



## EDITORIAL

As long ago as 1965 the editors of the original *Penguin English Dictionary* were expressing the view that 'One can no longer attempt to impose nationalistic divisions on a language whose divergent branches are in such frequent and intimate contact'. Certainly the frequency and intimacy of such contact have only intensified in the intervening decades. The infiltration of North American usage into other English varieties has become more and more marked, and in this part of the world Australian influence on NZE is a continuing phenomenon. (Should I have been surprised to overhear a Kiwi-accented airline passenger talking about his **doona** recently? Or to be confronted with 'Enrolment **rots** ruled out' as headline in my morning paper?)

And yet regional and national distinctiveness in words and meanings remains strong, much of it inherently resistant to levelling and cross-fertilising processes because of unique application to a particular English-speaking environment. The NZDC and our New Zealand dictionaries would have little reason to exist if this were not so. Moreover, such convergence of English vocabularies as is occurring seems to be more than countered by additional divergence as social and institutional changes require and generate yet more locally specific coinages.

In different ways the two main articles in this issue tap into rich seams of robustly distinctive New Zealand usage of the kind that could easily escape the superficial inquiry. Dianne Bardsley presents a generous and colourful selection of material collected in her current delvings into the (presently under-recorded) rural lexicon, and the editor (excusably, one hopes) is doggedly parochial in his quest for a particular set of provincialisms. As well readers will find here our regular Director's offering, details of the Centre's new website, and not least a young person's interesting take on a sometimes gaffe-producing Kiwiism.

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# On First Looking Into Kiwi Ruralspeak . . .

Dianne Bardsley

An initial study of the rural NZ English lexicon could easily reinforce perceptions of the 'Kiwi' as a resourceful DIY improviser and initiator who has evolved independent approaches to language and its use, as well as to farming practice. Since 1850 New Zealand farmers have adapted existing terms and coined words in the fields of animal husbandry, plant and soil science, stud breeding, dog trialling, and every other aspect of farming life. Borrowings from Maori or from the 'homeland' have been compounded, converted, and collocated, and with a high level of specificity, multi-lexical units have been a significant feature. Although words have been generated and adapted with what could be described a liberal and innovative agrarian air, such processes are perhaps merely typical of frontier societies throughout the English-speaking world. More significant, perhaps, is that New Zealand ruralspeak has been generated by a very small population in quite heterogeneous conditions.

Naturally, the rural lexicon shows close association with the physical environment: **sunny** or **clean faces**, **guts**, **river flats**, **chutes** and **shingle-slides**, **pakihis**, **wiwis**, **monkey scrub**, **gumlands**, **tomos**, **razorbacks**, and **nor'west arches** have specific rural application and significance. In the city, a **double-decker** is possibly an ice cream or a bus; in the country, it is a stock truck with two decks, or a sheep with two seasons' growth of wool. In the urban world, police and delivery vans do their beats, whereas out on the hills musterers and shepherds have beats with a different purpose, and **camp weeds** have a life of their own. A **finisher** in a rural sense can be a **fattener farmer** or a crop of lucerne. **Making a break** and **dozing off** are constructive pasture management activities on farms.

There are several specialist rural contexts, including the mustering lexicon (discussed more fully below), the language of the dog trials, of saleyards, of the woolshed, of the cowshed, of stock stud breeding, and of hunting, all of which show considerable variation, synonymy, and local colloquialism. Some of the numerous phrasal verbs, verbal nouns, acronyms, eponyms, and the application of trade names are included in the discussion here. Although specificity is a feature, many lexemes such as the borrowings **konaki** and **pikau** have been applied loosely with a range of meanings. Rural New Zealand English is a fascinating field of study, reflecting quite distinct stages and foci in our agricultural and pastoral development.

### CAN A BREAK BE BROKEN?

**Unit** in ruralspeak might be a farm, a farm implement, or a stock transporter. **Woollies** might be sheep in general or unshorn sheep or, more specifically, those that have missed at least one season's shearing. **Strip** refers to the airstrip, the dog dosing strip or what one does before **putting the cups on**. Land is considered **broken** when it is steep and contains gullies and guts. It is **broken** when it has been 'tamed' from native covering to pasture. It is also described as **unbroken** in both senses. Land can be **broken up** (subdivided) as well as

**broken in**. Bush can be **broken** with **pakihis** but also **broken in** to serve as **bush farms**. A **break** should be **back-fenced**, and stock can easily **break** while being **mobbed**. For soil conservation purposes, a **break** may have to be planted. A **break** may be punished with a **flogger**. The boy will have to go and move the **break** after milking. Wool from poorly nourished sheep can contain a localised weakness, a **break** or two. A **break** can occur in a sheep's skin if it has been on rough pasture.

**Clean hills** are different from **clean** sheep camps; **clean** sheep are quite different from **cleanskin** cattle. **Open country**, with several meanings, can also be **broken**. **Hooks** are spurs on a musterer's boots, they are tusks on wild pigs, and they are enclosures on dog-trial courses. A shepherd has to be careful not to **cut** in too quickly while **mobbing** or **taking a cut**; lambs will **cut** when they are not supposed to be **cut out**; the shed is **cut out**; and the shearing is **cut out** at **cut-out time**. If **cut-out's** early, one sits down and waits for the **brown boots** to arrive with the cheque book. One **runs** a dog at the dog-trials, has **run cattle** that one might occasionally **run** on a **run-off** (where one has to watch the run-off after rain), achieves a **runout** at the trials, and can have a **run-out** crop or paddock. Sheep can be **run in**, **run through** or **run out** by the whare boys while the boss runs into town in the ute.

On a farm it is common to refer not in general terms to 'the tractor', the sheep, or even the woolshed as a **townie** might. It's specifically the **Fergie** or the **steel-wheel**, the two-tooths or the culls, the shed, the boards, or the battens. Other examples of specificity include the different types of muster: **weaning muster**, a **delivery muster**, an **autumn muster**, a **crutching muster**, a **dipping muster**, a **helimuster**.

Cobalt deficiency disease is known variously as **bush sickness**, **bush disease**, **the skinnies**, **Hope disease**, **Mairoa dopiness**, **Tauranga sickness/disease**, or **Morton Mains Disease**. Wild pigs can be **bush pigs**, **maori pigs**, **bush pork**, **Captain Cookers**, **scofflers**, **scufflers**, **scoofers** or **scooflers**, **opera singers**, **porkers**, **tuskers**, **taraianas**, **Irish merinos**, **grunters**, **razorbacks** or **bristle-backs**.

### POSSESSION IS NINE-TENTHS . . .

An early borrowing from the Maori was **pikau**, and this survival term has been applied to several objects. Makeshift backpacks were known as **pikaus**, split sacks were **pikaus**, and saddlebags were **pikaus** in rural New Zealand English. A **konaki** was any sledge pulled by bullock or horse, but in some areas was specifically one with runners and rear wheels, used for hill country work. **Tutu** is an early borrowing adapted according to the region in which it has been used. Both in the North and the South Islands stock became **tutu-ed** or **tuted**, but in the South, where vegetation for fuel was in short supply, rural residents went **tutu-ing** for the plant roots that burned well. In other parts, **tutu-ing** consisted of cutting the poisonous plants and leaving the roots to rot. **Mokihi** was corrupted to **moggy** or a **moki**, and it was often made of **korade** (**korari**). **Tawhini**, **bidibid(i)**, and **matagouri** are well-known

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corruptions surviving in the rural lexicon. Collocations of Maori botanical lexemes include **manuka blight**, **old man manuka**, **rimu dropper**, and **akeake monkey**, while **whare** appears to have the greatest range of meanings and collocations in the rural world (**whare boy**, **sod whare**, **back whare**, **whare boss**, etc.)

**Pakihi** is a borrowing that has undergone considerable adaptation. Originally used by rural-dwellers to mean a clearing in the bush, it is specifically used as **open pakihi**, **closed pakihi**, and **blind pakihi**, and corrupted as **parkee**. Since then it has been used to describe large areas of swampy ground in the West Coast and Golden Bay areas. **Pakihi lands**, the **pakihi soils**, the **pakihi bogs**, **pakihi fern**, **pakihi country**, **pakihi swamp**, and **pakihi rushes** are some collocations. New Zealand cultivars of wheat, prairie grass, lucerne, clover, and ryegrass, such as **nui**, **ruanui**, **rongotea**, **huia**, **roa**, **matua**, **wana**, **ariki**, **takahe**, **tama**, etc., are widely known and used. A sentence like 'We bought a 1900-litre portable trough for the **tama**' can be perplexing for a **townie** reader of the newspaper farming page. **Poroporo** became widely used in the 1970s and 1980s when it was grown as a commercial crop.

## BEING MATEY

Sheep can be **shed-stained**, **woolblind**, **early-weaned**, **gate-shy**, **well-woolled**, **long-woolled**, **tight-skinned**, **clean-grazing**, **plain-bodied**, **open-faced**, **low-set**, **tough-shearing** animals, while dogs can be **whip-shy**, **chain-crazed**, **bike-happy**, **trial-weary**, **trial-happy**, or **gun-shy**. A successful **shepherd-general** needs to be **well dogged** . . . and 'Few could have handled the **horsebacking** that went on with a job on St James'. Cattle are put on **paddock-cleaning** duties on **fern-land**, which involves clearing land of fern and other **second-growth** and weeds. **Single-sire pen-mating** has certain advantages over **paddock-mating**. Plenty of **boulder-hopping** and **river work** is required up near the **creekhead**. One should **mob-stock** with sheep and cattle rather than **patch-graze**. We read that 'a satisfactory dairy farm can be developed on poor **gumland scrublands**'. Paddocks can be **overhayed**, and if the **picker** comes late, a fair proportion of lambs will be **overfat**, for which there is a scale of overfatness. Merinos can **outclip** the Corriedales by several kilos of wool, and **back-blockers** do not often go **downcountry**.

## A BUILDING BY ANY OTHER NAME

**Whare** boys lived in the **whare** or **single shepherds' quarters** with a **whare boss**, **rehab farmers** lived in **Semple's Temples**, and **homesteaders** lived in the **big house** at the **frontstation**. **Outstations** or **backstations** might consist of a simple single construction (an **out-hut**, an **out-whare**, a **back whare**, or a **musterer's hut**) or be part of a complex of farm buildings far from the main homestead. **Outstations** have occasionally been known as **accommodation houses**, but some musterers and hunters set up **fly-camps**, **galley-sides**, or **pigs-nests**. **Stud stations** are also located far from the main homestead complex. **The married man's house**, the **farm cottage**, the **shearer's whare** and **shearers' quarters**, **bunkhouse**, **cookshop** or **cookhouse**, the **killing shed** or **killing house**, the **boiling-down plant**, the walk-in **meatsafe**, and the **implement shed** are all located on the **homestead block**. The **cowman-gardener** works in the **dairy** by the house when he

separates the milk, and the **station school** might have its own **saddle room**.

## DOING A DOG JOB

High country shepherds and musterers do not call themselves shepherds and musterers; they are **dog men**, **hillmen**, **tussock-jumpers**, **scree-scramblers**, **lizards**, **dog-wallopers**, **sandy-hookers**, or **mutton-punchers**, and while they are mustering they are doing a **dog job**, **taking up the burnt chops**, or **bringing in the wool**. They could well be members of a **flying gang**, a **hill gang**, a **mountain gang**, or the **benzine boys**. A **hillman** knows when it is time to go on a **dog job** — he **sniffs the nor-west** (wants to go mustering). Over the years **hillmen** have worn no boots but **Bill Masseys**, **O'Briens**, or **Pannells** (or **Pannels**). A self-respecting **scree-scrambler** might **dag his trousers** before he embarks on a dog job. Musterers do not walk — they **hoof it** or **ride their hobnails**, or even get into **marrowbone country**, and when on horseback they could be **riding pigskin** or sitting on their **Ngatis**.

If the **all-rounder** is looking tired, they might have a **bark-up** or send down a **Nelson huntaway**. While they are **on the hill**, **tussock-jumpers** have been known to wear **saddle-tweeds**, **lammies**, **swannies**, or **bush nighties**, and **on the tops**, the **snow-leggings** might have come out of the **hill-bag**. If they are **hoofing it**, they will be accompanied by a **hill-pole**, **dog-flogger**, **ribby**, **mustering stick**, or **hill-stick**. **River work** might well be involved. Should someone have an accident they will be carried out on a **bush-hearse**. If **hillmen** encounter noxious animals when they are out on the tops, they will bowl them with a **shottie** or a **smoke-pole**.

They could eat **hockeysticks** or **365s**, which town-dwellers know as mutton chops. In the evening, **hash-me-gandy** and **brownie** could be on the menu. These delicacies could have been prepared for them by the **packie**, **blacksmith**, **doctor**, **babbling brook**, **greasy**, **cookeroo**, or **doughroaster** at the **outstation**, at the **hill hut**, or at the **musterers' hut**. If they cooked for themselves, **lizards** had a **tucker allowance** for themselves and their dogs.

When the **top man** or **top beat man** meets up with the **outside**, **middle**, and **low** or **bottom beat man**, all will be thoroughly grunted, although possibly rather **doggo**. They will look forward to getting **off the hill** and getting the **string in on the battens** and **ready for the board** or for the **bumbarbers**. On the way, the dog **wings**, the sheep are **winged**, and there is a **wing man** out **on the wing**. While sheep can **string**, dogs can **ring**. The mob might contain, among others, some **dingos**, **handlebars** (horned merinos), **rattlers**, **carryovers**, **broken-mouths**, **Hokonuis**, **double-deckers**, **hermits**, **greybacks**, **shivey-backs**, **overlanders**, and **gaspers**. Tail-enders could be **dropped off** the mob. It is not unusual for a **coarse-britched Auntie** or a **freezer ewe** to be tormented by a **meat-mangler** or **woolclasser** (a dog that worries sheep). Sometimes a canine non-conformist such as a **Sunday dog**, **sooner**, **carpet grass**, or **powder puff** may be walloped with a **flogger**. On the other hand, a **bread and butter dog** that keeps **running on the blind** will get an extra bit of tucker.

In their work **out the back**, musterers might come across a **shit-brindle** (a wild cow) or a **grunter hunter** and his **bush-happy block mate** who are **chasin' bacon** on a **dogging block** and will want to **talk pork** rather than **stalk pork**. Some of these hunters have been stalking the bush for days and will undoubtedly refer to the noxious **bush lawyer** in the **second-growth** as **snag-toothed barrister** and **rangiora** as **bushman's friend**. Perhaps they will harp on about the **dungy tarn** on top

of a **shingle-slip** or a **bluffy face**. If a **whare boy** (single shepherd) is really lucky, he might **gain the bottom wire of the fence** (marry the farmer's daughter). If he's unlucky, his presence might be required **pearldiving at the dagpickers' ball** (a wet-weather job under the woolshed, sorting wool from dags). After doing a **dog job**, a **tussock-jumper** might begin to feel symptoms typical of a **matagouri mermaid** and will want to head **down country** and get a job with a **mudflat cockie**. There, he could care for **bowies**, **bentlegs**, **milk lambs**, and **works lambs**, round up the **pasture lice** and **maggot magnets** in the **flying flock**, and even enter the **Golden Shears** or the **Silver Plough**. Then again, he might go and **strangle teats**.

## A BIT OF A TRIAL

A **bust** has nothing to do with statues and chests — it is a non-completion of a dog-trial course. A dog-trial course involves **long heads**, **long pulls**, **short heads**, and **zigzags**, and dogs can become **trial-happy**. About dog trials one can read, 'The main problem was that it was difficult to get a grip on the pull, so when the time came to put a bit more on them on the flat, they were off.' **Heads** can be skinny and **runouts** can be widened, and **slippers** and **liberators** are usually **great dog men**, not mere **kennel-followers**.

## PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

The rural world is perceived as a man's world in much rural writing. A farmperson is often known by his allegiances and enthusiasms — he may be a noted **Coopworth man**, a keen **Romney man**, a great **oilskin man**, a **hill-country man**, or a real **No. 8 man**. A dog trialist is often a **dog man**. He is occasionally a real **Swandri man** but more likely a **Swannie bloke**.

Rural folk were not without prejudice. A primitive flail is known as an **Irish combine**; **tumatakuru** or **matagouri** is known as **wild Irishman**; and an **Irish merino** is a wild pig. Taranaki is unjustly known for its makeshift initiatives with the **Taranaki gate** (first seen in South Auckland), the **Taranaki drive**, a **Taranaki** (or **Nelson**, or **Maori**) **huntaway**, and **Taranaki silage**. A Taranaki farmer is a **webfoot** in the South Island, and **Chateau Taranaki** is a brew enjoyed at the end of a long hot day. During the twentieth century, **ethnic hay** and **Maori hay** were used to describe land that had been left to revert or was overgrown.

**Station and farm cadets** were variously known as **lambs**, **ewe lambs**, **gate-openers**, **billy boys**, **remittance men**, **Archies**, **jackeroos** (from Australian rural English), or **silvertails**. A novice shearer is often given the name of **shearling**. A **townie**, a **townie dog**, and a **townie car** can scarce be tolerated in some rural situations. To the high-country folk, downlands are **mud flats**, and they are farmed by **mudflat cockies**. **Paddock-shepherds** are referred to as **shit-kickers** by **lizards**. A farmer with a large holding in pioneering Taranaki was known as a **broadacre man**, and **back-country types** could take a while to warm to a **newch'm**. And although **Waikato dandruff** might look pretty, it's not good **milking tucker**.

## TO CRUTCH OR NOT TO CRUTCH

The **crutch man** is not a **crutcher** and does not work in the **crutching season**, but he is involved in sheep work. He uses a **crutch**, and his work while **on the crutch** is to employ an S-shaped rod on the end of a pole during **plunge dipping**, to push and pull sheep under the dipping fluid (lice and keds being notoriously populous on the heads of sheep). The **crutch man** was variously called the **pole man** and the man **on the pole**. **Crutchers** are

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kept busy **crutching** (the cutting of wool around the rear of sheep), which is often loosely applied to include **bellying**, and **wigging** or **clipping**. But crutchers can specifically **fly crutch**, **ring crutch**, **ring**, **eyewig**, **eye-clip**, **half-crutch**, or **buttonhole**.

### UP, OFF, OUT DOWN, AND AROUND

Phrasal verbs are very much a part of ruralspeak. A paddock can be **shut up**, a horse is **saddled up**, a mare **bags up**; lambs can be **mothered on** or **mothered up**, the sheep are **shedded up** and **penned up**, and a paddock has its stumps **bladed out** before it is **worked up** and then **sown down**. Paddocks and stock are not just grazed; they **graze out** and they **graze off**. Dairy cows might have **pugged up** the **breaks**, but nevertheless if they have milk fever they should not be **milked out** too much in the first few days. Sheep are **mustered off**, **drafted off**, and **boxed up**, while scrub and rushes are **burnt off**. In **dirty weather**, musterers can be **snowed off** or **fogged in**. **Shy feeders** must be **culled out**. To **doze off** in the rural world is not the same as it is in the urban: it is a transitive verb, associated with bulldozer activity. Land can be **split up** to such an extent that farmers have to **walk off** during a downturn, with their margins being so lean. Young bulls should be **bailed up** with the cows and crops **bulked down**. It is customary to read, 'broken-mouthed ewes are **turned in** to **eat off** the tops, and the roots are then **harrowed out** in breaks', and it pays to keep the farm fully **stocked up** if the schedule's **coming down**.

And the land? One **takes on** land (although originally one **took it up**), **takes over** land, is **on the land**, **walks off**, and even **walks on** the land, as in: 'Mid Dome's owners

walked off without a brass razoo in the 1930s and three tough brothers from Awaka walked on.'

### WHICH PADDOCK, IN WHAT COUNTRY?

Rural periodicals are rich sources of collocations for such lexemes as 'country' and 'paddock'. Country is commonly **late**, **young**, **rabbit**, **tall**, **shady**, **huntaway**, **sand**, **tussock**, **nursery**, **hungry**, **scrubby**, **bush-bound**, **sour**, **sick**, **kindly**, **rough**, **light**, **heavy**, **mean**, **dirty**, **sunny**, **high**, **reverted**, **rugged**, **papa**, **pakihi**, **foothill**, **headwater**, **bush**, **fern**, **scrub**, **snowgrass**, **ragged**, **cow**, **tough**, **rehab**, **clean**, **lambling**, **tupping**, **bush-sick**, **cow-sick**, **sheep-sick**, **healthy**, **wether**, **hogget**, **ewe**, **low**, **tractor**, etc. If it is **easy**, it will be **pigskin country** (able to be mustered on horseback), and if not, it's **foot**, **walking**, or **marrowbone country**. Some land can be **top pig country**; it might be **summer run country** or **fat-lamb country**.

A **limper** might be found in a **hospital paddock**, an **isolation paddock**, a **safe paddock**, a **bush paddock**, a **maternity paddock**, a **sacrifice paddock**, a **house paddock**, or a **handy paddock**, by a **paddock shepherd**. **Paddock sheep** are not usually found **out on the run** and are only rarely used to give the hills the **hoof and tooth treatment**.

### MODERN TIMES

The economic, mercantile, and stud breeding aspects of New Zealand farming have coined most rural acronyms in recent years. At the **Fieldays**, we are likely to see exhibits of **AFFCO** (an early usage), **MOPANZ**, **CAPONZ**, **MIRINZ**, **WRONZ**, and **REAP**. In

the dairying world it is no longer possible to run **Artesian Friesians** (watering down milk before collection from the farm) or the **best cow** (the cold water tap). Dairying has gone high-tech on **conversions** all over New Zealand as well as on traditional **cow country**. **Milk solids** (MS/kg) are now used to grade cows and milk, rather than butterfat. A **downer** might need a visit from the vet, especially if the farmer is conscious of the **genetic gain** or **BW** (**breeding worth**) of the cow to his herd. A dairy farmer no longer gets a **milk cheque** or a **cream cheque** after taking his milk down to the **cheese-punchers** at the cheese factory or to the **creamery** or **skimming-station**.

**Monitor farms** and **peak rights** are often in the news, and **two-wheeled hacks** and the **bull in the bowler hat** are frequently seen near **herringbones** these days. **Sharemilking** from its initial usage around 1909 was developed into specifically **lower order**, **29%**, **39%**, **variable order**, and **50/50** arrangements. Farm owners now seek **herd managers**, **equity managers**, **farm technicians**, and **contract milkers** in the Situations Vacant columns. The more politically aware describe their properties as **finishing farms** or **pre-conditioning farms**, although **fattening farms** and **fat lamb farms** and **fats** are still advertised for sale.

These examples, gleaned from rural periodicals, farm and local histories, newspapers, technical texts, and websites like [www.fencepost.com](http://www.fencepost.com) have provided only some of the interesting features of distinctive rural New Zealand English.

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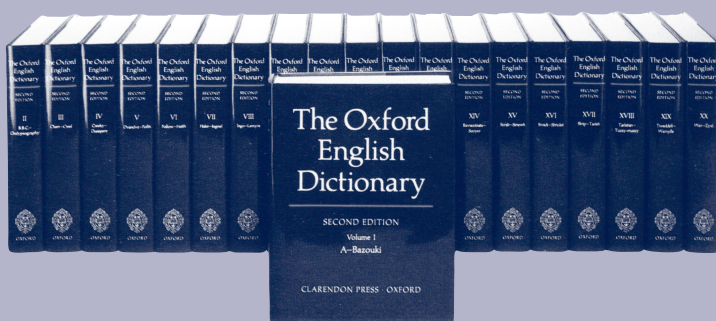
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## Graeme Kennedy, Director New Zealand Dictionary Centre

Since its establishment in 1997, the New Zealand Dictionary Centre has received support from many sources. In the first instance Dr Harry Orsman made it possible for the Centre to get off the ground by giving to Victoria University the intellectual property rights in his *Dictionary of New Zealand English*. His work thus forms the core of the Centre's database of distinctive New Zealandisms, those words, phrases, and usages that have evolved first or solely in New Zealand and help to make New Zealand English different from other varieties of English.

The *DNZE* has shown that **up north** and **down south** could be destinations, perhaps involving a bit of **bush-bashing**, and that New Zealand was a place where children went to **kindy**, ate their **play lunch**, and wore **jandals**. New Zealanders could be **jake**, could boil the **zip**, or be told not to **get their tits in a tangle**. **Peggy squares**, **gib board**, **GST**, **ranch sliders**, **easies**, and **solo mums** were among the words that the *DNZE* showed made an early appearance here. New Zealand farms **carried** stock and had **super** applied for fertiliser. New Zealanders ate **lemon fish**, **fly-cemeteries**, **lemon honey**, **hokey-pokey**, **jaffas**, and, of course, our **vegies**. We said '**good-oh**' and '**that'll be the day**'. We might have joined a **hikoi** or been told to **think big**.

### ADDING TO THE RECORD

The *DNZE* contained some 6000 headwords. Since its publication the Centre's researchers and a number of eagle-eyed correspondents in different parts of New Zealand have continued to note new or unfamiliar New Zealand words or usages. After investigation to confirm that they are indeed New Zealandisms, several thousand previously unrecorded items have found their way into our Incomings Database, accompanied by citations showing how the words are used. Among the likely New Zealandisms that have been added to the Centre's database recently, for example, are **hotwater cupboard**, **conservation estate**, **paralympian**, **farmstay**, **zorb**, **parallel importing**, **tiki tour**, **queenmaker**, **party hopper**, **waka jumper**, **munted**, **kai card**, **zip-zap**, **Jafa**, and **fifty-oner**.

The rural sector has, of course, contributed many words to New Zealand English over the last 150 years. Recent examples collected at the Centre include **shuttle stallion**, **cocky's string**, **heli-mustering** (the word **mustering** as a farming activity also

first appeared here), **bog orange**, and **bot-bombs**. At a time of rapid change in farming, even the familiar **stock and station agencies** are nowadays often referred to as **agribusinesses**.

### PROFESSORIAL GIFT

A very special and much-appreciated contribution of a different kind to the work of the New Zealand Dictionary Centre has recently been made by Emeritus Professor Ian A. Gordon, who both inspired and trained a whole generation of New Zealand lexicographers from the 1940s. Professor Gordon has donated to the Centre's library a splendid collection of English dictionaries, some of which date from the 18th century. His generous donation includes the first eight editions of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. The evolution of this familiar and widely used small Oxford Dictionary from the time when the Fowler brothers were editors will itself make an interesting study at some future time.

### NEW DICTIONARY IN THE MAKING

A major new project now under way at the Centre is the compilation of the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*. In addition to covering the words from the general lexicon of English that readers might like to consult (to check the meaning, pronunciation, or spelling of **adjacent** or **interlocutor**, for example), the new *NZOD* will contain several thousand New Zealandisms such as those mentioned at the beginning of this report, and which help give New Zealand English its distinctive flavour. The systematic coverage of New Zealand contributions to the general lexicon of English as it is used here is being complemented by the inclusion of a large number of brief encyclopedic entries covering distinctive or significant New Zealand places, historical events, institutions, icons, and individual New Zealanders. It will be possible to report more fully at a later date on this large project as it develops over the next two or three years.

Researchers at the New Zealand Dictionary Centre continue to welcome comments and observations on New Zealandisms from readers of *NZWords*. We can be contacted via our website at [www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/nzdc](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/nzdc) (see below), by



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### WEBSITE!WEBSITE!

<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/nzdc>

The New Zealand Dictionary Centre is pleased to advise that it has at last set up its stall in cyberspace, at the address above. Warm thanks are due to Dr Paul Warren of the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University, who has developed the site for the Centre. With the silver fern motif of the Centre's OUP dictionaries in the background, and Harry Orsman's landmark *DNZE* standing tall beside the recurrent index, the site projects a distinctive local and lexical identity. As well as essential information about the Centre and its staff, there is opportunity for visitors to send details of newly encountered New Zealand words by means of an online template and to call up all issues of *NZWords* to date. Links are provided to Oxford University Press Australia and New Zealand, the Australian National Dictionary Centre, and the *Oxford English Dictionary*. This is a start; as always, readers' suggestions for augmenting and enhancing the site will be welcome.



# CANTERBURY WORDS: LANGUAGE UNDER THE NOR'WEST ARCH

TONY DEVERSON

**City to Surf, the four avenues, little Bosnia, the Orbiter, Rangī, shagroon, Show Day, the Strip.** No prizes for guessing, given the title above, that these are all what I want to call Canterbury or — to use another of them — **Cantabrians'** words. The fact is that without assistance those living outside Canterbury are less likely to recognise the referents and the commonality of these terms than those within. They exemplify a regionally restricted form of New Zealand English vocabulary, undoubtedly paralleled (to some extent at least) in other parts of the country by usages equally mystifying to Cantabrians. How do we come to have Kiwi words that in many cases will be unfamiliar to a majority of New Zealanders, and where do they fit into a view of our variety of English more generally?

The existence of words and meanings peculiar to New Zealanders as a whole is of course not in doubt. In our home-grown dictionaries, and above all in *The Dictionary of New Zealand English (DNZE)* with its full historical coverage, we find ample evidence of a strong collective or national identity.

However, dialect study elsewhere, whether geographical or social, does not stop at the level of national communities but seeks differences among still smaller regional groupings of speakers. Such variation is a significant and well-documented feature of the major northern hemisphere Englishes, as evidenced by works like *The English Dialect Dictionary* and *The Dictionary of American Regional English*. Nearer home attention to lexical differentiation within Australia has recently produced a number of regional dictionaries: *Tassie Terms, Words from the West*, and (most recently) *Voices of Queensland*. For all New Zealand's relatively small size, are there words in at least some quantity that serve to reflect regional (intranational) identities and characteristics here also?

Linguists have generally concluded that NZE is a highly uniform variety regionally (although not socially) speaking. Other than the celebrated southern South Island post-vocalic /r/ (the 'Southland burr') our accent appears to show no marked local peculiarities, despite insistent claims to the contrary made from time to time by laypersons. But is our vocabulary as constant around the country as our pronunciation?

There are certainly a few well-known cases of inter-regional lexical variation in NZE. The Otago and Southland use of **crib** for **bach**, and the North Island preference for **punnet** over **pottle**, for example, have frequently been commented on. A certain number of words have been identified as specific to Southland or to the West Coast of the South Island or to the South Island generally. Some of these cited variants are no longer current, and where they remain they might seem to be merely exceptions that prove the rule of uniformity. On the other hand, Laurie and Winifred Bauer have recently provided evidence of systematic variations in children's playground usage in three broad New Zealand dialect areas.

## UNIQUE WORDS FOR UNIQUE THINGS

Examples like **crib** and **bach** illustrate one major kind of regional variation, where two words exist

for the same thing, either mutually exclusively (more or less) in two areas or with both terms used in one area and only one in another. In either case we have a kind of intradialectal synonymy (called 'heteronymy' in some accounts). There is, however, another class of regionally restricted word (or word-sense) where reference is made to something found in one region and not in others, so that there can be no question of finding synonyms for it in other varieties or subvarieties. All regional vocabularies have these two kinds of items, those with contrastive equivalents elsewhere and those without. It is the latter category, I suggest, that gives by far the greater yield of regionally restricted words and meanings within NZE.

All major areas in New Zealand are likely to have significant numbers of terms with purely local reference or importance. At least some of these will be known to a greater or lesser extent outside their own area, but their origins and predominant use lie within one specific region. Words associated with my own Canterbury locality are used to illustrate this kind of variation here; whether Canterbury is more or less lexically distinctive than other New Zealand provinces is an open question.

### Differences with the Neighbours 1

As well as in more obvious areas (indigenous loanwords, say) contrasts between NZE and AusE usage can elsewhere be quite subtle.

Sky digital subscribers now exposed to more in the way of Australian political news on Channel 17 might among others have noted that whereas we refer to plain **GST** (i.e. the tax in general), this recent import into Australia commonly comes with the article added: 'How has the introduction of **the GST** affected your business?'

Two further observations about lexical distinctiveness regionally within New Zealand are suggested by the present investigation. One is that local variation is much more substantial when historical as well as present-day materials are taken into account. Of the more than 80 items found in *DNZE* that are identified by labelling or definition as specific to Canterbury in some way, about half relate to past events and circumstances, having become obsolete at various times from the earliest European settlement onwards.

The other point similarly is that the more proper names one includes in the inventory of terms, the stronger the case for local distinctiveness becomes. To the list compiled from a search of *DNZE* I have added another 50 or 60 examples from my and others' personal experience, and almost all of these are proper nouns and phrases. The extent to which capitalised terms are admissible in dictionaries (and accounts of lexical variation) is arguable, although the argument has been rather left

behind by the increasing number of 'encyclopedic' dictionaries currently being produced (the *New Zealand Oxford Paperback* is one such). Even these, however, confine themselves to entries for more prominent places and persons, leaving the many thousands of other names (which do in fact figure prominently in everyday discourse) to be gathered in atlases, street indexes, telephone books, business directories, and the like. For the purposes of the current study proper names are admitted where something other than simply the primary denotative name for a place, institution, group, etc. is involved. Hence abbreviated and other indirect, derived, or secondary forms are those meriting inclusion here.

## CANTERBURY TRANSPLANTED

The most explicitly regional terms in this set are those employing the primary geographical and provincial name as modifier. Historically the transference of the English city name to New Zealand begins with the **Canterbury Association**, founded by J. R. Godley and E. G. Wakefield in 1848 under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which undertook the establishment of the **Canterbury Settlement** on the **Canterbury Block** purchased from the New Zealand Company. Emigrants making up the initial wave of Anglican settlement in late 1850 and following years were predictably dubbed **Canterbury Pilgrims**, alluding to Chaucer's medieval travellers (and occasionally **Pilgrim Fathers** with a North American analogy).

Detailed investigation of New Zealand's botany and zoology in time revealed restricted distribution of certain species, to some of which a provincial label could appropriately be applied. *DNZE* records **Canterbury broom**, **Canterbury mudfish**, and **Canterbury smelt**, and we can add, for example, local varieties of alpine hebe called **Canterbury hebe** (*Hebe canterburiensis*) or **Canterbury whipcord** (*H. cheesemanii* and *H. tetrasticha*). **Canterbury lamb** is a rather different kettle of fauna, being the name by which all export New Zealand sheepmeat was long known in the principal market of the UK, neatly exploiting the original Englishness of the name as well as acknowledging a prolific antipodean source of the commodity.

By ellipsis **Canterbury lamb** could become simply **Canterbury** (or **prime Canterbury**), and the name tout court (as with other toponyms) can also have frequent metonymic uses, especially with reference to a sporting team from the province ('Canterbury win Super 12 again'), to the University of Canterbury ('studying Classics at Canterbury'), and to the clothing company Canterbury of New Zealand with its internationally known Canterbury trade mark ('Canterbury wins big export order'). In World War I, like **Auckland**, **Wellington**, and **Otago**, the noun was pluralised to denote one of the New Zealand battalions organised on regional lines ('**the Canterburys** fought at Gallipoli'), so that an individual soldier might be a **Canterbury**. A common print media abbreviation of the name produces **Canty**, which could be given a spoken realisation (unlike **Wgtn**, say) but appears never to be.

## THE 'CANTABRIAN' QUESTION

A full lexicographical entry for **Canterbury** would also recognise the adjectival or attributive use of the word in general contexts ('Canterbury wines', 'Canterbury tourism', 'the Canterbury region', etc.). In such uses **Cantabrian** provides an alternative; however, this word is much more likely to be used as a noun, meaning 'inhabitant of Canterbury', for which **Canterbury** itself is unavailable. *DNZE*'s earliest citation for the noun is as recent as 1969, and it has proved more popular and natural than the little-used **Canterburian**, which, however, some have tried to insist on as the more 'correctly' derived of the two (in British English this is the (little-used) adjective meaning 'of Canterbury' — see the *OED*).

A Cantabrian abbreviation of **Cantabrian** (and **Canterbury**) is **Cantab** (with or without stop), again chiefly written, and especially as (**the**) **Cantabs** with reference to a representative sporting team ('Cantabs down ND'). The British use of **Cantab**, by contrast is as a shortening of Cantabrigiensis, 'of Cambridge', from Cantabrigia, the neo-Latin name of Cambridge University. MA (Cantab.) after one's name denotes a degree from Cambridge not Canterbury. Hence it has sometimes been argued that **Cantabrian** is an illegitimate and potentially confusing form because its true referent is British, not New Zealand. This is a purist not a pragmatic approach. Furthermore the full word **Cantabrian** has in fact no British meaning; it *is* a recorded English form, but only with reference to the northern Spanish region of Cantabria — hardly a possible source of confusion there. The New Zealand use makes the abbreviation **Cantab**, ambiguous, to be sure, but more in theory than actuality. However, the fortuitous homonymy with a word having Cambridge associations is nicely ironic in view of the strong Oxford (Christ Church) connection in Canterbury's origins.

The need for the convenient **Cantabrian** is the greater because there is no single word for a resident of what is by far Canterbury's largest centre of population (cf. **Aucklander**, **Wellingtonian**, **Dunedinite**; \***Christchurcher** or \***Christchurchite** was never a starter). Christchurch, like other big cities, has acquired its share of nicknames: the straightforward **City of the Plains** is the oldest, recorded from 1851 when the city was still more notional than actual; **Garden City** is the most familiar (associated with the 'more English than the English' theme), evidently dating from the time of the International Exhibition in the city in 1906–07. Geoffrey Rice in *Christchurch Changing* (1999) attributes this description to British Exhibition Commissioner Sir John Gorst, and notes it superseded the previously common **City of Trees**. The City Council's 1990s marketing slogan **the City that Shines** was meant to promote a less staid image than the traditional one, but it was far from universally well received.

Residents of the city have quite literally sworn **by Christchurch!**, the lengthened form no doubt intended to take some of the force from the imprecation. This oath (also found as **oh Christchurch!** or just **Christchurch!**) is noted in Sidney Baker's *New Zealand Slang* (1941), but seems dated now. A common abbreviation of Christchurch is **ChCh** (**Ch.Ch.**, etc.), which one might expect to be confined to written contexts but does in fact have an occasional (jocular) realisation as 'chuh-chuh'. Canterbury's second city, Timaru in South Canterbury, yields the noun (and adjective?) **Timaruvian** (the noun recorded in *DNZE* from 1889), evidently on the model of **Peruvian**; one Christchurch suburb, Fendalton, unusually, has its own derivative, **Fendaltonian**, which has connotations of affluence and

## Differences with the Neighbours 2

Trans-Tasman lexical contrast sometimes takes the form of different meanings attached to the same word item in the two countries. **Bush** (as **the bush**) is a prime example, together with floral and fauna terms like **bellbird** and **cabbage-tree**.

What does an Australian mean by saying they have found twenty dollars 'down the back of the **lounge**'?

refinement associated with that part of the city; and other Canterbury place names are represented in such forms as **Rangitata goose** (local name for the paradise duck) and (stretching the boundaries of the region to the limit) **Mount Cook flea** (a weta) and **Mount Cook lily** (for which a 19th-century alternative name was **Rockwood lily**, after Rockwood Station in Canterbury).

Mention should also be made here of certain indigenous local names overlaid and superseded by English forms at the time of Pakeha settlement, but restored to wider public awareness in recent decades through bilingual naming and signage etc. Thus the Maori word for roughly the area where the city of Christchurch now stands, **Otautahi** ('the place of Tautahi [a Ngai Tahu chief]'), translates as Christchurch and sometimes replaces it in English contexts. Similarly **Waitaha**, referring originally to the plains of the Canterbury region, has become the Maori word for Canterbury as defined in Pakeha geography, for example in the name of a new State Special School in the region, the **Waitaha Learning Centre**. Other Maori names associated with particular localities in the city and province are 'resurfacing' in this way too. These are the oldest Canterbury words of all, with pre-Canterbury origins.

## COLONIAL COINAGES

Returning to the beginnings of city and province (as it became in 1853), there are other distinctive regional items to note. Other settlements had their **first ships** (and New South Wales its rather differently motivated **First Fleet**), but Canterbury remembers more precisely its **first four ships**, the *Charlotte Jane*, *Sir George Seymour*, *Cressy*, and *Randolph*, the first group of Canterbury Association vessels to set sail from Home, arriving in Lyttelton close on one another's heels in December 1850. Their nearly 800 passengers constituted the **main body** of settlers, although other ships soon followed; there were moreover a number of European families already established in Canterbury in the 1840s, for whom the unusual word **pre-Adamite** (noun and adjective) was later reserved, conferring a quasi-divine status on the Rhodes and Deans and others who were the 'real' first (white) settlers in the region. (Cf. *OED* **Adamite** and **pre-adamite**.) *DNZE* cites **pre-Adamite** from 1930, but it has subsequently been antedated to 1907, and it might well have been a 19th-century usage. Contemporary documents sometimes distinguish the pre-existing colonists from the **pilgrims** by using the term **old settler** for the former.

The word **shagroon** is arguably the most curious term in this early colonial set. Wrongly defined in some overseas dictionaries, of uncertain origin, and variable in its meaning (and spelling) to some extent, **shagroon** (or **shagaron** etc.) is hard to pin down. Citations show the word being used, mostly disparagingly, of various 'outsider' elements in the developing population, contrastively with the **pilgrims** of the Canterbury Association; in particular it denotes

the initially unwelcome Australian pastoralists who were being attracted to the region's plains and back country at much the same time as the first ships arrived from England. (These sheepmen were also dubbed **prophets**, from their predictions of disaster for the English settlers' plans for dependence on arable farming.)

Although Arnold Wall, notably, advanced an alternative origin (in the English slang form **shabroon**, 'shabby or disreputable person'), the lexicographical consensus has been that **shagroon** derives from **shaughraun**, a spelling of Irish **seachran** meaning 'wandering'. This is Edward Morris's explanation in his *Austral English* (1898), later adopted by the *OED* and *DNZE* among others. Considerations of spelling might count against Wall (although *DNZE* does record one instance of **shabroon** with <p>); all the same it remains difficult to counter his objection that a body of English (and Anglican) settlers is an unlikely context in which to find an Irish word brought to (brief) prominence. Moreover, there's a semantic shift here (including pejoration), which is not easily explained.

Other words marked in *DNZE* as having particular reference to early Canterbury include **burst (up)** (of large runs, to subdivide or be subdivided), **Cookham's** (in full **Cookham's boots**), **crow's nest** (a shepherd's lookout), **grass-thief** (a person grazing sheep on another's run), **gridiron** (to purchase alternate strips of land, effectively securing the intervening strips against other buyers or users), **rooster** (a job-seeker), **skinner** (one exhausting land by constant sowing of the same crop, then moving on), the phrase **eat (one's) tutu or toot** (to adjust to the trials of colonial life, as it were like stock ingesting poisonous plants), and **V-hut** (the basic tent-shaped dwelling favoured for construction in the early years of settlement). Beyond examples of this kind it is noticeable that Canterbury citations predominate in *DNZE* entries for much of the more general New Zealand high country and pastoral farming lexis.

From the 20th century there are miscellaneous obsolete items such as **Bell's brick** (a loaf), (**Harry**) **Pannells** (mustering boots, after their Christchurch manufacturer), **the Perishable** (a transalpine goods train named for its contents), **paddock** (referring to the Waltham railway yards in Christchurch (hence **PDK** chalked on a wagon = 'send to Waltham'), a particular kind of **scow**, and names of former Christchurch street-gangs (**Diehards**, **Scalpers**, **Skulldraggers**, etc.). Historians of Canterbury could no doubt nominate further examples from all periods, especially of a more ephemeral and more narrowly parochial kind.

One can sometimes spot ephemera among current usages. **Little Bosnia** is a case in point. This is the ironic name popularly given to an inner-Christchurch commercial development ('Cathedral Junction') curtailed in mid-construction by the death of its owner, leaving a concrete shell with a passing resemblance to scenes of war-ravaged Sarajevo at that time in the 1990s. The site has remained in this unfinished state for several years, but its disparaging name is likely soon to pass into history now that completion of the development by a new owner has been announced.

A Canterbury usage of American origin, **Deep Freeze**, part of Cantabrians' consciousness since the mid-1950s, has slipped from view in the last two or three years with the withdrawal of the US Navy from involvement in the US Antarctic Program (Operation Deepfreeze) and the closing of the naval support base at Christchurch Airport, which was for so long referred to simply as **Deep Freeze**.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Many older usages have of course remained in use. The Canterbury region is idiosyncratic in its observation of one of New Zealand's statutory holidays. The **Anniversary Day** celebrated (on various dates) in other parts of the country passes virtually unnoticed in Canterbury (15 December), the public holiday being transferred to **Show Day**, the Friday of the Canterbury A&P **Show Week** in Christchurch in November. This week to racegoers is alternatively **Cup Week**, during which both the New Zealand Trotting Cup (at **Addington**, i.e. Addington Raceway) and the New Zealand (galloping) Cup (at **Riccarton**, i.e. Riccarton Racecourse) are contested. **Show Weekend** is the long weekend including the holiday, which at the show itself is traditionally known as **people's day**.

Like other cities, Christchurch has developed a repertoire of distinctively named events in its sporting and cultural calendar. The **City to Surf** mass-participation fun run from Cathedral Square to **QE2** (standard local usage for the Queen Elizabeth II Stadium); the **Coast to Coast** endurance race (west to east across the South Island), the one-day event being known as **the Longest Day**; and events belonging to the City Council's 'Summertime' programme, such as the **Festival of Romance** and **Classical Sparks** (an open-air concert), can all be included here.

## THE REGIONAL WEATHER

Locally meaningful terms are commonly found in the characteristic weather of a region. Winds seem especially prone to being distinctively named, personified even, from the Classical **zephyr** to the colonial **barber**. Canterbury winds are more prosaically and less uniquely titled, but are no less an ingrained part of the regional experience. The trio of prevailing **nor'easter** (or **nor-easter** etc.), cold **sou'wester**, and warm, dry **nor'wester** have strong local resonances; the **nor'wester** above all providing a constant topic of report and conversation since earliest colonial times on account of its strength and capacity to enervate. (*DNZE* records a high-country expression used of a highly efficient heading dog, one that could supposedly **head a nor'wester**.) The adjectival **nor'west** acquires a Cantabrian meaning in phrases like 'nor-west conditions', while the collocation **nor'west arch** refers to what is seen in the western sky on a typical nor'west day, the cloud cover extending low in the sky leaving only a narrow strip of clear blue below the 'arch' of the cloud-line.

Another cloud pattern associated with nor'west weather, especially in inland Canterbury, is the **hogsback** (**hog's back**, **hogback**), applied to 'torpedo-shaped' clouds as a number of references describe them, a sure sign of a nor'west rainstorm brewing in the ranges.

The particular topography of Canterbury, with high country inland from the plains, also produces a number of distinctive regional usages. The noun **front country** is used of the grazing land of the plains, contrastively with the more general New Zealand **back country**. Similarly **down** or **down-country** (also Otago) refers to movement or location away from the foothills and towards the coast. There is also a specifically Canterbury sense of the word **gorge**, to denote the high-country catchment area of a river flowing through a ravine (or gorge 'proper'), as in **Rakaia Gorge** etc. Another topographical term with extended meaning in Canterbury is **Maori oven**, referring to a large hole in the ground that is

or resembles the remains of a hangi or earth oven from former times.

Again, the physical barrier of the Port Hills between Christchurch and its port gives the phrase **over the hill** special meaning. *DNZE* records an obsolete **go over the hill**, meaning to be sent from the city to Lyttelton jail, but the commoner reference is to the journey from Lyttelton to the city, first achieved after 1850 by way of the **Bridle Path** and subsequently via the **hole in** (or **through**) **the hill**, as the rail tunnel opened in 1867 was termed. The road tunnel completed nearly a hundred years later is normally just **the tunnel**.

## BEING PARTICULAR

As we see from some of the uses just cited, a particular regional signification is often signalled by the use of the definite article with, and (often) initial capitalisation of, nouns of otherwise general meaning. This is also well illustrated by two examples in the opening sample, both relative newcomers. **The Orbiter** is a Christchurch bus service following a roughly circular path around the city, linking major suburban malls etc., now added to the traditional complement of bus routes radiating out from the city centre; and **the Strip** (shades of Hollywood) refers to the stretch of Oxford Terrace from Cashel Street northwards, which has come to house a virtually continuous series of bars and restaurants, with much of the dining and other activities located on the specially widened strip of footpath outside these premises.

These two items (also **the Crossing** associated with the new **Bus Xchange** (*sic*)) take their place among a set of more established terms such as **the Square** and **the Triangle**, and further afield **the Spit**, **the Estuary**, **the Groynes**, and **the Sugarloaf** (the last usually referring to the television transmitter located there). *DNZE* has entries for **the Plains** and **the Peninsula** (Banks, that is) with Canterbury reference. A historical example is **the Domain**, now occupied by the Christchurch Botanical Gardens. Like **the first four ships**, very specific to Christchurch are the **four avenues** bounding the original city block and named after the 19th-century province's only four superintendents. At least some of these city and regional names will be shared with but have different referents in other places (**the Peninsula** means something quite different in Otago or the Coromandel, for example); in their own 'dialect area' they become an integral part of the local idiom.

## TEAMS AND PERSONALITIES

The world of sport provides distinctive terms and names in Canterbury as in other regions. A key phrase here is **red and black(s)**, applied especially to representative rugby teams, from the traditional colours of a Canterbury jersey (cf. similar formations elsewhere: **Blues**, **Reds**, **green and golds**, etc.). This is absent from *DNZE* but is a long-standing form. A secondary adjectival use is found with general Canterbury sporting reference: **'Red and Black Sports Talk'** (a TV programme), 'this is **red and black** country' (in an advertisement).

Where particular sports are concerned there has been of late a similar proliferation of names for teams at provincial level as at national level (see 'Sporting New Labels' in *NZWords* 2.1). The greatest media prominence is enjoyed by **Crusaders**, naming the Canterbury-based rugby union Super 12 franchise, and appropriately recalling Chaucer's knight travelling to Canterbury fresh from foreign ventures; but Canterbury

also has for example its **Bulls**, **Cats**, **Cavaliers**, **Flames**, **Rams**, and **Red Sox**, in league, women's hockey, men's hockey, netball, basketball, and softball respectively.

Sports teams are fertile ground for the generation of nicknames, and at least some of these acquire a more public currency, especially those of outstanding players and personalities. Notable recent examples range from those that are little more than abbreviations or diminutives of first name or surname (**Harry**, **Mehrts**, **Macca**, **Toddy**) to more disguised epithets whose reference and significance might not be apparent to outsiders (**Bubs**, **Paddles**).

Nicknames are nothing new, one should add, as demonstrated by a 19th-century Canterbury personality from the academic rather than sporting world. Professor Alexander Bickerton, whose astrophysical theory of **partial impact** earns an entry in *DNZE*, was **Bicky** or **Bick** to his familiars and others. Natural processes of informal abbreviation have operated on many other regional names, for example **Bally's** (Ballantyne's store), **CD** (Canterbury Draught beer), **Rangi** (Rangi Ruru school), **Rolly** (Rolleston prison), **Tatts** (the former Tattersall's Hotel in Christchurch), and the **Waimak** (Waimakariri river). A US abbreviation reinterpreted in recent months for Canterbury police use is **CHIPS**, standing for Canterbury (rather than California) Highway Patrol Squad.

Notable individuals occasionally have their full surnames enshrined in lexical forms. **Nurse Maude** in Canterbury denotes the nursing organisation founded by Sibylla Maude as New Zealand's first district nursing scheme in 1896. The name of Professor Ian Coop of Lincoln College (as it was) is embodied in the **Coopworth** sheep, which his interbreeding of Romney and Border Leicester produced in the 1960s. And a more transient example was the (temporary) renaming of Rangiora (the captain's home town) as **Blackadderville** following the Canterbury Crusaders' Super 12 threepeat in 2000.

This account and its Cantabrian examples old and new does, I think, support the view that such lexical variation as exists within New Zealand English is predominantly a matter of words and meanings with exclusively regional reference. In the data assembled for this article instances of distinctive Canterbury naming of New Zealand-wide referents (heteronymy) are confined to a small number of floral and faunal items: *DNZE* provides **five-fingered Jack**, an obsolete variant of **five-finger**; **shark-bully** used for **torrentfish**; and **silvery** for **smelt** (also West Coast); the Canterbury (and Otago) use of **(a) bush** for 'patch of bush' might also belong here.

The writer's inventory of Canterbury words (most of which have been noted here) is relatively small when compared, for example, to the numbers of entries in the Australian 'State dictionaries' (*Voices of Queensland* lists some 500 entries). However, the present list is certainly less than exhaustive, and readers in Canterbury and elsewhere are invited to make suggestions for other inclusions. Further, non-Cantabrians might be moved to offer sample lists of words and expressions with particular significance in their own parts of the country. A dictionary incorporating *all* New Zealandisms in regional use, **Cantabrianisms** (if you will) among others, would I am sure make a substantial and engrossing publication.

*Tony Deverson grew up not far from Canterbury in England, and has taught at the New Zealand university of that name since 1966.*

In the last issue of *NZWords* we invited teachers and classes to send samples of project work being done on New Zealand English in our schools. We received in response some good-quality pieces of student writing on New Zealand usage from Western Heights High School in Rotorua, among which the following well-judged observations on a very familiar Kiwi expression seemed especially deserving of being reproduced in this publication. They were written by Emma Kehoe, in a class taught by Mrs Jane Collins.

**What does 'Ladies a plate' tell us about New Zealand society and customs, and especially about the role of women in our society?**

'Ladies a plate' is a saying that has been around since the turn of the century in New Zealand. However, its meaning has been changed and extended — we now have new sayings in its place.

'Ladies a plate' originally applied to those ladies, non-working, who had the time to attend regular social gatherings with other ladies in similar circumstances. Rather than the host providing food for all the guests, each was expected to 'bring a plate' — some type of food appropriate to the occasion, and able to be shared around those present.

When these occasions were at night, including the various gentlemen, ladies were still expected to provide food, in keeping with the wifely role of cook and cleaner. As it became more and more common for women to work as well as the men, the saying changed into 'bring a plate' — applicable to men and women both.

This saying has its pitfalls. It can be taken literally, and an empty plate brought. This is something many immigrants have done, my grandmother among them. With the increasing number of people and their cultures immigrating to New Zealand, 'ladies a plate' is fast becoming obsolete.

In the Rotorua area this saying is used by about 50% of people — generally those over 30, therefore in circumstances in which they can host dinners. The over-40s are even more likely to use this saying, as it is slightly outdated. Those who no longer ask ladies to bring a plate have two sayings of their own.

For the over-30 age group, the saying used in place of 'bring a plate' is 'potluck dinner', which has filtered in from overseas. It carries the same meaning as 'bring a plate', and has the added advantage of not being taken literally. This also reflects the time most people have to spare for social activities — dinnertime, or at night. 'Ladies a plate' referred more to light snacks and afternoon tea food.

The teenage group of course have their own slang: as most do not eat 'normally', the saying is 'bring some munchies', basically meaning 'if you want to eat it, you bring it'. Most teenagers are also not in a position to host full meals, so snacks are more appropriate.

'Ladies a plate' served a good purpose in its day. However, like many phrases, the development of English is making it gradually obsolete, especially among today's youth.

An enquiry to the Centre concerning New Zealand words originating in trademarks prompted a search of *The Dictionary of New Zealand English* for such items. Fifty-one headwords in the dictionary are recorded as being, or being associated with, proprietary names past and present. The oldest registered trademarks appear to be those of **nugget** and **zambuk**, both from 1903. A complete list with brief annotations follows:

**batt** or **pink batt** a pad of insulation material  
**big Ben** *obs.* an alarm clock  
**bomb** orig. **bom**, a chocolate-coated ice cream  
**bowser** a petrol pump, later by extension a petrol station  
**bush devil** (possible propr. name) a wire-straining device used in fencing  
**buzzy bee** the iconic pull-along toy  
**califont** (possible propr. name) a gas-fuelled water heater (cf. *Brit.* **geyser**)  
**carbonette** (possible propr. name) a coal briquette  
**chillybin** an insulated container (cf. *Aust.* **esky**)  
**Claytons** the non-alcoholic beverage; used adjectively = sham, illusory  
**Cookham boots** *obs.* stout working boots (cited from 1872)  
**double-happy** a firecracker  
**dover** *obs.* a knife, in the phrase **a run of the dovers** all you can eat (as a hired hand)  
**Dover** stove a small wood-burning iron stove  
**eskimo pie** a chocolate-covered ice cream  
**fibrolite** an asbestos cladding  
**gib (raltar board)** gypsum plasterboard (full form trademarked since 1932)  
**glaxo** an infant's food supplement (**Glaxo baby fig** a new recruit)  
**illegal tegel** a bird illegally taken for food (from the **Tegel** brand of dressed poultry)  
**jaffa** an orange-coated chocolate sweet  
**jandal** a.k.a. thong (trademarked since 1957)  
**Kelly** an American brand of axe  
**kerosene** (also *Aust. & US*) paraffin oil  
**lilliput cards** miniature playing cards  
**Lockwood** a pre-cut wooden building of interlocking tongue and groove construction  
**lux** short for **Electrolux** a brand of vacuum cleaner (mostly used as verb)  
**mallowpuff Maori** one brown on the outside and soft (or white) on the inside, like the chocolate-coated marshmallow biscuit (implication of superficial Maoriness)  
**malthoid** bituminous roofing or flooring material  
**Monkey Grubber** a mechanical stump-remover (Australian)  
**nibble nook** *obs.* a shop in or next to a cinema, selling ice creams etc.  
**niggerhead** *obs.* a pipe tobacco  
**nugget** boot polish (also verb)  
**pinex** a wallboard  
**Plumb** an American brand of axe (cf. **Kelly**)  
**Raro** orig. an orange juice, subsequently a fruit drink powder  
**samson** a kind of two-wheeled trolley

**sante bar** a chocolate bar  
**sao cracker** an unsweetened cracker biscuit (an acronym from 'Salvation Army Ordinance')  
**Shacklock** a wood or coal range (eponym)  
**smoker** a small pink sweet (orig. to counteract smoker's breath)  
**Steinie** short form of **Steinlager** (beer)  
**supertom** a grafted tomato plant (the similar **maxatom** is not in *DNZE*)  
**swann dri** (becoming **swannie** etc.) a bush shirt or jacket (trademarked 1914)  
**Thermette** an outdoor water-boiler, a picnic kettle (trademarked 1937)  
**waratah** a fence-standard (Australian)  
**Weetbix rock** a type of rock named from the flaked breakfast cereal  
**Whakatane harrow(s)** *obs.* a patented set of harrows  
**Woodbine** the English cigarette brand, hence in WWI an English soldier  
**zambuk** an ointment, and by metonymy a St John ambulance officer attending sports venues etc.  
**Zealandia** (for **New Zealand**) used in product names such as **Zealandia sheep dip**  
**Zip** a water heater (trademarked 1933)

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 31 MARCH 2002

**Payment:** The publisher reserves the right to edit or not to publish letters and articles submitted. There is no payment for letters. Payment for articles accepted for publication is by credit note from Oxford University Press for books from its list to the value of NZ\$100.

## MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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*NZWords* is published annually and subscription is free. To subscribe please send your name and postal details to:  
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**Back issues:** Back issues currently available in hardcopy (upon request): October 1999, August 2000.  
 All back issues are available as pdf files at  
<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/nzdc>

## NZWORDS

*NZWords* is published by  
**Oxford University Press**  
 253 Normanby Road  
 South Melbourne VIC 3205  
 Website: www.oup.com.au  
 Email: cs@oup.com.au  
 Free-Phone: 0800 442 502  
**Publisher: Ray O'Farrell**  
 in partnership with  
**The New Zealand Dictionary Centre**  
 Victoria University of Wellington  
 Phone: (04) 472 1000  
 Fax: (04) 463 5604  
 Email: nzdc@vuw.ac.nz  
 Website: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/nzdc>  
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ISSN 1440-9909

## Differences with the Neighbours 3

In respect of most of the notable transatlantic English contrasts, Aussies and Kiwis display a common allegiance, either to British or American usage or a mixture of both. We both have **cars** with **boots**, **queue** rather than **stand in line**, mean the same thing by an **entree**, and fluctuate between **film** and **movie**, **post** and **mail**, etc.

But it isn't invariably so: Australia like the US has its **freeways** and (domestic) **yards**, New Zealand like Britain its **motorways** and **gardens**. And it's **Labour** here not **Labor**.