OZ WORDS

EDITORIAL

In this edition, our lead article is written by a PhD student at the Australian National University, Sydney Kingstone. Sydney is undertaking research into popular perceptions of the Australian accent and vocabulary, what is sometimes referred to as 'folk linguistics'. We encourage readers to contact Sydney to assist her in her survey work on Australian English.

We also have several articles by ANDC editors on various aspects of Australian English across time. I write about rediscovering some of the words of the First World War as part of my research for my recent book *Furphies and Whizz-bangs*, Julia Robinson writes an extended response to a reader's query about the word (and item) *cosy-bye*, and Mark Gwynn investigates the many words that have been generated from *bogan*.

As always, we answer readers' letters and emails in our *Mailbag*, keep you up to date on new publications and resources of interest as well as happenings at the ANDC in our *From the Centre* page, and our new competition can be found on the back page. We hope you enjoy this edition of *Ozwords*, and look forward to receiving your letters, queries, and competition entries.

Amanda Laugesen
Director

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FOLK LINGUISTICS AND AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

SYDNEY M. KINGSTONE

How do Adelaideans *dance?* Do you drink *'beer'* in Sydney or *'be-ah'* in Perth? Do you wear your *cossie, swimmers,* or *togs* to the beach? Do urban Sydneysiders sound different to rural Victorians to you? Or do all Australians sound the same? These are a few of the questions I am asking Australians in my ongoing research into folk linguistics and language myths in Australia.

Linguists are often thought of as being authorities on matters of language – and for the most part, this makes sense: we study language for a living. We can tell you what helps language change, we can write out languages using strange-looking characters to help other linguists pronounce it, we can parse sentences into grammatical components. So what would make a linguist ask people who don't study language for a living to comment on their own language?

Ask any person walking down the street about what words people use across Australia to say what they wear swimming, or to describe what bogans sound like, and they'll gladly give you an earful. Most people might not have the scholarly repertoire to describe languages or language features in the same manner as professional linguists, but they do have a pretty good idea of how language influences their own world.

Linguists can learn a lot about language by asking people without linguistic training to describe their language. How people talk about what they say, and how they sound, tells a much bigger story than just their linguistic preferences. Attitudes toward language play a big role in identity establishment, culture, and society. Studying these attitudes to language is known as 'folk linguistics'. Now, by using the term 'folk', I'm not implying ignorance or incorrectness, but rather using the term to describe how non-linguists perceive language. These studies help to shape a more complete picture of speech communities. Attitudes to language often reflect a set of beliefs about individuals and groups. Therefore, by exploring folk linguistic perceptions, linguists gain insight into cultural beliefs and how languages change.

One of the major linguistic myths revolves around perceived inherent qualities of language varieties: some dialects are considered to be not as good as others. Imagine you walk into a doctor's appointment, and your doctor starts the appointment with a nasally 'how ya goin', mate?' Even if this doctor were regarded as the best in the field, you might be a bit hesitant to tell him about why you came in, and might look for a new doctor for your next appointment. We expect doctors to sound a certain way, and when that expectation is not met, our trust in their abilities diminishes.

While linguists themselves are happy to consider all language varieties equally valid, many people believe that certain dialects sound more prestigious or correct or pleasant than others. Higher status groups tend to view their behaviours (which include their language varieties) as more prestigious or standard than lower status groups' behaviours. These lower status groups often consist of minorities, rural speakers, and people who are less well-educated. From a linguistic perspective, standard language varieties have no more complexity, historical consistency, or expressivity than less prestigious ones. The process of selecting a standard dialect is purely a social construction. As all societies consist of a range of social stratifications, both standard and non-standard varieties of language exist in every society around the world.

ANDC @ozwords Should Australia ha... *@ozwords* has got everyone talking:) ✿ *ANDC @ozwords* Our Word of the Year, shirtfront, has got everyone talking ✿ *ANDC @ozwords* Man-bun and Ned Kelly beard – a nod to the hipsters.

The most 'prestigious' form of language holds the most power in a community. Speakers of other dialects may try to impersonate or emulate the prestige dialect to get further in society. The opposite is also known to happen. Speakers can express their membership of a group by exaggerating the differences between their dialect and the standard. This is known as linguistic solidarity. Sociolinguists (linguists who focus on the social aspects of language) and social psychologists theorise that both linguistic status and solidarity impact how languages change over time.

A lack of linguistic security has been noted here in Australia and across the pond in New Zealand as part of what we call the cultural cringe. Since English first arrived in Australia and New Zealand, Aussies and Kiwis have viewed their own Englishes as less prestigious than the English spoken in England. Linguist and language attitudes specialist Donn Bayard studied this extensively in language attitudinal studies he conducted in New Zealand, finding that Kiwis much prefer the sound of English with an English accent than a Kiwi one. Aussies do not fare any better: linguist Jenny Price found that Australians have been complaining about the vulgarity of their English in letters to the editor dating back to the nineteenth century.

Another myth in Australia is that all Australians sound the same regardless of where they live in the country, and that the only differences in accent relate to class and the urban–rural divide. This view of accent sameness was originally suggested by early Australian linguists A.G. Mitchell and Arthur Delbridge in their seminal work on Australian English. They concluded that while certain speakers sounded different depending on how broad or cultivated their accents were, this tended to line up with an urban–rural divide. Another early Australian English linguist, John Bernard, asserted in the first edition of the *Macquarie Dictionary* that 'the picture is of a widespread homogeneity stretching from Cairns to Hobart, from Sydney to Perth, a uniformity of pronunciation extending over a wider expanse than anywhere else in the world'.

There is still debate among linguists as to whether or not this relative homogeneity existed due to Australian English's young age, or to the way English settlement spread across Australia, or if this view was perpetuated by intentional ignorance of existing variation in favour of promoting similarity. Some linguists believe regional differences have always existed in Australian English, while others believe regional differences have emerged more recently. Linguists aren't the only ones divided about regional differences in Australian English: this myth still exists across mainstream Australian culture today.

An acceptance of regional variation has been more widely accepted by linguists over the past 30 years. The AusTalk Corpus, a recently collected database of Australian English voices, has helped linguists to study regional accent differences. Linguists such as Felicity Cox, Rose Billington, Pauline Bryant, David Bradley, Cara Penry Williams, and Barbara Horvath have noted regional differences alongside class, ethnic, indigenous, and attitudinal differences across Australian English. Their findings support the existence of regional differences in Australian English beyond the urban–rural divide.

> " ... Australians have been complaining about the vulgarity of their English in letters to the editor dating back to the nineteenth century. "

Extensive work done in the United States has shown that by examining the perceptions of non-linguists rather than those of professional linguists, we can better understand how these myths are perpetuated across societies and the impacts they have. Dennis Preston has been one of the pioneering linguists pursuing these folk linguistics studies. He found that people from areas of higher status such as Michigan tend to exhibit greater linguistic security: they tend to view their own dialects as sounding more correct and more pleasant than those from areas with lower status, such as the US South and New York City. These people think people from the South sound small-minded and less educated, while people from New York City sound rude and confrontational.

This work is just starting to be carried out in Australia. My PhD is seeking to study how Australians conceptualise their English, which I hope, will give further insight into Australian language and culture. So, how am I doing this?

A group of Sydneysiders and Canberrans at the ANU were asked to describe Australian English. For a nation regarded as remarkably homogeneous, the results of the survey painted a very different picture. The vast majority of respondents, 95% in fact, stated that they did believe there were differences in how people talked across Australia. Most of these differences revolved around urban/rural, class, and regional differences.

What makes these regions different depended on the unique settings in each area. For example, some people noted areas where the dialect sounded different to other areas. Many students thought that people from Adelaide say 'dance' differently, while people from Melbourne pronounce the name of their city as 'Malbourne', beer is pronounced 'be-ah' in Perth, and 'school' sounds different in Queensland. The perceptual findings fit in with current research being carried out by Australian English phoneticians (linguists who study speech sounds) such as Felicity Cox, Gerry Docherty, and Rose Billington, who have found that there are differences in Australian English pronunciation across Australia.

There were also areas where certain words differed depending on location. Respondents brought up Australian beachwear, which consists of *cossies, swimmers,* or *togs* depending on where in Australia you're from. This type of work on vocabulary differences first began with Pauline Bryant's research in the 1980s. The ABC worked with the Macquarie Dictionary team to create the Australian Word Maps project, which has furthered Bryant's data collection by including anecdotal evidence of dialect differences submitted by Australians.

Like Americans, Australians believed some locations had higher or lower linguistic status. When the survey takers were given maps of Australia and asked to describe areas where people talked differently, they once again indicated regional differences in Australian English. The results indicated that the most different sounding (and stigmatised) speakers came from the Top End and down the Queensland coast. The Top End was described as broad and indigenous, while Queensland was seen as having unique slang. Speakers from the southeast cities were grouped together by many of the respondents as the standard dialect speakers of Australia, which may reflect the continuing social and political dominance of the southeast.

When asked what words best describe how Australians talk, people described the speech as nasal, broad, and slurred. Certain language features were also brought up frequently, such as how Australians are lazy and relaxed with their language, how they abbreviate their words, and how they exaggerate their vowels. The negative tone used to describe Australian English showed that the cultural cringe is still very much present in Australian culture. However, the positive references to Australian culture such as 'g'day', 'mate' and 'how ya goin', along with the focus on informal and casual Australian lifestyle, showed Aussies don't see their language as entirely bad.

The work in Australia is just getting started. For a nation once considered to sound overwhelmingly homogeneous by linguists, these latest findings indicate Australians attest to the existence of regional differences, areas of high status, and stigmatised varieties.

Lexicographer Bruce Moore writes: 'Of all the markers of identity, language is by far the most significant. … Australian English is central to the process of giving a voice to our Australian identity in important ways, we are *what* we speak, and we are *how* we speak.' (*Speaking Our Language: The Story of Australian English*, 2008, p. ix) Keeping this quote in mind, it becomes clear that linguists should take into account what Australians *think* about what they speak and how they speak. By listening to what non-linguists have to say about their language, linguists are given a more complete picture of what shapes people's thoughts and behaviour, and how languages change over time.

The research mentioned in this article is ongoing. If you're interested in taking part in an online survey asking what you think about Australian English, please contact me at sydney.kingstone@anu.edu.au, or go to ozenglishstudy.wordpress.com to complete the survey.

> 66
> When asked what words best describe how Australians talk, people described the speech as nasal, broad, and slurred.
> 99

Sydney M. Kingstone is a PhD candidate in Linguistics at the Australian National University. Her work focuses on dialectology, social psychology and linguistic perceptions. She is currently collecting data on Australian English, and exploring language variation and attitudes to Australian English dialects.

MAILBAG

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.

SCRUB MULLET, ANYONE?

Professor Roly Sussex will be a familiar name to many language lovers, especially in Queensland, from his radio segments and newspaper columns. He recently sent us an email he received from a listener:

My late mother-in-law, a very good cook, told me about [a food term] that was used when she was a child who went to a boarding school which had quite a few girls from Western Queensland. It was the time when the sheep was king and many properties always ran some killers* for rations. Roast leg of mutton was common fare and more often than not the roast leg was fairly large and lasted a few days. If after a few days any of it were left it was often sliced off fairly thickly, dipped in batter and deep fried and served as fritters. The name often used for this dish was 'Scrub Mullet' and relished accordingly, bearing in mind fresh fish was a rarity in Western Queensland.

[*A 'killer' is an animal, especially a bullock or sheep, selected and killed for immediate consumption. Ed.]

F. Drane, Queensland

Scrub mullet is a jocular name for a dish that attempts to present the tired remnants of roast mutton in a different guise. The writer assumes the name refers to *mullet*, the coastal fish (less available in inland areas than mutton). However, we found a scrap of information in our archives indicating that the jocular name may not refer to a fish, but to a reptile. A little fossicking turned up evidence of *scrub mullet* as a common name for a large skink. In 1939 a Queensland newspaper mentions the term, couched in the racist language and attitudes of the time:

> The station homestead was situated in a dry area with the nearest waterhole nearly 100 miles away. A visitor from the city being apprised of the waterless nature of the country thought he would take a rise out of an old abo who dodged work whenever he could. 'I suppose there's plenty of good fishing on this place, Jacky?' remarked the visitor. 'Ah, yes, boss', drawled the wily abo. 'Plenty of scrub mullet.' 'Scrub mullet!' said the visitor surprised. 'What are they?' 'Plurry goannas longa the scrub', replied the abo. (*Central Queensland Herald*, Rockhampton, 27 April 1939)

The *Australian National Dictionary* does not record the term *scrub mullet*, but does have an entry for *land mullet*: 'any of several large lizards, especially a large skink, *Egernia major*, of eastern Australia, similar to the fish in shape and general appearance.' *Scrub mullet* is likely to be a variant of *land mullet*. It strengthens our suspicion that the boarding school joke is implying that the pupils are being served lizard in batter. Do any readers know the term *scrub mullet* as the name for (in F. Drane's mouth-watering description) 'fritters of scrag-end of mutton'? We would like to hear from you.

UP TO SPEED WITH ANACHRONISMS

From time to time we are asked, especially by writers of historical fiction, whether certain words or phrases are likely to have been used at a particular time. Getting the language right—or at least not making obvious howlers—is a factor in imparting a sense of the period. (Of course, this has never worried the writers of Downton Abbey!) We recently had a call from an author concerned about the idioms that her editor had suggested using for a novel set in the 1940s. The idioms were *a walk in the park* ('something easy, effortless, and pleasant'), and *bring them up to speed* ('make sure they are fully informed'). We were happy to tell her that her character may well have heard the term *a walk in the park*, since it dates from 1937, but we had our doubts about using *bring them up to speed*. The literal sense of the term *up to speed* (referring to something mechanical, 'up to full or working speed'), dates from the late 19th century, but the figurative sense of 'fully informed' is not recorded until the 1970s—far too late for this novel's setting.

WHACKABURRA, WACKABURRA

Linguist and friend of the ANDC David Nash alerted us to *whackaburra*, a word he found in a 1934 article in the *West Australian* newspaper. He discovered further evidence in the National Library's digitised newspaper archive, Trove, including a mention of 'whackaburra fighting sticks'. We did a little sleuthing ourselves. There are some half-dozen references to *whackaburra* (sometimes as *wackaburra*) in Trove, and all but one derive from Western Australian sources. As David Nash points out, the small handful of references suggest *whackaburra* did not have much currency, but it is interesting that it is sometimes used without explanation, as if the reader would know it. Here is the earliest evidence we have found:

> The prisoners were the first to make the attack on Herbert, but after striking him several times over the head and back with a wackaburra and long-stick, they desisted from participating in the subsequent attack made by the other natives of the tribe, who chased and killed the deceased. (*West Australian,* 3 August 1894)

David thinks the source of the word may be an Aboriginal language in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. We are gathering evidence for 'whackaburra' and we will consider it for late inclusion in the forthcoming edition of the *Australian National Dictionary*.

CHEERS!

Please, I need to know when you use 'cheers'. Do you use it differently than English people?

Elba, via email

Cheers is used in Australia in much the same way as in other Englishes. As an exclamation it has three main senses, all associated with the general sense of a friendly exhortation to be cheerful. The first and earliest of these is the drinking salutation we use as we raise a glass. The second is a way of saying 'goodbye' on parting, or at the end of a phone conversation or email. Both the first two senses date from the early 20th century. The third meaning is 'thanks', which is not recorded until the 1970s. The 'goodbye' and 'thanks' meanings of *cheers!* originated in British English, but both are now common in Australian usage.

TOMAHAWK

We are putting a local Canberra poem, about shearing at Cuppacumbalong, to music. One of the verses starts: 'Good shearing there, you bet; no man might tomahawk, / For if he did, he got the sack, and from the shed might walk.' We are wondering what 'tomahawk' means in this context—there is another song we know called Tomahawking Fred which was based on a music hall song called Fashionable Fred, and contains the words 'But I'd rather tomahawk every day and shear a flock / For that's the only way I make some tin.' Any suggestions welcome.

L. Thorburn, New South Wales

Tomahawk has a specific sense in a shearing context. It is a verb that means 'to shear (a sheep) roughly', and it can also mean 'to cut (a sheep) during shearing'. This explains why the man who *tomahawks* is likely to be sacked. The shearing sense of *tomahawk* is first recorded in 1859, in Henry Kingsley's *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn,* a novel about English immigrants seeking their fortune in Australia: 'The poor sheep got fearfully "tomahawked" by the new hands.' Evidence of *tomahawk* tails off after the middle of the 20th century.

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FROM THE CENTRE

SHIRTFRONT: ANDC'S WORD OF THE YEAR 2014

Each year the ANDC selects a Word of the Year, and we look for words that have come to particular prominence in the Australian social, cultural, and/or political landscape. This year the Australian National Dictionary Centre received a lot of publicity for our selection of the word *shirtfront* as Word of the Year for 2014. The figurative use of *shirtfront* to mean 'to confront, to challenge a person', first recorded in the 1980s, was brought to prominence in 2014 by Prime Minister Tony Abbott, when he threatened to *shirtfront* Russian President Vladimir Putin over the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17. While there has been some controversy over Abbott's understanding of the term, which has its origins in Australian Rules football, but also has a rugby sense, there is undoubtedly a figurative use in currency in Australian English. The term has subsequently been picked up and used in the media.

Other terms on our shortlist were:

* *Team Australia:* used by Prime Minister Tony Abbott to refer to those in our community who support Australia and its values, this was another term with origins in sporting contexts.

* *man-bun:* a man's hairstyle where the hair is drawn into a coil at the back of the head. This style became popular in 2014 and was sported by a number of celebrities.

* *Ned Kelly beard:* a full beard, similar in style to that worn by the famous bushranger Ned Kelly. Another style popular with young men in 2014 and worn by hipsters and sportsmen. This is a good example of how productive the term Ned Kelly has been in Australian English.

* *coward punch:* a term for a knock-out punch or blow, especially one delivered from behind. This term came to prominence in early 2014 when a campaign was launched to try to replace the well-established Australian English term king-hit, which was used in the media to refer to such a blow, with a term that was seen to be more reflective of the nature of the punch. It remains to be seen whether the term coward punch will replace king-hit in these contexts.

We will be monitoring the media through 2015 to see which words mark the year.

OTHER WORDS OF THE YEAR

Ozwords will know that the Word of the Year phenomenon is now widespread among dictionary makers and publishers. Last year it was kicked off by the British, when Oxford Dictionaries announced their word for 2014 was *vape*, 'to inhale and exhale the vapour produced by an electronic cigarette or similar device'. They found a thirty-fold increase in the use of *vape* in the previous two years in Britain, where *vaping* has been a hotly debated issue. The American Dialect Society's choice was the popular Twitter hashtag *#blacklivesmatter,* following the social and political protest in the US over the deaths of Black Americans at the hands of police. Merriam-Webster chose *culture*, the word that experienced the biggest increase in searches on their online dictionary. This was helped by the increasing use of *culture* as an element in compound terms, as in *celebrity culture, consumer culture*, and so on. Dictionary.com chose *exposure* as a significant concept in 2014, with reference to the Ebola outbreak, media scandals, and issues of internet security such as the cyber-hacking of Sony. The *Macquarie Dictionary* chose *mansplain* '(of a man) to explain (something) to a woman, in a way that is patronising because it assumes that a woman will be ignorant of the subject matter'. It was selected from new items in Australian English that entered the dictionary in 2014. Controversially, Global Language Monitor's choice was not a word but a graphic symbol, the heart-shaped emoji ❤, based on analysis of usage in English text on the internet. The field is now wide open for 2015.

DEATH OF MACQUARIE EDITOR, ARTHUR DELBRIDGE

It is with sadness that we note the death of Professor Arthur Delbridge, distinguished linguist and lexicographer. In the 1960s Delbridge, with Professor A.G. Mitchell, undertook an important study of the Australian accent. In 1966 he was appointed Professor of English at Macquarie University, and in the 1970s he was a major force in the development of a dictionary that would reflect English as it was spoken in Australia. The result was the *Macquarie Dictionary*, the first edition of which appeared in 1981, and which quickly became one of the leading authorities on Australian English.

OXFORD DICTIONARY ONLINE INCLUDES AUSTRALIAN WORDS

The Australian National Dictionary Centre has been closely involved in working with Oxford Dictionaries, UK, on a set of updates to their online dictionary database *Oxford Dictionaries Online* (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/). ODO is the primary repository of Oxford's dictionary data, and is making an effort to include more words from the varieties of English around the world. They update their database with new words and edits every three months, and over the course of 2015 will be including a number of words from Australian and New Zealand English. Many of these terms have been taken from the *Australian Oxford Dictionary* (Bruce Moore, ed., 2004) with updates and amendments taken from the resources and research of the ANDC under the guidance of editor Mark Gwynn.

NEW BOOKS OF INTEREST

Ozwords readers may be interested in two new publications. The first is the new book by *Macquarie Dictionary* chief editor Sue Butler, *The Aitch Factor: Adventures in Australian English* (Pan Macmillan, 2014). This book includes many of Butler's experiences and observations on language, and reflects on her time as editor of the *Macquarie Dictionary*. The second is Jonathon Green's *Language! 500 Years of the Vulgar Tongue* (Allen & Unwin, 2014) which tells the fascinating story of slang and slang dictionaries.

VISITOR NEWS

Visiting Fellow Bernadette Hince, with co-editors Rupert Summerson and Arnan Wiesel, has a new book out this month: *Antarctica: Music, Sounds and Cultural Connections,* published by ANU Press. Bernadette has long been interested in all things Antarctic, including its special vocabulary; she is the author of the *Dictionary of Antarctic English* (2000). She does not stop at one polar region, however, having a strong interest in the Arctic as well. In 2014 her paper '"Seal liver and onion for dinner": the role of food in preserving the peace on some early Antarctic expeditions' was published in *The Polar Journal* (volume 4, issue 2, pp. 377–88).

We welcome Phoebe Garrett, a new ANDC staff member. A Latin scholar and classicist, she has been reviewing and updating the scientific names used in the definitions of flora and fauna terms in the *Australian National Dictionary*. This is an essential task for the forthcoming second edition, since developments in the field of genetics in the last 25 years have meant an explosion in the taxonomic revision of Australian plant and animal species. Many well-known species are among them. For example, the Australian magpie, the Moreton Bay bug, the Major Mitchell cockatoo, and the Sydney rock oyster have changed their scientific names, as have a number of gum trees; some *Eucalyptus* species now belong to the genus *Corymbia*. No doubt we will still call them 'gum trees'.

Letters, emails and tweets are welcome.

Please **address letters** to:
Ozwords,
The Australian National
Dictionary Centre,
The Australian National University,
Canberra ACT 0200
Email: andc@anu.edu.au

REDISCOVERING WORDS FROM THE GREAT WAR

Amanda Laugesen

In my recent book, *Furphies and Whizz-bangs: Anzac Slang from the Great War,* I had the opportunity to revisit some of the classic collections of war slang, including the Australian publication *Digger Dialects,* written in 1919 by W.H. Downing, and the British *Songs and Slang of the British Soldier: 1914–1918,* compiled by John Brophy and Eric Partridge and published in 1930. I also took another look at the unpublished manuscript collection compiled by A.G. Pretty of the staff of the Australian War Memorial, 'A Glossary of Slang and Peculiar Terms in Use in the A.I.F.', collected in the period 1921 to 1924. (It is available online through the ANDC website at: http://andc.anu.edu.au/australian-words/aif-slang/original-manuscript.)

These glossaries have always been a rich source of evidence for the slang terms used by Australian soldiers, but in the past finding other evidence for these terms in contemporary records was difficult. While troop publications and soldiers' letters and diaries allowed us to trace some of the terms in the context of wartime use, others remained unattested anywhere other than in the glossaries. The advent of the internet, especially the digitisation of newspapers, has in part changed this. In researching my book I was able to use Trove, the National Library of Australia's gateway to digitised Australian newspapers, to trace terms for which we hitherto had little or no evidence. This gave me a broader understanding of the language of Australian soldiers, and also suggested the ways in which newspapers became a means of communicating the words, thoughts, and feelings of soldiers to a broad home readership.

Terms for which Trove provided additional evidence included:

- *mother's pet,* from the initials 'M.P.' and referring to a military policeman. This term was included in Downing's collection but no other evidence was located. One reference was found in Trove in a humorous item in a 1918 newspaper:

  Garge: 'I see you've got M.P. on your sleeve. Be you a member of Parliament, then?'
  Military Policeman (sarcastically): 'No, I'm mother's pet.' (*Cobram Courier,* 31 October 1918, p. 3)

- *Parapet Joe,* a term for a German machine-gunner whose gunfire would prevent a soldier from looking over the parapet of a trench. Although mentioned in several slang dictionaries as a First World War term, it was not well attested. I found evidence of Australian soldiers using the term in newspapers from 1917. For example, a Tasmanian newspaper, the *Zeehan and Dundas Herald,* noted in its 'News from the Front' column: 'Have had the bullets whistling over my head in the trench like a swarm of bees around a man. One German in particular we call "Parapet Joe" can almost play a tune with his machine gun. Goes from one end to the other of our section, and just chips up the edge of the parapet right along.' (22 March, p. 4)

- *pig-stabber,* a term for a bayonet. This was found only in Downing and Pretty's collections, and is a variant of *pig-sticker,* recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary.* A search of Trove turned up additional evidence: An Australian signaller wrote of his experiences at Gallipoli, saying 'I set out with my pig-stabber ready and the magazine full of "Turkish delight," and reached a communication trench going off from the main trench. There I found a Turk in a good hole throwing bombs.' (*Adelaide Daily Herald,* 6 January 1916, p. 2)

The fact that these terms can be traced in Australian newspapers from the wartime period suggests that people at home were well aware of many of the slang and other war terms that emerged during the war. This in turn suggests that Australians at home were more aware of the realities of war than is sometimes assumed. While soldiers would not have revealed all of their experie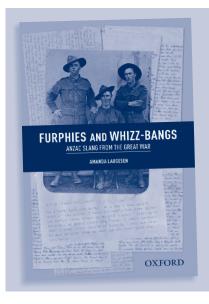nces in letters home (especially in those that found their way into print), they did make liberal use of slang and technical terms. A term such as *pig-stabber* left little to the imagination.

One of the most exciting findings of my research was this connection between the language of the front and home. In recent years scholars have increasingly argued for understanding the ways the culture of home and fighting front intersected; the rich online archives of newspapers and the study of language provide us with evidence that further complicates our understanding of what people at home understood of the soldier's experience.

Amanda Laugesen is Director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

> " ... people were well aware of many of the slang and other war terms that emerged during the war. "

ANDC (@ozworders Red ned, chateau cardboard, and plonk

ANDC (@ozworders 2014 in Two Words: 'Culture' and 'Vape'?

os, westies and durries: songs of Sydney's western suburbs.

COSY-BYE

Julia Robinson

One of our readers, W. Critchley, from Queensland, wrote to us with the following query:

> Back in the 1940s I had a bassinet made of canvas slung between a folding timber frame. A fibre filled mattress was placed in the base of it and it could be gently moved to rock a baby to sleep. We called it a 'cosie-bye' (sp?). Do you have any record of this name? Or was it just a family name for the bassinet?

We were not familiar with the term until this letter brought it to our attention. A search of historical newspapers reveals that it was most commonly spelt 'cosy-bye'. The first evidence is found in the 1920s, in advertisements such as this one in the *Maitland Daily Mercury:* 'Mothers! See our Cosy Bye Cots in Calico 16/9, in Cretonne 18/9.' (23 August 1924) Some advertisements are illustrated with line drawings showing a simple wooden frame with a canvas sling between the two top struts, just as our correspondent describes.

Mid-century newspaper articles describe it in similar terms, as a baby's bed with canvas sides, a folding canvas bassinette, and so on. Cosy-byes were cheap, could be easily moved, and folded away when not in use. But some articles point out the potential threat they posed to babies, as the following tells us:

> Cosy Bye Caused Baby's Death. After giving his finding on the cause of a baby's death at Neilrex last week the Coroner (Mr F.T. Millarey) added a rider stating he considered it necessary to warn parents against the use of home made 'cosy-byes'. Their hammock like construction had a tendency to press the pillow against the baby's face in a position from which it is difficult to move or turn. … The coroner found that the baby died from asphyxia accidentally caused by suffocating in his sleep.' (*Gilgandra Weekly,* 29 May 1947)

It is possible that *cosy-bye* was at some time a trade name: 'Jane On Shopping Rounds' notes that 'I was in a delightful store yesterday. … For the new baby they have a grand line in bassinettes called Cosy Bye'. (*Maryborough Chronicle,* 1 July 1949) Curiously, we find the first mention of 'Cosy Bye' in sporting reports in 1921, as the name of a racehorse. It is three years later that the earliest evidence appears for *cosy-bye* as a baby's bed, when it is used generically in this poem written for children:

> Far up beyond those fleecy clouds,
> Up where the skies are blue,
> There is a land called Babyland
> And well I know it's true.
>
> The roses there grow large enough
> For little cosy-byes,
> And hidden 'neath those petals soft,
> Each tiny baby lies.
>
> (From 'Babyland' by May Askew, in *Freeman's Journal*, Sydney, 17 April 1924)

The frequency of evidence increases greatly in the 1940s and 1950s, but by the 1960s the popularity was on the wane, maybe because they were increasingly considered old-fashioned (and perhaps dangerous), and the newspaper evidence peters out. The single mention of an 'iron frame cosy bye' in the 1980s is in the context of a sale of 'antiques, colonial furniture and sundries' in regional New South Wales.

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BOGAN—FROM OBSCURITY TO AUSTRALIA'S MOST PRODUCTIVE WORD? Mark Gwynn

In the mid 1980s, a new Australian term appeared in youth slang for a person regarded as uneducated and unsophisticated, especially such a person from a working-class background. This term was *bogan*. The earliest evidence we have found for it comes from the Sydney surfing magazine *Tracks* in September 1985: 'So what if I have a mohawk and wear Dr Martens (boots for all you uninformed bogans)? Does that give [a] reason for us to beat each other up?' An antecedent for *bogan* is *westie*, a word earlier applied to people from the western suburbs of Sydney; *westie* is a loaded term that implies a perception of these suburbs as working-class, uneducated, and uncultured. Across Australia regional terms for this stereotypical character have emerged in the last three decades, including *bevan* (Queensland), *booner* (ACT), and *chigga* (Tasmania). None of these terms have come close to the popularity of *bogan*.

The origins of *bogan* are still unclear. An obvious candidate is the Bogan River in western New South Wales. The river and the district around it have provided a number of terms in Australian English including *Bogan gate* (a makeshift gate), *Bogan shower* (a dust storm), and *Bogan flea* (a plant with spiny seeds). Perhaps the implication of our 1980s word is that a bogan is even more 'west' than the Western suburbs of Sydney? The *Oxford English Dictionary* posits a possible connection to the surname Bogan, and points also to the short story *The Luck of the Bogans* (1889) by American author Sarah Orne Jewett: a story concerning Irish immigrants to the United States. The problem with these possible origins (the river, the surname, the short story) is that there is no evidence of a link connecting any of them with the term that appears in the youth slang of 1980s Australia. While we are uncertain about the origins of *bogan*, it is obvious that the word itself has become extremely popular, and has subsequently generated a large number of derivatives and compounds.

The forthcoming second edition of the *Australian National Dictionary* will include a number of terms derived from *bogan*. The first decade of the 21st century produced *bogan chick*, 'a female bogan', *boganhood*, 'pride associated with being a bogan', *boganism*, 'the state or quality of being a bogan; an instance of bogan behaviour or language', and *boganity* and *boganness*, both referring to 'the state or quality of being a bogan'. More recently *bogan* has generated: *boganesque*, 'having the characteristics or resembling the style of bogans', *boganest*, (superlative adjectival form – 'he's the boganest politician in parliament'), *bogandom*, 'bogans regarded as a group', *boganology*, 'the study of bogans', and two terms for a wealthy bogan, *boganaire and cashed-up bogan* (also *CUB*). As is clear, the term has become very productive and the possible forms are almost endless: hence attributive forms such as *bogan pride* and *bogan vote*.

In recent years we have seen *bogan* undergo a process of amelioration. It was initially a term of abuse, ridicule, and disparagement, as illustrated in the TV show *The Comedy Company* (1988–90), where it was used by the schoolgirl character, Kylie Mole, to refer to people she described as 'losers'. But *bogan* has since been adopted by bogans themselves as a badge of honour and pride—perhaps as an affirmation of an Australian stereotype that harks back to the *larrikin* (originally a hooligan or degenerate, but now an individual with a disregard for authority and convention). With recent television series such as *Bogan Pride* (2008), *Upper Middle Bogan* (2013), and *Bogan Hunter* (2014) appearing on our screens, Australian culture is acknowledging that *bogans* are an integral part of contemporary society and identity. The productivity of the term *bogan* suggests that Australian English is reflecting ongoing debates about Australian culture and identity.

Mark Gwynn is an editor and researcher at the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

OZWORDS COMPETITION

OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 43: RESULTS

This competition asked you to write a witty definition for a word or expression used in Australian politics, past or present. The challenge prompted you to respond with entries that ranged far and wide beyond the brief, which we think may be a reaction to an overdose of politics recently. You defined terms such as *slip, slop, slap* (a story about a recipe that became an advertising slogan), *tall poppy* (something about a horticultural monk), and the nickname *Kanga* (a shaggy dog story about the First Fleet, the cultivation of hemp, and the defection of a French sailor in Botany Bay). However, a number of entries provided some trenchant political criticism. Pauline Hanson's famous *please explain* was defined as indicating a bogan mentality (G. Turvey, NSW), and *chief whip* as the instrument of first choice for flogging a potentially dead horse. (L. Green, NSW)

Since politics has made us all so grumpy in the last couple of election cycles, we have chosen the winning entry for its whimsy and lightness of touch, and the runner-up for its definition in free verse of *lifters and leaners.*

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

> An (Apple) computer for every child in every classroom. Is that a *core promise*?
>
> (P. Harley, SA)

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

> A leaner is someone who aspires to what today's lifters once had, a free education.
>
> A lifter is someone who conveniently forgets he/she was once a leaner utilising a free university education.
>
> Ergo, a free university education leads to selective memory loss.
>
> (J. McGahey, NSW)

And special mention goes to D. Tribe (NSW) who, although admittedly off the topic, gave us *struggle street* for the aisle in a Virgin airliner. How apt.

OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 44

Who has time to read long books these days? How many of us will choose Milton's *Paradise Lost* (12 books) or Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (9 volumes) as bedtime reading? Author David Bader found a solution. In *One Hundred Great Books in Haiku* he distilled classic works of literature into haiku, the very short Japanese verse form. Bader's book contains such gems as this retelling of Homer's *Odyssey:*

> Aegean forecast –
> storms, chance of one-eyed giants,
> delays expected.

We know you are literate, well-read individuals with a particular bent for the Australian language. We know you have read a good selection of famous Australian writers, such as Marcus Clarke, C.J. Dennis, Miles Franklin, Kylie Tennant, David Malouf, Les Murray, Patrick White, Bryce Courtenay, Helen Garner, Tim Winton, Peter Carey, and Geraldine Brooks. For this competition we ask you to choose a well-known Australian book or poem and retell it in a haiku. We offer as an example our take on Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians:*

> Tomboy sent to school.
> Be nicer to your kids, Dad,
> in case a tree falls.

A haiku written in English has three lines, and contains seventeen syllables. Usually the first and last lines have five syllables each, and the middle line has seven. Your haiku should follow this format, and the subject must be an Australian book or poem. Extra syllables may be frowned upon, as will any mention of politics without a good reason!

> Write us a haiku,
> encapsulate an Oz book.
> Count your syllables.

That, in a haiku, is your task for the next issue of *Ozwords*. The best entries will be in the running to win a prize.

Entries close 31 July 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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