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EDITORIAL

It is a great pleasure to bring you the current edition of *Ozwords*, my first as Director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre. Since taking over as Director in January 2012, I have been grateful for the support of my fellow editors and colleagues, Julia Robinson and Mark Gwynn, who have joined me with great enthusiasm in assessing the Centre's projects, its IT system, and its research priorities. We all feel excited by what lies ahead, especially at this time of great change in the world of lexicography. As highlighted in my article in this edition of *Ozwords*, we are on the precipice of a revolution in lexicography: print dictionaries may be dying, but digital dictionaries are fully alive, and online dictionaries that combine quality content, editorial input, sophisticated technology, and public contributions are yet to be born. The Dictionary Centre is keen to explore innovations in dictionary-making, and we will be sharing our adventures with readers of *Ozwords*. If you have a computer, please join us on Twitter @ozwords, our Facebook page, and our blog www.ozwords.org.



SARAH OGILVIE
DIRECTOR

THE FUTURE OF DICTIONARIES

SARAH OGILVIE

We are on the verge of another revolution in dictionary-making. Since the seventeenth century, there have been three major revolutions in lexicographic practice. In 1604, Robert Cawdrey produced the first monolingual English dictionary, which was – radically – arranged alphabetically. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson employed literary citations to illustrate the meaning of the words in his dictionary. And in the nineteenth century, James Murray began to produce the first great historical dictionary, tracking the use of a word over time, and extended the making of dictionaries beyond his Scriptorium of lexicographers working in Oxford by calling on contributions from around the globe. This was an enormous undertaking, and the first edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), begun in 1859, was not completed until 1928 (the second edition followed in 1989, and the third edition, published online quarterly, was begun in 2000).

Since the introduction of Murray's innovative methods and the publication of the *OED*, very little has changed in dictionary-making. Generations of twentieth-century lexicographers saw no need to change a method that had successfully created the greatest English dictionary that had ever been written. Murray had predicted as much in 1900 when he gave the Romanes Lecture at Oxford:

It is never possible to forecast the needs and notions of those who shall come after us; but with our present knowledge it is not easy to conceive what new feature can now be added to English Lexicography in the Oxford Dictionary, permeated as it is through and through with the scientific method of the century. Lexicography has for the present reached its supreme development.

And Murray was right: lexicography had reached its supreme development for the turn of the twentieth century. We have been following his methods ever since. Apart from using large collections of electronic texts (known as corpora) to gauge word frequency and usage, our current lexicographic methods are basically the same as those established 150 years ago.

When I first started to work in Oxford as an editor on the OED, at the start of the twenty-first century, I was surprised that we still received hundreds of quotations each

month from 'readers' around the world who sent in 4 × 6 slips of paper showing the use of a word in their local sources. This was the readers' system founded by Murray in 1879 and epitomised by the work of Dr Minor, as Simon Winchester so compellingly described it in *The Surgeon of Crowthorne: A Tale of Murder, Madness and the Love of Words?* (1998). Apart from the use of computers, the editing process I followed was exactly the same as that begun by Murray: each lexicographer was given a box of slips corresponding to our respective portion of the alphabet—for me, these were all the words that entered English from outside Europe—and we worked through slip by slip, word by word, striving to piece together fragments of an incomplete historical record, until we had crafted an entry and presented a logical chain of semantic development in much the same way that Murray and his editors had.

The dictionaries we know and love and have used since childhood are the result of this succession of lexicographic innovations, developed over four centuries. It is these same dictionaries that many critics are now declaring to be 'dead'. From the *New York Times* to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the death knell is being sounded for the dictionary. The deputy editor of the Indian national newspaper, *The Hindu*, recently challenged his readers: 'My dictionary-buying days are way behind me. I no longer need one. Why just me? When was the last time you actually reached out for one?' And last month, John Walsh in the *Independent* of London summed it up thus: 'Bluntly put, dictionaries are in trouble, and have been for years.'

Actually, what these critics are really saying is that the *print* dictionary is dead. As Doug McIntyre put it in the *LA Times* a few months ago, 'Who needs a dictionary when we have spell check? Who needs a library when we have Google?' They are predicting that dictionaries are going in the same direction as vinyl records, cassette tapes, and camera film—endangered species only to be resuscitated in retro-revivals. And to a certain extent, print sales do indicate this. Every year, print sales slightly decrease except in a couple of markets: primary schools and English Language Teaching.

But what these doomsayers do not perhaps realise is that dictionaries and word datasets are used in algorithms that power the back end of the Internet and hundreds

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THE FUTURE OF DICTIONARIES

SARAH OGILVIE

of applications and APIs (Application Programming Interfaces, which are sets of rules and coding that software programs use to communicate with each other). And all these rely on the old-fashioned products of lexicography. The Internet to which they are turning would not be the same without the supposedly defunct dictionary.

This means that in some cases dictionaries are becoming less visible as distinct entities, and have almost ‘dissolved’ to form algorithms and applications that enrich online and digital content, and can be characterised as ‘search’, word auto-complete, voice recognition, handwriting recognition, spell check, automatic summarisation, X-ray tools, related-link functions, real-time translation and subtitling. And then there are those transparent applications such as dictionary websites, dictionary apps, word games, crossword websites, and search functions (word, phrase, wild card features) both

Hence, these sites are not the creation of lexicographers, but rather commercial web entrepreneurs for whom profit rather than scholarship is the bottom line. A typical online dictionary start-up is backed by wealthy venture capitalists and is supported by marketing managers who can tell you how to wrap an out-of-print dictionary in HTML and sell it online to millions of people with the claim that it is the next new thing in dictionaries. They certainly have the marketing; they have the potential of the technology; but they lack the quality content.

So another revolution in dictionary-making has not happened yet, despite what the marketing men may say. But we are on the verge of one. The future of dictionaries is online, but the truly innovative online dictionary has yet to be born, and it will need to be, to borrow a phrase from the founders of the *OED* in 1857, ‘an entirely new dictionary; no patch upon old

of meaning in a way that is ‘smart’ and custom-made to their choices and interests. The smart dictionary could learn from what users do, and what information they look for, and adapt itself accordingly. In a wiki-fashion, the technology could also be designed to handle user-generated content, and allow editors—the lexicographers—to curate this content, ensuring its scholarly rigour, and integrate it into the dictionary database.

Indeed, collaboration and contributions from the public will be vital to this lexicographic revolution. Professional lexicographers will always need the help of readers and users far and near. We will create the innovative twenty-first century dictionary in collaboration, just as the *OED* and its national ‘spin-offs’ such as the *Australian National Dictionary* (AND) have always been created. James Murray used the Royal Mail to receive quotations from his readers. We can use technology, not only to harvest quotations but also to crowd-source all aspects of dictionary-making, thereby drawing on the interest, knowledge, and skill of people who care about a topic but do not necessarily want to devote their lives to it. The philosophy of crowd-sourcing depends essentially on the fact that an open call to a group of people will attract those who are most fit to perform the tasks. It is not so very far from Murray’s famous *Appeal to the English-speaking and English-reading Public in Great Britain, America, and the Colonies* in 1879, in which he asked people around the world—many here in Australia—to read local books and send in quotations. It was hugely successful, and two thousand men and women from around the world immediately responded.

The Dictionary Centre has always led the way in dictionary writing, both in research and practice, being the place where Australia’s Oxford Dictionaries are written. In the coming year, readers of *Ozwords* will be invited to share in the crowd-sourcing activities of Australian Oxford dictionaries and walk into the future of dictionary writing with the lexicographers at the ANDC. We will keep readers posted on the words we are working on and the techniques we will be experimenting with in order to produce the dictionary of tomorrow. Let’s see if we can create the next revolution in dictionary writing together.

This article originally appeared in the *Australian Book Review* (ABR) in February 2012, and is reprinted with kind permission.

Dr Sarah Ogilvie is Director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre and Chief Editor of Oxford Dictionaries, Australia. Most recently she was Alice Tong Sze Research Fellow in Linguistics at Cambridge University. Prior to that, she was editor on the *Oxford English Dictionary* responsible for words from languages outside of Europe.

“Three essential ingredients will be needed that no online dictionary currently combines...”

on the web and in eBooks. All of these applications depend on electronic versions of print dictionaries and wordlists, even though they are often referred to as ‘digital dictionaries’, as though that were somehow a new entity in both content and form.

Free online dictionary websites are being heralded as the next great innovation, maybe even the next revolution. None of them has yet proven to be so, for they are mostly print dictionaries—and often old print dictionaries—online. These applications therefore suffer from a lack of up-to-date, quality dictionary content. Most are either compiled by the public without any curation or editing, or are electronic versions of out-of-copyright print dictionaries which were simply scanned and cleaned up, or sent to India and typed up. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and scanned versions of out-of-print dictionaries are what form the core of existing dictionary sites such as CIDE (Collaborative International Dictionary of English), which uses the 1913 *Webster’s Dictionary*.

Users of free online dictionaries are fooled if they think that an out-of-copyright dictionary wrapped in XML is a brand new, cutting-edge product. Basically, all they have is an out-of-print dictionary that is searchable, which has been supplemented with feeds from free online corpora or Twitter to make it *look* more contemporary. But there is no new lexicographic content.

garments but a new garment throughout’. What will be needed to make this ‘new garment’?

Three essential ingredients will be needed that no online dictionary currently combines: editorial and lexicographic expertise; sophisticated technology; and contributions from the public.

Professional lexicographers will always be needed, doing the painstaking work of tracing etymologies, tracking new words, and writing their definitions, if we want more than digitised versions of out-of-copyright dictionaries. Language is dynamic and always changing in its use and meanings: all new and revised dictionaries need to describe the constant flux in language use and development. This means that it will be essential for professional lexicographers and quality dictionary presses to lead the way in the creation of the dictionaries of the future.

The employment of sophisticated technology will be essential. For example, a word could be described not just in words and image, but also in sound and video. A word’s use throughout history and in the present moment could be shown in more than mere written citations. Algorithms could analyse words over time and represent that analysis in different modes. A user would be able to choose a dictionary structure and a desired degree of detail, thereby accessing different layers

ANTARCTIC SOUP—THE COLD WORDS OF MAWSON AND STILLWELL

BERNADETTE HINCE

That a dictionary-maker should lay claim to the world's polar regions is an act either of desperation or of insight. I cannot claim to have had much insight when I began to look at polar words in 1989. In every way, there was more to it than I thought.

Douglas Mawson's 1911–14 Australasian Antarctic Expedition was the first Australian-led expedition to Antarctica, though not the first expedition to include Australians. Mawson was the leader ('Dux Ipse'—the 'leader himself') of the group who wintered at Cape Denison, Commonwealth Bay, the expedition's 'Main Base'. A second party of eight men established a base far to the west. The living hut at Main Base (actually two huts sandwiched together) has never been occupied by a later expedition.

One of the 18 men at Cape Denison was a young Melbourne geologist, Frank Stillwell, whose diary I have recently edited for publication. This glimpse of a few distinctively Antarctic words of that time is drawn from his diary and from Mawson's *The Home of the Blizzard* (1915).

The first stop after leaving Hobart in December 1911 was Macquarie Island, where five men disembarked. They were to stay a year doing scientific work, notably meteorology, and establishing a wireless relay station between Antarctica and Australia. Sealers, who lived in rough huts while they killed and boiled down penguins and seals for oil, intermittently occupied the island. 'Slept well on extremely hard bunks and through a very chilly night,' wrote Frank Stillwell on 16 December 1911. 'In afternoon walked over hills and along shore with Jones. Had fun with a big elephant. First experience of the nellies or giant petrels.'

Stillwell's *elephant*, though thick-skinned (or actually, thick-blubbered), was no pachyderm, but the main source of oil for the sealers, the sea elephant (*Mirounga* – now more often called an elephant seal). Giant petrels (*Macronectes*), also called nellies, stinkers, or giant fulmars, are large seabirds with a wingspan of two metres or more. These southern hemisphere birds breed on subantarctic islands and, as the English ornithologist Richard Bowdler Sharpe remarked, are 'well known as scavengers'. Interestingly, the earliest recorded southern uses of the terms 'stinker' (as 'stinkard', 1861) and 'nelly' (1822) come from the Falkland Islands.

'Hut is beginning to look homely. Bookshelves erected for library,' wrote Stillwell on 29 January 1912. On the hut's shelves were cookbooks, prayer books, books on life in the Arctic and near-Arctic – Robert Service's *Ballads of a Cheechako*, for example – and new accounts of recent Antarctic journeys, including Shackleton's *The Heart of the Antarctic* (1909).

'Mawson read extracts from the *Aurora Australis* and *South Polar Times* after dinner',

Stillwell noted a few weeks after the shelves went up. Both the *Aurora Australis* from the British Imperial Antarctic ('Nimrod') Expedition of 1908–09 and the *South Polar Times* from Robert Falcon Scott's British National Antarctic ('Discovery') Expedition of 1901–04 were edited by the explorer Ernest Shackleton.

The men's clothing and cold-weather equipment included ski (only just creeping

"Some of the men's new words were inventions which only lasted as long as the expedition"

into general English use, and never referred to in these diaries with a plural 's'), reindeer-skin sleeping bags, English burberries and jaegers. 'Vile day. Snowing and heavy blizzard and real Burberry weather,' Stillwell wrote on 23 February 1912.

The trade name 'Burberry' had only recently been registered for waterproof clothing made from tightly woven proofed yarn by the English manufacturer Thomas Burberry. The men's 'burberries' – overblouses and loose trousers – were protection from the icy wind. Under the burberries the men wore fluffy one-piece combination woollen fleece suits ('jaegers') of trousers and a sleeveless coat, and then a woollen jumper. In 1880, the German zoologist and physiologist Gustav Jaeger began advocating the health benefits of wearing animal fibres such as wool, rather than plant fibres, next to the skin. Within a few years the English manufacturing company Lewis Tomalin started selling 'Jaeger' woollen underclothing.

Some of the clothes came directly from the Far North. After they arrived at Cape Denison, each man got two pairs of soft reindeer-skin boots called 'finnesko'. There were 250 pairs in the expedition's supplies, as well as 86 pairs of wolfskin mitts, both from the firm of WC Møller, near Oslo.

Like travellers everywhere, the men saw new animals and landforms, as well as plenty of hitherto unknown forms of ice and snow. Unlike most travellers, they encountered no locals who could interpret and name the unfamiliar, though men with Arctic experience on board ship and among the hut occupants could recognise and name some of the ice forms and wildlife.

Even for Antarctica, the base was in an extraordinarily windy place. This prompted the men to devise a 'puffometer' (from *puff* + *anemometer*) to record the wind's strongest gusts. They tried it for the first time on 15 April 1912. 'Weather very puffy – relatively calm spells between strong gusts with thick drift', wrote Stillwell.

Some of the men's new words were inventions which lasted only as long as the expedition. A 'championship', for example, was the act of distinguishing oneself by a publicly hailed piece of stupidity. As Mawson wrote,

'Championship' was a term evolved from the local dialect, applying to a slight mishap, careless accident or unintentional disaster in any department of Hut life.

The fall of a dozen plates from the shelf to the floor, the fracture of a table-knife in frozen honey, the burning of the porridge or the explosion of a tin thawing in the oven brought down on the unfortunate cook a storm of derisive applause and shouts of 'Championship! Championship!'

Another word which did not outlive the expedition – unless it was in his Hawthorn household – was Stillwell's 'homemeal' for 'wholemeal': '4 lbs of homemeal bread was appreciated and considered the best so far', he remarked, and his 'homemeal scones' went down a treat too. As a home cook I found this word particularly endearing.

Food was always uppermost in the men's minds, and the local wildlife was eaten as often as possible. Creatures whose names had been unknown before the expedition, such as the 'crabbie' or 'crabeater', which Stillwell called a 'crab-eating seal', were seen, admired, shot and then skinned or eaten – or both:

Then after breakfast sally with gun found a crab-eating seal with a beautiful grey skin with a glossy appearance. He was killed and skinned after being photographed.

Such meals were not always enthusiastically received. After a meal on 16 March 1912, wrote Stillwell:

Madigan informed the talkative company that the English soup was Antarctic soup and contained skua gulls. There was a dead pause for some seconds before any could find speech. Then came laughter from most, disgust from a few and unbelief from some.

I don't wish I'd been there, but I'd like to have tried the soup.

Dr Bernadette Hince is currently Visiting Fellow at the Australian National Dictionary Centre. She is the author of *The Antarctic Dictionary* (CSIRO/Museum Victoria 2000), and *Still No Mawson: the Antarctic diaries of Frank Stillwell 1911–13* (Australian Academy of Science, Canberra, forthcoming May 2012).

MAILBAG

Letters, emails and tweets are welcome. Please address letters to: **Ozwords**,
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Email: andc@anu.edu.au Twitter: [@ozworders](https://twitter.com/ozworders) Blog: www.ozwords.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/ozwords

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.

GOT HIS DOOGS

M. King of South Australia remembers playing marbles as a kid in the 1950s: 'It was considered girly, or sissy, to refer to the game as marbles, so the terms 'alleys', 'agates', or 'doogs' (the 'oog' pronounced as in 'boogie') were used. I have discovered that 'alleys' derives from alabaster via marble and 'agate' refers to the stone agate, but I cannot find any reference to 'doogs'. Is 'doogs' a recognised slang word, or was it unique to South Australia, if not to my primary school (Ridley Grove Primary)?'

M. King, SA

The word *doog* meaning a playing marble has come to our attention in recent years. We will be adding this word to the next edition of the *Australian National Dictionary* (AND). *Doog* comes from an obsolete British dialect word 'doogs' meaning 'a term in the game of marbles' (*English Dialect Dictionary* (EDD)). The *EDD* goes on to quote a source from the county of Suffolk which says 'a party of two or three or more playing at marbles, and putting two or three or more each in the ring; he who knocks out the number he put in is said to have "got his doogs"'. In other words, the player had neither lost nor won.

The evidence we have for *doog* suggests that it is mainly used in South Australia and Western Australia. Our earliest record is from a 1954 article in the *West Australian* newspaper: 'A triangle is drawn by an authoritative finger and six coloured, dusty marbles are set in a definite pattern. Young George is the master here; he becomes the richer by five "doogs" which click into his bulging pockets'. More recently the word appeared in the Western Australian writer Tim Winton's 1991 novel *Cloudstreet*: 'Her mother said she was too old to play doogs in the street'. We have more recent evidence but the game of marbles is certainly not as popular as it once was.

You are right about the derivation of the Australian words *agate* and *alley*. Other Australian words for playing marbles that will be included in the second edition of the AND are *chow*, *connie*, *dib*, *glassy*, *imma*, *milkie*, and *real*.

ONE OFF VS ONE OF

J. Hobbs of Victoria asks about the use of the words 'of' or 'off' particularly in the building

trade where they talk of '1 of' or '3 off' in relation to timber required, etc. Is it an abbreviation—'3 of those' or '4 of the 4 × 2s'?

J. Hobbs, Vic

This is not an example of adding an extra 'f' to the preposition 'of' by mistake, but rather a use of the adverb 'off' that has been with us for almost a century. Internet evidence shows that the use is very common in the building and manufacturing trades. An example from a site that sells timber products is representative: '3 off timber framed balustrade panels with glass inserts. 1 off timber sliding door with glass panel (2200mm h × 1500mm w).'

The evidence for this usage is set out at sense 12 of *off* in the third edition of the *OED*: 'Used with a preceding numeral to represent a quantity in production or manufacture, or an item or number of items so produced'. The most common usage is in the formulation *one-off*, which means (as an adjective) 'made or done as the only one of its kind; unique, not repeated', and (as a noun) 'a manufactured product made as the only one of its kind; a prototype; (more generally) something not repeated'. We are all familiar with this usage. The *OED* also provides examples of *off* preceded by other numerals, examples which get us closer to the reader's query: 'Kienzle printers. 6 off, surplus to manufacturing requirements'. Here '6 off' means something like 'six only of its kind' or 'six only produced'. The examples in the reader's letter perhaps suggest that the *OED* definition needs some slight tweaking, since in usage the 'off' sometimes refers to the number of items required as much as *produced* or *available*. Thus: 'Used with a preceding numeral to represent a quantity in production or manufacture, or an item or number of items so produced, or the number of items required'. We would welcome your comments by post or by email to andc@anu.edu.au.

A PAIR OF GUITARS

I. Taylor of NSW has come across the word 'guitars' meaning a pair of top-boots. This word appears in a book called *Edinburgh Curiosities* (1996) by John Donald, with reference to members of the Kelly Gang who are said to have ended up in Edinburgh. A shopkeeper 'who had experience of Australia'

claimed to recognise one of them as Australian because he heard the word 'guitars' for 'top boots'.

I. Taylor, NSW

This word does not appear in the *Australian National Dictionary* (AND) or the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). We have one piece of evidence for this term in our database from a humorous piece written in the *West Australian* newspaper of 1932: 'A Bishop wears guitars when at a public meeting'. The AND does have evidence for the musical instrument banjo meaning a 'shoulder of mutton' dating from 1897, and a 'shovel' dating from 1915. These terms arise because of a similarity of shape which may also be the case for *guitars*. Another explanation is because of the different colourings of the guitar on the front and back. Note the *OED* definition for 'top-boot':

A high boot, having a top of white, light-coloured, or brown leather or the like, formerly habitually worn by gentlemen, yeomen, and farmers, in riding or country dress; now by hunting men, jockeys, grooms, and coachmen.

Whatever the reason for calling top-boots *guitars*, it would be great to hear if any of our *Ozwords* readers have come across this term.

REFLEXION VS REFLECTION

Over the last several months we have had a number of queries regarding the correct spelling of words like *reflection/reflexion* and *connection/connexion*.

Words such as *reflection* have a very unstable spelling history: *refleccioun*, *reflettioun*, *reflexioun*, and so on. The word *reflection* entered the English language in the fourteenth century via French, and like many similar words derived from Latin the more common spelling form was *-xion*. The frequency of the *-xion* spelling has declined over the last two centuries to the extent that for words such as *reflection* and *connection* this spelling form is now considered archaic by many dictionaries.

The reason behind this shift from the *-xion* form to the more frequent and acceptable *-tion* form is probably a result of the influence of the associated verbs, *reflect* and *connect* for example. So *reflection* and *connection* are now the preferred and more frequent spellings of these kinds of words.

NEW DIRECTOR

In January 2012 we welcomed our new Director, Dr Sarah Ogilvie, who was appointed to replace Bruce Moore on his retirement. Sarah comes to Canberra from the Linguistics Department at Cambridge University where she was Alice Tong Sze Research Fellow at Lucy Cavendish College. She is also Reader in Linguistics at ANU and Chief Editor of Oxford Dictionaries, Australia. Sarah knows the Centre well because she worked here under Bill Ramson twenty years ago, writing the pronunciations for the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, the first Oxford dictionary to have Australian rather than British pronunciations. She worked as Senior Editor at Macquarie Dictionary before working in England for many years as Editor on the twenty-volume *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) where she was responsible for words entering English from languages outside Europe. Sarah has a Bachelor of Science degree in Pure Mathematics and Computer Science from the University of Queensland, a Master of Arts in Linguistics from ANU, and a Doctorate in Linguistics from Oxford University. For her Masters thesis Sarah lived with an Aboriginal community on Cape York and wrote a grammar and dictionary of a previously undocumented language. Her DPhil at Oxford was on the treatment of foreign words in the *OED*.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Dictionary Centre has now entered the world of social media, and we are hoping that some of you may have too, so that you are able to follow us online. Our blog *Ozwords* can be found at www.ozwords.org. We are now on Facebook, and you can also follow us on Twitter @ozworders. Also check out our website at www.anu.edu.au/andc.



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NEW VISITING FELLOWS

We have two new Visiting Fellows at the Dictionary Centre. In March, Professor Leanne Hinton joined us from UC Berkeley. Leanne is an expert on language revitalisation programs and has written dictionaries and grammars of Native American languages. She visited Aboriginal communities at Alice Springs and Kununurra to train language trainers in the Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program, which was the topic of



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 Public Lecture she gave at ANU at the end of March on 'Reclaiming Indigenous Languages', hosted by the Dictionary Centre and generously sponsored by AIATSIS.

Our other new Visiting Fellow is Dr Amanda Laugesen, who has an article in this *Ozwords*. Amanda is currently collaborating with the Australian National Dictionary Centre to research the role of publishing and print culture in the shaping of Australian English. She is using the resources of the Centre to look at the ways in which written works have contributed to the lexicon and helped to formalise and shape our language.

LAUNCH OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CORPUS

The Australian National Corpus was launched at Griffith University in March. The Centre was represented at the event by the Director, Dr Sarah Ogilvie. The new corpus promises to be an excellent resource for research on Australian English. It contains published texts from many genres; transcribed speech with aligned audio files; videos of discourse; and electronic text including email, blogs, and social media. For more information see www.ausnc.org.au.

NEW DISCOVERIES IN OLD SOURCES

As the Sydney linguist Michael Walsh will describe in an article in the next edition of *Ozwords*, he has spent the past six months poring over manuscripts in the Mitchell library. He is extracting old wordlists of Aboriginal languages from the library's rich collection of early British settler diaries, missionary field notes, and unpublished historical documents for a project funded by the State Library of NSW and Rio Tinto. Recently, he sent us twelve scanned pages of a leather-bound diary he discovered which belonged to Richard Tester, who

had recorded his daily adventures in 1860, travelling overland from Kerkaraboo on the Wakefield River to Melbourne and the goldfields.

Tester's diary describes life in the bush and the goldfields, his encounters with Aboriginal people (including claims of murder and cannibalism around Lake Victoria), and his experience of a corroboree. His handwriting is difficult to read but the text is extremely rich in early Australian vocabulary, and those twelve pages alone provided over thirty new citations for the next edition of the *Australian National Dictionary*. There were earlier examples of words such as *wombat* 'a slow or stupid person' and *coon* 'Aboriginal person', antedated by 45 years and 39 years respectively. These are significant antedatings when you consider that Australian English is only 200 years old. The use of the word *coon* was particularly surprising because it showed that it was not originally used in a derogatory way, but in fact was also used self-referentially by whitefellas to refer to themselves.

There were also completely new words that we will now add to the dictionary such as *yeller dust* 'gold' and *thunder stick* 'a gun'—dated in the *OED* as 1918 but which can now be claimed as originally Australian from 60 years earlier. Even more exciting for us was the use of early pidgin and Aboriginal English in the diary: *bacca* 'tobacco', *black pella* 'black fella', *butter* 'the fat on an animal', and *moke* 'to smoke a cigarette'.

CONFERENCES

The Dictionary Centre Director, Dr Sarah Ogilvie, chaired a session at the first Australian Digital Humanities Conference, held at ANU on 27–30 March. The conference attracted many international scholars, and the Centre's Digital Humanities Specialist, Dr Tim Sherratt, gave a paper on 'Inside the Bureaucracy of White Australia'.

Dr Ogilvie will speak on the future of dictionaries at the Oxford Education Conference 2012 in Melbourne on 11 May.

NEW STAFF

The Centre welcomes Dr Tim Sherratt as our Digital Humanities Specialist, and three bright ANU students who are joining us for work experience: Charlotte Chambers, Eugene Danyo, Christina Greer and Daniel Lynch.



SCRABBLE ADDICTS ANONYMOUS

ROS FRASER



What can I say? Roughly six years after I joined an online international Scrabble club in September 2005, I found I had played about 155 forty-hour weeks of Scrabble, all in a state of ferocious and mostly entertaining escapism. I was quite shocked by this sum, as you can no doubt imagine, and have since played few games.

I came to online Scrabble because, for twenty-something years, nobody much in my immediate environment had regarded Scrabble as anything more than a risible substitute for life, only for autodidacts and the slow-witted. Online play seemed a perfect answer, as indeed it can be.

It was my first sally into either online games or a chat room, and when I started I was as nervous as if I were playing naked in Grace Brothers' window on a Saturday morning. The early days were full of embarrassment and querulousness. As soon as a newbie becomes apparent in these game forums, he or she is targeted by sharks looking to lift their ratings by, say, tricking the new player into 3-minute double-penalty games. (These assaults, and other kinds of bullying, don't last long once you've had a few games. Luckily it didn't happen often, and for years has hardly happened at all, and I now know exactly what to do when it does.) I got petulant about various kinds of player behaviour, and I excited the administrators' scorn quite quickly, only partly because I imagined that they would *want* to know that 'ballart', for example, was indeed a word, just like 'coolibah' or 'wurlie' or 'gilgai', which were acceptable to them. Well ... Not much game-playing in my background, you see.

The site I'm talking about has two categories of members, contributory and non-contributory. Paid-up members have various privileges, the two which engage me most being the right to play against computers and the right to have a second, non-contributory, account, which can be useful in various ways. One chooses a *nom-de-screen* for each account (carefully, so as not to excite the interest of pornographers or zealots). Some peoples' names have afforded me a lot of amusement or speculation. I'd tell you mine, but then you'd know who I was if you joined, hehhehheh and lol.

Games are played in real time. You can decide whether to participate with your partner (and others, if you like) in a chat window beside the board. Most people are willing at least to exchange formulaic greetings and wish each other luck. One of my buddies, naglaptop in Bangalore, routinely posts 'Good luck to us', but he usually gets more of it than I do. Some won't play you if you won't chat, and some never stop talking, which can be good or

bad. Basic details about yourself and your playing history are available to others deciding whether to challenge you or to accept your challenge. You can advertise yourself as ready for a game of a certain length and character (more later) with anyone, or you can challenge particular players, including those on your 'buddies' list whose game style or chat you know you enjoy. Rotters and cads can be placed on your 'no-play' list, and thereafter can't see when you are online or communicate with you. The computers are exhilarating to play against, and if you don't feel like being sociable they're just the ticket.

Game parameters you can vary at will include language (English, in either of two dictionaries covering varieties acceptable in several international and national tournaments, French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and a dictionary that covers them all). Many people are driven mad by the inclusions or exclusions of their chosen dictionary. (My ex-farmer culinary wizard and literary friend i[rish] terrier tells me our 250,000+ word dictionary is not up to speed on animal husbandry or cooking, for example.) At one stage I kept a record of disallowed words that I thought should be included, among them a number of Australianisms, which I thought I might get around to championing for the next version of the word list. The latest dictionary update has recently come out; although I haven't yet checked it, I'm hoping it might include some of them anyway, regardless of my own failure to pick up the flag.

You can also choose the length of any game, what happens when you put down a wrong word or wrongly challenge your partner's (you can lose varying numbers of points, or none), and whether the outcome should affect your rating. You can watch others' games from the sidelines, and let them watch yours, or not, and there are several other variables.

My opponents' ages have ranged from 11 to 94, the latter a long-time friend and Scrabble-foe in real life, although he lives too far away for us to play often in 3-D. Some of my opponents have turned out to live just down the road, but others have come from a fantastic array of countries, including ones where people have access to electricity for only a couple of random hours a day. Most in my rating range (1000-ish to 1250-ish, so far; ace players are in the 2000+ range) seem to play because they love Scrabble, but there are other agendas as well. Overseas players are sometimes keen to establish immediately what country you're in, your sex, age, marital status, and your attitude to people from their countries. Others are trying to improve their English, which seems a

smart thing to do. Some players whose first language is not English have vocabularies that put mine to shame. There is the odd person with a large vocabulary, English-speaking in background or otherwise, who can barely string two of their vocabulary items together, but that hardly matters to the game. I don't often meet those people with terrifyingly retentive brains who have slurped entire word lists into their eidetic memories; they're on there, but they mostly inhabit the upper ratings regions.

It's impossible not to laugh out loud merrily and often at the wit and ingenuity, or sometimes just the *chutzpah*, of many of the people I play, to develop a fondness for them and to react to the things that happen to them. Sometimes these happen in real time, as when I was playing someone living in a caravan on the beach as the eye of Cyclone Yasi approached (he/she and the dog were a bit battered but fine, mostly just hung over; it transpired when the power finally went back on in the region). A couple of my favourite partners have been mortally ill, then disappeared, and others have disappeared for unknown reasons.

I am, I'm sorry to say, only a mediocre player, despite all those games, and an unadventurous one. I've only tried three- or five-minute games a few times, for example. (Apparently there *are* people who can complete a game in three minutes.) I've discovered some things about myself, though, one being a competitive streak I was too mealy-mouthed to admit to before. I *want* to win, I *want* my rating to shoot up, I *want* to beat my favourite computers, I *want* to beat every last person I play, and that by miles. Happily, I stop caring the instant a game finishes, and only a very long run of losses makes me feel at all dejected.

I also want to remember every new word (of which there have been hundreds), especially the wacky ones, and know when to have them trip off my tongue, or my pen, in everyday speech or writing. But see where that gets me? I've won only 4842 of 9260 games, my present rating is at about the mean, and I've forgotten a titanic proportion of the fabulous words I've met, the meanings of most of which remain unknown to me. Notwithstanding, I have learnt some new ones, and had a lot of fun in a social environment not so different from an offline club, and all without even having to get out of my nightie if I haven't felt like it.

I should get a life. But am I happy when I'm playing? Oh, yes. Must go now – the dog is yirring.

Ros Fraser is an archivist who specialises in Commonwealth records on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



PUBLISHING, PRINT CULTURE, AND AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

By AMANDA LAUGESSEN



In the scholarship on Australian English, much has been written about the evolution of the Australian lexicon (Ransom (2002), Moore (2008), and Damousi (2010)). Yet much of this fascinating literature has paid only limited attention to the sources from which our knowledge of the lexicon, as it has been *recorded* in the past, derives. The *Australian National Dictionary* (AND) is based on the extensive reading of a range of sources, including private records such as government documents and diaries, and published sources such as newspapers and books. A glance at the 'Selected Bibliography' of the AND or a search through its pages will reveal that the majority of the sources used are of the latter, published, kind. I am embarking on a new research project that seeks to more closely investigate this source material and its relationship to Australian English.

A study of print culture and words can reveal how words have been recorded and how they circulate through print culture. So, for example, the earliest words recorded as Australian English – which mostly related to the new environment and flora and fauna of the newly discovered continent – found their way into circulation through the publications of explorers and scientists, and through travel narratives. These publications were nearly all published in London and brought new words and terms into circulation. In turn, the fact that these new words were finding their way into the printed record tended to make them the preferred words and terms that came into standard usage. This is most evident with borrowings from Aboriginal languages – the words that came into Australian English tended to be borrowed from the languages of the peoples that Europeans first encountered.

Certain writers and publications have played a role in shaping Australian English as it has evolved over two centuries and more. I intend to investigate some of these writers and publications, and to explore the publication history of some of the accounts that have played a role in shaping the Australian lexicon on the printed page. In considering the earliest accounts of the Australian settlement that have contributed a number of citations to the AND, David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* (1802) is an interesting and important one, and one for which we know something of the publication history.

David Collins was appointed deputy judge-advocate of the new settlement to be established at Botany Bay and travelled

to Australia with the First Fleet in 1788, leaving the fledgling colony in 1796. (He returned south in 1803 as lieutenant governor of a new settlement in what would become known as Van Diemen's Land.) Collins kept an extensive journal through his time in New South Wales, and there is some suggestion that he had his eye on its possible publication from the first.

Fellow travellers to the new colony, including Watkin Tench and John White, had their accounts of the settlement published soon after their return to England. Tench's *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* was published in 1789 and John White's *Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales* appeared in 1790. Collins' account appeared only in 1798. However, his book, published by the London publishers Cadell and Davies (who had a considerable reputation for publishing travel and exploration literature), rapidly became the authoritative account of the New South Wales colony. It was reviewed and excerpted extensively in leading British journals of the day, including *Gentleman's Magazine* and *Monthly Review*, and this gave it even greater prominence in the circulating print networks of the day and boosted both its readership and Collins' reputation.

An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales undoubtedly helped to paint a picture of the settlement for British and European readers who in the late eighteenth century eagerly sought out information about the new colonial settlements on the other side of the world. In addition, Collins' optimism about the potential of the settlement was influential in a time when there was much public criticism about the expense of setting up the colony and doubts expressed about its future.

Collins' account also helped to create a vocabulary by which the new colony could be understood and imagined. Over one hundred words or terms are cited from *An Account of the English Colony* in the first edition of the AND. Many are terms that describe the flora and fauna of the new and unfamiliar environment, and include *bandicoot*, *dwarf gum*, *black cockatoo* and *stringy bark*. As magistrate of the settlement, Collins was much concerned with the convict system and many terms cited in the AND from his book describe this system: *absolute emancipation*, *conditional pardon*, *convict servant*, *free pardon*, *gaol gang*, *public gang*, *runaway* and *working in irons* are just some of them. Many of these terms relating to the convict system are first recorded in Collins' account and brought the language of convictism to an international readership. His book had a lot of interest

in Britain and Europe because of its discussion of the convict system, and informed future debates about the efficacy of transportation.

Collins' book also recorded a number of words that were of Aboriginal origin. These include *bingey* (as *bin-dee*, from the Dharuk), *hieleman* (as *e-lee-mong*, from the Dharuk), *yiliman*, *malgun* (from the Dharuk), and *woomera* (as *wo-mer-ra*, from the Dharuk, *wumara*). As Bruce Moore has insightfully commented about the early lexicon of Australian English in *Speaking Our Language* (p. 8), these words borrowed by Europeans from Aboriginal languages, which tended to describe the world of 'things', did not suggest any real attempt on the part of the newcomers to understand the conceptual world of the indigenous peoples they encountered. A study of Collins' published account reinforces our understanding of British perceptions of indigenous society: Collins wrote in the preface that he thought that 'through the humble medium of this history, the untutored savage, emerging from darkness and barbarism, might find additional friends among the better-informed members of civilized society.' The interest was in 'civilising' the indigenous population more than it was in understanding the complexities of their culture and society.

This brief discussion of David Collins' early narrative of the New South Wales colony suggests that a richer contextualisation of the Australian lexicon, through an examination of the publications by which words were recorded and circulated, can reveal further insights into the evolution of Australian English. It also suggests that it is important to consider these publications in a transnational context, circulating across the British Empire and beyond.

There are many other questions and issues that I plan to explore in researching the relationship between print culture, publishing and Australian English, and I hope to share my findings in future editions of *Ozwords* and on the ANDC blog.

Dr Amanda Laugesen is currently Visiting Fellow at the Australian National Dictionary Centre. She is collaborating with the Centre to research the role of publishing and print culture in the shaping of Australian English. Her recent book *Boredom is the Enemy* (2012) is published by Ashgate.



OZWORDS COMPETITION



OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 37: RESULTS

For this competition you were asked to create rhyming phrases with Australian place names of the kind 'Things are crook in Tallarook'. We received nearly one hundred submissions which included the following:

As mad as a hatter in Coolangatta
(S. Robson, Qld)

Dame Edna waves her gladi fronds
To all her fans in Moonee Ponds
(P. Harley, SA)

I got the hump beyond the Black
Stump
(P. Higgins, NSW)

Found a dollar in Wallawalla
(S. Thomson, NSW)

Wine, not ale, in McLaren Vale
(H. Richardson, SA)

Taught to frack on the Birdsville Track
(D. Tribe, NSW)

Chew the fat at Ararat
(W. Wetherell, NSW)

Copped a feel at Warracknabeal
Reynolds, Vic.)

Didn't stay long in Wollongong
(J. McBryde, Qld)

They shot the cook at Muswellbrook
(M. Lean, Qld)

Came to grief on Ashmore Reef
(J. Dewar, NSW)

Great minds think alike:

Need a doona in Cooma
(L. Pattison, NSW and S. Pile, Vic.)

2nd Prize (books to the value of \$50 from the OUP catalogue):

We dared not linger at 'hot' Maralinga

The Rev. Canon Peter Patterson of South Australia shared a moving story to accompany his submission. He writes:

'This rhyming phrase refers to the remote place in outback South Australia where I served as an Army Chaplain at Maralinga during the British Atomic Tests. I am the only surviving Chaplain of six who were deployed there. We all suffered cancers from ionising radiation; my colleagues died from it.'

1st Prize (books to the value of \$100 from the OUP catalogue):

Wrecked my liver at Margaret River
(B. Maley, WA)

OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 38: AUSTRALIAN KENNINGS

From earliest days, English speakers have demonstrated a capacity to be creative and poetic with their language. Old English, like the closely related Old Norse, developed a poetic system of compound expressions. What we now term 'kennings' were words that figuratively, and often very vaguely, described something. Here are just a few Old English examples that have been translated into modern English: 'whale-road' for the sea; 'bone-house' for a person's body; and 'sleep of the sword' for death.

Your task for this competition is to come up with a kenning that has an Australian flavour to it. Here are a few examples to get you started: 'Assembly of Galahs' for Parliament, 'Earbashing box' for an iPod, and 'Department of Chunder' for a nightclub or pub.

ENTRIES CLOSE 31 JULY 2012

Entries sent by email should also contain a snail mail address (in order to receive the prize). All entries should be sent to the ANDC at one of the addresses at the top of the next column.

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