

# OZ WORDS



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SUBSCRIPTION  
TODAY!

(see back page  
for details)

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## EDITORIAL

This edition of *Ozwords* features a fascinating lead article by ANDC Visitor Bernadette Hince. Bernadette published *The Antarctic Dictionary: A Complete Guide to Antarctic English* in 2000, and is now working on documenting Arctic English as she produces a dictionary of the vocabulary of the polar regions. Bernadette's work might well be described as 'extreme lexicography', and is certainly an important contribution to our knowledge of global English. This article gives us just a small taste of what we can expect in the finished product.

Other articles in this edition include a contribution by former ANDC Director Bruce Moore on one of the words that will be appearing in the second edition of the *Australian National Dictionary*, and my own short piece on the way cars have contributed to the Australian English lexicon.

We would like to alert you to the fact that Oxford University Press is requesting that all *Ozwords* readers confirm their subscriptions. To confirm your *Ozwords* subscription please free call 1300 650 616, or email [ozwords.au@oup.com](mailto:ozwords.au@oup.com), or send the reply-paid card included with this edition. This will ensure that you continue to receive your copy of *Ozwords*.

**Amanda Laugesen**

Director

## WORDS OF THE FAR NORTH

BERNADETTE HINCE

What do you do after you write a dictionary? If you love the process of writing dictionaries, and if writing keeps you sane, then the idea of being without one is so unacceptable that you might start another. *The Antarctic Dictionary: A Complete Guide to Antarctic English* was published by CSIRO and Museum Victoria in 2000. In it I recorded the specialised Antarctic vocabulary developed by English-speaking explorers, adventurers, and researchers to describe the extraordinary landscape, wildlife, and weather they encountered. When it was published, I began examining the parallel words in the Arctic English vocabulary.

It made sense to compare the vocabularies of both ends of the earth. One reason was that some of the words in the Antarctic dictionary originated in the *northern* polar regions. Explorers like James Cook, Roald Amundsen, Carsten Borchgrevink, and Frederick Cook encountered terms in the Arctic which they took south—*polynya*, for example, a long-lasting area of open water in an ice-filled sea, *finnesko*, traditional reindeer-leather boots which could be stuffed with dry grass (*sennegrass*) to absorb moisture, or *nunatak*, a peak of land that protrudes above a surrounding icecap. In Antarctica, as in the Arctic, sea ice still forms *grease ice* or congeals into *pancakes*, and glaciers calve *bergs* that disintegrate to *berg bits*. *Northern lights* become *southern lights*, and *ice pack* is more often rendered as *pack ice*.

Even without the iciness, a few Arctic words are familiar to English speakers, although we do not often stop to think about their origins. 'Are we aware of the input the Inuit culture has had on the European one when we look at the *anoraks* used for outdoor activities and the *kayaks* used for white water rafting?', wrote Cornelia Lüdecke 15 years ago.<sup>1</sup> Often, we are not.

Interest in the polar regions was at its height more than a century ago, when little was known about either polar region. The extent of interest is clear from the very first page ever printed of the *Geographical Journal*. The 1893 first issue of the first volume of the journal included an article by explorer Fridtjov Nansen, who asked, 'How can the North Polar region be crossed?' Before addressing his own question, Nansen briefly assessed the relative interest shown at the time in the polar regions, remarking on the greater interest thus far shown in reaching the North Pole. This was still very much his own goal—in June 1893 he left Norway aboard the ship *Fram* to attempt to drift and sail across the North Pole.

In many significant ways the Arctic and Antarctic contrast strongly. While there is no permanent settlement in the Antarctic, the Arctic is ringed by settled lands. Its inhabitants speak a formidable number of languages including East and West Greenlandic, the several Saami languages, Evenki, Russian, Chukchi, Yup'ik, Aleut, Alutiiq, Athapaskan, Inuktitut, and Inuvialuktun. Slowly and selectively, some of their words have leached southwards into the language of English speakers.

Last year, I made a study trip to Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat), eastern Canada, Washington DC and Fairbanks, Alaska. At Kastrup airport in Copenhagen I sat waiting for the Greenland flight. A young woman in brand new *mukluks*, just like the boots people wear in Antarctica, walked past. Air Greenland's flight announcements (and magazine) are in three languages—Greenlandic, Danish, and English. Greenlandic itself has three dialects—West Greenlandic or Kalaallisut, northwest Greenlandic (the Thule dialect Inuktitut), and East Greenlandic or Tunumiisut.

The Greenlandic capital of Nuuk has a population of about 17,000, a little more than a quarter of the country's 57,000 people. Although the Internet can allow fast fact-checking and information gathering, dictionary-makers still need the informed comments of

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SALMON SKIN PARKA, MUSEUM OF THE NORTH, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA.  
 IMAGE BY: BERNADETTE HINCE

experts to confirm their definitions. At an interdisciplinary conference of the humanities and social sciences at Ilisimatusarfik, the University of Greenland, I met people who could help me ‘ground truth’ my definitions of words of Arctic English.

There was a reception for us in the former residence of early 18th century Danish explorer and Greenland coloniser Hans Egede. Here, I met Nikku Olsen, an Inuit Party member of the Greenland parliament which had arranged the reception. ‘I have never had a chance to eat whale meat before,’ I confided. ‘Did you try it?’ he asked. ‘Yes’, I said. Despite that moment, I cannot say that I have seen Greenland. I have barely seen Nuuk. And the contrast of my room in a clean-lined, expensive Danish-style apartment in Igimak 2, Qinnorput 402, was hard to reconcile with my notions of the poverty of the country, and my badly out-of-date picture of life in it.

The Nuuk Town Hall with its display of tapestries depicting Greenlandic history, the National Cultural Centre, and the National Museum of Greenland hold traditional clothes, domestic utensils and other possessions. Their Arctic English names range from *polar bear*

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*trousers* to *sealgut parkas* and *ulus*, the half-moon shaped scraping and cutting knives that are also found across northern North America. These are the words I will need to define.

An entire hall of the National Museum displays *kayaks* and *umiaks*, a larger and wider boat originally used for hunting bowhead whales. Late 19th century umiaks had fastenings of walrus tusk nails and leather thongs, because of the shortage of iron, and both kayak and umiak had driftwood frames—there are no trees in Greenland.

Tatqevluq's remarkable feat was to kill a whale from a kayak with a seal harpoon rather than from an umiak with a large whale harpoon, assisted by his own crew and other boat crews.<sup>2</sup>

But of course it isn't only the cultural institutions that hold the words I'm looking for. Despite radical changes in Greenland since the mid-20th century, traditional fishing, harvesting, and hunting are still a major part of cultural life. At open-air stalls in town, people sold socks knitted from *kiviut*, the soft warm wool of the musk-ox. In the nearby supermarket—whose *parkas* had real or fake fur trimmed hoods (and were made in China)—the frozen food section sold *musk-ox meat*, *whale meat*, and large squares of *mattak* or *muktuk*, the (edible) blubber of whales, in squares which looked like giant liquorice allsorts.

At the fishing co-op in the middle of town were fish I did not recognise, and long tables where men and women were at work cutting up meat. The luridly pink-red meat was unlike anything I'd ever seen. Surely it wasn't whale meat, which is dark? I was puzzled until I saw a flipper poking up at an angle amid the piles of meat. Of course. Seal. I ought to have guessed—the sounds of hunters' guns in the fjords had been almost constant since I arrived.

Across Alaska and the Canadian Arctic, people hunt whales, seals, and fish, trap other animals, and gather edible berries and leaves. This is *country food*, and its popularity has been more enduring than other aspects of what, for want of better words, we call traditional life:

About 71% of Inuit adults in the Canadian Arctic were involved in harvesting country food during 2000. Country food includes such things as caribou, whales, seals, ducks, arctic char, shellfish and berries.<sup>3</sup>

Native peoples constitute about 19% of Alaska's population. Every second year Fairbanks hosts the annual Alaska Federation of Natives convention, an annual meeting of Indian, Aleut, and Eskimo peoples. Four to five thousand people attended this convention in October 2013, the largest annual representative gathering of Native peoples anywhere in the United States.

In a huge sale next to the convention halls, more than 170 artists and stallholders from every part of Alaska displayed their art and artefacts, evidence of a very different way of life reflected in the words as well as the objects. I could have bought bundles of seal whiskers, a sea otter teddy bear, more *ulus*, and even the beautiful gossamer-light *sealgut parkas* or *kamleikas* worn over fur clothing for water protection. As fibre artist Fran Reed noted in 2008, 'it took some creative thinking to transform animal intestine from a food source to a garment':

The gut parka (raincoat) was and still is the most effective against wet weather, and was once prized by the Russian occupants as overall the best protection against the elements. Gut parkas are constructed using the intestines of sea mammals or bear and are worn in kayaks, tide pool collecting, dance and celebration ... Because of its practicality the gut parka continued to be made long after the sewing of bird skin garments, esophagus and sea lion flipper boots and hats for either ceremonial or utilitarian purposes.<sup>4</sup>

These then are some of the words born of the *cryosphere*, the ice caps, shelves, glaciers, and sea ice of both hemispheres.<sup>5</sup> When I began to collect Arctic English words 14 years ago, I guessed that the region might hold ten times as many English words as I'd found in Antarctica. That figure is still guesswork—it could be an overestimate. But the diversity of Arctic English can tell us a great deal about the area's past and present, particularly in a period of rapid cultural and climatic change. Chronicling Arctic English is an exciting occupation.

## Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, whose Australia–Canada collaborative travel grant made possible my study tour of the Arctic and near-Arctic, and visits to the Arctic Studies Center of the Smithsonian Institution, the Alaska Federation of Natives convention and the Alaska Native Language Center.

**Bernadette Hince** is the author of *The Antarctic Dictionary: A Complete Guide to Antarctic English* (2000) and was the Science Editor for the *Australian National Dictionary* (1988). She is currently a Visitor at the Australian National Dictionary Centre, works in science editing, and is compiling a dictionary of words of the polar regions.

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<sup>1</sup> Cornelia Lüdecke (1999) Problems for further research on the history of science of the polar regions. pp 154–77 (quotation on p 162) in Urban Wråkberg, editor, *The Centennial of S.A. Andrée's North Pole Expedition: Proceedings of a Conference on S.A. Andrée and the Agenda for Social Science Research of the Polar Regions*. Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm [my emphasis].

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Dorothy Jean Ray (1967) *Eskimo Masks: Art and Ceremony*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.

<sup>3</sup> Heather Tait (2001) *Harvesting and Country Food: Fact Sheet*. Statistics Canada webpage, available at [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-627-x/89-627-x2007001-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-627-x/89-627-x2007001-eng.htm), accessed 3 August 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Fran Reed (2008) Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings. Paper 127.

<sup>5</sup> Anon, in *Aurora* 20 (3): 24.



## TWO-BOB SNOB

For as long as I can remember my now 97-year-old mother and her sisters used the term 'two-bob snob' in reference to someone of modest means or attributes but who proclaimed themselves to be smarter, wealthier, or in any way grander than others. Initially I recall the use of two-bob snob to denigrate my grandfather's family who had distanced themselves from him when he married my grandmother, whom they described as being of 'bog Irish descent'. You can therefore understand my excitement and glee when my family history research discovered that my grandfather's grandparents were both convicts who met and married in Tasmania, while my grandmother's family actually owned the bog, lived in the manor house, and sent three of their sons to Australia in 1853 with £1,000 each.

P. Ryan, Victoria

We received this letter in response to Mark Gwynn's article on terms for currency in our last newsletter. *Two-bob snob* adds to the collection of idioms generated by the pre-decimal two-shilling coin: *silly as a two-bob watch*, *to have two bob each way*, and so on. We were delighted by this story and note that the correspondent describes herself as 'a genuine, genetic two-bob snob if ever there was one'. So far we have been unable to find any evidence of *two-bob snob* in any dictionary, but a little sleuthing turned up two similar terms. *Two-bob lair* is defined as a 'pretentious lout' in Ryan Aven-Bray's *Ridgely Didge Oz Jack Lang* (c. 1983), and the crowd-sourced electronic resource *Urban Dictionary* has an entry for *two-bob nob*, described as 'somebody who is a complete twat, usually wears a track suit & is unemployed'.

The only Australian evidence we have found of *two-bob snob* in print is as the name of an Australian racehorse, but, in the 'Yahoo Answers' website, someone posted this comment in response to a query about the expression *all fur coat and no trousers*: 'We say, all fur coat and no knickers, up here in Yorkshire, it means there [sic] a two bob snob, nothing in the fridge or purse but a flashy car in the drive.' The Yorkshire reference may suggest it is not confined to Australian use, but with such thin evidence it is hard to make a case. We wonder if any other Ozworders know this expression. Perhaps you have a *two-bob snob* in your own family? Please let us know.

## SIX-PACKS IN ST KILDA

In our last Mailbag in an item on triple-fronted houses, we quoted K. White's comment that in Geelong before the Second World War, 'the traditionally standard suburban house had a six-pack configuration'. A recent correspondent emailed to say he was puzzled by the meaning of *six-pack* as used here, but offers his own understanding of the term:

As an Urban Economist/Planner, we in the planning and property sectors have always

referred to the 3-storey walk-up flats as the 'six-pack', and this is because of the obvious configuration of this form of development. Typically, the 1960s-style flats comprised three levels, with two flats per level, giving a 'six-pack'. Of course, some developments comprised more than the six flats over three levels, but were generally described in the same context; for example, we would speak of a suburb having a 'multitude of six-packs', as in St Kilda here in Melbourne.

J. Henshall, Victoria

We have found quite a lot of evidence of the term *six-pack* in contemporary newspaper archives to describe this type of housing. It receives a lot of bad press—'cheap and ugly' sums up the criticism. On the positive side, preliminary research suggests that it is likely to be an Australian term, and we're always happy to find these. So far the evidence starts in the mid-1990s, but we hope to push it back further than this.

## ABBA-STYLE IN FOOTSCRAY

Another housing-related term we received via email is from M. Bell (ACT), who asks if we are familiar with the term *ABBA*, as in 'the *ABBA* style of architecture'. Our correspondent heard it in Victoria in the 1970s, and more recently has seen some examples of it in the Woden Valley in the ACT. She defines it as an acronym for 'All Bloody Balustrades and Arches', and notes that it referred to an ornate style of suburban architecture especially found in the Melbourne suburb of Footscray. Graham Seal mentions this term in his book on Australian English, *The Lingo* (1999), in relation to Anglo-Australian attitudes to multiculturalism: 'there are always subtle ways to express dislike of difference, as in the term *ABBA houses*, a reference to a baroque style of housing favoured by some Mediterranean migrants and meaning all bloody balustrades and arches.' The term is a play on the name of the Swedish pop sensation, *ABBA*, who rose to fame in 1974 when they won the Eurovision Song Contest with the song 'Waterloo'. They were famous for their coordinated stage costumes as well their music, with satin flares, silver jumpsuits, platform shoes, tassels, and velvet. It may be fanciful to suggest that the band's ornate stage dress directly influenced the development of the terms *ABBA house*, or *ABBA style of architecture*, but at least it did not hinder it!

## MORE CURRENCY TERMS

Your article on money interested me, as a collector of old banknotes. I have read fairly widely on the subject, and there are a few things I'd like to add:

- The word 'half' for a 10/- note refers the fact that it was a half sovereign, not half a pound. On the old ten bob notes the words 'Half Sovereign' were printed in red along the border.

- The use of 'deener' for a shilling, I think comes from the Spanish 'dinero', meaning money, rather than directly from 'denarius'. Seems likely, given that the holey dollar was a Spanish coin.
- The old green one pound note was 'a quid'.
- The early Australian banknotes that you describe as 'flimsies' were often known as 'shin-plasters'. This was partly because people often carried them in their socks. They were indeed flimsy, too, as it was the bank's advantage if a note disintegrated and could not be redeemed.
- The five pound note was referred to as a 'spin', as you say, and the ten pound note as a 'brick'; however they were mostly referred to as 'fivers' and 'tenners'.
- The reference to 'a flag' may have been because the first issue of pound notes after federation were quite colorful, and did contain red, white and blue in their design.
- The penny, which was a copper coin, was referred to as 'a copper'. There was a schoolyard saying—I'll prove to you that a shilling and a penny are the same: well, a shilling's a bob, a bob's a bobby, a bobby's a copper, and a copper's a penny, so there you are! It's hard now to imagine that a coin of that denomination was such a significant item in our lives in the 1940s.

M. Lean, Queensland

Thanks to this correspondent for his interesting comments and contributions. For those readers who do not know the term, a *shin-plaster* has several meanings. Originally 'a square piece of paper saturated with vinegar, used as a plaster for sore legs', it became used figuratively as 'a derogatory term for piece of privately issued paper money, especially one of a low denomination', and then to mean 'a promissory note, especially as issued by private traders and businesses'.

## THE ORIGINAL AND BEST?

Ozworder B. Keddie (SA) found himself drooling over our item in April on the *Ned Kelly pie*: 'It's my favourite pie from any bakery and is always a meat pie with an egg inside and topped with bacon and cheese.' He sent us an image of a sign for 'Ned Kelly's Bakery & Café' on Port Road, Alberton, South Australia: 'On the sign is written "The Original and the best Ned Kelly pie". I can't vouch for the authenticity of this claim, but a bakery naming a pie after itself, then claiming to be the original when other bakeries copy the style makes sense.' Is this indeed the home of the original Ned Kelly pie, or just advertising puffery? Do readers know of any other contenders for the title?

And on the subject of our best-known bushranger, we wonder if you have noticed the current craze for the *Ned Kelly beard*? Fashionable young men are sporting beards reminiscent of those worn by gentlemen – and bushrangers – of the Victorian era. We are currently researching the term.

## STAFF ACTIVITIES

ANDC editor Mark Gwynn went to the UK for two weeks in August. He spent a day at Oxford University Press to discuss issues relating to our contributions to Oxford Dictionaries Online ([www.oxforddictionaries.com/](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/)). He also attended a workshop at Herstmonceux Castle in Kent (pictured). The workshop, Lexicom 2014, explored current trends in lexicography, corpus linguistics, and lexical computing. A particular focus of the workshop was training in how to use cutting-edge technology to analyse corpora for the writing of dictionary definitions. Mark had the opportunity to meet up with a diverse range of lexicographers, including two researchers working on a historical dictionary of Old Norse, and a colleague from Oxford University Press South Africa. The practical components of the workshop will inform further editing and research work at the ANDC.



HERSTMONCEUX CASTLE, UK, VENUE FOR THE LEXICOM 2014 WORKSHOP,  
IMAGE BY: MARK GWYNN.

Former Director Bruce Moore published a chapter 'Australian Slang' in *Global English Slang: Methodologies and Perspectives*, edited by Julie Coleman. It is available through Routledge.

Centre Director Amanda Laugesen has been busy giving several conference presentations and public talks. She presented a paper on the topic of 'Language and Australian Soldiers in the First World War' at Manning Clark House as part of the Honest History series (for more on Honest History, see <http://honesthistory.net.au/>). She also presented a paper on soldiers and Afghanistan at the Australian Historical Association annual conference at the University of Queensland, and a paper on 'Soundscapes and the First World War' for a special conference on Sound, Memory and the Senses, at the University of Melbourne.

## OXFORD IS ENGLISH

Oxford University Press Australia ran a conference called 'Oxford is English' on 22 August. The conference was for English teachers in the secondary education system. Amanda Laugesen presented a keynote address on 'Why Australian English Matters', and ran a workshop on the use of dictionaries in the classroom. Other presenters included Sean Box, who talked about the Victorian English curriculum, and author Thomas Keneally A.O., who addressed the topic of 'Why Australian Books Matter'.

## FURPHIES AND WHIZZ-BANGS

The centenary of the First World War will be marked over the years 2014 to 2018. One of the most notable anniversaries for Australia will be the hundredth anniversary of the Gallipoli landing. A part of the ANDC's and Oxford University Press Australia's marking of that centenary is the publication of Amanda Laugesen's book *Furphies and Whizz-bangs: Anzac Slang from the Great War*, available from November. The book investigates the

language of Australian soldiers and the home front during the First World War, and discusses many terms (some Australian, some shared by the Anglophone armies) with illustrations of usage drawn from a range of contemporary sources.

Subscribers to *Ozwords* can take advantage of a special offer to purchase a copy: buy your copy before 27 November 2014 and you will receive a 20% discount and free delivery. All you have to do is use the code **FURPHIES** and place your order through calling 1300 650 616, or email [cs.au@oup.com](mailto:cs.au@oup.com), or online through [www.oup.com.au/anzacslang](http://www.oup.com.au/anzacslang)

## THE OED AND THE WWI CENTENARY

The *Oxford English Dictionary* has also been marking the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. Most notably, they have created an electronic timeline on their website that allows you to identify and trace the story of '100 Words that Define the First World War'. These words include *shrapnel*, *Mills bomb*, *cenotaph*, *lost generation*, and *demob*. The editors also put out an appeal to the public to help them trace the earliest recorded evidence for many of these terms. An Oxford blog has been written to accompany the timeline of the 100 words: <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2014/06/oed-ww1-timeline/>

## DICTIONARIES COURSE

The ANDC has been involved in the teaching of the Australian National University's undergraduate and postgraduate course 'Dictionaries and Dictionary-making'. Amanda Laugesen has convened the course, and presented a number of lectures; guest lecturers have included Professor Nicholas Evans, Dr Zhengdao Ye, Dr Bruce Moore, and Dr Andy Pawley. The course covers practical

lexicography, compiling dictionaries of undescribed and little-known languages, and the issues surrounding the future of dictionaries in the electronic age.

## ANDC WORD OF THE YEAR FOR 2014?

We will soon be commencing our search for the ANDC Word of the Year for 2014. This year has not produced any obvious front-runners so far, so we definitely welcome suggestions. Please let us know what you think the Word of the Year might be—write to us, email us, or submit your suggestion in our Word Box.



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# GOOGERY: AN AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH WORD FROM AN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE

Bruce Moore

In *Lily on the Dustbin: Slang of Australian Women and Families* (1982), Nancy Keesing includes a list of words supplied to her by the poet Les Murray. Included in the list is the word *googery*:

*Googery*. a small roofed shed, open on one side, in which a fire was lit to boil water, heat branding irons, etc. Very occasionally a googery had a gesture in the direction of a chimney, but mostly there was just a flat or sloping roof of bark or iron. (pp. 166–7)

In a footnote, Keesing comments on the possible origin of the term:

Les and I speculated whether ‘googery’ might have derived, via googy egg, from a family name for a hen-house or laying-shed, but he now thinks that a likelier derivation is that the first two buildings the old settlers liked to put up were a tent to sleep in and a shed or shelter to keep the rain off their fire. They called this shelter the ‘cookhouse’, and Les remembered, from very early childhood, that this was his other name for the googery, too! From ‘cookhouse’ to ‘googery’ seems a simple progression: cookhouse—cookery—googery. (p. 167)

Les Murray repeats his awareness of this term in a number of later publications, and includes the word, also with the spelling *gugri*, in a poem published in *The Daylight Moon* (1987):

The road runs through Bunyah,  
meaning bark  
for shelters, or firefighters’ candlebark  
blown on in a gugri house, a word  
for fire-hut that is still heard  
though few farms still use a googery.  
(p. 82)

In an essay in *Quadrant* in January 1991, Murray includes *googeries* in a list of ‘things which have decreased or become less common’, again with the definition ‘small shelter sheds on farms for making fire in’. This time Murray adds: ‘from the local Kattang word “gugri”, meaning house or shelter’. (p. 39) The Kattang Aboriginal language was spoken in an area of the New South Wales coast from Port Stephens to Port Macquarie, which includes the district of Bunyah where Les Murray was brought up.

To this point, our knowledge of the word *googery* was almost entirely restricted to what Keesing and Murray had to say about it. This situation has changed, however, with our access to early Australian newspapers through the National Library of Australia’s digitised newspapers project, available through Trove. We now have more evidence for *googery*. In 1861, the *Empire* newspaper (Sydney) reported on some Australian contributions to the upcoming 1862 International Exhibition:

The Arts and Manufactures’ Committee have selected a design (originated by Mr Hogarth) for workmanship in the precious metals. This design consists of a native ‘googery,’ or hut, of which the supporting pole rests at one end against a fern tree; at the other, against a stump. On the stump rests an aboriginal female, having on her right shoulder an infant, while the arm hanging down by her side grasps in the hand two boomerangs; the left arm bent towards the shoulder, with an opossum resting in the hollow. Opposite to her is an aboriginal man, in an attitude half sitting, half kneeling, grasping in his right hand a spear, while the left encircles a fishing basket. (19 June, p. 4)

Here is clear evidence that in the 1860s *googery* was understood to mean an Aboriginal dwelling, of the kind represented by the synonymous regional terms *humpy*, *gunyah*, *mia mia*, and *wurley*.

In 1927 the Australian writer Julian Stuart published in the *Australian Worker* (Sydney) an account of a drought on a farm, and the rainmaking ceremony conducted by an Aboriginal ‘king’ called Ghundjarra:

Ghundjarra dropped the shield and grabbed a spear, which he pointed all round the compass, with appropriate ululations, and the ‘bobberie’ closed with acclamations from the ‘googeries’ and gunyahs. (12 October, p. 13)

Again, *googery* is used to designate an Aboriginal shelter, and the synonym ‘gunyah’ makes the sense clear.

In 1946 we find a somewhat different use of the term in the *Dungog Chronicle*:

Mr Walter Redman writes: ‘Mr Crouch has not got it all his own way with tomatoes. I have had ripe tomatoes all this winter and still have some. I did not have to build a “googery” over them, either, to keep the frost off them.’ (3 September, p. 2).

This letter was written in response to a report in the *Dungog Chronicle* about Mr Crouch’s tomatoes, where the structure here designated a *googery* is described:

The annual tomato Derby is ‘off’ this year. A dark horse entered the race and showed such form that the others went out of work. Mr P. Crouch has been eating his home grown tomatoes for six weeks. He put in 12 plants, put a spaced ceiling of 4ft. 6in. boards, with bag strips dangling down. The plants get the rain and the sun, but no frost. (30 August, p. 2)

The term *googery* is used here in a transferred sense, applied to a structure that shelters plants, just as the original *googery*’s function was to shelter people. And this, of course, is precisely the kind of transfer that Les Murray notes in his

use, where the function of the shelter is to protect fire from the elements.

There is no doubt that the word *googery* comes from the Kattang language. A *Grammar and Dictionary of Gathang* (2010) by A. Lissarrague gives *gugirr* the meaning ‘house; camp’ with solid evidence from a range of Kattang sources. The 1861 and 1927 quotations lack geographic particularity, and it is possible that in the early period the use of *googery* as a synonym for ‘humpy’ was fairly widespread. The evidence for the transferred uses, while limited, comes from an area where Kattang was spoken or from areas adjoining the

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In an essay in *Quadrant* in January 1991, Murray includes *googeries* in a list of ‘things which have decreased or become less common’ ...

”

Kattang people (the Dungog area is south-west of Bunyah), suggesting that the transferred senses, at least, were limited regionally.

*Googery* is therefore an interesting addition to our understanding of how words from Aboriginal languages found their way into Australian English. It is now no doubt largely obsolete. But it is part of the history of Australian English, and it will be included in the new edition of the *Australian National Dictionary*.

**Bruce Moore** is the former Director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre, and is currently editing the second edition of the *Australian National Dictionary*.

He is the author of *Speaking Our Language: the Story of Australian English* (2008) and *What’s Their Story? A History of Australian Words* (2010), both available through Oxford University Press.

# CARS AND AUSSIE ENGLISH

Amanda Laugesen

At the end of 2013, General Motors announced that it would be shutting down its Holden factories in Australia. It followed closures of Mitsubishi and Ford, and signalled the likely end of car manufacturing in Australia. The closure of Holden prompted many comments on the cultural significance of Holdens in Australia since the Holden company first produced cars in 1908. Cars have long been an important feature of Australian life, shaping our society and culture, and they have also had an impact on Australian English.

One Holden model, the Kingswood (produced 1968–80), gave its name to a popular television show screened from 1980 to 1984, *Kingswood Country*. In the show the main character, Ted Bullpit, drove a highly prized Kingswood. The term has subsequently come to be used in Australian English to refer to suburbia and suburban values, often implying a certain level of conservatism and bigotry. The show also spawned some popular catchphrases, such as ‘The Kingswood! You’re not taking the Kingswood!’, ‘Pickle me grandmother’, and ‘Leave the money on the fridge’.

Other aspects of Australian society and culture are revealed in the Australian English term *Marrickville Mercedes*. The *Marrickville Mercedes* is a Valiant (produced in Australia by Chrysler from 1962 to 1981). These cars were popular with the Italian community in the 1970s and 1980s, and were sometimes referred to as *wog chariots* or *wogboxes*. The love for the *Marrickville Mercedes* is revealed in this comment from political journalist Chris Uhlmann back in 1990:

Cries of ‘Marrickville Mercedes’ followed me wherever I went in Sydney. ... The truth is I love my Valiant. Here is a true working man’s car, a car built to last, a car with solid body panels and strength of character. Not for me some poncy little Japanese job with flashy looks and the constitution of a marshmallow. My Valiant is not weighed down with hosts of useless gadgets or effeminate little lights on the dash. No, it is simply built and with an engine that refuses to die despite my best attempts to kill it. It is like a faithful old dog—no matter how hard I beat it it just wags its tail. (*Canberra Times*, 6 April, p. 22)

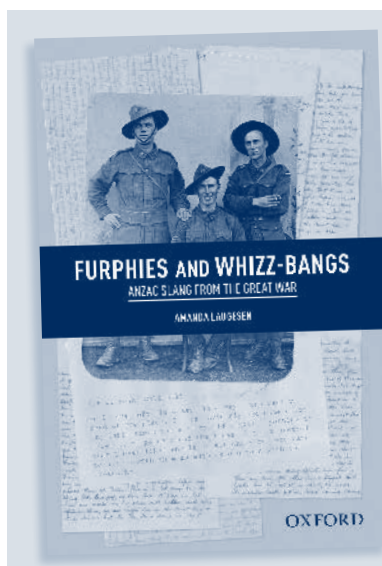
The ubiquitous large four-wheel-drive vehicles on suburban streets in recent decades have resulted in a number of regionally specific terms for them, many appearing for the first time in the 1990s: *Toorak tractor* (Melbourne), *Dalkieth tractor* (Perth), and *Mosman tractor* (Sydney) are commonly found. Other variations include *Balmain bulldozer*, *Bronte buggy*, *Rose Bay shopping trolley* (Sydney), and *Burnside bus* (Adelaide). The areas mentioned are all affluent, middle-class suburbs. Often the term is used in a derisory fashion, mocking the drivers for driving these vehicles because they are trendy and a sign of status, rather than because the owners actually intend to go off-road driving.

A *North Shore Holden* is another fairly recent car term in Australian English. It is a name given to a Volvo, usually implying middle-class affluence. People who drive Volvos, a Swedish car sometimes considered to be staid and not very trendy due to its (past) boxy design, have received their fair share of derisory comments: they are perceived as middle-class, respectable, and often boring. *Volvo drivers* and the *Volvo set* are both terms used as shorthand to refer to this type of Australian. *Volvo drivers* are also often criticised for their driving; either they drive too cautiously to satisfy other drivers, or they drive recklessly, perhaps because of the perception that their car is so safe that no harm will come to them.

Although the car industry in Australia is fast disappearing, cars will no doubt continue to be a central feature of the Australian lifestyle and also shape our language.

Amanda Laugesen is the Director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

“Cars have long been an important feature of Australian life, shaping our society and culture.”



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# OZWORDS COMPETITION

## OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 42: RESULTS

For this competition you were asked to come up with names for our Australian coins and banknotes. The most common approach to this competition was for respondents to refer to the image on the coin or banknote, or to the colour of the banknote. Hence we have a *Liz* or *Lizzie* (Queen Elizabeth II) (J. Taylor, Qld) and *strawberry smoothie* (D. Tribe, NSW) for the \$5 note; and *platty* (platypus) for the 20-cent coin (T. Hackett, SA). One amusing suggestion for the coinage as a whole was *backbenchers* because they are 'something having little significance or influence, and hence "a handful of backbenchers won't get you very far"' (M. Lean, Qld).

A suggestion for the \$1 (gold) coin was *ruse*, because 'it's not worth its weight in gold' (C. Sullivan, Qld). One entry played on the theme of the currency being floated back in 1983. Hence a number of nautically themed suggestions: *the tinny* for the 5-cent coin, *the skiff* for the 10-cent coin, *the yawl* for the 20-cent coin, *the cutter* for the 50-cent coin, *the clipper* for the \$1 coin, *the riverboat* for the \$5 note, *the smack* for the \$10 note, *the catamaran* for the \$20 note, *the tanker* for the \$50 note, and *the liner* for the \$100 (S. Robson, Qld).

We will pass on all of these suggestions to the Treasurer who may wish to discuss currency nomenclature with the new owners of the Royal Australian Mint should it be sold off.

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

The winning entry was (slightly) controversial in that we have some evidence for its existence in Australian English. However, we believe the evidence is very limited and that our winner arrived at it independently.

*A Bradman* for the \$100 note  
(B. Higgins, WA)

Australian cricketer Sir Donald Bradman (1908–2001) famously had a Test batting average of 99.94. By naming the \$100 note after him Australia finally gives Bradman his just deserts.

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

*A domingo* for the \$10 note  
(G. Case, Qld)

G. Case explains: 'It's a tenner (!), with homage to a one-time "world's greatest" Treasurer.' Also submitted by

G. Case was *min min* for the \$100 note because it's 'rarely seen, greenish in colour, and disappears rapidly when exposed to daylight'.

## OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 43

Our politicians continue to provide us with a range of terms that become instantly (if sometimes ephemerally) part of political discourse. In just the last year, we have heard much talk of *lifters* and *leaners*, the *budget emergency*, *Team Australia*, the *mining boom*, the need for *austerity*, the *end of the age of entitlement*, and everything being touted as *fair dinkum* from all sides of politics. Historically we have had Paul Keating's *recession we had to have*, John Howard's *Aussie battlers*, Robert Menzies' *forgotten people*, and Pauline Hanson's *please explain*.

Your task for this competition is to write a witty definition for a term or idiom used in Australian politics past or present. The most interesting and amusing entries will be in the running to win a prize.

### Entries close 31 January 2015

Send entries to the ANDC at one of the addresses in the next column, and please include a postal address, so we know where to send the prizes.

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