by the quickest route, formidable and often prohibitive. A return journey to China by land took months, not days. Navigators and explorers ventured into the unknown in ships that today would seem tiny, frail, and ill-fitted to cope with inclement weather. Progress was slow and very much at the mercy of the elements. There were also human hazards, ships from a hostile nation or buccaneers from one's own. The *Heemskerck*, Abel Tasman's custom-built yacht, displaced no more than a hundred tonnes, was not more than thirty-three metres long, and had a crew of sixty-six. There was no refrigeration, of course, and only primitive sanitation. We have come a long way in a very short time. Cook's vessel had roughly the same capacity as Tasman's, had about a hundred people on board, and all the appurtenances necessary for a stay of up to six months. It was a little bit like sailing to New Zealand in a Manly Ferry.

NAMES

Place names can sometimes be interpreted as indicating the motivation of the navigator and a measure of his success. The first Tasmanian place names commemorate either the Dutch connection generally or the patronage of a Dutch East Indies official. So Abel Tasman in 1642 named the west coast of Australia New Holland and the south coast of Tasmania Van Diemen's Land after Anthony van Diemen, the Governor of the Dutch East Indies. Maria Island, off the coast of Tasmania, was named as a tribute to the Governor's wife.

Cook on the other hand was the most diligent and assiduous of name givers, and, as a matter of course, claimed his landing places. His names, like those of the French explorers, had a freshness and immediacy about them—Cape Perpendicular, Bay of Inlets, Cooks Passage, Broken Bay, Cape Dromedary, Cape Flattery, Cape Tribulation, Pigeon-house Mountain, Weary Bay, and the Endeavour River itself being examples. Cook was also responsive to events and to changing perceptions. Thus the bay was initially named Sting Ray Bay, presumably after the particularly good catch of stingrays which, on 4 May 1770, had enabled each man to be served 5 lbs of fish; or perhaps after the giant stingray, weighing 280 lbs, caught as part of that catch. But Cook took the longer view and to mark the importance of Banks's work renamed the bay 'Botany Bay'.

History does not relate what James Cook said when he first set foot on Australian soil but his words were every bit as significant as Neil Armstrong's 'one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind'.

Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1828), a botanist and Oxford-trained scholar, who had already notched up a trip to Newfoundland and who was to be president of the Royal Society for forty-one years, led on board a formidable team of scientists and their assistants. Banks and his assistant Daniel Solander were both identified as naturalists in the ship's list, as were also Sydney Parkinson, a botanical artist and Alexander Buchan, a landscape artist, an astronomer and his servant, two footmen of Banks, and two servants, also of Banks's entourage. Cook, Banks and Parkinson kept journals which describe in fascinating detail the various encounters with the 'Indians' (as they called them) and the animals and plants that were found in the Endeavour River district. All three men were acutely conscious of the need to return to England with evidence of the truly colossal difference in the flora and fauna of the new continent. Banks alone took back almost a thousand specimens of plants and hundreds of descriptions of animals, birds, and fish.

AUSTRALIA

There was considerable uncertainty as to what to call the new continent in the period between its discovery and its settlement. John Hawkesworth, writing of Cook's journal, chose to call Aborigines *New Hollanders* and the Terra Australis *New Holland*, and these terms remained in use for a good part of the nineteenth century.

Cook, recognising the Dutch claim to the western coast of the continent, and having effectively occupied the eastern coast, named it *New South Wales*. *Antipodes* and *South Land* both had limited currency as did the poetic *Austral* and the optimistic *Australia Felix* as the name for the region south of the Murray River, which in 1851 was separated from New South Wales and named *Victoria*. *Australasia* was first used in French in 1756 with reference to the Australian continent and neighbouring islands (including of course, *New Zealand*).

But none of these could compete with *Australia*. Cook used the name *Australia* in his reference to Quiros's discovery of the islands called *Australia del Espiritu Santo*, which were thought to be part of Australia. But the real champion of the cause was Matthew Flinders:

> It is necessary, however, to geographical propriety, that the whole body of land should be designated under one general name; on this account, and under the circumstances of the discovery of the different parts, it seems best to refer back to the original Terra Australis, or Australia, which being descriptive of its situation, having antiquity to recommend it, and no reference to either of the two claiming nations, is perhaps the least objectionable that could have been chosen; for it is little to be apprehended, that any considerable body of land, in a more southern situation, will be hereafter discovered.

And he went on:

> I have ventured upon the re-adoption of the original Terra Australis. … Had I permitted myself any innovation upon the original term, it would have been to convert it into Australia; as being more agreeable to the ear, and an assimilation to the names of the other great portions of the earth.

Flinders' arguments were persuasive and Governor Macquarie's adoption of the term gave authority to *Australia*:

> I beg leave to acknowledge the Receipt of Captn. Flinders' Chart of Australia. Lieut. King expects to be absent from Port Jackson between Eight and Nine months, and I trust in that time will be able to make very important additions to the Geographical knowledge already acquired of the Coasts of the Continent of Australia, which I hope will be the Name given to this country in future, instead of the very erroneous and misapplied name, hitherto given it, of 'New Holland', which properly speaking only applies to a part of this immense Continent.

The formalities were duly completed and the rest is history.

BUCKLEY'S
Bruce Moore

Buckley's or *Buckley's chance* are the surviving variants of a phrase that once also existed in the forms *Buckley's hope* and *Buckley's show*. Where does the phrase come from? Some theories were canvassed in the October 2000 edition of *Ozwords*. There are really only two credible possibilities, and these were spelt out by Sidney Baker in 1945 in *The Australian Language*:

> *Buckley's chance.* One chance in a million or not at all. Especially used in the phrases *haven't a Buckley's* or *haven't Buckley's chance*. Perhaps commemorating a convict named Buckley who escaped to the bush in 1803 and lived with the aborigines for thirty-two years. An argument against this theory is that the expression did not become current until about 1898. [The earliest record is 1895.] It is suggested that it comes from a pun on the name of the Melbourne firm Buckley and Nunn, which would explain the currency of the Australian phrase. 'There are just two chances, *Buckley's and none*', meaning that there are no chances at all.

WILLIAM BUCKLEY

The most popular choice for the origin of the phrase would seem to be William Buckley (1780–1856), a British convict who was transported to Australia for receiving stolen cloth. He escaped from custody at Port Phillip in 1803 and lived with the Wathawurung Aboriginal people near Geelong for thirty-two years. He was discovered by John Batman in 1835. As Baker admits, the first problem with the William Buckley attribution is the huge time gap between Buckley's life and the appearance of the phrase in the 1890s. Buckley's story, however, was widely known, and there were a number of published accounts of it, including a biography in 1852.

In spite of the time gap, the earliest attempt to explain the origin of the phrase firmly attributes it to this convict Buckley. This was in a paper delivered in Sydney in 1912, and printed in most major newspapers:

> The explanation of the term 'Buckley's chance'. ... Captain J.H. Watson, who read the paper, said it appeared that when Batman's party landed in Victoria in 1835 they were surprised to find among the natives a man whose features showed him to be of European extraction, but his skin was as black as the natives. When, however the letters 'W.B.' were found tattooed on his arm, inquiries were made, resulting in the following discovery:—About 32 years previously, Captain Collins had attempted to found a colony in the south-eastern portion of Australia, but had failed. A number of the convicts escaped, but all except William Buckley had died or been shot. He and a companion had travelled along the coast for nearly a year. His companion, at last, decided to return, and was never heard of again. Buckley soon also fell in with a party of natives, and for over 30 years had lived with the tribe, not raising them to his level, but descending to theirs, and thus he alone of all the escapees had survived. Hence the term.

In this interpretation of the idiom, it is the miraculousness and unlikelihood of the survival that is to the fore—as Baker puts it, 'one chance in a million or no chance at all'. This helps to solve the second problem with attributing the origin to William Buckley, namely that rather than having 'no chance', he seems to have had an extremely 'fortunate chance', in that he survived his ordeal. From the early twentieth-century point of view of Captain Watson in the paper quoted, Buckley's stay among the Aborigines was anything but a 'fortunate chance', and he sees it as a moral descent ('not raising them to his level, but descending to theirs'). Buckley's fate was therefore horrific, and to survive it was miraculous: no later nineteenth century or early twentieth century European would wish to undergo it. Moreover, while the expression appears very late, the story of William Buckley was one of the best known and most recounted of convict narratives.

BUCKLEY AND NUNN

Baker's second explanation links the phrase to the Melbourne firm of Buckley and Nunn. Mars Buckley, in partnership with Crumpton Nunn, set up a store in a small shack in Melbourne in 1851. The business flourished and became a fashionable store. Tradition has it that a pun developed on the 'Nunn' part of the firm's name (with 'none') and that this gave rise to the formulation 'there are just two chances, *Buckley's and none*'. This explanation, as with the previous one, has appeared to have a time problem. Until recently, the evidence suggested that the Buckley and Nunn etymology was the product of a very late tradition, for which Baker in 1945 is the earliest clear statement. The formulation 'there are just two chances, *Buckley's and none*' was known in the 1940s and 1950s, but didn't really take off until the 1980s. Moreover all the evidence from the 1890s for *Buckley's* occurred in sources published in Sydney, suggesting that the phrase, in its early use, was not closely associated with Melbourne.

NEW FINDING

New evidence, however, can perhaps shed some light on this matter. I recently discovered an early use of the phrase 'Buckley and none' that has been missed by researchers. It occurs in a newspaper account of the proceedings of the Victorian Parliament in November 1901:

> An indication of what prospect there is of getting the tariff through the House before Christmas was afforded yesterday. After members, in a repentant mood, had metaphorically fallen on each other's neck and kissed each other, whilst their good resolutions were like the atmosphere fresh, when every member spoke briefly, concisely, and to the point, they managed to dispose of three not highly contentious items. If items of great importance are not to be slummed through in the small hours, when most of the members are asleep, there is only one chance of getting through the tariff before Christmas, and that is Buckley's—or, according to the local adaptation of the phrase, it is Buckley and none.

The speaker here knows the standard version of the phrase (*Buckley's*), but he also knows what he calls 'a local adaptation' of it: *Buckley and none*. This local or Melbournian variation is clearly the pun on *Nunn/none*, indicating that the original phrase (*Buckley's chance* or *hope* or *show*) had nothing to do with the Melbourne firm, and that it was only after the phrase had been established that Melbournians could formulate their own witty local variation, starting with the common ground of 'Buckley' and then varying the idiom with the addition of the pun.

This 'chance' occurrence of the phrase *Buckley and none* in 1901 is a salutary lesson in the gap that can exist between the appearance of a word or phrase in colloquial speech and its appearance in print. If it were not for this passage, we would have no evidence for *Buckley's and none* before Sidney Baker's book in 1945. All this evidence indicates that it was not the Melbourne story that was the origin of the term; rather, the Melbourne term latched on to a term that was formed otherwise and earlier. The potential time gap between the appearance of a term in speech and its appearance in writing offers a glimmer of a hope to the William Buckley supporters. It must be admitted that the time gap between Buckley's life and the appearance of the phrase, and the lack of any mention of William Buckley in association with the phrase between 1895 and 1912, compel us to label this one as 'origin uncertain', although of all the explanations on offer it is certainly the most likely.

OZWORDS COMPETITION

OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 35: RESULTS

You were asked to create an Australian variant of the idiom of the *a sandwich short of a picnic* type, used to allude to madness, craziness, and sometimes plain eccentricity. We had a huge number of entries. A number of the entries were identical, causing great difficulty for the judges, who finally decided that these could be enjoyed but not included in the final cull. They included:

- a bend short of a boomerang
- a blade short of a Victa mower
- a budgie short of a smuggler (lots of these!)
- a chook short of a raffle
- a door short of a dunny
- a laugh short of a kookaburra
- a peg (or two pegs) short of a Hills Hoist (much enjoyed!)
- a penny short of a two-up game
- a sail short of an Opera House (we especially liked that one!)
- a sheep dog (or kelpie) short of a muster etc.
- a star short of the Southern Cross
- a twitter short of a tweet (not quite 'Australian')
- a yacht short of a Sydney-to-Hobart

Other entries included:

- 50 kilometres short of Woop Woop (S. Robson, Qld)
- a billy short of a swagman's picnic (M. Sutherland, Vic.)
- a black stump short of the never never (D. Tribe NSW)
- a bunyip short of a billabong (R. O'Connor, SA)
- a burra short of a kook (P. Kaukas, NSW)
- a cork short of an Akubra (B. McPherson, Vic.)
- a few aces short of a pack (G. Duffell, Vic.)
- a few independents short of a government (S. Darlington, Qld)
- a few k's short of the black stump (V. Waters, WA)
- a few penguins short of a rookery (B. Maley, WA)
- a few star pickets short of a fence (R. & L. Male, Qld)
- a gumleaf short of Blinky's breakfast (J. Dewar, NSW)
- a hole short of a two-hole dunny (B. Turvey, Tas.)
- a lamington short of a shin-dig (J. Murphy, NSW)
- a locust short of a plague (A Jones, Qld)
- a lolly short of a mixed bag (M. Sutherland, Vic.)
- a pumpkin scone short of an afternoon tea (P. Higgins, NSW)
- a quondong short of a Chinese chequerboard (L. Evans, WA)
- a ranga short of a matchbox (S. Walsh, NSW)
- a rooster short of a crow (M. Fitzsimons, Vic.)
- a sausage short of a sizzle (W.H.J. Edwards, Vic.)
- a shingle short of a donga (E. Marsh, Qld)
- a ship short of the First Fleet (S. Walsh, NSW)
- a shout short of a round (L. Pattison, NSW)
- a shrimp short of a barbie (M. Mitchell, WA)
- a slice short of a magic pudding (G. Case, Qld)
- a slice short of a Vegemite sandwich (P. Harley, SA)
- a Wilkie short of a majority (R. Calitz, Tas.)
- one flag short of a patrol area (B. Hall, NSW)
- some peas short of a pie floater (C. Stiller, Qld)
- the coconut short of a lamington (C. Howard, Vic.)
- two bob short of a quid (S. Thomson, NSW)
- two porkies short of a pollie (F. Fisk, NSW)

2nd Prize (books to the value of $50 from the OUP catalogue):
a strawberry short of a pavlova (D.W. Magann, SA)

1st Prize (books to the value of $100 from the OUP catalogue):
a polly short of a waffle (B. Proverbs, Tas.)

OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 36

There is a series of Australian similes that begin with *full as*: *full as a goog*; *full as a tick*; *full as a state-school hat-rack*, *full as the family po*, *full as a pommy complaint box*; *full as a boot*, *full as a bull's bum*. These occasionally mean 'crowded', and sometimes 'full with food', but they usually mean 'drunk'. Some of them are sounding somewhat old-fashioned—probably not many households have a *po* or 'chamber pot' under the bed. It is your task to try to update these similes, and come up with a modern one that refers to any kind of 'fullness', and which preferably has something of an Australian flavour.

ENTRIES CLOSE 31 JULY 2011
Entries sent by email should also contain a snail mail address.
All entries should be sent to the ANDC at one of the addresses at the top of the next column.