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EDITORIAL

Bob Burchfield, a great lexicographer, died in England at the age of 81 on 5 July 2004. He was chief editor of Oxford English Dictionaries in the period 1971 to 1984, and therefore was the controlling force behind the four supplements that appeared in the 1970s. These supplements formed the basis of the second edition of *OED*, which appeared in 1989. In retirement he produced a new edition of *Fowler's Modern English Usage* (1996).

Bob Burchfield was a New Zealander. In a tribute to him, Professor Graeme Kennedy, Director of the New Zealand Dictionary Centre, wrote: 'Bob Burchfield was one of a cohort of remarkable students, including Grahame Johnston, Harry Orsman, Bill Ramson, and George Turner, most of whom studied under Professor Ian Gordon at Victoria University College in the aftermath of World War II, and who subsequently had notable careers as lexicographers in Australia and New Zealand.'

Although they began their careers as kiwis, these lexicographers contributed greatly to the study of Australian English. Grahame Johnston was the editor of the first general Australian dictionary, the *Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (1976). Bill Ramson published *Australian English: An Historical Study of the Vocabulary 1788–1898* in 1966, and was the editor of the *Australian National Dictionary* (1988). George Turner published *The English Language in Australia and New Zealand* in 1966, and was editor of the first edition of the *Australian Oxford Paperback Dictionary* (1987). Burchfield introduced many Australian and New Zealand words into the *OED* supplements. The study of Australian English owes much to them all.

Frederick Ludowyk
Editor, *Ozwords*

HOW DO WORDS GET INTO DICTIONARIES?

BRUCE MOORE

The publication of this issue of *Ozwords* coincides with the publication of the second edition of the *Australian Oxford Dictionary*, which first appeared in 1999. This provides me with an opportunity to address an issue that is often raised by users of dictionaries: how do words get into dictionaries? One thing is certain. They do not come from people who write to us hopefully, saying: 'I have invented this word. It fulfils a purpose. I invented it on 22 September 2004. Please put it in your dictionary.' No joke. We get quite a few of these letters each year.

However, words sometimes do get into dictionaries in mysterious ways. The most notorious example of this is the word **dord**, which appeared in the 1934 edition of Webster's *New International Dictionary*. The entry read: '**dord** (dórd) *n.* *Physics & Chem.* Density.' The sequence of events seems to have been as follows: 1. A decision was made that the abbreviations for this edition would be in a separate section at the back of the dictionary. 2. An expert in chemistry submitted a card for the abbreviation section with the notation: 'D or d cont/density', by which he meant that at the abbreviation *D* the present entries would need to be 'cont(inued)' with an entry for 'density'. 3. This card became mixed up with the cards for 'new entries'. 4. An editor ignored the 'cont/', misread the spaces on either side of the word 'or', and made a new headword **dord**. The pronunciation, part of speech, and subject label were added without any research. 5. Some years later another editor noticed the curious absence of an etymology, and unravelled the mess. 6. The word was removed from the dictionary in 1940.

There is a very important dictionary-making lesson here. You should not put words in dictionaries unless you have collected the evidence for their existence, and can make this evidence available to public scrutiny. This is the fundamental principle on which the *Oxford English Dictionary* operates, and it is the fundamental principle on which the Australian National Dictionary Centre operates. It is a sad fact of publishing that some dictionaries simply feed off other dictionaries, and this is no doubt the origin of the myth that lexicographers put some invented entries in their dictionaries in order to catch out the plagiarists. The early slang dictionaries were often of this kind. In the June 2000 issue of *Ozwords*, Judith Robertson demonstrated how a

number of words in Cornelius Crowe's *Australian Slang Dictionary* (1895) have been taken up by other slang dictionaries when there is no independent evidence of the words' existence.

Robertson has similarly demonstrated how the manuscript of *Material for a Dictionary of Australian Slang*, compiled by A.G. Stephens and S.E. O'Brien between 1900 and 1910, has similarly been uncritically plundered. For the entry **joey**, Stephens and O'Brien add a 'new' meaning: 'an hermaphrodite or sodomite: applied generally to any foppish or effeminate young man'. There is no suggestion that Stephens and O'Brien made this up—one of them must have heard the word being used this way, or perhaps misunderstood it for another word. But there is absolutely no other evidence for this sense of **joey**. Sidney Baker had access to the manuscript, and he added this sense in the 1941 edition of his *Popular Dictionary of Australian Slang*: '**joey**: a baby kangaroo. (2) a young child. (3) An hermaphrodite. (4) A sodomite. (5) Applied generally to a foppish or effeminate young man.' The British lexicographer Eric Partridge got hold of Baker's book and added the entry to his large and influential *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, giving this Australian sense to his **joey** entry: 'A hermaphrodite: a sodomite; an effeminate or foppish young man neither hermaphrodite nor sodomite.' And so from dictionary to dictionary this piece of nonsense has acquired a life of its own.

These examples demonstrate the need not merely for care, but also for evidence in the compiling of dictionaries. But what is 'evidence'? As a general rule of thumb we would expect a word to be around for about five years, and to be used in at least five texts of different kinds. But there will obviously be exceptions to this rule of thumb. When **SARS** appeared in 2003, the use of the term was immediately widespread, and there was no chance that it would prove to be ephemeral. We, along with other lexicographers, added it to our dictionaries. The terms **SMS** and **text message** were suddenly so ubiquitous that it would have been folly to insist on the five-year rule.

You will recall that in the build-up to the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Kevan Gosper became a figure of controversy. In the *Sunday Telegraph* (May 2000) we find: "He's done a Gosper (made a blue)" is

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already a folkism. The phrase made several appearances during the AFL football broadcasts this past week.' The *Canberra Times* (May 2000) was so sure that this was a stayer that it set out information for future lexicographers: 'Etymologists please note, when the PM displaced the Queen from the front of the queue to open the Games, he was "doing a Gosper".' The *Australian* (May 2000) explained the term: 'Being "gospersed" is the classic example of how those who aspire to prominent positions in the public trust can destroy a reputation carefully built up over years by one foolish mistake. The court of public opinion passes a very harsh judgment.' These terms **to do a gosper** and **to be gospersed** seemed to be real goers. By the end of 2000, however, they were dead. Much the same happened with **to do a Bradbury** in 2002.

A similar problem was raised by the term **dewogging**, which made its appearance during the 1996 federal election campaign:

1996 Federal Queensland National Party candidate Mr Bob Burgess apologised again yesterday for describing Australian citizenship ceremonies as 'de-wogging' occasions. (*Age*)

If number of citations is the criterion, then this one is a winner, since there were hundreds of them. But the hundreds of citations all appear to derive from this one incident, and they are almost entirely in 1996. The occasional later citation refers back to the 1996 incident. Is this a 'closet' term that only Mr Burgess dared to utter publicly, or did he make it up? Unless more independent uses of the term come to light, we are unable to include it in the dictionary because it does not satisfy the basic criteria for inclusion.

So what are some of the terms that have been added to this second edition of the *Australian Oxford Dictionary*? We added some 10,000 new words and meanings. Most of these are from the realm of international English, and for these international terms we rely on the research and resources of the dictionary department of Oxford University Press in the UK. Many of these additions are not especially exciting, but they are essential inclusions in a dictionary of this size. A small section of the letter M yields the following additions: **maki sushi**, **Makonde**, **maia**, **malamute**, **malanga**, **malariology**, **Malayali**, **maldevelopment**, **maldistribution**, **maleate**, **malfatti**, **malik**, **malimbe**, **malkoha**, **mallong**, **malolactic**, **malonate**, **malpresentation**, **maltase**, **maltodextrin**, **malware**, **mamelon**, **management buyout**, **managerialism**,

Mandan, **maneb**, **maned wolf**, **manga**, **mangabey**.

Others are in the more traditional category of 'new words', reflecting cultural and technological changes in recent years. From this source come new terms such as **barista** 'a person who makes coffee (esp. espresso) professionally', **blog** for **weblog** ('a personal website, on which an individual or groups of users record opinions, links to other sites, etc., on a regular basis'), **cyberslacker** 'a person who uses their employer's Internet and email facilities for personal activities during working hours', **dirty bomb** 'a bomb dispersed by conventional explosives but containing radioactive material', **egosurf** 'search the Internet for instances of one's own name or links to one's own website', **MPEG** 'an international standard for encoding and compressing video images' (acronym from *Motion Pictures Experts Group*), **SMS** 'Short Message (or Messaging) Service', **text message**, and **weapon of mass destruction**.

Even so, there are some international words that the British dictionary (in this case the 2054 page *Oxford Dictionary of English* 2003) did not include. The British dictionary does not have the cycling terms **criterium**, **domestique**, and **keirin**, which have been in our dictionaries since 1997, perhaps reflecting a different level of public interest in professional cycling in Britain. Similarly, the fact that for this new edition of the *Australian Oxford Dictionary* we added from our own research the international terms **people smuggling** and **sky marshal** perhaps reflects Australian concerns. The term **metrosexual** was not in the British dictionary, probably reflecting the fact that, while it has been in existence since 1994, it was not until 2003 that it really took off. We added it with the definition: 'a young, stylish, fashion conscious, consumer-oriented (esp. heterosexual) urban male'. Most dictionaries have not tapped into the sense of **ripped** when applied to muscles. Nor have they caught up with the new computing sense of the verb **rip** 'use a program to copy (sound or video data on a CD or DVD) on to a computer's hard drive'. One of my favourite international additions to this edition is the word **mondegreen**, defined as 'a mishearing of a popular phrase or song lyric'—as when 'Gladly the Cross I'd bear' is heard as 'Gladly the cross-eyed bear', or when the Beatles' 'a girl with kaleidoscope eyes' comes out as 'a girl with colitis goes by'. A website comments: 'Misheard lyrics come with many alternate names. ... The technical term prized by aficionados is *mondegreen*. If your dictionary doesn't include *mondegreen*, throw it out and buy a better one.' The term apparently arose

from a mishearing of a line from a Scottish ballad. The line 'They have slain the Earl of Murray and laid him on the green' was heard as 'They have slain the Earl of Murray and Lady Mondegreen'.

Finally, here are some of the new Australian entries in the dictionary, along with some of the evidence that helps to establish their validity and clarify their sense.

BUDGIE SMUGGLERS

This term for a male Speedo-like swimming costume is a variant of the international term **grape smugglers**. The evidence is very recent, but it is widespread.

2002 It was all we could do not to look. But Mooney kept right at it, driving our impolite eyes back to his well-fitting 'manskin', 'budgie smuggler' and 'lolly bag' as he described them. (*Australian*)

2003 But someone should have a word to him that it is not cool to walk down the main drag in Sydney's Bondi in the old budgie smugglers. (*Herald Sun*)

2004 But that's not the reason Thorpie wears his intimidating black suit; he reckons the old budgie-smugglers were a little too revealing. (*Advertiser*)

BRICK VENEREAL

This is an Australian term that has been out there for some time, but has only recently been picked up by the dictionary makers. It was used by the novelist Kathy Lette in 1988: 'Most of this suburb suffers from brick veneeral disease—blonde, brick double-garaged houses with pedicured lawns.' But it is only from the late 1990s that we have collected sufficiently detailed evidence for us to put it in the dictionary as an Australian term. It is defined as 'a derogatory term (playing on *veneer/venereal*) to describe a suburban brick-veneer house, or a housing development in which most of the houses are of a similar brick-veneer design'.

2000 Champion takes us back to that butt of a thousand jokes, the brick veneeral vistas of Australia's less salubrious suburbs. Yet again we are shown the ludicrous naivety and vulgarity of our lower middle-class. (*Australian*)

2002 The unique characters of NSW towns are at risk from the spread of Sydney's ubiquitous 'brick veneeral' project homes. (*Sydney Morning Herald*)

CHOP CHOP

1996 Chop chop—illegally processed tobacco—is readily available at pubs and parties, especially in the country's tobacco growing heartland in far north Queensland. (*Courier-Mail*)

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2000 The tobacco industry reckons high prices are igniting sales of illegal 'chop chop' tobacco and the taxman is inclined to agree. (*Australian Financial Review*)

2003 The Auditor-General has called for tougher action to stem the loss of up to \$450 million a year to the public purse from the black market in illegal tobacco or 'chop-chop'. (*Canberra Times*)

There is plenty of evidence for this term meaning 'illegal tobacco traded on the black market'. The term has nothing to do with **chop chop** meaning 'quickly quickly', a pidgin term from a Chinese dialect. **Chop chop** was used in Australia to describe chopped up fodder, sugar cane fibre, etc. for feed for stock, and this may be the origin of the term.

UTE MUSTER

This is a relatively recent term meaning '(especially in country towns) a gathering of utility trucks for display and competition'.

1999 The ute muster was part of a bigger Play on the Plains festival. (*Weekly Times*)

2003 The crowd revelled in the music at the ute muster. (*Outback*)

DOUBLE PLUGGER

This is 'a thong with an extra plug on either side where the thong attaches to the sole'.

1999 But Franklin also reveals how to create your own bogan. 'A mullet haircut, blue singlet, flannelette shirt and K Mart double plugger thongs', he says. (*Herald Sun*)

2002 Every living Australian, it seems, owns or has owned a pair of thongs. Not sandals, flip-flops, clogs or shower shoes, as some countries lay claim to them, but thongs—the cheap rubber double pluggers found in discount stores. (*Australian*)

2003 Even the traditional double plugger has gone trendy, with punters shelling out about \$15 for brands such as Havianas, from Brazil, and Everlast. (*Daily Telegraph*)

SEACHANGER

The ABC television program *SeaChange* ran from 1998 to 2000. It depicted a corporate lawyer who left her hectic city life and job for the quiet life of the seaside town Pearl Bay. While the program was showing, people who made a similar lifestyle change were being called **seachangers**.

1999 About 66 per cent of men over 45 were likely 'Seachangers', according to Morgan and Banks research. (*Courier-Mail*)

Even with the end of the program, the term continues to be used, and has an assured place in Australian English.

2002 Many Australians flock to the coast as seachangers. (*Sunday Mail Brisbane*)

2003 Braidwood is a place that is still attracting artists but also young families, seachangers and developers. (*Canberra Times*)

2004 Long before Sigrid Thornton packed up and moved to Barwon Heads, thousands of other would-be seachangers yearned for the year-round coastal lifestyle. (*Geelong Advertiser*)

So the term has entered the dictionary, defined as 'a person who makes a dramatic change in their lifestyle, especially by moving from the city to a seaside or country area'.

These are just some of the terms we added to the second edition of the *Australian Oxford Dictionary* and our reasons for adding them.

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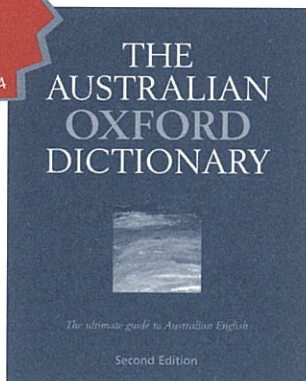
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We welcome readers' comments on their recent observations of Australian usage, both positive and negative, and their queries, particularly those not easily answerable from the standard reference books.

MARQUEE

A reader sent in two cuttings from Australian newspapers which used the word **marquee** in a somewhat unusual way: 'Considering that Serena Williams and Jennifer Capriati were no-shows, the only marquee females to be spared from taxing injury and illness at present are Venus Williams and Lindsay Davenport'; 'At the Australian Open there always seems to be a worthy no-name, an Andre Pavel or a Dominik Hrbaty, waiting to ambush a potential marquee battle.' He asked what marquee meant in these sentences.

*I must confess that I had not noticed this use, but when I checked I found that it seems quite common—the Google Internet browser provides 4230 hits for **marquee player** and 5050 hits for **marquee players**; and **marquee value** provides 4260 hits. We are fortunate that the lexicographers who are working on the third edition of the Oxford English Dictionary started with the letter M, for the online OED solves this conundrum. The OED's first sense for **marquee** is the one used commonly in Australia: 'A tent large enough to hold many people (now usually one used for social or commercial functions).' At first I thought this might have provided the extended sense, because many commercial firms provide marquees for guests at major sporting events. But the OED has a second sense, which it describes as originally and chiefly US: 'A canopy projecting over the main entrance to a building; specifically such a canopy at a theatre, cinema, etc., on which details of the entertainment or performers are displayed.' And it seems that it is this sense that develops into the adjectival '**marquee**': 'designating a celebrity, star attraction, etc., whose name appears or is worthy to appear in the billing of a film, show, etc., or (allusively) who has achieved great fame and popularity'. The OED's first evidence for this sense is from the Washington Post in 1978: 'It's very difficult to run a jazz club successfully unless you have a great many **marquee** names.' Sporting examples soon follow, as when in 1986 the Los Angeles Times Magazine stated: 'A major factor in the rise of the league has been an influx of **marquee** players.' ED.*

ZIFF

Just wondering if you have any information on the origin of the word **ziff** meaning a short growth of beard because a man hasn't shaved?

S. Brake, Qld

Unfortunately this is one of those words for which we have been unable to find an origin. It

first appears in Australian English during the First World War. In the magazine Stretcher in 1917 we find: 'Z is for "Ziff" which appears on the lip/To call it a "mo" would give one the pip.' This earliest citation supports your notion of a short growth of beard, but many of the quotations over the following years indicate a very full beard. Thus in 1922 in the Bulletin: 'The miner's ziff was beaten by that of a man who used to knock about Sydney. ... His beard ... reached his feet and trailed 18 inches along the ground.' However, a 1981 example in G. Kelly's Always Afternoon seems to support you: "'Better get rid of that ziff", she said pointing to his embryonic beard'. We thought that this was a term almost obsolete in Australian English, and would be interested to hear if it survives widely, and what exactly it now means. ED.

BRONZED

On a number of occasions during the Athens Olympics I heard commentators say that a person 'bronzed' in an event, rather than saying they won a bronze medal. Is this acceptable usage?

J. Harley, NSW

*The verbs **to bronze** and **to silver** were very common in reports on the Athens Olympics. Typical is this report on the success of the Italian team: 'The men previously had also silvered in basketball, and bronzed in soccer.' These new verbs are in the tradition of the verb **to medal**, meaning to win a medal in an event. We first entered this verbal sense of medal in the 1997 third edition of the Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary. I notice that it has appeared in the new online version of the Oxford English Dictionary, where it is labelled US Sport: 'To win a medal (i.e., to come first, second, or third in a sporting event or competition).' We started to notice this sense at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, although the OED citations make it clear that it was established in American English at an earlier date: 1979 Washington Post: 'Our women are coming along beautifully—they've medaled well recently'; 1984 Marathon & Distance Runner: 'Gabriella Dorio made her break too early, otherwise she could have medaled'; 1994 Coloradoan (Fort Collins): 'U.S. bobsledders haven't medaled since 1956.' In the Australian commentaries at the Athens Olympics the use of **bronze** as a verb often played off against the notion of the bronzed Aussie. Thus when Alicia Molik won a gold medal in the tennis, one headline read 'Bronzed Molik enjoys day in the sun'. And when the Australian softball team won a silver medal, improving on their bronze medal in Sydney, another headline*

trumpeted 'Bronzed Aussies no more'. These two verbs are still highly colloquial, but it seems inevitable that they are here to stay. ED.

BET LIKE ...

In E.A. Wallish's *The Truth Dictionary of Racing Slang* (1989) there are two similar phrases: **to bet like the Watsons** is defined as 'to wager heavily in the manner of the Watson brothers' and **to bet like the Kiels** is defined as 'to gamble often and heavily in the manner of the Kiel brothers—Tiger, Rocco and The Wad—of Richmond, Victoria'. Do you have any information about these terms?

G. Evans, NSW

To bet like the Watsons appears in the Australian National Dictionary, and is well attested from the late 1940s to the early 1970s, although in a 1972 number of the Bulletin the statement 'You never hear now of a punter betting like the Watsons' indicates that it was on the way out. It now appears in dictionaries, but I suspect not in the speech of present-day Australians. Sidney Baker, in the second edition of The Australian Language, comments: 'There were apparently two Watson brothers, but legend disagrees when they operated—it varies from the 1880s to "about 1910". They are alleged to have been born at Bendigo, Victoria, and also to have been Sydney hotel-keepers and outback NSW shearers.' The Kiels, however, are a mystery to me. We have no other evidence for the existence of the phrase. ED.

PROGRAM(ME)

There still seems to be confusion in Australian English about whether in non-computing contexts the spelling should be **program** or **programme**. Television stations, for example, sometimes spell it one way, and sometimes the other.

Stan Smith, Vic.

*The OED points out that when the word came into English via Greek and Latin in the seventeenth century it was spelt **program**. It was only in the nineteenth century that it was remodelled on French **programme**. Thus **programme** is the interloper. In computing contexts the spelling **program** is the only acceptable form worldwide. In other contexts there is divided usage, usually described as the standard American (**program**) and British (**programme**) spellings. Worldwide the ratio of **program** to **programme** is 4.5:1 (indicating the strong American influence). In the UK, however, it is 1:2. New Zealand 'out-Britishes' the British with a ratio of 1:3, while Australia favours **program** by a ratio of 7.5:1. **Program** is clearly the preferred form here. ED.*

AUSSIE ENGLISH

Our work with the National Museum of Australia and the cartoonist David Pope led to the publication of three volumes of *Aussie English for Beginners* in 2002, 2003, and 2004. The Museum has now set up an interactive game of Australian English on their website — see <<http://www.nma.gov.au/play>>. There is also an essay by me on the vocabulary of Australian English, which can be downloaded as a PDF.

AUSSIE FOOD TERMS

We are in search of printed evidence for a number of Australian food terms. Ideally, in the *Australian National Dictionary*, we aim to have a quotation from a printed source for each decade of a word's existence. Do you have any early cookery books that we may have missed?

Our earliest evidence for **chocolate crackle** is from a cookery book dated approximately 1940 and called *Betty King's Cook Book*: 'Why not save yourself hours of baking by high-lighting your hospitality with some of Coph's famous party specials? ... And here they are—all your old favourites, from Chocolate Crackles to Chocolate Biscuit Cake.' The quotation says this is an 'old favourite', so presumably there are earlier examples.

Puzzlingly, the earliest printed evidence for **fairy bread** is still 1979, in C. Clarke's *Children's Party Ideas*. Many people claim they can recall the term being used much earlier than this, but the evidence has just not come to light.

Another interesting term is **Boston bun**, although there is some uncertainty about what exactly it is. A basic feature is that the large bun is iced and sprinkled with coconut. Some recipes call the icing 'Boston icing', although why it should be called this is a mystery. If it is from Boston in the USA, the American equivalent would be 'Boston frosting', but we can find no evidence of this term. Some Australian recipes call for sultanas and currants to be added to the dough, while others call for mashed potato. Our earliest printed record for this term is 1992.

White Christmas gets its name from its copha outer covering. Our earliest reference is from 1965 in *Tested Recipes from C.W.A. of Air*: 'White Christmas. ... Place coconut, icing sugar, mixed fruit, nuts, cherries and rice bubbles in mixing bowl and mix well. Warm copha gently until melted and pour over ingredients. Mix well and place in a Swiss roll tin and set in fridge. Serve sliced into fingers.' We have evidence

FROM THE CENTRE

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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.

from the 1980s and 1990s. Does anyone have any reference earlier than 1965, or from the 1970s?

We mentioned the Queensland **Windsor sausage** some years ago, and one of our readers did some wonderful research at Rockhampton Municipal Library on the Lakes Creek Meatworks Archive in the early 1940s. In 1941 a list of cooked sausages included: 'Luncheon Polonie 8d lb. Belgium Sausages 9d Windsor Sausage 11d.' Subsequently we have found a 1937 recipe that uses Windsor sausage, in *Davis Dainty Dishes*: 'Windsor Sausage in Jelly. ... Arrange slices of sausage round the side of the mould. Fill the centre with slices of sausage, hard-boiled egg or tomato, if liked. Pour the remainder of the liquid over the sausage, and leave to set.' Another use appears in the *Courier-Mail* in 1991, with an hors d'oeuvre that seems to bounce straight out of the 1960s: 'Take a square of pineapple, add one green, white or red cocktail onion, carefully slice off a chunk of windsor sausage, insert toothpick through all of the above and await the rapturous praise which follows.' Again in the *Courier-Mail*, this time in 2004, a writer recalls another use for Windsor sausage: 'As a child, my first memory of encountering a bird is of a kookaburra stealing a slice of windsor sausage from my hand as I sat on the back steps of our Red Hill house.' The common account of the origin of this term has it that anti-German sentiment during the First World War led to terms such as **German sausage** becoming taboo. In 1917 the British Royal family prudently changed its name from the very German *Saxe-Coburg-Gotha* to the very British *Windsor*, and Queenslanders loyally followed suit by transforming **German sausage** into **Windsor sausage**. So we would expect something earlier than 1937. We would also like more evidence from the period 1950 to 1980.

The **jubilee cake** or **jubilee loaf** was created in 1936 for South Australia's one hundredth Jubilee year. It is basically a fruitcake. The recipe appears in the 1936 edition of the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*: 'Jubilee Cake (To be eaten with butter). A cup and a half S.R. flour, one dessertspoon butter, one tablespoon castor sugar, one cup sultanas and currants, lemon peel, one egg, half cup milk, pinch salt. Method—Mix dry ingredients together. Add egg and milk. Bake half an hour. While still hot, pour in two tablespoons icing sugar mixed with milk, and sprinkle with cocoanut.' The same recipe appears in the 1943 edition of this recipe book, but we lack any other evidence from the period 1940 to 1970.

Pikelet in the Australian sense 'a small pancake made by dropping spoonfuls of a leavened batter on to a heated surface' is first recorded in 1916. Our records for this term are quite good, but we are missing a quotation from the 1920s. Similarly, we have records for **lamington** from 1903 to the present, but we are lacking evidence for the 1920s and 1940s.

Finally, we have a 1961 record for a **billycan sponge cake**. It reads: 'Billy-can Sponge Cake (Carry it with You). ... Pour mixture into well-greased billy-can. ... Put lid on can and bake in moderate oven for 1 to 1 and 1/4 hours.' This is our only record of the term. Has anyone come across it elsewhere?

BODGIE BLOOD

Among the year 2000 archives of the television program *Burke's Backyard* there is an article on red cordial, which includes this sentence: 'Red cordial also makes stunning spiders, a great topping for ice-cream, and the best possible Bodgie's Blood (a 50s favourite made with cola instead of water and 1–2 scoops of ice-cream)'. A milk bar in Wauchope, New South Wales, has a website that indicates they supply **bodgie's blood**. In the Melbourne *Herald Sun* on 12 May 2000 an article refers to **bodgie blood**: 'If you're a baby boomer or just appreciate memorabilia, stop at a shop in Daylesford called Lost in the '50s Ice Cream Parlor, where you can enjoy a lime spider, widgie brew, bodgie blood or an ice cream sundae while listening to some good old rock 'n' roll.' These recent references are primarily nostalgic 'lookings back' to the era of bodgies and widgies (this is the only reference we have found to **widgie brew**). Can anyone locate references to this term from an earlier period?

Bruce Moore
Director.

AUSSIE WORDS: THE PIONEERING SHIRALEE

DYMPHNA LONERGAN

In his introduction to the 2002 reprint of D'Arcy Niland's book *The Shiralee* (originally published in 1955), Les Murray comments that when the book was first issued the word *shiralee* had little currency in Australia and abroad, but at the same time it had appeal because it sounded 'exotic or plausible'. A quick Internet search today reveals that not much has changed. The melodious *shiralee* has surprisingly few occurrences. While most Internet sites use the word in reference to D'Arcy Niland's book, and the subsequent movies and television series, other sites reveal the appeal of the word as a name for many different things—a backpacker hostel, a group of holiday cottages on Norfolk Island, a craft group, a female first name, and most importantly a prizewinning Basset Hound.

First captured in print in 1892 in the phrase 'drop in his shiralee and water bag by him' (*Australian National Dictionary*, 1988), the word *shiralee*, at that time, was evidently a receptacle for a swagman's possessions. S.J. Baker documents *shiralee* in his book *The Australian Language* (1945), where it occurs in the middle of a list of similar words: **drum, swag, bundle, curse, matilda, shiralee, parcel, turkey, donkey, national debt, and bluey**. Significantly, Baker includes alongside *shiralee* the comment that its origin is unknown. Ten years later in D'Arcy Niland's *The Shiralee*, the word is used metaphorically in reference to the child, Buster; she is a *shiralee*, a physical and psychological burden for her father, Jim Macauley, an itinerant worker. While the sole use of the word *shiralee* occurs around three-quarters of the way through the book, readers have been alerted to the word and its meaning in the verse from Ruth Park's 'The Ballad of the Shiralee' that prefaces the text: 'And from his shoulder drops the swag, /The shiralee, the tether, /That through the cruel, stumbling day /Drove all his bones together.' Here the word *shiralee* refers to a physical object, the swagman's bundle that has caused him great discomfort throughout the day. In theme and plot Niland extends this literal meaning for *shiralee* to connote a psychological burden for his main character, Jim Macauley. If we consider S.J. Baker's list again we can see that some words, such as **bundle** and **swag**, simply denote the object, while others,

such as **curse** and **national debt** carry negative connotations. Nevertheless, Baker makes no suggestion that the word *shiralee* carries any meaning beyond that of a bundle, yet ten years later the word had taken on an extension of meaning. What we may ask ourselves is whether the connotation of 'burden', either actual or metaphorical, is a connotation that existed in *shiralee* outside of Niland's book. The point is, that this extended meaning arising from the book has not only gained currency, but generated fanciful speculation as to the origin of the word *shiralee*: a British movie Internet site, quoting from George Perry's synopsis of the 1957 movie, claims that 'The child is the "shiralee" an aboriginal word meaning "burden"'. Aboriginal origin for this word has never been proposed in lexicographical circles.

Les Murray speculates on the 'odd beginnings' of *shiralee*, suggesting, but not asserting 'Gypsy, perhaps, or Irish origin' for the word. The Irish connection is promising because of D'Arcy Niland's background (his father was Irish) and the number of Irish related words and phrases in *The Shiralee*. The book is peppered with Irish idioms, such as the use of the preposition 'on', for example 'the mood was **on** Macauley again', when standard English would have 'Macauley was **in** a mood again that day'; the use of the definite article where standard English would omit it, for example 'she was just the rancy-tancy one for the refinement and culture'; 'she's a bit **heavy** with the cold' (also evident here is the word **heavy** meaning 'sleepy' that matches Irish **trom** that denotes both 'heavy' and 'sleepy'); the term 'in it' to mean 'in existence', a calque from Irish **ann**, meaning 'there', but also 'in existence', for example 'there's only two in it, you and my mate here'. Other Irish connections are the word **powtering**, that may be from Irish **pótaireacht** meaning 'drunkenness' and the Irish word **gob** 'beak' used in English slang as a word for 'mouth'.

In 1892 the word *shiralee* was applied to an object, a swag. However, just as the word **didgeridoo**, used for an object, may have originally been one associated with a person (Irish **dúaire dubh** 'black trumpeter'), the word *shiralee* may be the Irish word **tiarálaí** in disguise. **Tiarálaí** is pronounced 'cheer-awe-lee'. Irish lexicographer

Niall Ó Dónaill translates it as 'toiler, slogger' (in *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*, 1977).

The stem word is **tiaráil** 'act of toiling, slogging; laborious work'. The related **tiargeálaí** is translated as 'preparatory labourer', 'pioneer'. We can see that this word is used for the literal act of breaking new ground as well as the figurative sense of leading the way. The Irish speakers who arrived in Australia in the 1850s would have included some who took to the roads in search of gold, travelling far and wide as a result, and if unsuccessful on the gold fields needing to earn a living some other way. Coming from a rural background, with perhaps few skills other than those of manual labour, an Irishman could find work as a **tiarálaí**, a manual labourer, on a farm or in a shearing shed. The swag he carried may have been distinctive, and in time the **tiarálaí** may have been recognised for this particular kind of swag, leading to the transference of the word *shiralee* from a person to an object. Of course the swag may not have been any different to that of another itinerant rural worker, and the transference may have come about because over time our knowledge of the person behind the object became distorted. Our modern concept of a swagman is not usually one of him at **work**. We have a mental image of him on the road, carrying a swag, but we seldom think about what lies at the end of the road: a place of work to earn a living. In nineteenth-century Australia, itinerant workers did the hard physical work of shearing, fruit picking, fence-mending, and digging. Because they were itinerant they carried their possessions on their backs. Carrying the swag was a signifier of the itinerant **worker**. The word *shiralee*, then, is more likely to have started out as the Irish word **tiarálaí**, a word for a person, and later became transferred to an object, the swag. The proposal of Irish **tiarálaí** as an origin for *shiralee* is plausible and ultimately satisfying in solving the mystery of this appealing Australian English word.

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The word **billabong** is first recorded in Australian English in reference to the Bell River in south-eastern New South Wales. In 1836 the explorer T.L. Mitchell records: 'The name this stream receives from the natives here, is Billibang.' It is a Wiradjuri word of southern NSW and northern Victoria. In the extended and current sense—'an arm of a river, made by water flowing from the main stream, usually only in time of flood, to form a backwater'—the term is first recorded in 1853: 'This station is situated about half-a-mile inland, over a "billy-bong" (the native name for a small creek or backwater)' (J. Allen, *Journal ... on the River Murray*).

The word is not recorded in the first edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*—the letters A and B for the first edition were prepared between 1882 and 1888, before the important contributions of the Australian academic E.E. Morris. It appears in Morris's *Austral English: A Dictionary of Australasian Words* in 1898. Morris quotes a passage from W. Landsborough's 1862 book *Exploration of Australia*: 'In the south such a creek as the Macadam is termed a *billy-bonn*, from the circumstance of the water carrier returning from it with his pitcher (*billy*) empty (*bong*, literally *dead*).' Here is the beginning of a whole series of confusions about the origins of the terms **billabong** and **billy**.

Morris did not accept Landsborough's somewhat silly suggestion that the **billa-**element is our 'billy' or 'pitcher', but he makes a crucial error in his explanation of the **-bong** element: 'In the Wiradhuri dialect of the centre of New South Wales, East coast, *billa* means a river and *bung* dead. See Bung'. Morris believed quite wrongly that the Australian *bung* (as in *the damn telly's gone bung again!*) had its origin in British slang, but he also believed that its Australian use had been influenced by the Aboriginal word mentioned by Landsborough: 'In parts of Australia, in New South Wales and Queensland, the word "bung" is an aboriginal word meaning "dead", and even though the slang word be of English origin, its frequency of use in Australia may be due to the existence of the aboriginal word, which forms the last syllable in *Billabong*.'

The word **bung** (often formerly spelled **bong**) comes into Australian English from the Yagara language, which was spoken in the Brisbane region. In Yagara it meant 'dead'. It is one of the words that found its way into nineteenth-century Australian pidgin English. This pidgin started in Sydney, so that many of its indigenous words are from the Sydney region. But as it spread out across

Australia the pidgin picked up words from other Aboriginal languages. A few of these words found their way into mainstream Australian English, including **bung** and **yakka** (also from the Yagara language).

In pidgin and then in Australian English **bung** originally meant 'dead' and the phrase **to go bung** meant 'to die'. This sense is now obsolete. The transferred sense 'incapacitated, broken, failed' arose in the late nineteenth century. I suspect it was because of the wide-spread use of the Queensland-Yagara word **bung** in the pidgin spoken in all parts of Australia that both Landsborough and Morris made the error of assuming that the word must have been present in the indigenous languages in areas where the pidgin was spoken—if the pidgin spoken in the Wiradjuri area contained the word **bung** then **bung** must have been in the Wiradjuri language. But they were wrong. The word **bong** meaning 'dead' is not a Wiradjuri word, and this cannot be the meaning of the element in **billabong**. But the erroneous etymology has been very strong. It is restated in the first edition of Sidney Baker's *The Australian Language* (1945), and the Internet is awash with this egregious nonsense. It is the current view of the Australian National Dictionary Centre that the **billa-** element meant 'river' and that **-bong** or **-bang** was a suffix signifying a continuation in time or space.

Landsborough's suggestion that the **billa-** element means 'pitcher' is a reminder that the Australian word **billy** has similarly attracted various etymologies. Morris in *Austral English* suggested a possible origin in the common pet-name *Billy*: 'The word comes from the proper name, used as abbreviation for William. Compare the common uses of "Jack," "Long Tom," "Spinning Jenny".' This is the explanation offered by the *OED*. Morris offered a second possibility: 'Another suggested derivation is that *billy* is shortened from *billycan*, which is said to be *bully-can* (sc. Fr. *bouilli*). In the early days "*boeuf bouilli*" was a common label on tins of preserved meat in ship's stores. These tins, called "*bully-tins*" were used by diggers and others as the modern *billy* is.' Sidney Baker dismissed the *bouilli* story: 'The origin of *billy* is by no means as obscure as Morris and others would make it. It is academic nonsense to seek an origin in the French *bouilli*. The source is the aboriginal word *billa*, a creek or river, by transference to water. *Billa* makes its appearance in another well-known Australian term, *billabong* which, as its origins — *billa*, a creek, and *bong*, to die — show, is a portion of a river that is no longer running'. And so one Baker error lends support to another.

The *Australian National Dictionary* and the *Dictionary of New Zealand English* support a Scots origin. The word appears in both Australian and New Zealand English at about the same time. At *billy*, the *Scottish National Dictionary* gives a list of combinations, including *billy-pot* meaning 'cooking utensil' from the northern dialect of Aberdeen, with an 1828 citation from P. Buchan's *Ballads* ('She boil'd it in the billy-pot'). In its Scots manifestation it is probably from the hypocoristic form of *William*—as suggested by Morris—used, as *OED* explains, 'for various machines and implements'.

Thus *billabong* and *billy* have an entangled history. And they have come together in the development of an altogether new sense of *billy*. Take these passages:

That's when the cars started to arrive. ... A few doughies, maybe a billy or two, smash a few bottles, play some AC/DC real loud and they'd be gone.

'I'll tell you about rank', he laughed. 'Savage Henry's billy. That was rank. It was surely the rankest billy in the world.'

The first quotation is from the August 2001 number of the surfing magazine *Tracks*. The second is from John Birmingham's 2003 book *Dopeland: taking the high road through Australia's marijuana culture*. For innocents not in the know, what is meant by *billy* in the above quotations would be mystifying. A swaggie's billy? But it is surely unlikely that our bronzed Aussie surfers are brewing up bilies of tea, to be taken with pumpkin scones and jam! What it really means becomes clearer in this second passage from Birmingham's book:

The cops had been through and taken his prized ceramic bong. Seventeen, eighteen years he's had that billy.

The word *bong* in the sense 'a water pipe for smoking marijuana or other drugs' comes from the Thai word *baung* 'cylindrical wooden tube'. Recently, in Australian English, a play on the Thai-originating *bong* and the Wiradjuri-originating *billabong*, has produced a kind of rhyming slang, with the rhyming element (as often occurs in rhyming slang) being removed, and leaving the stem *billy*. This *billy* is a container for water, but what flows through it is something stronger than *billy* tea. Ironically, Australian English has finally produced a *billy* with the sense and origin postulated by the misguided Landsborough in 1862.

OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 22: RESULTS

With regard to collectives, British fauna has been remarkably well treated by that erudite nun Dame Juliana Barnes (1486) and others. But Australian fauna has received scant attention by anyone. There is, of course, a **mob of kangaroos**. But what about our poor **currawongs**, **dingoes**, **galahs**, **koalas**, **magpies**, **wallabies**, **kookaburras**, **quokkas**, **bardi grubs**, and **wombats**, to name but a few? Well, this competition gave you your chance to out-Juliana Dame Juliana and do Oz a favour. Your task was to pick one (or many) from the above list and, with the holy nun Juliana as your inspiration, devise a witty collective or collectives for your choice. Wit wins as always.

MULTIPLE ENTRIES

The hoary old cliché has it that great minds think alike. Evidently so in this instance. Here are only some of the multiple entries we received from all over Australia, some entries being sent in by as many as a dozen entrants:

bardi grubs, a barbie of; **bardi grubs**, a course of; **currawongs**, a cacophony of; **currawongs**, a carolling of; **currawongs**, a choir of; **dingoes**, a din of; **dingoes**, a howl of; **dingoes**, a shame of; **dingoes**, a snatch of; **dingoes**, a stealth of; **galahs**, an asylum of; **galahs**, a caucus of; **galahs**, a gaggle of; **galahs**, a galaxy of; **galahs**, a gang of; **galahs**, a gossip of; **galahs**, a parliament of; **koalas**, a cuddle of; **koalas**, a doze of; **koalas**, a piddle of; **koalas**, a kip of; **koalas**, a quaint of; **koalas**, a slumber of; **koalas**, a snooze of; **kookaburras**, a cackle of; **kookaburras**, a cacophony of; **kookaburras**, a chuckle of; **magpies**, a choir of; **magpies**, a marauding of; **magpies**, a rumour of; **magpies**, a swoop of; **quokkas**, a quirk of; **quokkas**, a quota of; **quokkas**, a Rottnest of; **quokkas**, a soccer of; **wallabies**, a bound of; **wallabies**, a scrum of (I very much liked this one); **wallabies**, a swag of; **wallabies**, a union of; **wallabies**, a wallop of; **wombats**, a borough of; **wombats**, a burrowing of; **wombats**, a muddle of; **wombats**, a waddle of; **wombats**, a wobble of. Good as some of these are, they could not be considered for a prize because they were sent in by more than one person.

Our congratulations to the students of the Year 6 class, 6M, at Calare Public School in Orange NSW who sent in some very good entries—especially to Michael D (a **scratch of koalas**) and Codey and Dakota (a **ha ha of**

kookaburras) who receive honourable mentions.

Honourable Mentions to the readers who sent in the following: a **cabinet of kookaburras**; a **caucus of kookaburras**; a **chukka of quokkas**; a **collingwood of magpies**; a **coma of koalas**; a **commentary-team of currawongs**; a **eucalyption of koalas**; a **dinkum of dingoes**; a **Faculty of galahs**; a **ha ha of kookaburras**; a **Kelly gang of kookaburras**; a **melody of magpies**; a **piss-up of koalas**; a **scrum of galahs**; a **scratch of koalas**; a **sinbin of currawongs**; a **sleepover of koalas**; a **wally of wombats**.

Equal Second Prize (books to the value of \$50 from the OUP catalogue): **J.G. Addison-Smith** of Junabee, Qld, for a **corroboree of kookaburras**, and **Paul Drakeford** of Kew, Vic., for a **madrigal of magpies**.

First Prize (books to the value of \$100 from the OUP catalogue): **David Tribe** of Neutral Bay, NSW, for a **chatroom of galahs**.

OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 23

Etymologies and Explanations

Being a lexicographer manqué, I have always been fascinated by the origin of words, the oddballer the origin the better. Did you know that the word **jewel** came from Old French **joel** meaning 'testicle'? You didn't? I'm not surprised. I just made that up. With some justification, I hasten to add: a man's testicular appendages are vulgarly called his 'jewels' or 'crown jewels' or 'family jewels' as a testimonial to his masculine preciousness and value over mere females of the species. Your task is to choose one (or some or all) of the Aussie words and phrases below and provide an outrageously false (but witty) etymology or explanation of its origin in no more than 150 words. As always the wittiest wins. If in doubt about any of the words, check the *Australian National Dictionary*.

shiralee, **ridgy-didge**, **fossick**, **cunjevoi** (a sea-squirt), **cully** (a mate, pal), **not worth a crumpet**, **toe-ragger**, **illywhacker** (a small-time confidence trickster), **jackeroo**.

ENTRIES CLOSE 28 FEBRUARY 2005.

Entries sent by email should also contain a snail mail address. All entries should be sent to the editor.

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