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An emphasis in *NZWords* 13 is on the changing use of terms in our lexicon from te reo Maori. Dr Joan Metge, Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Auckland, and former Associate Professor of Anthropology at Victoria University of Wellington, casts an anthropological eye over the uses in New Zealand English of terms from te reo. She examines the origins of particular words from te reo, and supports the uses to which early terms are used with a new sense or in a new context, rather than remaining fixed and immutable. Dr Metge certainly answers in the positive to the question of Lewis Carroll's Alice, i.e., 'whether you can make words mean so many things'. And she herself questions, as an anthropologist, the appropriateness and usefulness of the linguistic terms 'borrowing' and 'loan words'. John Macalister examines the hypothesis that the familiarity of words from te reo is increasing, citing examples from an ongoing research project. (At the Centre, we continue to note how many of our terms from te reo and Pasifika languages confuse newcomers. We have at least five different common uses for **mumu**, for example: an indigenous chafer beetle, a checked tututuku panel pattern, an underground oven (Papua New Guinean), a loose dress (Cook Islands), and a shark.)

Tony Deverson's paper, taken from his address at the 2008 Australlex conference, shows that recognising or identifying a New Zealandism, a term that originated in New Zealand, or has a particular sense or usage here, is not as easy as one might think.

Finally, there is a paper on a new **national taonga**, the National Library online early newspaper resource, with its valuable search function.

Thank you to all readers who have written to the Centre with questions, with comments, and with terms and citations which contribute to our database.

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Words Escape Us

JOAN METGE

Overseas visitors and New Zealanders returning home after an absence are taken aback by the frequency with which Maori words crop up in conversations and appear in newspapers in ordinary type without glosses. During Maori Language Week last year *New Zealand History Online* put out a list of 'the 110 Maori words which every New Zealander should know.' As the editor of the *Dictionary of Maori Words in New Zealand English* puts it: 'There is no getting away from it: New Zealand English is different, and it is Maori words that form the most distinctive feature of New Zealand English.' Since 1980 in particular a significant number of words for Maori cultural concepts and practices have come into English as Maori have fought related campaigns to save their language from extinction and to assert their status as the 'people of the land' and partners to the Treaty of Waitangi.

As a New Zealand anthropologist who has worked in Maori and cross-cultural contexts for fifty years I take a particular interest in what happens to such words when they are adopted into New Zealand English. Elsewhere I have drawn attention to the way two key concepts **mana** and **utu** have lost their primary meanings in the process. In the Maori lexicon, the primary meaning for **mana** is a force of supernatural origin which invests people, places and things, enhancing their capacity for achievement but making it dangerous to treat them with anything but respect. Glossaries of Maori words in English omit this meaning, giving **mana** the derivative meanings of prestige and authority. In the Maori lexicon, **utu** is the principle of reciprocity which requires that gifts received, whether good or bad, must be returned with an increment. This produces an imbalance which ties the parties together in an on-going relationship, negatively in fighting, positively in gift exchange. In English **utu** is given the meanings of revenge and payment or price, ignoring the unifying principle of reciprocity.

In this paper I explore what has happened to a set of words closely related in Maori thinking, beginning with **marae** and **hui**, settings in which **mana** and **utu** play key roles. In Maori **marae** refers both to the courtyard in front of a meeting house and the combination of that courtyard with a meeting-house, dining-hall and ancillary buildings. Both meanings have been carried over into English distinguished when necessary as **marae atea** and **marae complex**. In English as in Maori a **marae** is quintessentially Maori space, governed by Maori rules and practice.

In Maori the primary reference of the word **hui** is a gathering which is held on a **marae**, lasts more than 24 hours and involves the people of the **marae** giving visiting parties a formal welcome, meals and beds, and visitors reciprocating with gifts mainly of cash. In English, however, **hui** is widely used to describe gatherings which may or may not be organised or attended by Maori: the word has

escaped from its original Maori setting with its restrictions on venue, length and protocol. In 2001 the New Zealand Dictionary Centre published, under the heading 'Proliferative Hui', a list of 24 **hui** of which only four had an unequivocal Maori reference.

Marae are typically owned and managed by a **hapu**, a locally based descent group intermediate in depth and political function between groups called **iwi** and **whanau**.

In Maori **iwi** has two major referents: 'a people' of undefined size and membership and a politically autonomous descent group glossed in English as tribe. During the 1980s and 90s Maori campaigning for greater control over their assets emphasised the tribe as the quintessentially Maori governance body, in hearings before the Waitangi Tribunal, the Maori Fisheries Commission and Parliament. As a result **iwi** has passed into English with the meaning of tribe only, while **hapu** is glossed as sub-tribe or tribal section. Both **iwi** and **hapu** belong exclusively to the Maori cultural context.

The course followed by the word **whanau** could not be more different. In Maori settings the primary reference of **whanau** is a group of co-operating kin with a descent-group core spread over several households. Such groups may be contained within a **hapu** but in the city especially may stand alone. This primary meaning is the source for the continuing generation of new, metaphorical meanings, for example, the group of relatives, friends and colleagues gathered to support an applicant in a job interview. All these meanings have been transferred into English, but while the meaning 'extended family' is recognised as primary, **whanau** in English no longer signals a culturally Maori context the way **iwi** and **hapu** do. A weekly magazine headlined a recent article 'Taking time to feed the **whanau**' and an upcoming Christmas festivity sponsored by city groups including the Auckland City Council is currently being advertised as 'A **Whanau** Christmas Event.'

One thing **iwi**, **hapu** and **whanau** have in common is the importance of kinship relations, especially descent, since inheritance from ancestors is a major source of **mana**. The recording, tracing and interpretation of such relations is covered by the word **whakapapa**. When used in English **whakapapa** identifies mainly Maori kinship relations but on occasion it is applied to non-Maori subjects: for example, 'the proud **whakapapa**' of a Pakeha business dynasty and the **whakapapa** of a New Zealand wine which 'runs back to Bordeaux.'

Leadership in **iwi**, **hapu** and **whanau** is exercised by **rangatira** and **kaumatua**. In Maori **rangatira** is applied at the level of **iwi** and large **hapu** to members of senior descent as a category and to one of their number as chief. **Kaumatua** is applied at the level of **whanau** and small **hapu** to elderly members as a category and to individuals noted for

their cultural knowledge and/or effective leadership. Both words retain this double application in English but non-Maori tend to stress age as the defining feature of **kaumatua**, expect all the elderly to be cultural experts and deny the title to younger leaders. When used in English, both words are usually applied to Maori but **rangatira** in particular is sometimes applied to non-Maori as a compliment. Reportage of a Agreement in Principle between a consortium of **iwi** and the Crown attributed its achievement to negotiations conducted '**rangatira-to-rangatira**'.

This brings us back to **utu**. In the contemporary Maori context **utu**, the principle of reciprocity, is active during **hui** on the marae, when the host **hapu** and visiting groups exchange greetings speeches and **hongi** in the welcome ceremony, the hosts feed and bed the visitors and the visitors' **kaumatua** present **koha** (gifts of cash) to the hosts. On special occasions **taonga** (valued objects such as flax cloaks) may be exchanged. It was impressed on me by Maori mentors that **koha** given at **hui** are not payment for hospitality received on that occasion but a return for **koha** received from the hosts in the past and expected in the future, in the context of an on-going relationship. The words **koha** and **taonga** are increasingly popular in New Zealand English but for those not knowledgeable about Maori culture they do not have the connotations they have in Maori. Most non-Maori encounter the idea of **koha** on **marae** visits organised for educational purposes. These are mostly one-off affairs which do not establish an on-going relationship, so **koha** has come to be seen by many as payment for the hospitality being received and in general contexts as cash given without strings attached, a donation. Maori have always used **taonga** to describe intangible as well as tangible assets. A text written in the 1840s names fighting and women as 'very great **taonga**'. The word is increasingly used in New Zealand English to describe all sorts of treasures, from great artworks and national heroes to cherished grandchildren. Most have forgotten the connection with gift exchange, if they ever knew it.

The incorporation into New Zealand English of closely related words has produced not one but a variety of outcomes. Some (**marae**, **iwi**, **hapu** for example) remain so firmly tied to Maori contexts that have become prime markers of Maori culture. Some (**mana**, **hui**, **whanau**, **koha** and **taonga** for example) are recognised as having a Maori source but regularly used with rather different connotations in a much wider frame of reference. Then there are words like **whakapapa**, **rangatira**, and **kaumatua** which, while still primarily tied to Maori referents, are also applied occasionally in a general context. A few (like **utu**) are seriously misunderstood and misapplied.

Yet, while the process of incorporation sometimes results in loss of meaning and

misapplication, the losses are balanced by gains. The loss of the primary meaning of **mana**, supernatural force, freed that word for use in general contexts where a degree of ambiguity is an asset, as when **mana** is attributed to a former President of the U.S.A. and a New Zealand politician is hailed for his 'financial **mana**'. Similarly **hui**, no longer tied to the **marae** as venue, now signals gatherings held for the purpose of discussion, which has always been a central function of **hui** on the marae.

Among the gains is an enhanced opportunity for word-play. Scientists early exploited the possibilities for bilingual compounds with names like **Taniwhasaurus oweni** and **Tylosaurus haumuriensis** for dinosaur fossils. **Cyber hui** is a recent addition to the list of **hui**. If Maori wordsmiths coined the phrases **hui hopping**, **hui fatigue** and '**too much hui not enough dooey**', these expressions have been gleefully adopted by non-Maori for application in general contexts. I chuckled over a recent paragraph headline '**Hui Hooley**'. Describing projects and services as **iwi-initiated** or **iwi-led** usually expresses approval, while any tendency to insist on the **iwi** as the only valid form of Maori organisation is mocked as **iwi fundamentalism** or **iwi-isation**. Pensioner housing is a **kaumatua flat** regardless of who occupies it; **dial-a-kaumatua** rebukes those who call in **kaumatua** to perform show rituals. **Mana munching** skewers those who seek to enhance their own status by putting others down. Stress leave is redefined as **mana restoration leave**. New examples crop up almost daily: recent ones include **McHangi**, **Hangi Combos**, **reo-texting** and **reo-phobes**.

Three things are clear: a significant proportion of words in New Zealand English originally belonged to Maori; Maori took the initiative in encouraging their use in New Zealand English; and how they are used and change depends on innumerable linguistic choices made by non-Maori with widely varying motivation and degrees of understanding. Have Maori lost control of these words? Did non-Maori appropriate them? Or do words escape their speakers' control? Are they ultimately un-ownable wealth?

Traditionally, **rangatira** exhibited their **mana** and acquired more by giving away wealth, using it to reinforce social and political relations within their **hapu** and between their **hapu** and other groups. From the beginning of their campaign to revive the Maori language, champions of **te reo** Maori have identified it as a **taonga**, an identification which places it squarely in the context of gift exchange, to be given away in expectation of a return. According to the Chairman of the Maori Language Commission, 'the Commission's guiding aim (is) that Maori becomes a language of common use for all, not just for Maori ... We're only **kaitiaki** ... The language belongs to New Zealand and all New Zealanders.'

In Maori gift exchange, givers leave it to the recipients to decide what to return with what increment - though they are not above dropping hints. Instead of bewailing what they have lost in the process of incorporation, Maori leaders concentrate on what they have gained: acceptance in speech and writing of Maori plural forms without a final 's'; establishment of Maori as an official language of New Zealand in 1987; the Maori Language Commission; growing support in the non-Maori population for the incorporation of Maori words and growing if incomplete understanding of what they stand for. For Maori the lexicon of their language is inalienable wealth.

The reasons why non-Maori accept certain Maori words are varied: filling the gaps in existing vocabulary, ease of pronunciation, potential for word play, empathy for Maori values and aspirations, increasing participation in Maori cultural contexts, and an emerging national identity to which a Maori presence is integral. Their acceptance, however flawed, fulfils the ultimate purpose of gift exchange, the reinforcement of social and political relations.

The overall result is highly unusual in the Pacific and possibly in the world, the language of a politically dominant majority made distinctive by the incorporation of words from the language of the indigenous minority. Essays in the recent work *Borrowing: A Pacific Perspective* are nearly all about borrowings from English into local languages. The only one dealing with the 'borrowing' of local words into English is about Fijian English, which is not the majority language in Fiji.

Have anthropologists anything to contribute in situations like this? I suggest we can and should work with linguists, doing what anthropologists of my vintage do best: observe, record, interpret and share our findings. In addition, we could help design improvements to the available terminology. I have deliberately avoided using the terms borrowing, appropriation and adoption as misleading; they stress the beginning of the process and the agency of speakers of the receiving language. Equally I avoid loanword because it suggests a temporary arrangement and stresses the agency of speakers of the language of origin. Instead I consistently use the term incorporation which emphasises process and leaves open questions of agency. Remembering that borrowing and loanwords have their origins in metaphor, I like to identify Maori words incorporated into English as transplantings: while remaining recognisably themselves, they make themselves at home in their new setting, adapting to different conditions and producing vigorous new growth. There is even a pronounceable Maori gloss: **huarangatia**. (36) Unownable wealth or inalienable wealth, the words transplanted from Maori enrich New Zealand English.

Kia ora tatou.

Commentators on New Zealand English generally agree that the presence of Maori words is increasing, but it does not necessarily follow from this that readers will be familiar with all the words borrowed from te reo Maori. Indeed, writers appear to recognize that not every Maori word they use will be familiar to readers. As the following examples show, glossing of a Maori word and the use of synonyms are both employed by writers to assist the reader's understanding of potentially unfamiliar words.

Maori have criticized plans for more wind turbines in the Tararua Range, saying turbines are weakening the mauri (life force) and mana of the hilltops.¹

With a head like a koosh ball and a characteristic long skinny trunk, ti kouka, the cabbage tree, is synonymous with the New Zealand landscape. Growing from Northland to Bluff, the cabbage tree is found almost everywhere, a friendly, comical feature fitting in whether in farmland ruggedness or chic city courtyards.²

At the same time, however, it is reasonable to expect that the increasing presence of Maori words in New Zealand English will, over time, lead to increasing familiarity with that component of the lexicon. Whether this does, in fact, turn out to be the case remains to be seen. In the interests of discovering what is happening in the New Zealand English lexicon, then, this paper reports on research undertaken to track changes in familiarity with Maori words.

The research began in 2002 when a survey was carried out with senior secondary students in the greater Wellington area. The survey instrument was a 50-item multi-choice questionnaire designed to be representative of the non-proper noun Maori word types found in the files for the year 2000 of a corpus compiled for the purposes of examining changes in the Maori word presence in New Zealand English from the years 1850 to 2000. One of the conclusions drawn from this first survey was that further expansion of the Maori word component of the New Zealand English lexicon was likely, coming in particular from the social culture category - that is, words referring to non-material aspects of a culture such as actions, concepts and relationships. In 2007 the survey was again carried out in the greater Wellington area, with the intention of capturing evidence of any on-going changes in familiarity with

Maori words from one secondary school generation to the next. In the following sections, the results for each of the three semantic domains included in the survey are presented and discussed. As a framework for the discussion, five bands along a continuum of familiarity are proposed below. The percentages refer to the proportion of respondents who responded correctly to an item. It should be emphasised, however, that this framework is intended as a continuum. The division into five bands is a convenience, for discussion purposes. There is unlikely to be a real difference in familiarity between a type with a 61 per cent score, and a type with a 59 per cent score.

Words in the two highest bands can be said to have become reasonably well-established in the New Zealand English lexicon, whereas those in the two lowest bands are not well-known and could reasonably be expected to be glossed in an English language text. Thus **mana**, in the first citation above, would be an example of the upper bands, **mauri** of the lower bands. In the middle band, although they may still require glossing, the words are in a transition phase. They may be moving into the lexicon, or falling out of it. It seems likely, however, that if around half the population is familiar with a borrowing, and that borrowing continues to be used in written New Zealand English, that it will grow in familiarity and become increasingly well-established.

FLORA AND FAUNA

The 50-item questionnaire contained 14 items drawn from the flora and fauna category, and there was little change in the results from 2002 to 2007. In both years 57% of the items were in the top two bands, and 35% in the bottom two bands. This result was in line with expectations; Maori names for flora and fauna are well-established within New Zealand English and many are what the noted linguist Uriel Weinreich classified as inherited borrowings³ - they pass in use from one generation to the next and are generally no longer regarded as Maori words. Indeed, for a number of familiar examples of New Zealand flora and fauna (such as **kiwi**, **kauri**, and **katipo**) there is no English language alternative available.

There is little reason to expect future growth in familiarity with words in this

category for senior secondary students except insofar as Maori language words displace their English language synonyms. This has occurred in the past, with **tui** displacing **parson bird**, for example, and **puha** displacing **sow thistle**. In current written usage, observation suggests that **kereru** may be becoming a more frequent term than either **native pigeon** or **wood pigeon**, but changes in familiarity with a single word type are unlikely to affect the overall picture of familiarity with words in this category.

MATERIAL CULTURE

As with flora and fauna, there was little change in familiarity with the 11 items in the material culture category. In both years 63% of the items were in the top two bands, 18% in the bottom two. Again, this lack of change was not unexpected as neither the flora and fauna nor the material culture category is likely to be a significant contributor to any expansion in familiarity with Maori words in New Zealand English, for senior secondary students at least.

This is not to say, however, that individual items will not become more familiar, and the case of **taiaha** illustrates this point. From 2002 to 2007, familiarity with **taiaha** increased by 12.3%, to over 64%. This is a sizeable increase, and a tentative explanation may lie in the object's contemporary use in formal welcomes, its occasional appearance in news stories, the importance of skill with the **taiaha** in Witi Ihimaera's *The Whale Rider*, and the teaching of **taiaha skills** in at least some schools.

A small group of year 9 and 10 students have had the opportunity to learn the art of Taiaha which is a form of Maori martial arts and disciplinary training. This is the third year our students have been trained by Robini Peachey, a Pouwhitu Level 7 taiaha tutor.⁴

SOCIAL CULTURE

The category of most interest from a researcher's perspective in 2007 was that of social culture, because this is the domain of usage in which commentators on New Zealand English expect change to be most apparent. Furthermore, in the 2002 implementation of the survey, 40% of the 25 items in this category fell in the middle band of familiarity, words that could be said to be in a transition phase. In 2007, the proportion of words in this band fell to 24%, although the raw percentage needs to be treated with

0 - 19%	20 - 39%	40 - 59%	60 - 79%	80 - 100%
likely to be known to a relatively few speakers of New Zealand English, and generally to be regarded as an unknown word	likely to be familiar to a minority of speakers of New Zealand English	likely to be familiar to around half the speakers of New Zealand English, and to become better known	likely to be familiar to a majority of speakers of New Zealand English	likely to be familiar to most speakers of New Zealand English

extreme caution as three items with familiarity scores between 39 and 40 per cent only just fell out of the middle band. All the same, however, the general impression from the 2007 survey is one of greater familiarity with Maori words than in 2002, with five words in the social culture category – **hikoi**, **rangatiratanga**, **whakapapa**, **utu**, and **mokopuna** – achieving increases in excess of 7%. Only one of these (**mokopuna**) shifted to a higher familiarity band, however, and it may be that the apparent increases are simply variations within a band rather than evidence of a trend towards increased familiarity. **Utu**, for example, was a word included in a survey carried out in Dunedin in the 1990s and was found to be familiar to around one-third of respondents at that time⁵. In the 2002 and 2007 surveys the word fell in the mid-band of the familiarity continuum. This may suggest that this word is destined to remain in this degree of familiarity for this population, as there are no obvious triggers to make it more familiar.

CAVEATS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The following table shows the words that were included in the survey, and their results in 2007. It must, however, be strongly emphasised that the words chosen are not individually important; rather, they are representative of all possible word types within each semantic domain. Individual words are interesting only insofar as they represent general trends.

Two other points remain to be made. The first is that the respondent population in 2007 did not exactly match that of 2002, and when the two were compared this lead to an expectation that familiarity scores would be lower overall in 2007 than they had been in 2002. This is because there was a higher proportion of males in 2007 (and females tend to display greater familiarity with Maori words) and a lower proportion of Maori and Pasifika respondents (who also tend to greater familiarity) than in 2002. The fact that familiarity scores did not track downwards overall was interpreted as positive in terms of New Zealand English speakers' familiarity with Maori words.

The second point is to emphasise that the respondent population consisted of senior secondary students. The results, therefore, capture a snapshot of this population's familiarity with Maori words used in New Zealand English as they enter adult life. It seems reasonable to expect that this familiarity will increase over time through on-going exposure to Maori words in, for example, the media or through new learning experiences, whether formally or informally, universities or gardening groups. **Utu**, for example, is likely to be more familiar to older speakers of New Zealand English than to senior secondary students.

"Utu on Waterfront Watch for being right." That's how councillor Iona Pannett describes Variation 11, a new set of planning rules proposed by Wellington City council last week for the waterfront.⁶

Finally, a third and final implementation of this survey is proposed for 2012, which should allow us to confirm – or challenge – the hypothesis that speakers of New Zealand English are becoming more familiar with the words of Maori origin that are increasingly a feature of our variety of English⁷.

- 1 Dominion Post, 17 March 2007: A10.
- 2 Wellington Contact, 29 January 2004: 29.
- 3 Weinreich, U. (1964). *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. The Hague: Mouton.
- 4 Kapiti College Newsletter September 2008. Retrieved 6 March 2009 from <http://209.85.173.132/search?q=cache:DZwqBitjQNJ:fc.kapiticollege.school.nz:90/Gallery/Sept08newsletter.pdf+taia+ha+in+schools&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=33&gl=nz>
- 5 Bellett, D. (1995). 'Hakas, hangis and kiwis: Maori lexical influence on New Zealand English'. *Te Reo*, 38, 73-104.
- 6 Capital Times, 10 December 2008: 3.
- 7 In a report of this kind there is, inevitably, a degree of self-referencing, which is always vaguely embarrassing. However, for those interested in this topic the 2002 survey was reported in John Macalister (2004) 'A survey of Maori word knowledge' *English in Aotearoa* 52: 69-73, and (2006) 'Of weka and waiata: familiarity with borrowings from te reo Maori' *Te Reo* 49: 101 – 124; the construction of the corpus from which the questionnaire items were drawn is described in John Macalister (2006) 'The Maori lexical presence in New Zealand English: Constructing a corpus for diachronic change' *Corpora* 1, 1: 85-98; and a fuller account of the 2007 survey can be found in John Macalister (2008) 'Tracking changes in familiarity with borrowings from te reo Maori' *Te Reo* 51: 75 – 97.

	Flora & Fauna	Material Culture	Social Culture
80-100%	pohutukawa pipi weta pukeko	waka poi	haka te reo
60-79%	kowhai kina hoki kea	hangi pounamu taiaha whare kai maunga	aroha tapu hui whakapapa taonga mokopuna mihī
40-59%	toetoe	koru pa	korero kaumatua karakia hikoi utu kura kaupapa
20-39%	raupo kotuku	nohoanga	taihoa tumuaki hapu wairua mana whenua taha Maori kaitiaki raupatu rangatiratanga
0-19%	piwakawaka tieke akeake	paepae	rahui

The main thrust of my work at the New Zealand Dictionary Centre in 2009 is the preparation of a new collection of New Zealand English words and usages, provisionally titled *The Oxford Dictionary of New Zealandisms* (ODN for short). This will be the first dictionary since Harry Orsman's monumental *Dictionary of New Zealand English* (DNZE), published in 1997, to attempt a comprehensive general coverage of exclusively New Zealand lexis, across the full range of semantic fields, registers, and historical periods.

ODN will however be of modest size in comparison with DNZE and similar works such as the *Australian National Dictionary* (AND); in particular there will be room for only a small proportion of the citational material (quotations from written sources) that occupies much of the space in a true dictionary on historical principles. One or two illustrations of usage only (drawn from the Centre's databases, including DNZE) will be provided for around half of the 6000 or so New Zealandisms expected to be included in the new dictionary.

The title of this article is intended to carry two meanings. On the one hand recognising New Zealandisms means *acknowledging* them as a major part of the distinctiveness of the New Zealand variety of English, giving them due recognition by publishing them as in the forthcoming work. On the other hand, and prior to that (and more problematically), it means *identifying* them among the world of words at large, or at least among the entire vocabulary used by New Zealand speakers, spotting them in the lexical crowd as it were. How are they recognisable, and how recognisable are they, in that crowd?

One of the variables or contrasts I employed some years back in devising a descriptive typology for classifying New Zealandisms (and applicable to regional vocabularies generally) concerned the *reference* of words and meanings.¹ That is, one can broadly contrast words and meanings denoting locally specific referents with those that have a wider, more general reference. There are New Zealand words and meanings for New Zealand-specific 'things' on the one hand, and for pan-English 'things' on the other. A small sampling exercise suggested that the split may be roughly half and half between the two.

Admittedly it is not always entirely clear whether the referent itself is a regionally specific thing or not, but by and large the words and senses with local referents (that is, to do with our distinctive flora and fauna, indigenous culture, social institutions, and so on) constitute a substantial part of the vocabulary that is easily identified and can be admitted to a New Zealand headword list with full confidence. Importantly no external knowledge is required, since these items,

and their referents, have no equivalent in other English varieties. Their status is established purely internally

It's above all the other main component of the vocabulary, the items with general reference, that is problematic in terms of determining membership of the set of New Zealandisms. Words and senses with general reference may or may not be New Zealandisms, and of course the overwhelming majority are not. Where the referent is universal there is no guarantee that a usage is not to be found somewhere else as well, and if it is, the question is sometimes did it originate here or there, or was it an independent development in more than one variety.

For example I was startled in 2008 to hear a very British character in a British TV drama conclude some instructions to another character with the remark 'It's easy as, right?'. This elliptical construction, where the completion of the comparison is omitted and the word **as** becomes an intensifier to a preceding adjective, has become a common New Zealand colloquialism in the past 10 to 15 years (Orsman did not record it, and our earliest citation is from 1997, in the initial and still most frequent form, namely **sweet as**). We have assumed this to be a New Zealandism; it may not be (or no longer be) after all, although one instance elsewhere probably isn't enough to alter one's assessment.

The fundamental difficulty we have lies in the necessarily comparative nature of this part of the exercise. The ideal regional lexicographer would be polydialectal, or omnidialectal rather, so far as English is concerned – because only by familiarity with the language in all its complex worldwide variety can one ascertain whether particular words and meanings and idioms are regionally restricted or not. However no lexicographer could claim such omniscience. This means that we are heavily reliant on various forms of external guidance and assistance: among these are previously published regional dictionaries (of one's own and other varieties); the contents and geographical labelling of general dictionaries (especially UK dictionaries in our case); and beyond that a range of other information sources, among which the Internet or World Wide Web, in David Crystal's recent description 'the largest corpus of usage there has ever been', is now paramount. None of these various resources however is fully reliable.

It should be noted that the loanwords from Maori (and other Polynesian languages) in New Zealand English straddle both the specific and non-specific reference camps. As well as the many terms for Maori-specific and New Zealand-specific referents an increasing number of words from the general Maori vocabulary is making its way into the written and spoken English of Maori themselves in particular (there are also long established examples such as **kai** and **puku**). These are terms that coexist

in New Zealand English with a general English synonym, but they are of course just as recognisably New Zealandisms as the rest of the Maori (and Polynesian) component of our vocabulary. Words from an indigenous source will inevitably be the single most prominent feature of any regional English lexis (in their form, in their cultural importance, and certainly in New Zealand's case their considerable quantity).

In considering lexical usage outside of New Zealand the point must always be made that the sharing of a word or meaning with (and only with) Australian English does not disqualify the item in question as a New Zealandism. The 'Australasianisms' like the M ori words straddle both the reference categories, but most appear to have non-specific referents, so there can be difficulties in correctly recognising and confirming items shared with Australia just as there are with those that are not. If words are shared further afield, for example with North America as well as Australia the picture becomes less clear. Whether (or which of) these count as New Zealandisms remains an open question.

Though it's now around 15 years since it was being finalised for publication, Harry Orsman's DNZE (and the larger Orsman dataset from which this was compiled) remains the principal source material for any New Zealand lexicographer. New Zealand dictionary-making would be rudimentary at best without Harry's O's lifelong pursuit of our distinctive word usage. Material has continued to be collected at the NZDC since 1997, providing an excellent resource for updating the DNZE's headword list in the new publication. Recent work has been enhancing the historical record also, but the Orsman collection provides the indispensable primary documentation of over 200 years of our lexical history.

The DNZE is such a magnificent achievement that one is reluctant to say anything that might undermine its stature or diminish our huge debt to it. Some omissions can certainly be noted and remedied (like the Maori loanwords **mokomakai** and **wero**), and the new dictionary will make more room for certain kinds of headword that were only occasionally collected by Orsman, including abbreviations and acronyms. The validity of many of DNZE's inclusions can also be questioned.

Of course we do now have more and better information about some of the words Harry O included. Even so it's a little surprising to see recognised as New Zealandisms such general English items as **to break the back of**, **Chinese burn**, **goss**, **home alone**, **surimi** and **yahoo**. Many entries are dubious (or peripheral at best) for other reasons: there is often just a single citation, or citation only from other dictionary sources, or reliance on personal attestation only. Some of the idiomatic material appears to be of the nonce variety, merely private language

perhaps, or else the kind of invention that might well occur independently in other locations (as **Irish as Paddy's pig, to lie like a flatfish**, and the like).

Putting those types of more idiosyncratic and marginal entry aside, it's also true that DNZE does in general have quite liberal inclusion criteria. The Introduction notes that 'the policy has been to include rather than exclude, especially in admitting entries for words which, though used elsewhere, have significance for our history or society'. 'Used elsewhere but of [historical etc.] significance in New Zealand' is a very common annotation in DNZE. I have no quarrel with a broad inclusion policy in itself (and I have my own examples of this kind that are not in DNZE, such as the adjectives **bicultural** and **customary**); however for a smaller work this is one of the entry types that has to receive limited recognition.

A related set of DNZE entries consists of words for which there is some specific use or context recorded. The question here is whether the local use is sufficiently distinctive to constitute a separate sense. The *Shorter Oxford* (SOED) defines **pigeon post** as 'the conveyance of letters or dispatches by homing pigeons'. DNZE enters the term to refer to an instance of such a postal service between Great Barrier Island and the mainland at the turn of the 20th century; this is interesting social history but it doesn't make **pigeon post** a New Zealandism in my view. I've rejected items such as **special constable** (or the elliptical **special**), **pioneer**, and **wooden spoon** for similar reasons, also verbs such as **to poison** (of rabbits) and **to scrape** (of kauri gum). But one has to judge these (as indeed much else) on a case by case basis.

Looking at the non-specific reference side of things overall, it's fair to say that we can trust published regional dictionaries (DNZE et al.) to have correctly recognised local usage in the great majority of all cases. It goes without saying there has been careful checking of potential inclusions against all available sources of information at the time of the dictionary's preparation. There are large numbers of words and senses about which we will have strong and confident intuitions about their established place in our regional lexis.

Experience teaches one, however, to be wary of any word or sense that is not strictly tied to a New Zealand referent. Diligent checking is still required, both because improved information about a item's currency may now be available and because an item's regional distribution may itself have changed. As with **easy as surprises** may occur; one must expect the unexpected.

A case in point is **vertical drinking**. A DNZE entry for this is supported by four citations that associate the phrase with the bad old days of the six-o'clock swill. Given that it wasn't (and still isn't) listed in British dictionary sources (or Australian for that matter) it was perfectly

reasonable to recognise this as a uniquely New Zealand usage.

The fortuitous discovery of the term in a recent cartoon from the British satirical magazine *Private Eye* threw that into doubt, however. The cartoon shows people standing to drink from a row of suspended upturned bottles, with one observer saying to another: 'All our pubs have state of the art vertical drinking'. A subsequent Google search yielded hundreds of UK hits (especially in the context of Britain's recently extended drinking hours), as well as further New Zealand evidence. So the phrase definitely has a wider currency than was thought, though it's still unclear how old the British use is, and whether New Zealand might claim first use.

A term like **vertical drinking** has been under the radar as it were so far as UK dictionary recognition is concerned, which points to an obvious difficulty in relying on overseas dictionaries to settle doubt about a word's regional status. Omission from those works (even the largest works) is no proof that a word is not also used in Britain or wherever, is not always confirmation of restriction to New Zealand or Australasian English. The larger the works one uses for comparative study the better, clearly, because SOED for example lists many New Zealandisms that are not found even in the large single volume *Oxford Dictionary of English* (ODE).

Curiously these two works between them are sometimes better informed about Australasian usage than either DNZE or AND. SOED correctly records as 'Austral. & NZ' **to sweat on** (anxiously await an event etc.) and **to wag** (play truant from), and ODE has **to pike out** or **on** (back out of an arrangement, let a person down), none of which is found in either of the two national dictionaries.

Less helpfully, in the larger UK Oxford dictionaries regional labelling is far from uniform for particular entries across the various works. The phrase **to put the boot in** is marked 'esp. Austral. & NZ' in OED, has no label in SOED, but is (rather disconcertingly) given as 'Brit.' in ODE. The earliest record of the idiom is in fact a 1906 citation in DNZE, so it's a New Zealand first, though Orsman doesn't explicitly say so. Similar disparities in labelling occur with, among others, **to do over**, **not to give a stuff**, **to knock back**, and **stone the crows!** ODE's 'British' label is in fact its conventional way of indicating 'not North American', for all entries as appropriate, and not excluding Antipodean imports. SOED for its part doesn't label British uses not shared by American English, only North American ones not shared by British English.

In some cases where a geographical label is absent it's clearly because the item in question is judged to have become established in English generally: this applies to originally Australasian items such as **a big ask**, **knockback** (noun), **earbashing**, **greenie**, **lippy**, **mozzie**, **quack** (meaning any doctor), and **uni**.

There is no difficulty when we know, or where OED (or SOED) will confirm, that the items did originate with us. But in other cases the inconsistency of labelling makes it difficult to know whether items without a label or labelled as 'British' began life as New Zealand and Australian usages or not. For example the idiom **away with the fairies** is in DNZE, but it's labelled 'Brit.' in ODE; this may be a case where Orsman assumed the item to be a New Zealandism simply because it wasn't – and still isn't – listed in OED or SOED.

Words shared with various British dialect sources also pose a problem. DNZE often cites dialectal origin (usually following OED), but SOED et al. may include these items unlabelled and without reference to any British dialectal restriction: **to gap** (an axe) for example. Do we recognise such usages as New Zealandisms or not?

If the dictionaries themselves leave some matters unresolved, and certainly for words and phrases too recent to have been picked up by the print works, we have to seek answers elsewhere, which nowadays means, not exclusively but predominantly, that massive data source the Internet.

Whether by way of its search engines or through its individual websites, the Net is not just a powerful research tool that was beyond our wildest imaginings even 15 years ago, but it's also and not least a great timesaver. For lexicographers it provides a rich fund of citations, past and present (see Dianne Bardsley's article on *Papers Past* elsewhere in this issue), and sites like Wikipedia (as well as all the various online glossaries and dictionaries) can be invaluable in formulating accurate definitions of new words and uses.

There's a downside of course. Googling typically unearths too much information, even if one refines the basic search in some way, so a clear picture is elusive. In trying to ascertain a word's regional distribution from a quick scan of the web addresses of the hits, we have the problem that URLs don't always include a clear indication of a site's national origin, and even if the site's source is identifiable, the hit may occur in a post sent from some other undisclosed place. And one can only open so many sites to pin down the target, otherwise the timesaver quickly turns into the great timewaster.

As one example, I went googling for another of New Zealanders' recent colloquialisms, the rather curious phrase **turn to custard** (equivalent in meaning to **go pear-shaped**), which is in our database with citations from 1996 onward. Is this indeed a New Zealandism? In this case the literal hits had first to be sorted from the figurative. In the kitchen contemplating dessert one's thoughts might well turn to custard, and one British instance of the phrase referred to a woman who had tried in vain to get her MP to act for her in some dispute, and in her frustration had literally turned to custard, planting a very real custard pie in his face to get his attention.

On the first few pages of hits most of the examples of the figurative use were from New Zealand sites, a couple were traceable to Australia, and two or three more hinted at an even wider currency. There's a balance of probability that the phrase started here, and a suggestion that it may be spreading. As a custard lover I find the negative meaning given to the idiom rather perverse, but for now it stays in my headword list along with other items (**throw a hollywood** is another) about which it is proving difficult to draw definite conclusions concerning New Zealandism status.

I have wanted to show here that it's the words and usages (both established and new) that do not have specific local reference that are most likely to frustrate efforts to produce a neat and tidy listing of a regional lexis. Of their nature these items resist containment, both in the language and in the wordbooks. We must accept that all vocabularies are open-ended, in flux, and that lexicography is to a significant extent intuitive, and always provisional. We work with shifting sands. Yet for all the doubts about many individual items, a substantial body of distinctive New Zealand usage is in fact

clearly recognisable, and as accurate as possible a capture of that remains the primary goal of the current ODN project.

¹ See 'Handling New Zealand English Lexis', in Bell and Kuiper (eds), *New Zealand English*, John Benjamins, 2000: 23-39.

Tony Deverson is Senior Editor at the New Zealand Dictionary Centre. This is a slightly modified version of a paper given at the Australlex Conference in Wellington in November 2008.

Papers Past: A Twenty-First Century National Taonga

DIANNE BARDSLEY

In September 2007 the prayers of any lexicographer working on a national lexicon based on historical principles were answered for us here at the Centre with the new functionality of the National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa's online newspaper website, *Papers Past*. How Harry Orsman would have envied those of us today who can search for terms from 1.2 million early newspaper pages from throughout New Zealand covering the years 1839 to 1920. With access to paperspast.natlib.govt.nz, we can work right through the *Dictionary of New Zealand English* and our Dictionary Centre database, antedating headword entries which cover all significant parts of our history during those years. We can select from a wide range of supporting citations, and authenticate and exemplify the specific sense and usage of each term.

Newspapers have an interesting history in New Zealand. In early bush settlements and localities, **rag-planters** (newspaper proprietors) provided settlers with news of local, national, and international interest. In 1910 there were 193 newspapers in the country with a population of one million. Eketahuna, described as 'the jewel of the South Pacific' in the *Dominion Post* on November 1, 2008 but more often the butt of jokes as the ultimate one-horse town, actually had four newspapers, three of which were dailies, though one was short-lived, and one tri-weekly. Most newspaper proprietors appear to have been avid followers of all aspects of politics in the country, and several actually went on to take positions of national office themselves. Sir Julius Vogel is an example, having established the *Otago Daily Times* with a partner, and the best-known **rag-planter** of all Joseph Ives (who founded 26 newspapers in New Zealand) stood for several provincial councils and later became a full Member of Parliament. *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (1966 2: 667) recorded:

Powerful writing, some of it irresponsible and vituperative, but most of it couched in a forceful, often

dogmatic vein almost unknown today, produced explosive reactions among the more volatile settlers who read their early papers as much to see what persons they knew were writing as for the views the writers were expressing ...

Papers Past sources provide us with a new perspective on our identity as well as our politics and general history. It's been interesting to see how our various cities were regarded in the nineteenth century, and how they regarded themselves. **Nelson**, for example, was known as **Sleepy Hollow** from as early as 1851, and this continued through the decades into the twentieth century, for which our most recent citation (of twenty two) is 1957.

Britannia was the name selected for Petone (or Pit-one), as the first New Zealand Company settlement. The name was short-lived, but popular at the time it was mooted:

Britannia, the name first given to the New Zealand Company's first and principal settlement has been approved by his Excellency Captain Hobson. It is a good name because till now unappropriated by any town, and therefore distinctive in its character; and further, in being agreeably associated in the minds if all Britons with their fatherland. (*New Zealand Gazette & Wellington Spectator* 22 August 1940:2)

Floods prevailed in the Hutt and Britannia settlements, and the name was transferred to Thorndon when it was decided that Port Nicholson/Wellington was the better locality for a permanent settlement.

Early Auckland settlers were often overtly derisive of Wellington, among them Captain Hobson, when addressing the Legislative Council in Auckland in 1841:

Some of you, Gentlemen, are perhaps aware of the existence of Port Nicholson. A considerable number of insubordinate, not to say impudent, fellows – a pestilent faction – have congregated in that place. Putting an

extreme restraint on my own feelings, I dwelt amongst them for some three or four weeks, and the state of discomfort to which I was reduced, may be illustrated by the fact, that it was with the utmost difficulty I procured a joint of roast pork for dinner – the common articles of subsistence there being beef, mutton, fish, and poultry none of which, as you are aware, ever disgrace the well appointed table of our more fortunate metropolis ... It may appear incredible, that although, during the greater part of my sojourn in Port Nicholson, there were no fewer than fourteen or fifteen large vessels in the harbour, supplying the starving population with the means of subsistence, and offering conveyance to a happier land, scarcely one of the deluded inhabitants could be persuaded to exchange Wellington for Auckland. (*New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator* 20 November 1841:2)

More of the rivalry that developed between cities, particularly between Wellington and **Wellingtonians** and Auckland and **Aucklanders** is documented in the pages of *Papers Past*. Auckland is described in 1892 (*Tuapeka Times*: 1 June: 6) as

... "a paradise of croakers". This has been said before, but now the phrase has appeared in print.

Auckland regarded itself as the maritime capital of the nation, while Dunedin was known as the **Southern capital, Edinburgh of the South**, and **New Edinburgh**, and often the commercial capital, while Wellington was referred to as the **Empire City** until well into the twentieth century. Wellington obviously had its share of dishonest citizens:

He has been one of the smartest servants to the public safety department of Wellington during the past few years, and has been something of a terror to the vagabondia and spierderom of the Empire City (*Free Lance* 10 August 1901: 3)

Years later, Edith Grossman was reported as asserting that "Auckland ... is peculiarly the city of **Maoriland** and " ... if the day comes when New Zealand becomes part

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of a wider federation, Wellington will lose its supremacy, and Auckland will again be a queen in the Pacific." (*Otago Witness* 26 December 1900: 68) In fact, **Queen City** is still occasionally used of Auckland.

Fernland/Fernlander, Maoriland/Maorilander, and Pig Island/Pig Islander were terms used widely of New Zealand and its citizens. We also have citations for the country as **the other side**, being the other side of the globe from England. Later, however, the term was used in this country for Australia (the other side of the Tasman Sea). **Britain of the South** and the **Granary of the South Seas** were monikers given to the nation from both within New Zealand and from overseas, but all were recorded in use here. The early colonial names of **New Ulster, New Munster, and New Leinster** proposed by Governor Hobson for the even earlier **Northern Island, Middle Island** and **Stewart's Island** (or **Southern Island**) have also been antedated. In 1841 a correspondent of the *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator* (24 July: 2) criticised the new names and Captain Hobson with them:

Few of our readers have any notion of their whereabouts. They fancy, forsooth, that in the Northern Island of New Zealand, they have fixed their residences and founded their fortunes. Deluded beings! They are peopling New Ulster ... If New Zealand had been discovered by Irish navigators, or chiefly inhabited by Irish settlers or their descendants, there might have been some excuse for this new exhibition of Hobson's folly.

Along with Governor Hobson, most politicians received close attention from newspaper editors as indicated earlier and not the least of them was the controversial Premier Sir Julius Vogel. His policies and exploits generated several terms, including **Vogelian, Vogelite, anti-Vogelite, Vogelism**, and the **Vogel episode** or **Vogelian episode** (when Sir Julius was named by the parliamentary speaker and ordered to leave the House.) Sir Julius, in challenging the Speaker, found himself on the wrong side of **anti-Vogel** newspapermen, one of the chief among these being the editor of the *Poverty Bay Herald*. The **Vogelian creed** was directly translated as 'there's a good time coming, boys'.

Others were not spared. On July 5 1883, *The Hawera Star* reported

The Ashburton Guardian has invented a title for Sir George Grey, which will probably stick to the great Proconsul; it calls him a "legislative larrikin".

Did it stick? Well, no. The *Wanganui Herald* in a report of the awarding of the name two days later explained that it was George Grey's Bill to abolish the Legislative Council that earned him the name, but the term was not ascribed to him again in forty-four other newspapers and periodicals on *Papers Past*.

New Zealand's first Prime Minister, popular Dick Seddon, who was nationally known as **King Dick**, and referred to on occasions as **Richard the Second to None**, generated **Seddonland** (New Zealand), **Seddonite**, and **Seddonian**.

There were plenty of **big bugs** in the early days it seems, along with the commercially acquisitive:

It is the middle classes in the colonies - the purse-proud shopocracy and snobocracy - who try to assume grand airs and who strive by a lavish expenditure to impress others with their importance. (*Observer* 15 February 1890: 3)

In fact, the **snobocracy** were cited as early as 1853.

But newspapers were not limited in their content, and the rural domain received its share of attention. **Carrying-capacity**, a term which Harry Orsman insisted was first recorded in New Zealand (his earliest citation was 1902) was in fact, we find, in common use here in our newspapers from 1865. There are numerous other antedatings of at least forty and fifty years, while **pastoral lease** is cited in a newspaper one hundred and forty-three years before Orsman's earliest citation. **Land jobbery** is another rural term with exceptionally early citations, along with **shingling** [a road], antedated by 106 years. (Even **on the pig's back** has an antedating of forty-seven years!)

A wide range of alternative names for flora, particularly indigenous flora, is cited in early papers, and early spelling variants, such as **ponga, pongo, punga, bungy, and bunga bunga** can be found. We have been intrigued to find citations for **New Zealand emu**, the early name given to the *Apteryx kiwi*.

Both correspondents and editors had critical comments to make about the use of New Zealand English vocabulary, namely slang, **colonial tongue**, and **colonial colloquialisms**. And readers found the origins of their colonial vocabulary of considerable interest. One intriguing inquiry to do with word origins was found in the *Otago Witness* on 15 September 1892:

SHAPROON. - R. Oamaru writes: In a letter dated 8th March 1850, in mentioning a visit to the Taieri Plain, the writer says: "We visited the warri or hut of a Shaploon - i.e., one of the retired whalers 'who have married Maori wives.' Can you tell me the meaning and derivation of the word Shaploon, and why the retired whalers were so-called?" - Can any reader oblige with a reply.

On 22 September, R was obliged with a reply:

SHAPROON.- Alec. Alan writes in answer to "R., Oamaru:" -Shaploon is from the French *chaperon*, and originally meant "little captain." It was applied familiarly to youngsters or companions, as an Englishman [sic], especially of the seaboard counties

might encouragingly address one of the same as "my captain." The French use *mon capitaine* similarly, and the Yankee freely addresses even a stranger as "cap." Time gave *chaperon* in France the significance of fellow, companion or mate, in one direction, while in another it kept nearer its original meaning of little leader, and was applied, as it is now in England, to an aged or married lady in charge of the younger ones, and recoiling, with this new meaning in opprobrium, was used to a man as sometimes in English we use the term "old wife." There is no doubt that the term was used by French sailors and those in contact with them with the same meaning as English sailors use the term mate. Mispronounced and misspelt by its adoption into the English of the rough-and-ready sea-faring men, shaploon would have this signification, and even under certain circumstances might reassume its original acceptance of little leader, and be addressed to the captain of a small band, and become equivalent in a new country, as this was 50 years ago, to the word pioneer.

It is doubtful that this is the origin of the word as it is used in the original 1850 text. The term is closely related to the term **shagroon** for early settler, usually from Australia, who farmed in early Canterbury farming settlements. Professor Arnold Wall in the 1940s suggested that **shagroon** was not from the Irish shaughraun (drifter or vagabond) but from the English shabroon, which is held by the OED as a term for a ragamuffin or a shabby person. Other citations for **shagroon** in early newspapers, which also make specific reference to whalers as "whale-fishers", support these likely origins, rather than the French one suggested by Alec Alan in 1892.

Our colonial pronunciation of English terms was also a topic for correspondence, just as it is in newspapers of the twenty-first century. Future articles describing the antedatings from this national treasure will be written for *NZWords*.

1 A subculture of swindlers

ATTENTION TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Oxford University Press offers an annual award of a copy of the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* (valued at \$130) for the best Year 12 or 13 Research Project in New Zealand English. Entries need to be received at the New Zealand Dictionary Centre before December 1 each year. E-mail dianne.bardsley@vuw.ac.nz for details.

At the New Zealand Dictionary Centre, we have compiled a list of more than 50 New Zealand English research topics for use by senior secondary students of English. These are posted on the NZDC website, but are also available as an e-mail attachment from the e-mail address above.

In November 2008 the Centre hosted the two-day 2008 Australlex conference, which was attended by several Northern Hemisphere delegates including those from Oxford, Denmark, Germany, Moscow, Belgium, and Sweden, along with a supportive contingent from the Australian National Dictionary Centre, the University of Sydney, Macquarie University, and Flinders University, closer to home. The conference theme, *Faces, Forms, and Functions of Lexicography*, was intentionally broad in order to attract a range of specific interests. Emeritus Professor Graeme Kennedy opened proceedings, paying tribute to some of the international lexicographers who had been educated at Victoria. Keynote addresses which opened each half day of presentations, were given by Sarah Ogilvie (Trinity College, Oxford), Welby Ings (Auckland University of Technology), Bruce Moore (Australian National Dictionary Centre), and Kon Kuiper (University of Canterbury). Peter Gilliver, who is working on the OED at Oxford, provided some comprehensive poster material dealing with the early toilers on the OED. Wellington turned on spring

weather which allowed us to continue our fellowship into the evenings, with contributions from OUPANZ. Our Word for the Month bookmarks featured at this conference, along with several other conferences held at Victoria in 2008.

In November our eight-section contribution to *Te Ara*, the Ministry of Culture and Heritage online encyclopedia of New Zealand, was launched. It can be found at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/thesettledlandscape/countrylife/rurallanguage/8/en>

John Reynold's *CLOUD*, his first installation work based on the DNZE, has been purchased by Te Papa, and last week I attended the blessing for the work prior to its exhibition, which is of a six-month duration.

Cherie Connor and Kate Quigley are completing PhD studies this year and it is hoped that two new PhD Fellowships will be awarded later in the year. Publications from the Centre this year include the *Oxford Dictionary of New Zealandisms* (Tony Deverson) and a new edition of the *Oxford New Zealand (Upper) Primary Dictionary*

(Dianne Bardsley), both of which will be presented in a new livery. Jane Dudley, Jan Bunting and Amanda Holdaway continue to put in a few hours each week antedating citations in the Orsman and the NZDC databases from *Papers Past*.

Readers will have doubtless noticed that neologisms in the wider domain of global economics and politics have taken on distinctive shades of doom and gloom. Top terms from within the area include *bailout, credit crunch, downturn, financial meltdown, financial tsunami, recessionista, subprime*, and the euphemism for depression, *Global Economic Restructuring*. And from the ever-hopeful fashion world, comes *chiconomics* (aiming to be chic despite the recession). To top it off, and most apposite, has been *Fraud Awareness Week*, March 3-10. Exactly how this was to be observed is any punter's guess! It will be interesting to follow the lexical elements of this economic trend.

We'd like to remind teachers of English that we have resources which can be used for student research, and that there is an award for the best project in New Zealand English at Years 12 or 13.

Miscellany

FROM THE MEDIA:

It seems that stats are no longer merely statistics:

It's open seven days a week - save for the stats. (*Sunday Star Times Escape* 25 January, 2009: 10)

WINSTON PETERS: A SPINSTER?

We have had political spin-doctors for some time, but Liz Pearce brought to our notice the use of the term **spinster** in connection with a political electioneering Polly Award. (*DominionPost* 7 November 2008:B5):

SPINSTER AWARD: Mr Peters for denying he had used helicopters for campaigning, then arguing it was only once, then admitting it was twice, but arguing that reporters' questions implied it was from the door of a helicopter as the rotors were turning - which no one had even vaguely suggested.

According to the trusty OED, a spinster is 'a woman (or, rarely, a man) who spins, esp. one who practises spinning as a regular occupation.' Having lost his Tauranga seat in the election held a week after the publication of the award, we wonder if Mr Peters now spins full-time as his 'regular occupation', or now has no need of spinning.

Gleaned from a recent *Listener* editorial (7 February 2009: 5):

And with the same hindsight, Maori leaders may now realise the **un-New Zealandness** of the notion that the coastline is not everybody's treasure.

The Government's first big Maori policy test, legislation that will, at least on paper, allow the banning of **non-iwi** from parts of the East Coast shore, is looming.

From a former medium (*New Zealand Free Lance*, 17 January 1907: 12):

They have a visitors' book at the Exhibition. In it are tabulated the bright, brilliant, original remarks for which visitors' books are famous. The most brilliant are by ladies. Their literary gifts are apparent when one considers that five or six ladies describe the Exhibition as "the juicy oyster." Several condense it by writing only the letters "J.O." and one lady, from New South Wales, varies by "Quicy Joyster." A lady from Wanganui thinks that the Exhibition is "a bit of orl right." A Dunedin lady says that it is "a snorter, boshker," another Dunedin lady says that it is "very decent," and Christchurch ladies say that it is "all serene" and "scrumious," while one of them expresses her opinion by saying, "Here I am again."

Other expressions dotted over the pages are: "A snorter," "Not half bad," "Not so rusty," "Basko," "Boska," "OK," "A.I.," "Just the fixing," "Scrummy," "Just the feller," "Just the ticket," "Rats," "Not 'arf," and "Let her go." In all the brilliant concatenation of piquant expressions there does not seem to be a "Wot O!" or "It's a bonser!"

Thanks go to Paul Corliss for sending this to us. It reignited an inquiry into the origins and use of **bonser/bonzer** and **bosker**. Frederick Ludowyk, editor of *Ozwords* in May 2003 presented a

comprehensive discussion that convinced us that the origins of **bonzer** and **bosker** are uncertain and may well be independent of each other, irrespective of their appearance in Australian and New Zealand English at a similar time. Quite obviously, **bosker** failed to last the distance in New Zealand English, although it was popularised somewhat by Frank Sargeson in his short stories dealing with working class men in the 1930s. **Bonzer**, however, is still used in New Zealand English.

I followed up other citations for **bonser (bonzer)** and **bosker (boscar)** in *Papers Past* and from other sources. The *Australian National Dictionary* records usage of both terms from 1904, the *Dictionary of New Zealand English* from 1902 (*bosker*) and 1906 (**bonser**). It appears that both words attracted attention in New Zealand newspapers, and being more common in oral discourse, they are commonly cited in reported speech or in inverted commas with an upper case B. Citations are found more often in sporting, school, and dramatic or musical domains. In 1893, the *Otago Witness* (3 August: 30) reported

The Sister Agnes filly is a real "Bonser" - a chestnut with a blaze and near white hind fetlock; but what power.

In 1896, came a report from a thespian context:

The latter [entertainer Percy Kehoe] is always springing surprises on his audiences, his "Railway medley" being a "bonser" as the pittance¹ has it. (*Otago Witness* 30 January: 37)

A five-day horseback and wagonette excursion for a group of Hawera schoolboys to the destination of Parihaka, reported in *The Hawera & Normanby Star* (4 April 1896: 2) possessed elements of **bonserism** in a telegraphed report en route:

koreros with natives along road ... songs (minus individuality) galore. Wild *chiroos* order of day. Commissariat "Good-oh" and plentiful. "Bonser cooks" ... Usual blanket fights ...

The following year, within fiction:

"Would you like to go to a concert tonight?" asked Miss Ross.

"Concert? You bet! Bonser!" he answered eagerly. (*Otago Witness* 15 April 1897: 51)

In the *Marlborough Express*, 21 May 1898:4, was a more generalised usage:

He saved enough to get into a business in Blenheim. This town was lively then, says Gett, doing a "bonser" trade.

By the end of the century **bonser** was rife amongst the young and not regarded with unanimous approval:

Listen to the pronunciation of school children – not alone those of the primary but of the private and secondary schools – and what do we hear? 'W'ere yer go-un?' for 'Where are you going?' 'Deown the teown,' for 'Down the town;' 'Reound and reound' for 'Round and round;' while slang terms such as 'A bit orf,' 'What er yer givin' us?' 'I should smile,' 'Ain't it a bonser one?' come trippingly off the tongues of even the sweet young maidens of our modern drawing-rooms. (*Observer* 29 January 1898: 4, cited from the *Wellington Times*.)

Its use as either noun or in attributive use flourished into the twentieth century:

The men responded with their Maori war-cry, which had to be repeated, and finished up with "He's a bonser" for their host. (*Evening Post* 9 March 1900: 6)

By 1901, the term had reportedly become common, but its origin was being questioned:

Can any of your readers enlighten me as to the origin or meaning of the very common school word now used – "Bonse" or "Bonser." Be it a large apple or a good stroke at tennis "Oh, that's a bonser!" we hear at once. Has it anything to do with "Bonanza"? (*Otago Witness* 10 April 1901: 41)

Alec Alan replied (17 April 1901: 41):

BONSE or BONSER.- Replying to "Old Boy." Probably the correct form is "Bonsor," a proper name – that of a famous English Rugby half-back, now applied as the hall mark of merit.

And later:

Various classical scholars tell me William [a singer] is a "bosker" and a bonser". I'll tell you if he is when I look up the Latin dictionary. (*Free Lance* 24 March 1906:16)

No use looking up the Latin dictionary, I fear. Harry Orsman reported various derivational possibilities including from the British dialect 'bouncer' for something large, 'bouncer' or 'bonzie' for a large marble, and 'bonanza'. Alec Alan was probably incorrect.

Interestingly these terms were used, not always consistently with the distinctive senses of 'big' and 'superb' by First World War New Zealand soldiers A and B, as found in their diaries and letters:

Soldier A:

Dug a bonzer big hole which we now use for putting scraps in, saves a lot of digging. (1 July 1915)

Got to be quite an expert at cooking. Bosker at boiling rice. (9 July 1915)

Soldier B:

During the week I also had letters from Nana & Aunt Maud & also a bosker cake from the latter. (Letter, 20 August 1916)²

Last week I got a surprise as a large parcel arrived from Mrs George Bloomfield – a bonser cake. (Letter, 17 December, 1917)³

Can we conclude that Aunt Maud's cake was smaller than, but perhaps equal in quality or even superior, to that made by Mrs George Bloomfield?!

It use as a noun was also becoming more common, particularly as part of the lexis at Gallipoli:

There are dozens of warships, transports etc. here, including the 'Queen Elizabeth' – she is a bonzer (<http://www.nzmr.org/garland.htm>)

When the big Lizzie fires it shakes the earth. She is a bonzer! (*Evening Post* 8 June 1915:8)

As the use of these terms continued to grow, their sense and/or their interchangeability failed to become really obvious, as noted in the following:

'... the telegraf posts appear like a stab fence. Strite!'

'That must be bosker,' said the Young Colonial. (*NZ Railways Magazine* June 1926:36)

"Lumme," said the bus driver to the fare alongside, "that's a bosker pipe of yourn mister!" (*NZ Railways Magazine* 1 July 1935:55)

And now comes somersault Asher He's a record try-getting smasher, He's a bosker, no kid (they say he's half Yid)

But I tip him to end up a crusher. (Football Jingles, *NZ Free Lance* 8 August 1903: 21)

Are the posts, pipe, and player impressively large or merely impressively smart, straight, or strong? Co-texts are required!

The most recent citation we have for **bonzer**, the longer-living term, is from 2009 (refer below). We will continue to record the development of these terms, each of which has had an uncertain genesis and a dubious universal acceptance.

Mallory McComish, a New Zealander living in the West Indies, has thought about some of the features that are shared by New Zealand English and Australian English:

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Australia and New Zealand should merge as a singular nation – mate, that would be coker, fair dinkum, the consummate unification.

The land of the bach and the barbie, the gumboot and number 8 wire, kangaroo, koala and kiwi – a country the world would admire.

The realm of the bloke and the sheila, the home of the pie and the ute where no-one's a whinger or poker 'cause everything's bonzer and beaut.

A nation of cobbers, Down Under, the home of the pav and the lamington and courses for thoroughbred horses like Ellerslie, Randwick and Flemington.

The country where she'll be right mate, the land of the try and the wicket, where nobody throws a sickie except when there's rugby and cricket:

And whether in Dubbo or Palmy, or Darwin or Otorohanga, there's always a schooner or stubby when you're dry as a wry Wollongonger.

But what should we name the great nation from Gisborne to way beyond Alice? "The United States of New Zealand" is suggested, without any malice.

Correspondent Denise Stephens informs us that:

"The new word is "superable", to describe earnings included in calculating superannuation contributions.' Although Denise admits that the word was relatively new to her last year, it seems well known in HR, accountancy, and law circles.

gallivant:

There's something nice about this word that we hear so rarely these days. Parents always seemed to be telling children to "stop gallivanting around and wash your hands for dinner" – or claim "You're always gallivanting about". Is the word still used out there? And if so, by what age group? The OED has six citations, all from the nineteenth century, and all suggesting, as in the definition, an element of flirtatiousness. But that was not how it was used by parents in the 1950s – we recall it as having more of a sense of frivolity then.

docket:

A colleague told us recently that this term is not used as it was – we don't get a docket, as distinct from a receipt, when we purchase these days. What do we get? A chit of paper?

cribbie:

The hypocoristic term **cribbie** for **crib-** (or **bach-**) owner or occupier has been cited more recently than it has in the past. There are two main reasons. **Cribs** were often built on land owned by a farmer with a friendly, informal agreement with the landowner. With the increasing frequency of land sales and turnover, new agreements are being arranged legally, or the cribs have to be taken away. This often requires consent notification – and **cribbies** get into the news. Now, too, with foreshore and seabed concerns, some **cribbies** have been found to be occupying land illegally. No doubt soon the term will leave us – 'holiday homes' are being built these days – a far cry from the often makeshift and humble huts of yesteryear.

shickery:

Another word which is almost phonaesthetic or attractive to the ear,

meaning shaky or insecure, appears to have led a marginally longer life in New Zealand than elsewhere. The OED records citations range from 1851 to 1888, whereas our citations are from 1850 to 1906.

Usages on the increase:

As we noted in *NZWords* 10, there is more compounding and collocation of terms from te reo, such as **hui** and **iwi**. In addition to those we listed in 2006 we have **annual general hui**, **commemoration hui**, **crime hui**, **queer youth hui**, **regional consultation hui**, **summer hui**, **workshop hui**, and **youth hui**. The use of **non-iwi** (noun) and **iwi authority** is becoming more common. We are also **mihing** more than we ever did.

More kiwiana:

We have had Taihape's **Gumboot Day** since 1985 and the world's largest urban

Running of the Sheep at Te Kuiti since 2002. It seems now that the **Southern Shearer** and **Northern Musterer** trains will take you to this King Country event. And wonder of wonders, you can stay in the **Waitanic**, a World War II antisubmarine patrol Fairmile ship, the Motunui, which has been converted into motel accommodation on land. And now not only do we have the **Golden Jandal Award**, the **Golden Pliers**, the **Golden Shears**, and the **Silver Plough**, but also the **Golden Gumboot**. The **Golden Gumboot** trophy is part of the annual National Fieldays award for the Rural Bachelor of the Year.

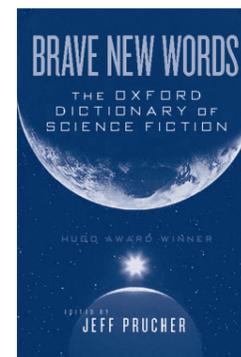
1 A spectator who occupies a place in the pit of a theatre.

3 www.theKivellfamily.co.nz/family_pages/ralphs_diaries/transcribes/diary_one_p7

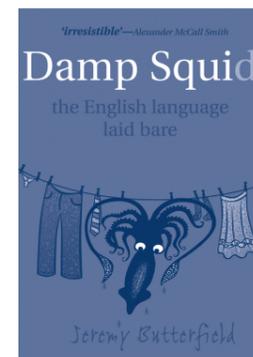
3 Alister Robison, http://www.nzine.co.nz/features/warletters_8; http://www.nzine.co.nz/features/warletters_17

For Lovers of Language...

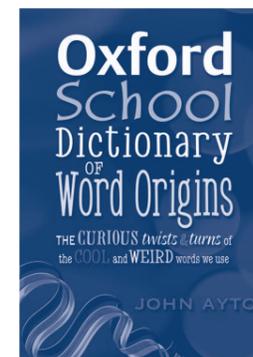
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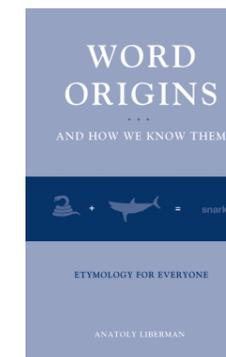
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We welcome comments and queries concerning New Zealand usage. While space does not allow all contributions to be printed, the following letters represent a range of correspondents' interests.

A lot of hui

Thursday September 18, 2008

Michael Cullen on Morning Report this morning (at around 08:30), in describing his evasive flight from a small group of protestors at a Northland marae a couple of days ago, termed the incident as "a bit of a hui-bui" (or perhaps "hooy-booy::no spelling on radio of course). This may be another small polished stone for your collection.

Bevan Greenslade.

Ed: I have not been able to find any written citations for this term. Could be a Cullenism.

Ponsonby handshake

I've never heard of a Ponsonby handshake, but I'm well aware of the term Te Kuiti handshake within the same meaning. I suppose you know of this, and who knows how many other regional variations. Sadly, I have no written citations to offer.

Regards
Caroline McGhie

Ed: We have been unable to find written citations for Te Kuiti handshake, but we would welcome news of this and any other regional form of the term. Incidentally, 'handshake' has a new use in the computing domain, where it refers to the synchronizing of two machines or programs, or linking a modem and a computer or two modems.

Hector Bolitho

We had some interesting responses to the request for information about the exclamatory Hector Bolitho (Ed.):

I remember the expression Hector Bolitho being used as an expansion of 'heck' when I was at school in the 1940s but I had no idea who H.B. was. It was interesting to find out.

Deryk McNamara.

I've just come across your query re the exclamation 'Hector Bolitho!' in NZ Words. As it happens, I'm currently editing a memoir by Ann Thwaite, daughter of historian AJ Harrop, who knew Bolitho in wartime, was apparently fond of substituting Bolitho's name for profanity. I don't know if Harrop was the originator, but the use was certainly common among NZ writers and newsmen who congregated with the likes of Noel Coward in London restaurants in the early 1940s.

Richard Reeve.

I am another Bolitho researcher, in my mid-seventies, and my attention has been drawn to the Mailbag item in the recent issue of NZWords.

My mother, who was a few years younger than Hector Bolitho, frequently used the common "Heck!", (analogous with Dash!) and also frequently lengthened it to "Hector Bolitho!" for more emphasis and its satisfying rhythm - probably from the 1930s onwards, maybe earlier. As well, the mild surprise of "Goodness Gracious", "Heck!" expressed feelings of frustration, annoyance, bother, and similar uses of "Hell".

Because my mother was one who loved to play with words, I always imagined her use of the name in this way was unique, so I am fascinated by the item suggesting its wider currency. I can assure you that it is not at all surprising that Bolitho's name was known in NZ during the period of his tremendously successful writing career, particularly for his books on royalty. He had a considerable reputation here as well as Britain, United States, Canada, Australia and elsewhere and as usual with successful ex-pats, New Zealanders were proud to claim him as one of their own. His writing often appeared in NZ papers and the glossy "Mirror" (and possibly other NZ magazines which I'd like to know about). There would also be news reports about him. He gave lectures and broadcasts when visiting NZ, and other parts of the world. It was all part of carefully cultivated public relations, and lecture scripts usually appeared somewhere later in published form.

Whenever there was a reference made to him in the papers or on radio Mum would say "He's a New Zealander, you know", so as a child I certainly knew all about him. He grew up in Devonport where I now live and my research is for Devonport Library Associates which collects detail on Devonport writers and hopes to use the material for publishing his name further. His home is on a local Writers' Trail, as is that of Isobel Maude Peacocke. We have produced a small book about her: *Isobel Maud from Devonport*. I would appreciate as much as you can tell me of the results of your inquiry.

Joyce Fairgray.

Subsequent to Richard's mail, Joyce wrote:

It [Richard's e-mail] says NZ newsmen. Many of them - particularly in the 1930s - were very scornful of Bolitho. Pat Lawlor in *Books and Bookmen* attributed it to jealousy. John Mowbray wrote about it in *The New Zealand Observer*, Thurs September 28th 1933.

Ed: Joyce is writing a full, more detailed biography of Bolitho and would appreciate any further references. Hector Bolitho, an atypical Kiwi bloke, certainly left his mark on our lexis for some years, in addition to writing more than sixty books.

MAILBAG

The editor of NZWords welcomes readers' comments and observations on New Zealand English in letters and other contributions.

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