



## EDITORIAL

Our lead article in this edition is written by Professor Stefan Dollinger, editor-in-chief of the soon-to-be-completed *Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles*. Canadian English, like Australian English, has its chroniclers, and the new edition, coming many years after the publication of the first edition, will be an important contribution to recording the varieties of English around the globe.

We also investigate the story of *short soup* and *long soup*. It may be surprising to know that the terms *short soup* and *long soup* are Australianisms, and that they have a long history in Australian English. Julia Robinson tells us all about what she discovered in her research.

We also include our regular Mailbag feature: this edition we respond to contributions on a variety of topics, from *Burdekin ducks* to *pig-stabbers*. Please continue to send us your always interesting and challenging queries and contributions.

We were very pleased to receive many terrific entries for our haiku competition. It was very difficult to select a winner, and we thank everyone for their contributions. We look forward to receiving your entries for our next competition.

**Amanda Laugesen**  
Director



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## IN THIS ISSUE:

- STEFAN DOLLINGER DISCUSSES THE *DICTIONARY OF CANADIANISMS ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES*
- JULIA ROBINSON INVESTIGATES THE STORY OF SHORT AND LONG SOUP

# HOW TO WRITE A HISTORICAL DICTIONARY: A SKETCH OF *THE DICTIONARY OF CANADIANISMS ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES*, SECOND EDITION

STEFAN DOLLINGER

In January 2005 at a linguistics conference in Toronto, Canada, someone in a panel asked the question: 'Who would be the next Avis?' What was meant by this was who would be leading a new edition of the *Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* (DCHP); Walter Avis led the first edition to completion. As a PhD student in English Linguistics at that point, I was sitting in the audience and wondering to myself: 'Yes, who would do such a job?' Little more than a year later, just before graduating, I was editor-in-chief of a new, second edition of DCHP: DCHP-2. A decade on, as the completion of DCHP-2 seems imminent, I am pleased to briefly introduce DCHP-2, its goals, its scope and, as an online dictionary, its functionality.

DCHP-2 is built on a number of principles. The integration of diachrony and synchrony means that we value present-day evidence as much as historical evidence, which has not been typical for all historical dictionaries. When finished, DCHP-2 will be, just like DCHP-1 Online, available in open access for everyone to see. For that purpose, we tried to ensure that our accounts are both precise and user-friendly. The regional dimension is given some prominence in DCHP-2, which is quite logical in the second largest country in the world. While in this regard we cannot reach the precision of the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, the leader in regional variation, we were inspired by this book and we made do with the limited resources we had.

## Reviving an abandoned dictionary

Not many readers of this newsletter will have heard about DCHP. The first edition, DCHP-1, was published in 1967 by an editorial board around Walter S. Avis, the pioneering Canadian linguist, with the assistance of Canadian publisher W. J. Gage in Toronto. After initial success, the dictionary had fallen into oblivion by the 1980s in all but expert circles. In 2005 a panel was put together by Terry Pratt and David Friend to probe the possibility of a new edition. DCHP-2 will likely see completion in 2016 after a decade of work, for most of it with insignificant funding. As a born-digital project, which was in 2005 a rather strange thought for many lexicographers, we had to devise some unusual procedures. One of the most challenging and tedious parts of the work was the digitisation of the paper copy, which was scanned and run through an optical-character-recognition program. A high error rate required manual proofreading of the entire text of about 1,000 pages with numerous abbreviations and short-hand symbols, which was carried out in Vancouver by English linguistics students over the course of two years. The results of that project, a digital DCHP-1 reproducing the 1967 edition, can be found as DCHP-1 Online at [www.dchp.ca/DCHP-1](http://www.dchp.ca/DCHP-1).

While Avis and his team completed the original DCHP-1, he was not the founding editor. As with many other dictionaries, it was the 'outsider' who started to pay attention to the idea of a dictionary of Canadian English. Charles J. Lovell, an American lexicographer,

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started his collection of Canadian terms in the 1940s while working on Mitford Mathews' *Dictionary of Americanisms*. Lovell, a champion of the study of Canadian English at a time when few were interested in the topic, would lead DCHP-1 until his untimely death in 1960. This Chicago connection puts DCHP in a lineage with William Craigie, who worked on the *Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles* (Craigie & Hulbert, 1938-44). DCHP-2 thus stands in the tradition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, although it is not an Oxford project. Since 2010, DCHP-2 is—after initial assistance from Nelson Education, the successor of Gage Limited—a purely academic project with no publishing affiliation, with all the advantages and challenges this entails.

## The scope of DCHP-2

DCHP is a dictionary of 'Canadianisms'. Canadianisms are, to paraphrase Avis's definition, terms, expressions and meanings that originate in (what is now) Canada or that are 'distinctively characteristic of Canadian usage'. Such a definition necessitates a profoundly comparative perspective. If one wants to know whether *washroom* ('public toilet') is Canadian or not, one needs to find out how the term (or meaning) is used not only in Canada, but also in other Englishes, most notably in American and British English. In order to offer a theoretical framework as well as clear guidance for readers, we devised a six-tiered typology for Canadianisms, which can be used as a map towards Canadianisms, as described below.

## The proof is *not* in the pudding

One of our main goals with DCHP-2 is to show, as explicitly as possible, the rationale why certain terms, expressions or meanings are deemed Canadian. We do so by providing a readable account of our evidence, which we call 'word story', rather than etymology, where we show as much of our data as we can without making the entries verbose (or so we hope). This is a departure from the short-hand that is customary in the paper-based tradition. This means rather than offering claims, e.g. '*cube van* Cdn. moving van' or '*by acclamation* Cdn. election without opposition', we explain why we think the term or meaning is Canadian.

This approach seemed necessary, as a 'lack of proof' has been one of the major problems in Canadian dictionaries. Readers find terms marked as Canadian that seem odd, and in some cases, outright wrong, as we know now. Why, for instance, would *Boston bluefish*, *coffee cream*, *farmer's sausage*, or *kerfuffle* be Canadian terms, as one well-known dictionary claims? At least a rationale would be required. As it turns out, however, none of these terms are Canadian. The only way to counteract such negative developments in lexicography and lexicology is to be as open and forthcoming as possible with our evidence. This is carried out also in the hope that if incorrect interpretations are offered in DCHP-2 (and there doubtless will be some), then the cause of the error would be easily identified and corrected, which is possible in the digital medium. Because this is a new development in Canadian English, we felt the need to include in DCHP-2 some terms that are *not* Canadian, which are clearly marked with a red background color and labels, to set them apart from the Canadian terms in order to dispel some long-standing myths concerning some words.

“... a 'lack of proof' has been one of the major problems in Canadian dictionaries.”

### **cube van** *cube-van, cube truck, cube-truck* 🇨🇦

DCHP-2 (April 2013)

• n.

a mid-sized truck whose cargo area is cube-shaped. See Image 1. Usually a type of moving truck or delivery van.

**Type: 5. Frequency** — Identified as Canadianisms in COD-2, the terms *cube van* and *cube truck* are Canadianisms by frequency (see Charts 1 and 2). *Cube van* is the more frequent one. They are examples of Canadianisms of a general nature that have no connection to Canadian administration or history (see Boberg 2005 for others). In the area of car terminology, *cube van* and *cube truck* seem to represent independent Canadian developments that go against the trend for automobile terms to pattern with US terms, e.g. trunk (not BrE boot), hood (not BrE bonnet), gas (not BrE petrol), muffler (not BrE silencer) (Avis 1978a: 3).

The compound nouns *cube van* and *cube truck*, and its spelling variants, are fairly recent developments (see the 1984 quotation). In newspapers, the term is used nationally (BCE 2006--), with quotations from all major dialects regions of the country, including Newfoundland (see 2007 quotation) and the Northwest Territories (2006 quotation). However, as Chart 3 shows for *cube van*, the terms are more frequently used in Quebec and Ontario, which suggests a Central Canadian origin (see Hung, Davis and Chambers 1993 for a similar east-west movement of a phonetic form).

- 1984** Occasionally their marriages break up and Mr. Needham comes to the rescue with his cube van to pick up the pieces, and help expedite the divorce of one of the parties. 🇨🇦 🇨🇦
- 1989** Police are asking anyone with information about the vehicle, a white "cube" van, possibly a GMC, to call the hit-and-run squad at 665-2157. 🇨🇦 🇨🇦
- 1990** That's one reason for their fleet of trucks, from semi-trailers to one-ton cube van delivery trucks. 🇨🇦 🇨🇦
- 1998** Another time, while driving a cube-van during the summer, we took a corner too fast. The metal ramp that was inside a slot on to the back of the van flew out into a major intersection, and people drove over it a lot. 🇨🇦 🇨🇦
- 2006** The boy and his family, visiting the territory from Surrey, B.C., were turning left onto Second from Fourth and failed to yield to The Brick's cube van heading up Two Mile Hill, said Whitehorse RCMP Sgt. Ross Milward. 🇨🇦 🇨🇦

FIGURE 1

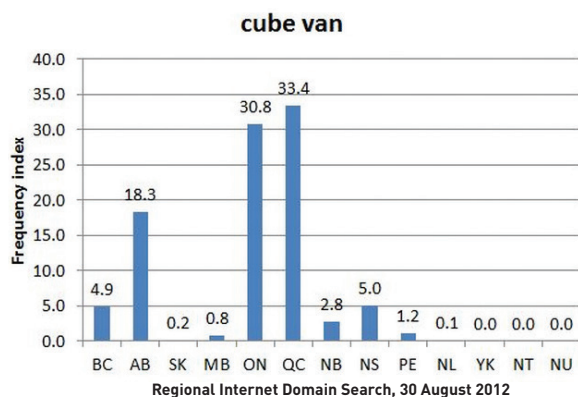


FIGURE 2

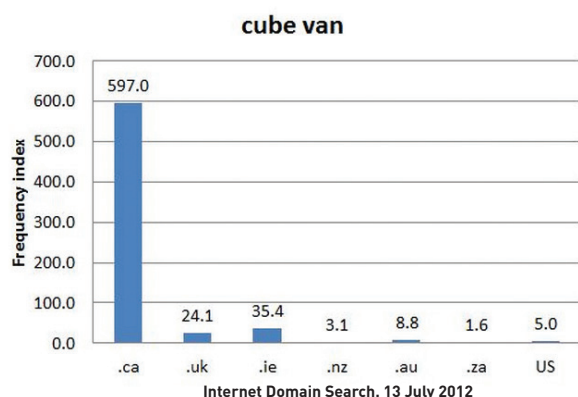


FIGURE 3

This evidence is often offered in the form of frequency charts and is explicated in the ‘word story’, shown in **Figure 1** in snippets from our draft entry for *cube van* (the entire entry would be too long to be shown here). Previously, many Canadians were puzzled why *cube van*, a term they may never have heard, should be Canadian. The word story offers an accessible account of the regional dimension of *cube van*, which shows a concentration—and likely origin—in central Canada (Ontario and Quebec), so that a British Columbian (BC) would not be surprised about the label, as is shown in the chart in **Figure 2** (and referred to in the word story). In addition to these regional charts, we offer national charts based on top-level internet domains, shown in **Figure 3**. With this evidence, we label *cube van* a Canadianism on grounds of frequency, which is Type Five. Together with a picture of a typical *cube van* and attestations up to the present day, the entry is rounded off. Besides *Frequency*, there are five more types of Canadianisms, which are introduced below.

## Six types of Canadianisms plus non-Canadianisms

In many ways, DCHP-2 tries to establish some order, some framework, in what might otherwise be at times a bizarre discussion of unsubstantiated or poorly substantiated claims about a term’s Canadian dimension. Each term or meaning is therefore classified as one of six types:

- Type 1—Origin: when a form was created in what is now Canada (and with it its meaning), e.g. *garburator* (‘in-sink organic waste disposal’), *humidex* (‘subjective heat index depending on humidity’), *parkade* (‘parking garage’), *loonie* (‘1-dollar coin’), *toonie* (‘2-dollar coin’), and *T4 slip* (‘employed earnings tax form’).
- Type 2—Preservation: when a form or meaning that once was widespread in many Englishes, is now preserved in Canadian English, e.g. *government wharf* (‘wharf funded by the government’), and *pencil crayon* (‘colouring pencil’), which were forms that were common in other varieties of English. The latter, *pencil crayon*, is used most frequently in Canada, followed by Australia, as we hope this newsletter’s readers will confirm.
- Type 3—Semantic Change: terms that have undergone semantic change in Canadian English, e.g. *toque* (‘beanie, woolen hat’), which earlier referred to other kinds of hats; *Canuck* ‘Canadian’, which was formerly a racist term of abuse derived from the Hawaiian term *kanaka* (‘Hawaiian, dark-skinned person’) that was brought via whaling ships to Canada and the US. In the former country it quickly underwent amelioration to today’s term of prestige.

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“Previously, many Canadians were puzzled why *cube van*, a term they may never have heard, should be Canadian.”



# 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.

## BATHERS, TOGS, AND VEEES

We received several letters on the topic of swimming costumes as a result of Sydney Kingstone's April article. R. Balmford (Vic.) writes: 'I was born in 1933, and have lived all my life in Melbourne. I have worn *bathers* to the beach (or occasionally *togs*) all my life. I don't think I have heard of *cozzie* or *swimmers* except in a literary context—in *Ozwords*, for example.' *Bathers* and *togs* also get the thumbs-up from P. Dineen (WA), who records his preferred terms in a haiku: 'Keeping us decent/ Like that Johnny Weissmuller/ Just togs or bathers.' He also quotes Clive James' use of the word 'vees' in *Unreliable Memoirs* ('we changed into blue vees and swam'), and suggests this may be a local usage for BVDs (a type of boxer shorts).

## A MOAN ABOUT MAROAN

*I'll admit that I do moan  
 When an ignorant buffoon  
 Still pronounces as maroan  
 That rich colour's name, maroon.*

P. Kelly, South Australia

I'm afraid you are losing the battle for 'maroon' (rhymes with spoon). Both pronunciations are acceptable in Australian English and, based on current usage, the 'maroan' (rhymes with phone) pronunciation is now more common. Our Australian dictionaries reflect this, and have recorded both pronunciations since 1987. We now give the 'maroan' pronunciation as the preferred Australian form. It is interesting to note that the 'maroan' pronunciation seems to be exclusively Australian.

## PIG-STABBERS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

*I was interested to read in the p.6 article the WW1 use of 'pig-stabber'. This was the term commonly used in the Commonwealth Public Service during the 1960s, probably before and possibly after, for a type of bodkin used to punch a hole in paper before filing. It was 21 cm long with a wooden handle and a sharply pointed blade. It was commonly used in the top left corner of the paper which was then impaled on a 'star binder'. This was a small metal item with a flat round back and two upright prongs which went through the file cover and folded back over the paper to be filed. We had to apply to the Keeper of the Stationery Cupboard for a box of these binders. In that era we also had to produce our used ballpoint pen before being given a new one!*

M. Bell, Australian Capital Territory

'Pig-stabber' is not only a military term for a bayonet, it was in common use in the Australian Public Service at least through the 1980s and 90s for the dangerously sharp wooden-handled, needle-like device used to make holes in papers to be filed by their top left corner on a bifurcated drawing pin (to hell with a hole-punch!).

C. Kelly, Australian Capital Territory

We hadn't heard of this kind of 'pig-stabber', but there is some anecdotal evidence online, usually in a public service context. In June 1980, for instance, the *Canberra Times* reported on a court case arising from an incident in which a man entered a government department in Brisbane, 'announced he was taking it over, and stabbed one officer with a paper bodkin, referred to as a "pig stabber". Only a superficial injury was caused.' C. Kelly's description of the 'dangerously sharp ... needle-like device'—and the photo M. Bell sent us—suggest the victim was lucky not to be seriously injured. It seems unlikely the pig stabber, clearly a workplace health and safety issue, is still in office use today!

## BURDEKIN DUCK, DOG IN A BLANKET

*I do not recall the dish Scrub Mullet but when I was a girl living out of Quilpie in SW Qld we sometimes for lunch, never dinner, had a dish known as Burdekin Duck. Here is part of my musings on lunch dishes from my childhood. Mum made her salad by slicing the lettuce and all other vegetables, usually only onion, cucumber and tomatoes, very thinly. This was served with a very sweet, and sticky, mayonnaise made from condensed milk, vinegar and Keen's Hot English mustard powder. Hard-boiled eggs, cut in halves, also featured at some lunch-times or sliced tinned beetroot. Fortunately this was served separately from the salad. Sometimes, in winter, we might have a hot meal like curried eggs, salmon mornay, a big meat pie, or a very strange dish known as 'Burdekin duck'. This was made of slices of cold roast lamb dipped in batter and fried in dripping. I suspect that the Burdekin, though a large river, might have been dry a lot of the time and probably harboured very few ducks, if any at all; hence the cynical name for the dish. 'Burdekin' duck was always eaten with lashings of tomato sauce or sweet chutney.*

J. McGahey, New South Wales

*In my Grandmother's house the fritters were known as a Dog in a Blanket. Any leftover meat could be used and I suspect it was an economical way of making a little bit of cold meat go a long way. Never the less we kids loved them, especially as like sausages, they always were accompanied with tomato sauce and what kid, even today doesn't love tomato sauce?*

J. Rule, Queensland (raised in WA, as was her grandmother)

We received a number of responses to our item on *scrub mullet* (fritters of leftover meat) in the last Mailbag, including the two letters above. C. Kelly (ACT) remembers her mother using a recipe from the CWA's 'Golden Wattle' cookbook to make the same kind of fritters during the 1960s and 70s. Evidence for *Burdekin duck*, described above by J. McGahey, dates from the 1930s. The fritter has no relation to the real *Burdekin duck*, the *radjah shelduck* *Tadorna radjah* of northern Australia, except as an ironic joke.

Tom Ronan in *Strangers on the Ophir* (1945) notes a geographical alternative: 'A meat fritter [is] known in the Kimberleys as a "Burdekin Duck", and on the Burdekin as a "Kimberley Oyster".' J. Rule's *dog in a blanket* may have taken its inspiration from *pig in a blanket*, a small sausage or hotdog wrapped in pastry, bread, or bacon (and also, originally and chiefly in North American use, an oyster wrapped in bacon). We expect these aren't the only names invented by thrifty cooks for leftover meat fried in batter. Tomato sauce obligatory!

## DOCKET, RECEIPT

*Just wondering if you have come across the term 'docket'. My memory is that a docket used to be a generic term for any paperwork associated with or recording a transaction—a cart note, receipt, manifest, invoice etc. The dictionary definition of a docket seems to be quite specific—either a cart-note (English) or a court list (US), but my memory (Adelaide 1970s/80s) was that it was used very commonly and much more generically for any paperwork, particularly receipts (e.g. if you were going to take something back to Myers for a refund, you would need the docket). I asked the attendant at a petrol station for the docket the other day and drew a blank look. Which made me reflect, and realise that the only person I had heard use the term for a long time had been me. Maybe it was just an Adelaide thing.*

D. Mussared, South Australia

*Docket*, meaning 'a retailer's invoice or cash register receipt for goods or services supplied', was once common in Australia, not just in Adelaide. 'Keep the docket in case you want to return the item', we were told. British English does not appear to have this sense, recording the primary meaning of 'docket' as 'a document or label listing the contents of a consignment or package', while North American English has the legal sense noted by our reader. Evidence from Australian newspapers shows the term *docket* is used from 1881. Today the word *receipt* is often used instead, especially by the younger generations, while *docket* chiefly survives in some supermarkets in the 'Shop A Docket' advertising offers on the back of your cash register receipt.



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## NEW DICTIONARY

The new edition of the *Australian Primary Oxford Dictionary* has just been published. This edition, the fourth, was edited by Mark Gwynn and Amanda Laugesen, and is the first new edition of this dictionary in a number of years. It was based on the latest edition of the *Primary Oxford Dictionary*, with the inclusion of a lot of new Australian material. It is intended for readers aged 10 to 12. One of the most interesting new features of this edition is the inclusion of quotations from notable children's literature, including the works of a number of Australian authors. These quotations illustrate usage, as well as introducing young readers to a wealth of children's literature.

## OBITUARIES

We note with sadness the death of ANU historian Professor F.B. Smith on 3 March 2015. Barry was a regular contributor of quotation evidence for the *Australian National Dictionary* and was a leading scholar of the history of health and medicine. He will be missed.

We also note the death of corpus lexicographer Adam Kilgariff. Adam ran the Lexicom workshop attended by Centre editor Mark Gwynn last year and was a significant contributor to the development of corpus lexicography. He is perhaps best known for his work in designing and running Sketch Engine, a tool for creating, maintaining, and analysing large corpora.

## RESOURCES FROM AROUND THE INTERNET

The internet offers all sorts of innovative ways of presenting dictionary data, as well as bringing old publications to a new and wider audience. In each edition we hope to highlight some of the best and most interesting of these online lexicographical resources. Last year, the team at the Dictionary Unit for South African English at Rhodes University, South Africa, launched an online version of the *Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles*. <http://dsae.co.za>. The dictionary is similar to the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Australian National Dictionary* in structure, and is a rich resource for those interested in South African English. The team is also working on updating it.

The first edition of the *Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* is also available online: <http://dchp.ca/DCHP-1/>. As mentioned in our lead article in this edition of *Ozwords*, a new edition of the DCHP, DCHP-2, will be available soon. Both of these dictionaries contribute much to our understanding of the development of regional Englishes.

## TIMELINES OF SLANG

Lexicographer Jonathon Green, author of the acclaimed three-volume *Green's Dictionary of Slang* (Chambers, 2010), has an expanding

online presence. From his large database of slang terms he is building interactive timelines on the major themes that have dominated the slang vocabulary for more than 500 years: 'To sum them up as sex, drugs and, in its widest sense, rock 'n' roll wouldn't be so far from the truth.' His timelines do not include definitions, but aim rather to showcase the creativity of slang. They include topics such as insanity, sex, money, race, alcohol, women, and bodily parts and functions. He adds the caveat 'whether we like it or not, slang is humanity at its most human'. The timelines can be found online at: [thetimelinesofslang.tumblr.com](http://thetimelinesofslang.tumblr.com). Jonathon Green is also on Twitter as @MisterSlang.

## AUSTRALIAN WORDS IN GLOBAL ENGLISH

ANDC editor Mark Gwynn was recently commissioned to write an article for the BBC Culture website. In his article 'What Australian slang has given the world' Mark discussed the phenomenon of Australian words that have made their way into global English. The most common group of words that have migrated from Australia are those abbreviations with the '-o' and '-y' suffixes. These include words such as *budgie*, *demo*, *greenie*, *muso*, *pollie*, *preggo*, *selfie*, and *surfie*. Other abbreviated forms including *g'day* and *uni* are also widely known outside of Australia today.

Words heard commonly in Australia that have found a place in the wider English-speaking world include *petrolhead* (a car enthusiast), *ratbag* (a troublemaker), *rustbucket* (a dilapidated car), and *wheelie bin* (a large two-wheeled bin for household rubbish). Several originally Australian verbs can also be heard elsewhere now, including *crash* (to go to sleep), *hurl* (to vomit), *rubbish* (to denigrate a person), and *stonewall* (to obstruct a piece of parliamentary business). Phrases that have made the leap from Australia's shores include *like a rat up a drainpipe* (very quickly), *no worries* (an assurance that all is fine), and *put the boot into* (to attack savagely, especially when the opponent is disadvantaged). The full article can be found on the BBC website at [www.bbc.com/culture/story/20150427-pervs-greenies-and-ratbags](http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20150427-pervs-greenies-and-ratbags).

## LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON AUSTRALIAN WORDS

One of the key parts of researching the history of words involves trying to discover their origin. Most of the time, we are able to pretty conclusively determine where a word has come from. However, sometimes the origin of certain words remains a mystery until we can find more evidence. Perhaps our readers would be able to shed some more light on the origins of these Australian words:

- *fortescue*, a fish (*Centropogon australis*) of eastern Australian coasts, with venomous spines that can inflict painful wounds. At the moment, we are uncertain of the origin of *fortescue*. It possibly derives

from an alteration of a popular name 'forty skewer'. This origin is suggested by the first piece of evidence for the name *fortescue* for this fish from 1874. E.S. Hill (recorded in J.E. Tennison's *Fish and Fisheries of New South Wales* (1882)) writes that the fish had been given the name 'forty skewer' or 'fortescure'. This is the only suggestion as to its origin.

- *merry widow*, a handpiece with wide combs and cutters used in shearing sheep. This term possibly derives from the 'Merry Widow's hat', an ornate wide-brimmed women's hat, first recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1908, and popularised by the style of women's hat worn by a character in Franz Lehar's operetta *The Merry Widow*. However, this origin is not certain.
- *smoker*, a long-tailed parrot (*Polytelis anthopeplus*) of south-western and south-eastern Australia, the adult male having mustard-yellow plumage and a dark tail. Why this parrot is called a *smoker* is unclear, given the bird is a yellow color, although possibly it is alluding to the smoky color of the tail.

We would welcome any information you have on these words.

## WORD OF THE YEAR: CAN YOU HELP US?

What is your word of 2015? Each December the ANDC chooses a Word of the Year. It is a word, term, or phrase that has achieved prominence during the past twelve months in Australia. It does not have to be new, or an Australianism, but it should be a term that has become significant in our cultural, social, or political conversation. In 2014 we chose *shirtfront* as our Word of the Year, thanks to the attention it received as a result of the Prime Minister's threat to 'shirtfront' the Russian President over the downing of flight MH17.

We are drawing up our shortlist now, and welcome any suggestions you may have for our 2015 Word of the Year. Please contact us by mail, email, or submit your suggestions through our Word Box.

Letters, emails and tweets are welcome.

Please address letters to:  
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Email: [andc@anu.edu.au](mailto:andc@anu.edu.au)



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

- Type 4—Culturally Significant: these are terms or meanings that have been enshrined in the Canadian psyche, e.g. *universal healthcare*, *gun legislation*, and most ice hockey terms, e.g. *goalie mask*, *wraparound* ('hockey move trying to score from behind the net'), *Zamboni* ('ice-resurfacing machine') and the like, terms that are widely considered 'Canadian'.
- Type 5—Frequency: these are terms or meanings that are Canadian by virtue of discourse frequency, e.g. the above *cube van*; *to table something* 'bring forward, rather than to postpone [as in US English]', as in *to table legislation*; and *washroom* 'public bathroom, toilet'.
- Type 6—Memorial: these terms or meanings are the flip-side of cultural salience. Whereas the latter is something Canadians take 'pride' in, *memorial* terms refer to negative entities in Canada's history, e.g. *residential school* ('schools that abused aboriginal people, schools for cultural genocide'); ethnic terms of abuse, e.g. *chink* ('Chinese'), *wop* ('Italian'); or now inappropriate terms, e.g. *Eskimo* ('Inuit people'), *iron chink* ('fish-gutting machine, named for the predominant role of Chinese labourers in gutting fish before the machine's invention'). In other words, these are terms or meanings that were once widespread and form part of Canada's negative legacy today.
- In addition to these six types, we have the category of 'non-Canadianism', i.e. terms, such as the four named in the previous section, which have been labelled 'Canadian' in other sources, but for which we found no proof of their Canadian status and for which we are confident that they, in fact, have no claim to being Canadian.

Naturally, terms are often classifiable by more than one type, e.g. *pencil crayon* can be seen as a Canadianism by virtue of preservation (Type 2) or by virtue of frequency (Type 5), but there is generally one type that is more dominant or important in the North American context. This dominant choice is selected, while other options are discussed in the word story where appropriate. For *pencil crayon* for instance, *Preservation* makes more sense in the Canadian context, as the neighbouring US no longer uses the term to a comparable degree. In a global context, however, *Frequency* would work better (in Canada: 7 frequency index points, Australia: 4, the US less than 3).

## The comparative-linguistic approach and novel methods

A comparative approach as outlined here requires recourse to linguistic methods: dealing with corpora, using the web—as the biggest corpus—in a controlled way, using linguistic studies where possible, and carrying out separate questionnaire-based studies to gather insights into the use and distribution of a term or meaning. These methods need to be used in addition to the more traditional historical data mining.

For the latter aspect, we have, by and large, relied on digital sources, but we have complemented our searches with targeted library materials. As a project started ten years ago, we were just 'late enough' to take advantage of digitisation initiatives, so sources such as *Early Canadiana Online*, the Champlain Society's digital record of early Canadian travel accounts, early Canadian newspaper archives (going back to 1844), or *Canadian Newsstand*, for more recent cross-country sources, to name but a few, became instrumental. Due to funding difficulties, we learned early to integrate the project into courses on English linguistics, where 50 students would go and explore one word each and thus find more data than would have been available otherwise. We even went a step or two further than that and offered training programs for entry drafting to undergraduate students who were taken on in the dictionary lab. These students, complete newcomers to the task, for the most part excelled and produced drafts of a quality one would not expect from such inexperienced young scholars. The results, perhaps, might be food for thought for other dictionary projects: while on the one hand it takes years, even decades, to develop good lexicographic skills, these second and third year undergraduate students acquired remarkable drafting skills in six months of lab work. Perhaps the future of historical lexicography lies somewhere in between the two extremes.

Above all, it is hoped that DCHP-2 will not only offer authoritative information on a selection of Canadian terms. It is also hoped that it will revive a discourse tradition on Canadian English and produce a marked increase in quality concomitantly. After almost seven decades of research on Canadian English, it should no longer be good enough to merely claim that a word is Canadian. Instead, one must offer a rationale and good evidence for it, which is what DCHP-2 aims to do for about 1,000 new headwords, which will add 10% to DCHP-1's 10,000 existing lexemes. Once DCHP-2 is completed, another kind of work is poised to begin: a third edition would likely tackle the revision of the old DCHP-1 entries (readers can see for themselves online what they look like), while keeping abreast with current language change. Who, one might ask, would then be the 'next Avis', that is, the next linguist to embark on the considerable task of editing DCHP-3?

## Further Reading

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# THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

Julia Robinson

Recently we received this query from a Victorian reader: ‘I am writing to ask about the term “short soup”, as in the Chinese wonton soup. Other non-Australian speakers of English are unaware of this phrase, it seems. Is it uniquely Australian and when did it originate?’ (J. Bookman)

*Short soup* and its companion *long soup* are indeed Australian terms for Chinese wonton soup and Chinese noodle soup respectively. The name *long soup* probably derives from an English speaker’s way of describing the kind of noodle typically found in the dish; *long soup* contains long, thin noodles. *Short soup* contains wontons, a type of small dumpling formed by wrapping small, flattened pieces of noodle dough around a savoury filling. The first evidence for both terms occurs in the 1880s, with *long soup* appearing a few years before *short soup*. In early evidence they often occur together.

A longtime resident of Sydney’s Chinatown, Norman Lee, explained the difference between the soups, in recalling the people who frequented Chinese ‘cook shops’ in the early part of the 20th century: ‘It was good food—genuine stuff. Most of the customers were Chinese; only the Australian drunks came then. When they ordered plain soup with noodles, they called it long soup. With won tons, it was short soup.’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 January 2007)

Much of the early written evidence occurs in the context of Melbourne’s Little Bourke Street, Australia’s first Chinatown, established in the 1850s. An early reference appears in the *Australasian* newspaper, in a full-page illustrated special on ‘The Chinese Quarter in Melbourne’. It is written as an anthropological investigation, and as with many similar newspaper reports of the period, the tone is frequently racist:

Very curious was it to watch them at their meal. In front of each was a bowl of soup of which, by the way, the Chinese distinguish two kinds—‘long’ soup and ‘short’ soup. This was ‘long’ soup, and it seemed to be a kind of chicken broth, thickened with flour. ‘Short’ soup is different—we do not exactly understand in what way. However, the gentlemen pictured above were busy with their ‘long’ soup, drinking it with little earthenware ladles. (21 April 1888)

This and many other contemporary references show that by the end of the first decade of the 20th century, the names of these dishes were becoming familiar to non-Chinese Australians, and were seen as typical of Chinese cuisine.

A good number of references to *short soup* and *long soup* are found in court reports of the period. This may suggest that Chinese food was cheap, and that Chinese cooks were catering to a larrikin clientele who could not afford to eat at other restaurants. Fights and arguments between customers and staff were liable to break out over a bowl of soup:

*Brawl in a Cook Shop.* ... Three men went to [Quon Cheong’s] cook shop in Heffernan’s-lane about midnight last Saturday, and after being served with ‘long soup’ broke a saucer and a soup basin, for which they declined to pay. Then they blackened his eye, split his lip open and gave him a severe mauling. (*Melbourne Age*, 30 June 1910)

In one case *short soup* was used as code for a sly grog operation: ‘Melbourne, August 24. Two Chinese cook shop proprietors were to-day fined £40 each on a charge of sly grog selling. Two revenue officers called at the establishment and asked for “Short Soup”, and were supplied with several bottles of ale.’ (*Hobart Mercury*, 25 August 1909)

Later evidence confirms that *short soup* and *long soup* were increasingly recognised as standard fare in Chinese eateries, if still considered exotic by many. In the late 1920s the *Goulburn Evening Penny Post* claims that there are ‘hundreds of Melbourne citizens who regularly relish the Oriental dishes of Little Bourke-street short soup joints’. (13 April 1927) The taste for Chinese food was well-established by mid-century. In the 1960s the *Australian Women’s Weekly* published a recipe for long soup (with chicken stock, vermicelli noodles, and shallots), and in an article on the favourite food of local pop groups, the *Weekly* records the lead guitarist of the Strangers commenting in the lingo of the time: ‘I could live on Chinese food. ... Fried rice and short soup are rather groovy.’ (14 May 1969)

But what is ‘short’ about *short soup*? It is not the most obvious way to describe a wonton. Is *short soup* perhaps a calque—that is, a literal translation from Chinese?

Australian *long soup* and *short soup* are dishes in the style of southern China, because most Chinese immigrants who came to Australia in the 19th century came from the southern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian, either directly or via Singapore. Chinese linguist colleagues tell us there are no corresponding terms in Mandarin or Cantonese for *long soup* or *short soup*, but one scholar who is familiar with southern dialects has anecdotal evidence from Fujian of a term for wonton soup that translates literally as ‘flat food soup’. She notes that although the word for ‘flat’ may imply ‘thin’ and ‘small’, it does not directly correspond to ‘short’.\*

“

But what is ‘short’ about short soup? It is not the most obvious way to describe a wonton.

”

*Short soup* does not appear to be a translation from Chinese, even from the most likely southern dialectal regions. In Guangdong province there is a term for soup containing long noodles that translates as ‘long noodle soup’. But this is descriptive, and does not precisely correspond to *long soup*. We think that these Australian English terms are a binary pair, and that *short soup* was named in contrast to *long soup*, in order to distinguish one from the other. Thus *short soup* does not really describe its ingredients, but rather tells us it is not *long soup*.

\* With thanks to Wendi Xue and Dr Zhengdao Ye for their help. All errors are my own.

Julia Robinson is an editor and researcher at the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

# OZWORDS COMPETITION

## OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 44 RESULTS

We asked you to encapsulate an Australian book or poem in a haiku. You took to the task with gusto, and the first email entries arrived within a day of our last issue being mailed out. The entries were based on a variety of novels, plays, poems, bush ballads, short stories, and works of history and biography. The writer who attracted the most entries was Banjo Paterson, whose 'Clancy of the Overflow' was especially popular (Thumbnail dipped in tar./ I'd written him a letter./ How awkward was that.—J. Dennett). His 'Mulga Bill' proved popular too (Mulga Bill's old horse/ Reinstated after fall/ from pedal power.—H.B. Schmidt). Other well-represented writers were Patrick White, Ruth Park, and C.J. Dennis, whose 'Sentimental Bloke' scored several entries, as did Dorothea McKellar's poem 'My Country', and Joan Lindsay's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Workplace Safety rule:/ Repeatedly check headcount/ on Hanging Rock trips.—G. Case).

Children's classics were well-represented, especially *The Magic Pudding*, *The Muddle-headed Wombat*, and *Snugglypot and Cuddlepip* (Evil banksias/ Pursue little larrikins/ In floral tutus.—J. Whyte). Readers took on historical works of non-fiction, such as Ned Kelly's 'Jerilderie Letter' ('Horse thief? Murderer??/ All of it untrue!' says Ned/ 'I was a good bloke!'—P. Mitchell and L. Bowen).

The style of entries ranged from the plain summary (Dad gone off droving/ Snake in house with Mum and dog/ Mum gives snake what-ho.—P. Higgins on Henry Lawson's *The Drover's Wife*), to the poetic (Drowning reflecting:/ dreams and visions dissecting./ Franklin collecting ...—J. Dewar on Richard Flanagan's *Death of a River Guide*), and the quirky ('One more nuke! We've won!/ We rule the whole world now! What?/ Nothing. Noth-ing N-o-t-h- ...'—L. Roberts on Nevil Shute's *On the Beach*).

Thanks to the many readers who sent us haiku. The standard of entries was high and we had some difficult choices to make.

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

Our winner stood out for the incisive treatment of *The One Day of the Year*, Alan Seymour's classic play about generational conflict and Anzac Day.

Piss-up? Two-up? Throw-up? Shut up? Burning questions one day of the year.

(G. Case, Qld.)

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

Second prize goes to a reader for two entries, and for temerity. We forgave certain liberties with syllables because we admired his brisk handling of Henry Handel Richardson's three-volume *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, and Charles Bean's twelve-volume *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918* (six volumes written by Bean himself).

Mahony enjoyed Australia Felix, waxed, went home ultimately died.

Bean on World War One, Diggers good, Pommie generals not, Boo to them.

(R. Byard, Vic.)

**Honourable mention:**

Found: Book in bomb site.  
For further information  
Please enquire within.

(J. Ferguson, SA. *People of the Book*, Geraldine Brooks)

## OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 45

For this competition we would like you to take the name of a classic or well-known Hollywood movie and translate it into Australianese. For example *Gone with the Wind* might be Australianised as *Shot Through with the Southerly Buster*; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* as *Possum on the Galva*; and *Psycho* as *Berko* (or perhaps *Dingbats*). The most entertaining entries will receive a prize.

**Entries close 31 January 2016**

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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