

# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL DICTIONARY CENTRE

Newsletter No. 1, 1990

## News from across the Tasman

Some users of AND will know that Harry Orsman, Editor of the *Heinemann Dictionary of New Zealand English* (1979, revised edition 1989) and of the *Heinemann Dictionary of New Zealand Quotations* (1989), read through the draft text of AND and generously supplied New Zealand quotations when these antedated the Australian. Some users of the OED Supplement will know that the fullness of its coverage of New Zealand English is in large part similarly due to Orsman's generosity. Orsman has been collecting since 1951 and the good news from across the Tasman is that his dictionary of New Zealand English on historical principles is close to completion. He has supplied the following note:

Collections for an historical dictionary started in 1951 and continued as far as the exigencies of other work allowed. A real impetus towards completion came in the early 1980s with access to the University's mainframe computer coinciding with Government-funded training schemes for the unemployed - a coincidence which allowed the citation collection of between 3 and 4 million running words of carded, manuscript, and other material to be "computerised" by trainees. "Shovelled on" would not be an inappropriate metaphor - the operation had much in common with banjo-loading of gravel trucks in a riverbed - the sweat of basic proofreading and correction still lingers with me.

The next problem was raising money to employ staff. "Completion" (as most of us know) is not a word included in the conception of one-person dictionaries. Victoria University was as generous as it could be with its limited research pool. Help finally came from a substantial grant from the New Zealand 1990 Commission to employ staff to complete the dictionary this year. We have also had the encouragement of seeing the *Australian National Dictionary* so finely finished; and the support not only of Victoria University but also of Oxford University Press.

The *Dictionary of New Zealand English* will follow the OED and *Australian National Dictionary* pattern of presenting various senses of between 7-8000 headwords, justified by citations, presented in chronological order. We are fortunate in that the publication of the AND will allow us to include accurate comparative datings for those items shared by New Zealand and Australia; and also to provide a sharper perception of the major differences between the lexis of the two countries: the varying uses of Aboriginal and Maori sources, for example; or the obvious facts that we share "damper" but not so much of "dry", and agree fairly well in "scrub", but differ greatly in "bush".

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## News from across the world

Joan Hughes and Bill Ramson were fortunate enough to visit St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1988 and spend some time with George Story and William Kirwin, two of the three editors of the splendid *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (1982). There, and elsewhere, we were made acutely aware of the problems regional dictionaries face in remaining active after the publication of a first edition and in face of the project-oriented attitude that 'when the job's done, it's done.' Story and Kirwin have maintained a watching brief since 1982, with the support of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies (and a very vigorous folklore and language archive), and it is good news to hear that the Dictionary is being reissued this year with a supplement covering their findings since 1982. Perhaps they will have discovered the derivation of *killick* (AND *kellick*) and benefited from information supplied by Orsman on the New Zealand use of *catamaran*.

### Dawn parade, dawn service

Keith R. Groom, whose correspondence with the Centre is as helpful and interesting as it is vigorous, points out that AND is 'strangely silent on, or oblivious to, this solemn observance' and offers the information that the first dawn service was conducted by the Reverend Arthur Ernest White at Albany on Anzac Day 1923. This set us wondering, our earliest citation evidence of *dawn service* being in 1938. Bill Gammage recalled, but was temporarily unable to document, a dawn service in Tinui (New Zealand) in 1916 - but it might not of course have been so styled. Pauline Fanning found a 1930 quot. for *dawn*

*parade* in the *West Australian* and a 1932 quot. from the *Sydney Morning Herald* locating a *dawn service* in Perth but the earlier history of both event and name remain unestablished. As a caution, reports of Anzac Day ceremonies in the *Albany Despatch* from 1919 to 1927 provide no record of either ceremony or word. Can anyone help?

### The coming revolution

The Centre's activities have continued 'as was', data collection being on hand-written cards, subsequently filed in a number of individual files, and editing being by way of hand-written marginalia on a blown-up copy of the base text. But the times they are a' changing, the smallest sign being that we have discovered the delights (and frustrations) of E-mail. Harriet Michell, Head of the Faculties Computer Unit, was seconded to the Centre for three weeks in May, to assess the Centre's needs. She reported to the University, and as a result was sent to Oxford for ten days in August to familiarise herself with the data management systems developed by OUP and by the Centre for the New OED at Waterloo, Ontario. She has now been seconded for a three-month period (September to November) to implement the conversion.

We hope to have operational by the beginning of 1991: a system for handling incoming citations which is basically that developed in Oxford, so that the Centre's post-AND citation files (at present sub-divided) will be integrated into a single, multipurpose file, with:

citations manipulable according to purpose and electronically transferable between Oxford and Canberra;

an editing system (so that, for instance, the 8th (1990) edition of the *Concise Oxford* is available in electronic form to serve as the basis for a second edition of the *Australian Concise*);

a data-base, essentially the tagged text of OED2 and AND (the latter presently being prepared at Waterloo), accessible to the highly sophisticated search-and-display software (PAT and LECTOR) developed at Waterloo.

We hope also to have the programming staff necessary to facilitate a meaningful interface between this wondrous technology and the lexicographers.

### Forlorn hopes

Newsletter No. 1 sought information on *Neenish tart* and the first acronym (ANZAC being the local candidate), Newsletter No. 2 floated *furgle* and *right of tambour*, sought advice on several eponymous heroes, and reported on information elicited on *Neenish tart*. This is an update. *Neenish tart* still lacks an etymology, ANZAC remains unchallenged - if one excludes non-English acronyms, like F.I.A.T. (from 1899) later FIAT (from 1907), and ignores the fanciful, like the explanation that *wowser* stems from We Only Want Social Evils Rectified and *pom* from pome

(Prisoner of Mother England). (Though the Defence of the Realm Act was passed in 1914, it does not seem to have been familiarised into DORA until 1917). John Simpson rightly drew my attention to the OED entry for *tabouret* which includes *privilege of the tabouret*, but Catherine Martin's *right of tambour* appears otherwise unattested. The eponymous heroes remain unidentified and *furgle* turns out to be a rude word with a degree of ubiquity, Gary Simes having provided several quotes. not least one from *Catch-22*.

### Was there a man outside Hoyt's?

Keith R. Groom offers an answer, and we seek confirmation that he was not the man on the Clapham bus:

#### HOYT'S, the man outside

To make a pedantic point, the phrase cannot refer to the commissioner outside Hoyt's Theatre in Melbourne, but only to a commissioner, notable for his spruiking outside a Melbourne cinema (c. 1920 - 1950), Hoyt's operating no less than eight of the twenty-two city theatres, plus dozens of Hoyt's suburban theatres, many simply known as 'Hoyts', when the phrase was coined.

Whilst duly acknowledging the historical evidence which makes AND so valuable, a personal interest in this matter says I must give Charlie Fredericksen a guernsey - even if his ghost can now only wear it in the archives! - as it was around this otherwise anonymous barker, to borrow the English term, that the Melbourne idiom arose.

According to my notes, Charlie began spruiking in 1908. He was still on the job, albeit with a slightly decrepit visage, not unsuited to his years, when I commenced work at a city theatre almost 40 years later.

Hoyt's had the classy Regent with the Plaza in the lower level and the Athenaeum (on lease) in Collins Street; the Capitol, opposite the Town Hall in Swanston Street, and four more, including the Times newsreel theatrette, "in the heart of Bourke Street" where the principle retail area is located. Close by was the Tivoli vaudeville theatre, making this the most competitive concentration of amusement houses in the city, and the area where Charlie Fredericksen did most of his *fielding*. He did, however, sometimes spruik elsewhere.

It seems so mundane now, but The Man Outside Hoyt's, with his fine blue uniform lavishly decorated with gold trimmings; his constant strutting to and fro, and the seemingly endless harangue from mid-morning till all seats were sold for the fourth and final session at night, was a performance hard to forget.

Charlie Fredericksen was never destined to become an eponym, not even a celebrity, as so very few ever knew his name, but he was the epitome of that legend-in-his-own-lifetime who nobody really knew at all. He was simply The Man Outside Hoyt's, who, and which, said it all.