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EDITORIAL

October will be an exciting month for us at the Dictionary Centre. The international conference 'Who's Centric Now? The Present State of Post-Colonial Englishes', hosted by Oxford University Press, the Australian National Dictionary Centre, and the Humanities Research Centre, will be held at the Australian National University from 27 to 29 October. There will be papers on the Englishes of Australia (including Aboriginal English), Bangladesh, Britain, Canada, Fiji, India, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, and the USA.

During the conference a major new dictionary, edited at the Centre, will be launched by the Hon. E.G. Whitlam. This is *The Australian Oxford Dictionary*. A distinctive feature of this new dictionary is its encyclopedic material. It includes substantial entries on people, places, events, etc., and has short essayish entries on topics ranging from Aborigines to Zulus.

This number of *Ozwords* includes articles by Kate Burridge and Roly Sussex. Kate's article on swearing is timely indeed, given the decision of a Dubbo Local Court magistrate (on 22 August) to dismiss 'an offensive language charge against an 18-year-old man' on the grounds that 'the word "f—" had become extremely commonplace and had lost most of its punch' (*Canberra Times*, 2 September 1999).

I shall be delighted to receive more articles from our readers.

Frederick Ludowyk

Frederick Ludowyk
Editor, *Ozwords*

AUSSIEISMS
SEND HER DOWN *WHO*–IE?

FREDERICK LUDOWYK

When sensible people (such as I) become bored with the snailishness of test cricket (and the pace of much of this game can make a snail's arduous sojourn from *Osmanthus fragrans* to cuttings of rare roses but a metre away seem like the frenetic flight of a Fury), they usually yearn to cause a bit of miching mallecho and mayhem. Thereupon they pray to **Hughie**, the God of Celestial Effluence, in the hallowed formula **Send her down, Hughie!**—and the genial God generally obliges. Whereupon the rains they rain and the papers thereafter carry satisfying headlines such as PLAY WASHED OUT *AGAIN*.

The phrase **Send her** (or **it**) **down, Hughie!** (or **Huey!**) is a prayer to our uniquely Aussie Rain God to send down rain a-plenty, and that prayer has been prayed, it seems, for a very long time. In 1922, for instance, the *Bulletin* reported: 'At the end of the dry, when the first few showers fall, "Send it down, Hughie!" is the heartfelt exclamation of every eager bush-watcher.' The 'she' variation first appears in Katharine Susannah Prichard's *Roaring Nineties* (1946): 'Miners and prospectors would turn out and yell to a dull, dirty sky clouded with red dust: "Send her down! Send her down, Hughie!" ' By 1981 the phrase had been taken up, with a slight variation, by surfers, and this time the appeal to the weather God is for him to send down truly awesome waves: 'Incoming waves may be assessed, and sometimes the ancient cry will rise during a lull: "Send 'em up Huey!" Meaning: push some waves in' (*National Times*, Sydney, 20 December). In surfing circles, **Huey** is often referred to without the **Send 'em up** tag-phrase: 'Rabbit felt inclined to find out what was happening. He then broke out the old mobile and engaged in the task of communicating to Huey. "What's going on?" he was heard saying here. "I asked for the swell to hit today, mate, not tomorrow. And I want it to be six foot and no less." Huey was quick to respond and sure enough by the arvo the six-footers were pumping through' (*Tracks*, August 1995). Or, more domestically: 'Most surfers entertain the concept of having a special relationship with Huey's missus, Ma Nature' (*Tracks*, February 1994).

Who is **Hughie** or **Huey**, this recipient of fervent prayer for rain since very early in this declining century or even late in the last? Interestingly, the earliest written record of the phrase also offers an etymology. It occurs in the *Bulletin* in 1912:

> *Re* the shearer's 'Send it down, Hughie!' ... when needed rain is threatening. I first heard the expression in Narrandera (NSW). ... I believe that it originated in that district, by reason of a Mr Huie ... an amateur meteorologist, who had luck in prophesying rain. ... Hence, 'Send it down, Huie'.

. This has all the signs of popular etymology of the folksy, word-of-mouth kind which can claim without a shred of evidence that the very Aussie **neenish tart**, for instance, was the invention of a Ruby Neenish at Grong Grong (NSW) in 1913 when she happened to run short of cocoa to ice her cakes for a shower tea. The eponymous amateur meteorologist, Mr Huie, it seems to me, is as much a stray wisp of watery vapour from *Nephelokokkugia*, better known as Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, as is the cocoa-improvident Ruby Neenish.

One etymology proposed for the Australian idiom **Send her down, Hughie!** is not just vaporous, it is clearly wrong. This etymology is contained in the claim that the Aussie **Hughie** derives from the Iroquois helicopter gunships used by the Americans in the Vietnam War, manufactured by the Hughes Corporation, and given the model number **HU II** (Helicopter Utility series 2). This explanation was offered in a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 September 1995: 'The ground-based radio operators after giving enemy positions would say "Send 'em down, Huey" [i.e. send down the bombs]. The idiom was later adopted by the Australians and at home used by surfers referring to the sun's rays.' Oh, come! Bombs and rays of sunshine are but moonshine as far as **Hughie** is concerned. He is nothing if not a *watery* God. The writer adds: 'I have no idea how the Yanks picked

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

SEND HER DOWN *WHO*–IE?

FREDERICK LUDOWYK

up the phrase, but it was very popular and most common.' Unfortunately for the attempt to Yankify our home-grown **Hughie**, he was proving his Australian identity and his watery influence in Oz at least as early as 1912—long before the Vietnam War and bomb-burdened HU IIs rained fire from the skies.

Many of the popular etymologies are made of sterner stuff, stuff of a classical kind. A unit on traditional grammar is taught at the Australian National University. At a particular stage in this course, students learn that the classical Greek for 'it is raining' is **huei**. Some of them—budding etymologists all—get in touch with the Dictionary Centre, exclaiming *'Eureka!'* (or, rather, *'Hêurêkamen!'*)—'we have discovered the dinkum origin of **Hughie**. The mystery is solved. **Hughie** is obviously an ancient Greek God whose name means "It is raining". He's not an Aussie at all.'

Sigh! Those shearers and drovers, those miners and farmers, all invoking **Hughie** down the years, they were all classical scholars (or perhaps they were doing a correspondence course on traditional grammar from the ANU back in 1912). '**Send her down, Hughie!**' the drouthy cockies cry. And then, but moments later, their faces wet with tears and rain, they raise the alleluiatic chorus to the skies: 'Ah!—**huei**, **huei**.'

Other versions of the classical origin have it that **Hughie** is either a corruption of *Jupiter* (pronounced *YOU-pitter*) *Pluvius*, the God of rain (**you** is almost **Hugh**, get it?), or a corruption of *Zeus*—with the typically Australian hypocoristic -y ending producing a **Send 'em down, Juie!** (**YOO-ie**) or **Zeuy!** which, in process of bucolic time, was corrupted to **Send 'em down, Hughie!** Lord love a duck (or even a bedrenched *baskas*—an ancient Greek 'duck' to you)! What's with these Zyoo-eys and Yoo-eys and **huei** 'it rains' that we should be so bothersomely beset with them?

In Aristophanes' satiric comedy *Nephelai* (*The Clouds*), the philosopher Socrates and the elderly hempen homespun Strepsiades are involved in a profound theological disputation. Socrates stoutly asserts that God is but an imaginary conceit. The Clouds, he avers, are the only deities there are. The old rustic is shocked. *'No God?'* he cries. *'If that is so, who makes the rain come down? Hah! Answer me* that, *if you can!' 'Why, the Clouds, of course,'* replies the philosopher urbanely, no whit feezed or fazed. *'The proof is* watertight. *Have you ever seen rain falling anywhere when there* wasn't *a Cloud in the sky? How is it that God is unable to produce rain in clear weather when the Clouds have all gone walkabout?'* [I append the original for those who read classical Greek, since my translation is, perhaps unwarrantably, loose: "phere pou gar pôpot' aneu Nephelôn **huont**' êdê tetheasai;/kaitoi chrên aithrias **huein** auton, tautas d'apodêmein" (lines 370–71).] *'Blow me!'* exclaims the rustic, scratching his head on hearing this weighty proof. *'And here was me thinking orl the time that it was bloody obvious that rain was nowt but God pissing through a sieve!'* ["kaitoi proteron ton Di alêthôs ôimên dia koskinou ourein" (line 373).] Me, I'm more inclined to believe that when it rains it really is God pissing through a sieve (a whimsically Goddish thing to do) than that *Zeus* was Australianised into *Zeuy* or that *Jupiter* was Australianised into *Joey* and then that either was or both were corrupted into *Hughie*.

A pish and a tush for your Greek Gods! There are proponents of the theory that **Hughie** is a corruption of **Yahweh**, the Hebrew name of God in the Bible (we're back to the **You–Hugh** slide, it seems). Then there are those, followers of the nomenclatural practice of Jehovah's Witnesses, who argue that **Hughie** is a corruption of **Jehovah**. And **Jehovah** and **Jove** are awfully close in sound, are they not? (This is a non sequitur no less sequential than the *Zeuy–Hughie* etc. slides.) For those not impressed by **Jehovah** there is always **Yowie**. Who is Yowie? Peter McCormack, in his delightful book *Q&A: Questions and Answers on Anything and Everything* (ABC Books, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1993) tells us—and (tongue in cheek) gives us other possible etymons of **Hughie** as well:

> The origin of Hughie is uncertain, although several possible explanations have emerged. One is that it derived from the saying 'Send it down, Yowie'. *Yowie* is an Aboriginal word for thunder. Another is that it could be a humorous invocation to the former government meteorologist, Hughie Watt. And then there was the early Bendigo political figure, Hughie McColl, an ardent campaigner for water conservation. There was also the celebrated cricketer Hugh Trumble, whose fast bowling instigated cries from the crowd of 'Send 'er down, Hughie—wooden legs are cheap.' (p. 90)

Peter McCormack throws in Yahweh for good measure and St Hugh of Wessex as a bonus: 'Hugh was a Catholic bishop in Wessex in the sixth or seventh century. He is reputed to have had great success with the weather. When he died, the peasants prayed to Saint Hugh for rain' (p. 90). I can say this, at least, for what it is worth—St Hugh's ability to make it pour (assuming that he did in fact exist and so was able to do a bit of pouring) is attested in Thomas Dekker's play *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600).

A few years ago we received a letter from a Tasmanian now living in Queensland. Part of the letter reads:

> Queenslanders say some funny things. They **sick** their dog onto something. In Tasmania we **skidge** 'em. They do something special **on the weekend**. We did it **at the weekend**. They get a **ding** in the car when they hit a roo, we got a **dent**. And they don't **beep** the horn, they **barp** it. Barp?! Is that a word? And they don't say **Send her down, Hughie** when they want more rain. They say **Send her down, David**. They're a funny mob, these Queenslanders.

Now I dare make no comments about Queenslanders (*David* forsooth! What do they think this is? Bush Week?), but this is the first (and only) evidence we have come across of the formulation **Send her down, David!** being used in Australia.

It is certainly used in Pommyland. E. Fraser and J. Gibbons *Soldier and Sailor Words and Phrases* (1925) give **Send it down David!** (or **Davy!**), indicating 'a soldiers' greeting to a shower of rain likely to postpone a parade'. J. Brophy and E. Partridge *Songs and Slang of the British Soldier: 1914–1918* (1930) report: 'The Biblical David, for some unknown reason, was held responsible for rainfall, and

drenched, shivering troops would apostrophize the dripping skies—Send it down, David, send it down!' (p. 195). In his *Dictionary of Catch Phrases* (1977), however, Eric Partridge has changed his mind about the identity of this David whom the pommy Tommies invoke:

> **Send it down, David** (with variant **Davy lad**)! The variant belongs to the Regular Army; and the basic *send it down, David* is often intensified by the addition of a repetitive *send it down*: late C19–20. In the army, esp. during WWI, it was used to implore David, the Welsh patron saint, to send a preferably very heavy shower, notably when it might cause a parade to be postponed or cancelled. Parts of Wales have a notoriously wet climate: and, what is more, Wales is 'the land of *Leeks*' (leaks).

There is, of course, a further association between St David and leeks. Shakespeare, for instance, describes the tradition of Welsh people wearing leeks on St David's day as 'an ancient Tradition began vppon an honourable respect, and worne as a memorable Trophee' (*Henry the Fifth*, V. i. 64).

Is it possible that the Australian prayer is a copycat variant of the British prayer? The odd feature of the British prayer is that the role of David as a weather god or wetting saint is not part of his curriculum vitae—indeed, his rainy role appears to rely solely on the appalling leek/leak pun. And why should Australians have varied 'David' with the now even more obscure 'Hughie'? It seems much more likely to me that the Australian idiom is the original and that the pommy one is the copy. **Send it down, Hughie!** existed well before the First World War in Australia (S.J. Baker in *The Australian Language* (1966) notes that 'It has been in Australian use since the beginning of this century'). **Send it down, David!** arises in British English during the First World War. It is feasible to my mind that British soldiers, faced by our boys with the even-by-then obscure Australian **Hughie** ('Send her down *Who*-ey, choom?') and the further obscurity of that **her**, wittily replaced the impenetrable **Hughie** with their home-grown leaky David, picking out the one salient fact that they could understand about our God—he leaks.

In 1991 a letter-writer to the surfing magazine *Tracks* asked 'what "Huey" really means or what people believe he is'. The editor responded:

> All I can say is that, yes, Huey is THE god of the waves. His legend can ONLY be passed on orally. The last person who even thought about putting it into print died in an unspeakably horrible way. If you are destined to learn his legend, you will.—Ed.

Well, I am warned. But I shall persist in trying to 'learn his legend' and if I do I shall certainly put it into print. Hughie, my friend, I shall blow away your cloud-cover yet. But please be up above when test cricket next looms.

> Then send her down hard, my
> nebulous Hughie!—
> But wait till I've upped *mon parapluie.*

Lord, what diuretic doggerel! I must be deviating into dotage.

MAILBAG

Letters are welcome. Please address letters to: Frederick Ludowyk, Editor, *Ozwords*,
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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.

FEWER OR LESS?

I'm in Year 11. ... When I wrote [in an assignment] **there were less people than expected**, my teacher crossed out **less** and wrote **fewer** on top. But later when I said **less of a crowd** she left the **less** alone. ... Is there a rule about this? I don't know when to say **less** and **fewer**. Thanks.

Peter
Vic

*You are in exalted company, Peter, when you say that you don't know when to use **less** and when to use **fewer**. Talking about tax policy on the ABC's A.M. programme, 24 February 1999, the Treasurer Peter Costello remarked that something or other produced 'less distortions'. He should, of course, have said **'fewer** distortions'. And in* The Taming of the Shrew *Shakespeare makes a character say,* ''Tis known my father hath no less/Than three great argosies'. *That should have been* 'no **fewer** than three great argosies'.

The formal rule is quite simple really. Think of nouns as falling into one of two classes: COUNT NOUNS *and* MASS NOUNS. *'Count nouns' refer to things which you can count and so they can take a plural. 'Assignment' is a count noun ('I have six assignments to write before next week'); 'people' (if you think of them as 'persons') is a count noun; 'distortion' and 'argosy' are count nouns. 'Mass nouns' refer to things which you* can't *count and so they usually have no plural. 'Sugar' is usually a mass noun. (Well, I suppose you could count the individual grains in a kilo of the stuff but you'd be mad to try.) 'Milk' is usually a mass noun. 'Butter' is usually a mass noun. Now for the rule: use* **fewer** *with a count noun and* **less** *with a mass noun. 'There were fewer people at the footy than I'd expected'; 'I'll have less sugar, thanks'.*

There are some grey areas, I'm afraid, but common sense should help you sort these out without too much hassle. Take the noun 'hair', for instance. It can be a mass noun ('I have less hair on my head than you') or a count noun ('I have fewer hairs on my chest than you, and you have at least twelve').

I have just given you the formal *rule for using 'less' and 'fewer'. The evidence we have is that fewer people are abiding by that rule these days. If I were to follow the increasing trend, I should say 'less people are abiding by that rule these days'. I'd advise you to follow the rule in formal speech and writing. But even in other contexts and in ordinary speech I'd recommend you to avoid following the example set by Peter Costello and Shakespeare. The rule makes quite a useful distinction which it would be a pity to see lost.* **Ed.**

AN OZ ODDITY?

On a recent visit to Perth, Western Australia, I saw a word that I had never seen in the UK or anywhere else: **vice-chancellory**. This word, which I saw on signs at more than one university, seems to connote the building in which you can find the vice-chancellor, or else the actual office of the vice-chancellor. *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* of 1994 does not have this word.

Jonathan M. Daube
Connecticut, USA

*Thank you for your letter regarding the ubiquitous **vice-chancellory** in Western Australia. It aroused my curiosity since I had assumed, as you did, that **vice-chancellery** is the only allowable spelling either for the position of the incumbent or for the building which contains him or her. The 20-volume* Oxford English Dictionary *allows **chancellory** as an alternative spelling to **chancellery**, but has only a single citation for the **-ory** variant:* **1886**: 'His *locum tenens* in the Chancellory' (J. Gillow, *History of the English Catholics*, II. 380).

*I next did a search of the Internet for **chancellory** with somewhat startling results. There are no fewer than 961 instances of the campus **chancellory**, in places as far removed from one another as the UK, Malaysia, and Canada. Of the 961, nearly half (475) are from Australia and the vast majority of the Australian **-ories** occur in Western Australia. Perhaps it's something in the air there. A few **-ories** surface sporadically elsewhere in Oz—Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, for instance, has its **vice-chancellory**.*

*Now that I think about it, **vice-chancellory** has a perspicuous logical appeal. Why should the office (in either sense) of a Vice-Chancell**or** be called a Vice-Chancell**ery**? But then, the populist view of English is that logic is scarcely the long suit of this most dynamic of languages.*

To this Mr Daube replied: What fun the English language is! But you misread me. I was not ... interested in whether the word ends in **-ery** or **-ory**. Rather, I was interested in the word with **vice** in front of it, and only in an academic setting. I am pretty sure that you will find neither a **vice-chancellory** nor a **vice-chancellery** throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. ... Happy sleuthing.

*I did misunderstand you. Thank you for the clarification. None of the dictionaries in OUP's large stable gives us a **vice-chancellory/-ery**, not even any of the Australian Oxfords or the Macquarie Dictionary. Surprising, given the plethora of **vice-ories** there are in Oz.*

*A (very cursory) search of the Internet for **vice-chancellory** did, however, come up with two surprises: the University of Massachusetts, in quite a number of its web sites, uses the term; and so does a Malaysian university. Very odd, indeed.* **Ed.**

AUSSIE MATILDA REVISITED

My waltz with Matilda (Ozwords, *May 1999*) *provoked many responses from readers. The majority of my respondents was concerned merely to express surprise at and interest in Matilda's putative pedigree. A small few, however, took patriotic umbrage at the suggestion that Mattie migrated to Oz from Germany. One respondent, bless him or her, pointed out to me that my story of Mattie eloping with the swaggie was so moving that it simply had to be true—a response which startled me considerably. This, I thought, is how folk etymologies begin the process of becoming veridical, of reaching the stage where people can say with Cicero* Nemo est quin sciat—*'Everybody, but* everybody, *knows it!' The association of the cakey lamington with the doughy English baron* (Ozwords, *May 1999*) *may well be a case in point.*

*I am particularly grateful to one respondent, Mr Werner Schmidlin of Woolloomooloo, for providing contemporary corroboration of the idiom **auf der Walz gehen** 'to go a-wandering'. Mr Schmidlin wrote:*

I have read your article about 'Matilda' and 'Waltz' with great interest. I have spent my childhood growing up in the Swiss countryside, not far from Zurich. We spoke a Zurich dialect of Swiss German. Swiss German branched off from High German in the Middle Ages. Switzerland has even today numerous dialects which differ greatly from each other. During my childhood in the 1950s one could detect dialect differences even as little as 20 km away. We still use in everyday speech the phrase **uf d'Waltz gah** (walkabout), **ume waltze** (aimlessly walking about). I think this further demonstrates the ideas in your article.

WHO'S CENTRIC NOW?

THE PRESENT STATE OF POST-COLONIAL ENGLISHES

27–29 October 1999

A conference held at the Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University

Hosted by the Australian National Dictionary Centre, Oxford University Press, and the Humanities Research Centre

The Conference

The dictionaries of regional Englishes published by Oxford University Press since 1988 provide evidence of intense local and international interest in regional English. Yet this has occurred in the context of the increasing internationalisation of English.

What is the future of regional Englishes in the context of the globalisation of English? In most of the countries with a regional dialect of English, other languages are also spoken—how do the regional dialects of English position themselves in relation to these other languages? These are some of the cultural and political issues that the conference will address.

A highlight of the conference will be a public lecture (titled 'Queen's English or People's English') by **John Simpson**, editor of *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

A keynote address, on the present state of world Englishes, will be given by **Tom McArthur,** editor of *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (1992).

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NB: You can register for the conference at the above website.

Humanities Research Centre

The Humanities Research Centre was established at the Australian National University in 1973. It aims to stimulate and advance research in the humanities throughout Australia. The HRC offers several kinds of fellowships in the humanities and sponsors conferences, seminars, discussions, and lectures. The director is Professor Iain McCalman.

Oxford University Press

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It has been operating in Australia, New Zealand, and the South West Pacific since 1890. It is one of the oldest publishers and the largest university press in the world, with a tradition of excellence based on its commitment to education, culture, and research.

In 1976 it published the first genuinely Australian dictionary. This was Grahame Johnstone's edition of *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary*. In 1988 it published *The Australian National Dictionary*, and signalled its continuing support for Australian lexicography with the establishment of the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

Australian National Dictionary Centre

The Australian National Dictionary Centre was established in 1988 with the twin purposes of conducting research into Australian English and providing Oxford University Press with editorial expertise for its range of Australian dictionaries. It is jointly funded by the Australian National University and Oxford University Press Australia. W.S. Ramson was director of the Centre from 1988 to 1994. Bruce Moore became director in 1994.

The Centre takes its name from *The Australian National Dictionary: A Dictionary of Australianisms on Historical Principles*, ed. W.S. Ramson, which was published by Oxford University Press in 1988.

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DAY ONE Wednesday 27 October

9.30–10.30 Keynote paper by Tom McArthur
World English(es), world dictionaries

The paper will begin by discussing such words as 'world', 'international', and 'global' (used to describe and/or assert the unity and universality of 'English') and such words as 'dialect', 'variety', 'Englishes', and 'English languages' (used to describe and/or assert diversity and distinctness). It will then consider the realities so labelled, and what has been done and may yet be done lexicographically to manage the quite possibly unmanageable.

Dr Tom McArthur is founder editor of the *Oxford Companion to the English Language* (1992) and the quarterly *English Today: The International Review of the English Language* (Cambridge, 1985–). His more than twenty published works include the *Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English* (1981), *Worlds of Reference: Language, Lexicography and Learning from the Clay Tablet to the Computer* (1986), and *The English Languages* (1998). He is currently Deputy Director of the Dictionary Research Centre at the University of Exeter.

10.30–11.40 Morning tea followed by the launch of *The Australian Oxford Dictionary*. The **Hon. E.G. Whitlam** will launch this new dictionary.

11.40–12.30 Bruce Moore Director of the **Australian National Dictionary Centre**, Australian National University
Australian English: Australian identity

At the end of the nineteenth century, running parallel with debates about republicanism, there was a lively interest in Australian English. Yet this interest was absent for much of the twentieth century. It was only in the last quarter of the twentieth century that Australian English asserted itself as the national language, after three-quarters of a century in which it was regarded as an inferior version of the prestige British English. At the end of the twentieth century, republicanism is again on the table. Does Australian English have a role to play in the present republican debates? Interestingly, many of the recent public debates have been structured around the meanings of key words—'settlement' or 'invasion', 'Australia Day' or 'Day of Mourning', 'naturalisation ceremony' or 'dewogging ceremony', 'sorry' (in Australian and Aboriginal English), 'the black armband view of history', and, most recently, 'mateship'. The *Centenary of Federation Advisory Committee Report* argued that one achievement of Australian political democracy has been the peaceful transformation of the cultural exclusiveness of 1901 to the cultural democracy of the 1990s. To what extent is 'cultural democracy' reflected in the present lexicon of Australian English?

1.30–2.20 Tony Deverson University of Canterbury, New Zealand
New Zealand, New Zealand English, and the dictionaries

The lexicographical record of New Zealand English (NZE) has taken great strides forward in the past twenty years, culminating in the publication of Harry Orsman's *Dictionary of New Zealand English* in 1997. Two strands in its development are explored in this paper. One is the record from within, which has its starting-point in Edward Morris's *Austral English* of 1898, and which has blossomed of late in a social and political climate more receptive than previously to expressions of a distinctive New Zealand nationhood. The other is the record from without, which begins with the *OED* (and Morris's contributions thereto), and whose growth is most evident in a number of recent works (such as the *New Oxford Dictionary of English*) having aspirations to global coverage of English lexis. Whereas these two strands are to some extent convergent, various constraints operate on the effective representation of a regional vocabulary such as that of NZE in the transnational English dictionary compiled offshore. In the situation of continuing and increasing differentiation of NZE lexis from that of other varieties of English, the major responsibility for authoritative description of this as of other aspects of the variety must be and is being shouldered internally.

2.20–3.00 Graeme Kennedy New Zealand Dictionary Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
The Distribution of Maori Words in New Zealand English

This paper explores some of the ways in which contact between Maori, the indigenous Polynesian language of New Zealand, and English, the language of the European colonial power has contributed to the development of present-day New Zealand English. The Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English reveals the nature and extent of lexical borrowing from Maori into English among different sociolinguistic groups and in different genres of use. It is suggested that the methodologies of historical lexicography and corpus-based analysis present two different but complementary pictures of lexical borrowing, reflecting both possibility and probability of occurrence in New Zealand English.

3.30–4.15 Penny Silva Deputy Chief Editor, *Oxford English Dictionary*
South African English: politics and the sense of place

South African English, in common with other varieties worldwide, has developed distinguishing features which tie it to its region, link it to the many indigenous languages, and theoretically create a bond between its diverse users. Whereas this bond is obvious among South Africans abroad, within the country English is a highly politicised issue, carrying for many the overtones of imperialism and elitism, while simultaneously being highly valued as the 'neutral' (and inevitable) language of communication. Ambivalent attitudes towards English persist in the 'new South Africa', despite its use since 1994 as the ANC government's language of choice.

4.30–6.00 Exhibition of the on-line *Oxford English Dictionary*

DAY TWO Thursday 28 October

9.00–9.45 Vincent B Y Ooi National University of Singapore
Globalising Singaporean-Malaysian English in an inclusive learner's dictionary

The rise of English as a world language brings it with the issue of the relationship between the traditional centre(s) of English (i.e. those that prescribe 'standard English, 'core English', 'proper English' etc.) and the various 'linguistic epicentres' brought about by localised and educated norms of usage in other English-speaking communities. In the context of Singapore and Malaysia as an English-speaking speech community which uses English as a second or first language, this paper examines the various linguistic (multilingual) and extra-linguistic (socio, political, cultural) forces that have shaped the making of the *Times-Chambers Essential English Dictionary* (2nd edition). This dictionary has the distinction of being the first-ever inclusive learner's dictionary to incorporate Singaporean-Malaysian English, using a Concentric Circles Model formulated for this purpose. Such a model might also be relevant to the making of much larger, globally inclusive dictionaries, especially if the next wave of dictionaries for the 21st century includes plans to take into account such localised lexical (and syntactic) innovations. Subsequent editions of such globally inclusive dictionaries as the *New Oxford Dictionary of English* and Microsoft's *Encarta World English Dictionary* can further improve their coverage and treatment of the linguistic phenomena in various emerging epicentres.

9.45–10.30 Rahela Banu Language Centre, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, and **Roland Sussex** Centre for Language Teaching and Research, University of Queensland
English in Bangladesh: issues of language prestige and mixing in a post-colonial society

Since the creation of Pakistan in 1947 and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation in 1971, English has continued to be in constant use in spite of national policy directions favouring Bengali. Political and social changes have affected the importance, domains, and nature of English use in Bangladesh. This can be clearly seen in four major formal

domains of Bangladeshi life: administration, education, law and the media. The role of English in different domains in Bangladesh, as revealed by primary documentation, reveals an unusual situation in which the complementary use of English and Bengali, including widespread code-switching on multiple levels, prevails for complex socio-political reasons. The detailed description of these domains, and additional data from the commercial use of language, contribute to a characterisation of the role and status of English in its complex interactions and co-existence with Bengali in contemporary Bangladesh.

11.00–11.45 R.S. Gupta Centre of Linguistics and English, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi

English in Post-Colonial India: an appraisal

The paper addresses the central theme of the conference and first discusses the formal/structural, socio-psychological, and functional pressures that mould and condition the 'presence' of English in India. The second issue that the paper examines in some detail is the power relations that obtain between English and Hindi (the national official language of India) and other major Indian languages that have their own respective official status as well as significant literary traditions, and comments on the cross-pollination/hybridisation that has given rise to several mixed varieties like Hindi-English, Bangla-English, Tamil-English etc.

11.45–12.30 Cavan Hogue Director of the National Thai Studies Centre, Australian National University

The spread of Anglo-Indian words into South-East Asia

Whereas much work has been done on the influence of Indian English on international English and of Indian languages (Sanskrit and Pali) on South-East Asian languages, this paper analyses some forty words from the Raj which are not found in international English but which exist in Singapore, Malaysia, and/or Hong Kong. It considers how they got there and whether they might have come into local Englishes from local languages (e.g. Malay) instead of from Indian English. The Philippines is used for comparison. The paper concludes that there was some influence from Anglo-India on the vocabulary of Englishes in other British colonies in Asia.

1.30–2.15 Darrell Tryon Deputy Director of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS), Australian National University.

Pacific Pidgin Englishes: the Australian connection

This paper will discuss the pivotal role of Sydney in the early development of Pacific Pidgin Englishes: Bislama (Vanuatu), Pijin (Solomon Islands), and Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea), and ultimately the Pidgin Englishes of Australia, chiefly Kriol (Northern Territory) and Broken (Torres Strait). The paper discusses the symbiotic relationship which existed between the Pacific Islands and Sydney, as a Pacific maritime hub, between Sydney and the Aboriginal populations of the east coast of Australia, and finally the move back from Queensland to the islands of Melanesia of Pacific Island labourers at the beginning of the 20th century, together with the Pidgin English which developed with them on the plantations there.

2.15–3.00 Ian G. Malcolm Edith Cowan University.

Two-way English and the bicultural experience

Aboriginal English emerged in Australia as the indigenous people found the need to communicate with English-speaking colonists and to interact with one another on the colonial experience. The fact that Australian English and Aboriginal English developed separately reflects the cultural and social separation between the indigenous people and the colonists. In the face of widespread language shift to English, Aboriginal English functions as a repository of indigenous culture, as may be seen today in its distinctive lexicon, discourse forms, and speech use features. Many indigenous Australians adapt to their bicultural experience through the maintenance of alternative varieties of English, thus maintaining the functional and symbolic separation between Aboriginal English and Australian English.

3.30–4.15 Jan Tent Macquarie University.

The status of English in Fiji

This paper will give a brief outline of the history of English in Fiji and the development of Fiji English. It will then discuss a number of aspects of attitudes towards English and its use. This will be based on a language use and attitude survey I carried out in Suva in 1993. The survey sample was 504 Fijian and Indo-Fijian (252 each) men and women living in and around Suva. The survey found that although English is usually used as the inter-ethnic lingua franca, it is not used as much as is normally believed. Also, Indo-Fijians have more positive attitudes to English and use it much more than Fijians.

6.00 Public lecture

John Simpson Chief Editor of *The Oxford English Dictionary*

Queen's English or people's English

Since Dr Johnson's day English has spread across the globe, replicating in varieties which have developed away from the original standard. 'Queen's English or people's English' examines post-colonial Englishes (including British English) from the point of view of the historical lexicographer, asking when a national variety comes of age and what implications this has for English (and English-speaking societies) around the world.

DAY THREE Friday 29 October

9.30–10.15 Katherine Barber Oxford University Press, Canada

Neither Uncle Sam nor John Bull: Canadian English comes of age

The picture of Canadian English that emerges from *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (1998) is of a language variant that has cast off the yoke of both external and internal colonialism. In its pages, Canadians found an affirmation that they are different from Americans, as the elusive Canadian identity took tangible form in all the words they had been using all their lives without knowing they were Canadianisms. But the vocabulary recorded in the dictionary also reflected an assertion of non-anglophone cultural identities within Canada. The numbers of words borrowed into English from immigrant languages such as Ukrainian and Italian demonstrated a recognition of those cultures by Canadian society which would have been unimaginable two generations ago. The increasing influence of Canadian French, especially in Quebec, coincided with the growing rejection of perceived Anglo colonialism in that province, while the Native people's cultural renaissance and rejection of definition by the colonialising culture has resulted in a wave of new self-designations and words designating Native cultural realities. But some remnants of colonialism linger, as demonstrated by the reluctance of some users, often virulently expressed, to accept some of the facts about Canadian English recorded in the dictionary.

9.15–11.00 Pam Peters Linguistics, Macquarie University

Varietal effects: the influence of American English on Australian and British English

The impact of American English on Australian and on British English is more often talked of than analysed for its consistency, contemporaneity, or longer-term effects. Differences of cultural orientation might be expected to diversify the American impact on those different regional varieties, facilitating or resisting it as the case may be. This paper takes an inventory of heterogeneous American loanwords observed in Australian English this century and examines their arrival and currency in British English by means of the Oxford dictionary and the British National Corpus. The study will compare and contrast the kinds of loanwords (by domain, e.g. food, sport, transport), as well as the dates at which they were borrowed into Australian and British English and their relative currency in the 1990s. The research will provide a supranational dimension to the study of varieties/dialects in contact and the topic of koineization, as well as insights into components of the putative Common English.

Frank Abate (Abstract of paper to be advised.)

The Presidents' English and the Queen's English: American English as a world player

12.30 Lunch at the Boat House, Lake Burley Griffin

FROM THE CENTRE

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL DICTIONARY CENTRE

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

THE CONFERENCE

October is the month for the Centre's conference 'Who's Centric Now? The Present State of Post-Colonial Englishes'. It runs from 27 to 29 October. See the enclosed flyer and draft conference programme.

THE AUSTRALIAN OXFORD DICTIONARY

At the conference, *The Australian Oxford Dictionary* will be launched. This new dictionary includes encyclopedic entries. The encyclopedic entries are much more detailed than is usual in a dictionary of this kind. For example, the biographical entries not only give the important facts about a person's life and work, but also provide information which puts in a wider context the life and achievements of that person within a particular field or historical period. The place-name entries locate the place in question and provide information about the character of the place and its historical, economic, or political importance. Longer articles are provided for countries and major regions and cities. Other proper-name entries cover a wide range of topics, and include, for example, entries on political parties, religious organisations, historical events, and mythological and fictional characters. In addition, many lexical items which normally receive only very brief treatment in conventional dictionaries here often receive detailed explanatory coverage. Information on specific subjects, concepts, movements, events, etc. is presented in concise and self-contained articles following immediately upon the standard dictionary entry, as in the case of such entries as **Aborigine**, **Marxism**, **black hole**, **existentialism**, **computer**, **post-modernism**, etc.

AND THERE'S MORE

Two conferences immediately follow the 'Who's Centric Now?' conference. AUSTRALEX, the Australasian Association for Lexicography, will hold a one-day conference at the Australian National University, Canberra, on Saturday 30 October. The conference brings together commercial and academic lexicographers, people working on world languages, and those working on minority languages. Full details appear on the AUSTRALEX web site, at www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/alex/a99/ A one-day workshop on 'Place-names of Indigenous Origin in Australia' will be held at the Australian National University, Canberra, on Sunday 31 October. The workshop is sponsored by AUSTRALEX, the National Place-names Project, and the Australian Language Research Centre, Department of English, University of Sydney. For further information about both conferences contact: Dr Jane Simpson, Linguistics F12, University of Sydney, NSW 2006 (email: jhs@mail.usyd.edu.au).

THE OED ONLINE

The large *Oxford English Dictionary* will be available online from March 2000. All twenty volumes of the Second Edition, plus the three volumes of Additions, will be accessible in a state-of-the-art electronic form that allows you to search the Dictionary with unprecedented speed and flexibility. Also, you will be able to access new and revised entries. Every three months, at least a thousand new and revised words will be added to the database, giving readers the results of the OED's latest research. There will be a demonstration of OED online at the 'Who's Centric Now?' conference. Details are also at http://www.oed.com

LAMINGTONS CONTINUED

The article on **lamingtons** in our last issue produced some lively responses. Catherine Tomlinson of Queensland supplied us with the earliest reference to lamingtons so far—a recipe for them printed in the *Queenslander* of 4 January 1902. Catherine also provided us with a reference to a small **Leamington sponge,** which was made in a **leamington tin**—she provides an illustration from a recipe book published in London in 1908. Another reader sent us a recipe for **leamingtons** from a 1975 British cookery book, and these are identical with **lamingtons** (although it is just possible that this is a borrowing from the New Zealand **leamington**).

POSTS AND ANTES

In our last number we asked readers if they could help with *printed* evidence of Australian words and meanings, and there was an excellent response. In the following examples, 'pre 1999' means that we are looking for any printed evidence prior to 1999, whereas 'post 1977' means that we are looking for any printed evidence after 1977. Can you help?

BLUE HEELER any evidence of this term carrying the meaning 'police officer' before the television show *Blue Heelers*.

CIGARETTE SWAG 'a small swag'. Post 1977.

COCKY CAGE (or BIRD CAGE) 'a kind of marble'. Pre 1999.

CRAWCHIE 'a freshwater crayfish'. Any written evidence (in books, newspapers, etc.) welcome.

DROPKICK 'a hopeless (i.e. useless) person'. Pre 1983.

EMPIRE SAUSAGE (Newcastle area) or WINDSOR SAUSAGE (Queensland) or BELGIAN SAUSAGE (Tasmania) 'a kind of bland cooked sausage eaten cold'. Any written evidence. Newspaper advertisements are the most likely sources; there should be evidence from the First World War onwards.

GIBBER GUNYAH 'a shallow cave used as a dwelling or for shelter'. Post 1947.

NECK OIL 'beer'. Pre or post 1972.

NOINTER (in Tasmania) 'a mischievous child'. Pre 1994.

ONKAPARINGA (or ONKA) rhyming slang for 'finger'. Post 1981.

ONKUS 'disagreeable, distasteful, disordered'. Post 1962.

RISSOLE 'an RSL club'. Pre 1985.

WHITE MAGGOT 'an umpire in Australian Rules football'. Pre 1994.

BRUCE MOORE
DIRECTOR

MA'S OUT, PA'S OUT — LET'S TALK RUDE: PEE-PO-BELLY-BUM-DRAWERS! [FLANDERS & SWAN, 1977]

KATE BURRIDGE

[Dr Kate Burridge is Associate Professor in the Department of Linguistics at Latrobe University. She has a regular radio session on words and language in Terry Laidler's drive-time slot on 3LO on Wednesdays at about 5.45 pm.]

It's been quite a year for swear words. In April the Premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennett, caused quite a storm when—on radio—he used the insult 'pricks' to describe those who had flouted the gas restrictions during the State's Longford crisis last year. Around the same time there appeared a TV advertisement using 'bugger' to sell the new Toyota Hillux ute. This had followed hot on the heels of a Lotteries Western Australia advertisement in which a winner says 'bullshit'. Finally, in June we heard the Australia Institute's executive director, Dr Clive Hamilton, use the 'f-word' during a *Four Corners* piece on the Democrats' GST negotiations.

Swearing has probably been around ever since recognisably human language developed—and we all do it. Whether we use full-blown swear words or select from among the many euphemistic remodellings like *Shivers!*, *Golly!*, *Gosh!*, or *Crumbs!*, swearing is a way of releasing anger, frustration, or anguish. And it's fortunate, isn't it, that society provides us with this convenient out. We may feel the inner urge to swear, but at the same time not want to appear overly coarse. Society recognises our dilemma and provides us with an impressive array of conventionalised disguises. Think of them as 'euphemistic dysphemisms'. In fact, swearing has a number of different functions. There's the obvious expletive function just mentioned—the use of a swear word to let off steam. But there's the abusive function as well. This includes curses, name-calling, and any sort of derogatory comment directed towards others to insult or wound them. And don't forget the important social functions—swearing as a means of marking social distance, or alternatively signalling social solidarity.

Now, an examination of swearing patterns over the years indicates a number of interesting trends. One, for example, is the sweeping transition from a religious-based idiom to a more secular-based one. In addition we see a shift to expressions more physically and sexually based. Consider Jeff Kennett's outburst. There are three interesting aspects to this particular insult chosen by the Premier. The first is of course the nature of the idiom. A hundred years ago Premier Kennett probably would have described these gas cheats as *bounders*, *cads*, *rotters*, or *villains*. This category of morally based expression has now disappeared from the language, replaced by more physically and sexually based terms like *bastard*, *bugger*, *prick*, and of course a whole host of others I'd prefer not to mention here. Earlier still Premier Kennett would have had an array of virulent religious insults at his disposal (*heathen*, *pagan*, *devil*, *witch*, and so on). These terms are no longer offensive and have well and truly lost their potency. The focus of insulting language has definitely shifted from the religious to the secular, especially to matters relating to sexual and bodily functions. Now, Jeff Kennett defended his use of 'pricks' by pointing out that William Shakespeare used this word 'well and often'. This is true. Shakespeare would certainly have known the word *prick*, but only as the term for the body part. In this sense it has been in use since the 16th century. (The metaphor is obvious: compare the use of terms like *needle*, *thorn*, and *thistle*.) However, *prick* was not used as an insult until much later—the 1920s, in fact. This metaphorical extension of sexual parts is really very recent indeed.

The second interesting aspect of the Premier's use of *prick* as an insult is that he felt able to use this word on radio. This shows just how much words like *prick* have lost their original intensity. There are two reasons for this weakening. One is a natural bleaching process—these words simply wear out over time, which is why this is an area of vocabulary in a constant state of flux. So even if Shakespeare had used the term this way, it's unlikely to have remained a lively insult 400 years later. The other thing is that sex is no longer the great taboo. Racial and ethnic swearwords have become the true obscenities today. Their use is so provocative that they now have legal consequences. The current push for equality and equal opportunity has given rise to sanctions against what might be dubbed *-ist* language (racist and sexist language, for example), and it's these that now replace our relaxing laws against profanity, blasphemy, and sexual obscenity.

Finally, Premier Kennett claimed that he was directing this insult to obnoxious and difficult men *and women*. This is curious. For most English speakers the male body part cannot be used as an insult for women. And here lies a sexist asymmetry in our use of body-parts terms as insults. As Monash University linguist Keith Allan has pointed out in his excellent examination of bawdy body parts, those terms invoking the female sex organ have a wider range than those invoking the male sex organ. While *prick* can generally only be applied to males, female body-parts terms such as c—t are applicable to both males and females. Moreover, the female-derived terms are much more potent, to the extent that I would prefer not even to mention them here in print. So why this imbalance? Whereas our language may allow us to compliment a woman by using male-associated words, by social convention a man is downgraded by ascribing to him the characteristics of a woman. Look at the insults for males like *sissy*, *old woman*, *girl*, and so on. Perhaps a woman cannot be abused as 'a prick' because women are not downgraded by being ascribed the characteristics of a man. In fact to say of a woman that 'she's got balls' or 'she's ballsy' is to praise her strength of character.

Those of you who are perturbed by modern swearing patterns might be comforted with the thought that English has lost one collection of truly nasty little words; namely, those which invoke deadly and disfiguring diseases. Just think about something like 'A pox on you!' Here's an expression that invokes either bubonic plague or syphilis—either way, we're looking at sores, suffering, and (at the time the expression was in use) inevitable death. Many of the linguistic relatives of English, such as Dutch, have retained this gruesome idiom in their maledictions. Recently I attended a conference paper where the presenter reported on the increased use of 'cancer', 'plague', 'pleurisy', 'smallpox', 'tuberculosis', and 'typhus' as expletives in some modern Dutch dialects. Perhaps we should be more appreciative of the sexually-based idiom of our modern-day English expressions!

OF DONKEYS, STERKS, SHERROCKETER ... AND OTHER THINGS

ROLY SUSSEX

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

DONKEYS

A **donkey** is well known in Australia as a name for an engine. In earlier times this was a small auxiliary engine, sometimes steam-powered, and was often used to start a larger engine. American dictionaries report **donkey engine** and **donkey pump** from the mid 19th century. More recently we have called *any* engine a **donkey** or, colloquially, a **donk**. In July 1999 there was an ad for Ford on the TV. A Falcon ute comes plummeting out of the sky in answer to a birthday wish. A rustic farm worker looks under the bonnet at the shining new V8, and mutters, *'What a donk!'*

But there is another meaning of **donkey** which is less known, especially in urban Australia. A **donkey**, or *water-***donkey**, is a hot water system. In outback Australia it often consists of a 44-gallon drum, or larger, laid sideways over a fire. A pipe out of the bung at the top of one end carries the hot water away to the nearby house.

The hot water **donkey** is a fairly permanent installation. It is still in regular use in rural Australia, at least in the Northern Territory, Western Queensland, northern South Australia, and Tasmania. And we have a report of a large-scale **donkey** installed in Hambledon House, built in 1863 in Singleton, NSW. Seen side-on, the drum and pipe do look a bit like a donkey, with the pipe standing in for the tail. But it's just as likely that the origin is *donkey boiler*, used in America from the 19th century, and known in Britain as one of those ill-tempered Dalek-like wood-chip heaters that used to crouch in the corner of bathrooms and emit gouts of hot water and steam.

The term **donkey** has also been applied to pot-belly stoves and the more expensive, commercial stoves with a wet back for heating the water. Rekindling the donkey in the morning is not a favourite chore. It goes along with carrying water where it isn't piped in—the job of the *water johnny*.

STERK and STERKY, SHERROCKETER and SHERROCKER

It gives me the sterks is a ripe Australian colloquial phrase. When it is written at all it is spelt either 'sterks' or 'sturks'. *The Australian National Dictionary* lists it as 'a fit of exasperation or depression'. In its milder version it means 'gives me the irrits' or 'gets up my nose'. Others claim that it means 'gives me the shits'. And with justification: **sterks** comes from Latin *stercus*, meaning 'faeces'. *The Australian National Dictionary* also lists 'frightened' as one of the meanings. Gerry Wilkes agrees, and has **sterky** as 'scared' in his *Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms. It scared him shitless* is a plausible connexion with *stercus*.

Some listeners, however, report that in their families, over the last 50 years, **sterks** has meant 'frightening', so that *it gives me the sterks* means 'it scares me, puts the wind up me'. A **sterky tree** is a scary tree, one that is daunting to climb. This meaning dates from around 1930 in Queensland.

Another expression in the same broad field is **sherrocketer** or **sherrocker**. This allusive word has several meanings, most reported from the 1930s and 1940s, especially in Tasmania—though it isn't listed in *Tassie Terms* by Maureen Brooks and Joan Ritchie (Oxford University Press, 1995). It is only marginally used today. One of these meanings conveys threat or warning: *I'll give you sherrocketer/sherrocker if you don't...* (i.e. *I'll give you what-for if...*). This is similar to *give you a rocket*, but there's no clear evidence that they are connected. Another meaning covers irritation or annoyance, and overlaps with **sterks**: *You give me sherrocker* means 'you give me the irrits', 'you're getting up my nose' or 'you're causing me a lot of bother'. And a third meaning involves pain: *My leg's giving me sherrocketer today* means 'my leg's giving me gyp'.

The Australian National Dictionary has **take sherrocker** from 1908, meaning 'to hurry away, take French leave'. But this doesn't seem to have any link with these later uses.

GAMMON

Gammon as an expression of disapproval is listed in *The Australian National Dictionary* as being typical of pidgin. Radio talkback listeners show it to be widespread among all English-speaking people in the Northern Territory, where they regard this as one of the features of Territory-speak. It is most common among speakers younger than about 20. As an exclamation **gammon!** means 'rubbish! garbage!'—or worse. It can also be a verb: *don't* ***gammon*** *me* means 'don't try that one on me'.

ENDIVE, CHICORY, AND WITLOOF

Australian gastronomical vocabulary is currently very unstable, with Italian (*zucchini*), French (*courgettes*), and British (*Italian marrow*) alternatives jockeying for position. But nothing exceeds the confusion surrounding **endive**, **chicory**, and **witloof**.

There is a vegetable with lance-like leaves, used both raw in salads and cooked, which the British, following the French, call **chicory**. The Belgians and the Americans call it **endive**. There is another salad vegetable, like a bitter lettuce with crinkled leaves, which the British, following the French, call **endive**. The Americans call it **chicory**. According to the *Larousse Gastronomique*, both vegetables are sometimes given the reverse names on both sides of the Atlantic. The Belgians offer an alternative. They call the lance-vegetable **witloof** (literally 'white-leaf'). Australia is following suit, although the spelling varies ('whitlof', 'whitloof', 'whitloff', 'whitloaf', and others).

That leaves **endive** for the bitter crinkled lettuce. **Chicory** is now something that used to be put in coffee as an additive or substitute, or in salads, *Chicorium intybus*.

That would be fine if overseas cookbooks and cooking programmes on the TV would kindly leave us in peace. But every non-Australian gastronome reintroduces the confusion. The only way out is to be multi-dialectal in matters of food.

THE TOOWOOMBA NEOLOGISM

Toowoomba in Queensland has a neologism. The word is **wok**. Listeners report that it has been around for three to five years among the under-20s, and especially in schools. **Wok** is an adjective and means 'bad' or 'out of order': *My ankle's all wok and I can't play football.* It doesn't seem to originate in any major Asian language, which is what its phonology might suggest. And it doesn't recall any English word or expression. **Wok** hasn't made much progress outside Toowoomba itself so far. But it is short and expressive. It will be interesting to see if it has the legs to make it to Brisbane, and thence into the wider world.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

ECHO PHRASES

English is full of echo phrases like *hoity toity, brain drain, cool Yule.* Some echo phrases are listed as Australianisms—*Shark Park,* for example, and *laugh at the lawn,* meaning 'to vomit'. There are probably thousands of echo phrases. Some of them are ephemeral and pop up as nonce-forms in conversation, only to be forgotten. Others are a regular part of our language, specially of Australian English.

There doesn't seem to be a collection of echo phrases in English, although Midge Johansen lists a number among other entries in her *Dinkum Dictionary.* I have collected more than 500 from dictionary sources so far. If readers have any, please write to the address below, or email me via the web site. I'll put all the data on the web page for the use of everyone interested in this odd, and very dynamic, corner of English.

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

OZWORDS COMPETITIONS

Ozwords Competition No. 11: results

We had a surprisingly large number of entries to our mixed-metaphor competition. Our panel of experts at ANDC has come up with the following results:

Honourable mentions: **Ralph Elliott** for picking up this gem in Hansard, Federal Parliament: *'The Prime Minister is like the bloke who skated along the barbed wire fence with a leg on either side and chickened out like a rabbit.'* **Lianwe Evans** for this prognostication by WA sports commentator George Grljusich, made after an Aussie Rules footballer had tackled his opponent very aggressively: *'That'll put the wind up his socks!'* **Yasmine Gooneratne** for this inspired comment by a sports commentator on a radio morning show: *'Pat Rafter is carrying the whole country on his shoulders, but he's really got to thread the needle and hit him across the tramlines if he wants to bring home the bacon.'*

Second prize ($50 worth of books from the OUP catalogue): **Jon Frederick** for this outstanding Bjelke-Petersenism on ABC radio apropos the release of the Fitzgerald report into crime and corruption in Queensland: *'Well,'* said Joh, after raving against all and sundry, *'they've cooked their own goose and they'll have to lie in it.'*

First prize ($100 worth of books from the OUP Catalogue): **Lorna Channon-Little** for noting down this goodie (perpetrated on Radio 2GB Sydney by the federal shadow Minister for Immigration commenting on the Chinese boat people): *'The Government is trying to sweep it under the carpet, but it won't wash. The Minister is going to unleash Amanda Vanstone and try to cover his behind.'* **Ed.**

Ozwords Competition No. 12

For this competition, you are to be your own lexicographer. You are to submit a headword (or headwords) plus an appropriate definition of each for inclusion in a new dictionary consisting entirely of neologisms. Note that wit is required in formulating both the headword and the definition. The headwords could be existing words (e.g. **mouse potato** below) or words you've coined for the nonce (e.g. **irritainment**). Use the examples below, all gleaned by me from the Internet, as a guide. **Ed.**

carperpetuation [**kar**-puh-pet-yoo-ay-shuhn] *n.* the act, when vacuuming, of running over a piece of string or fluff at least a dozen times, reaching over and picking it up, examining it, then putting it down again to give the vacuum one more chance.

disconfect (dis-kuhn-**fekt**) *v.* to sterilise the piece of toffee you dropped on the floor by picking it up and blowing on it, somehow assuming that this will remove all the germs.

ecnalubma [ek-nuh-**lyoob**-muh] *n.* a vehicle which can only be seen in the rear-view mirror.

elbonics [el-**bon**-iks] *n.* the actions of two people manoeuvring for one arm rest in the movie theatre.

frust [frust] *n.* the small line of debris that refuses to be swept into the dust pan and keeps backing a person across the room until he or she finally decides to give up and sweep it under the carpet.

irritainment [i-ri-**tayn**-muhnt] *n.* entertainment and media spectacles that are extremely annoying, but you find yourself unable to stop watching them, the O.J. trials being a prime example.

lactomangulation [**lak**-toh-mang-gyoo-lay-shuhn] *n.* the process of manhandling the 'open here' spout on a milk carton so badly that one has to resort to the *illegal* side.

mouse potato *n.* the online, wired generation's answer to the *couch potato.*

telecrastination [tel-uh-kras-tuh-**nay**-shuhn] *n.* the act of always letting the phone ring at least twice before you pick it up, even when you're only six inches away.

Entries close 31 January 2000.

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

ADDRESS FOR ARTICLES AND LETTERS

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