

Australian Rhyming Slang (II)

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Abstract

Originally made popular by the quick-witted and waggish Cockneys in London's East End, rhyming slang spread to other parts of the world and in particular to Australia. Australians with their strong English background and taste for fun and irreverence, readily adopted rhyming slang and made it a part of their culture. Most rhyming slang words deal with everyday matters and despite a preoccupation with drinking, gambling, body parts and fornication, the language is essentially good natured.

Many rhyming slang words are euphemisms-Bengal Lancer (cancer), Edgar Britt (shit), Khyber Pass (arse). Some imported words were used during wars and the depression and fell into disuse. Other are very recent and are often based on high-profile politicians, sportsmen and film and medial identities.

Rhyming slang has its rules. It consists of two or more words the last of which rhymes with the word replaced. Where applicable, the shedding of the second or rhyming word is encouraged.

What Is It ?

A writer in the "Bulletin" of January 18, 1902, gives the following example :

Me mother's away, as I was swiftly flowing up the field of wheat in the bread-and-jam, a heavenly plan with a big charming mottle of O-my-dear sticking out of his sky-rocket fancy sashed the girl-abductor on his bundle-of-socks with it cos he wouldn't let him have a virgin-bride for nothing.

The other day as I was going up the street in a tram a man with a big bottle of beer sticking out of his pocket bashed the conductor over the head (i. e. think-box) with it (i. e. the bottle) because hi wouldn't let him have a ride for nothing.

It is a comment that rhyming slang was "twenty years old at least" in Australia, which would take us back to the 1880s. However, in 1898, a writer points out :

The Cockney rhyming slang is popular in Australia and the lion comiques and lydies of the variety stage are helping to make the hold stronger.

The following example were added to show the type of rhymes used; Arty Rolla, a collar; mince pies, eyes; cheese and kisses, the missus; Charlie Prescott, waistcoat; pot and pan, old man; tiddley wink, a drink; lamb's fry, tie; plates o'meat, feet. These example, or the greater percentage of them, are not Australian. What authentic rhyming slang there is in this part of the world, will usually be found in a disguised form. Most rhyming slang words deal with everyday matters and despite a preoccupation with drinking, gambling, body parts and fornication, the language is essentially good natured.

A disguise is dropped over many indigeous expressions that were originally rhyming slang. Knock-me denotes a billy, from the rhyme knock-me-silly; poddy is two-and-six, from poddy calf, as a rhyme on half-a-caser; maggies denotes women's drawers by clipping from Maggie Moores; Robertson means profit, by extraction from the name of the Melbourne firm of Robertson and Moffat; do a Botany, to run away, from a rhyme on Botany Bay; Steele Rudds, potatoes, from a rhyme on "spuds" ; don't be auntie! meaning don't be silly! has travelled even further-it has come by transference from the English rhyming slang don't be Unlike Willie; Victor Trumper, a cigarette butt (by rhyme on the Australianism bumper).

A few examples are more complex than this. Listening to some deft words by a floor flogger (a drink steward) in a Sydney club, who has taken his order to the bar: " Three lilies new, Paterson Laing old, a oncer rogan's the kembla". Translated, this means "three schooners of new beer, two schooners of old beer, £ 1 given to buy them, given me the change in shillings". This translation is achieved by knowing that a schooner of beer is referred to in rhyming slang as a lily of Laguna and is then cut to lily; a duce, i. e. two, is formed on the name of a Sydney firm Paterson, Laing and Bruce, which is then cut to Paterson Laing (sometimes to Paterson alone); a oncer is £ 1, although this, of course, is not rhyming slang; rogan is a shilling, extracted from the English rhyming slang rogue and villain, and Kembla means change, extracted from Kembla Grange, the racecourse at Wollongong, N. S. W.

Another good example is melbourne with the meaning of "back". This is how it works out: Melbourne is short for Melbourne Grammer, the school; hammer and tack, which is a rhyme for back. Unfortunately, a great deal of rhyming slang fails to reach these levels. In the round-up of rhyming terms given below, only a few of the items are worthy of attention, they are used exactly for high school students. Because I quizzed them about how they know at Waracknabeal college. Aug. in '98.

I found that they use them exactly in daily life. The most used expressions are as follows.

dead horse sauce
 dog's eye meat pie
 bag of fruit suit
 East and West vest
 four by twos shoes
 tit for tat hat
 cry and laugh scarf
 dead wowsers trousers

fiddles and flutes boots
keys and locks socks
Joe Blake snake
Joe Rees bees
Joe Marks sharks
a macaroni pony
chock and log dog
apple sauce horse
Dad and Mum rum
Angus Murray curry
Gypsy Lee tea
Huckleberry Finn gin
kerb and gutter butter
loop the loop soup
Mother Machree tea
soft as silk milk
squatter's daughter water
Tom and Sam jam
Uncle Ned bread
stop thief beef
Betty Grable table
Teddy bear chair
bat and ball hall

The rhyming slang word for road id "frog and toad." Simply drop the rhyming word "toad" and say " I'm off down the frog." means I go down the road. And I met "trouble and strife". means I met my wife.

Examples:

after darks	sharks
alone	Pat Malone, I'm on my Pat tonight.
any good?	any plum pud?
arms	Warwick Farms, usually refers to lack of underarm hygiene. Someone may be a bit woofy (smelly) or Long Jetty (sweaty) under the Warwicks. A Sydney racecourse.
arse (bum)	Khyber luck (you arsey bastard); job dismissal; or sexual achievement for one to tell another to stick up your Khyber indicates a distinct lack of good will between the two.
back	hammer and tack (hammer), to be on someone's hammer is to pursue that person by keeping on his track or figuratively, "back". Also used to indicate a sudden lack of employment. "I got the hammer"

balls (testicles)	orchestra stalls Niagara Falls town halls
bank	J. Arthur Rank, used literally-I'm going to the J. Arthur' or figuratively by punters.
bar	near and far, I'll meet you in the near and far.
barber	Sydney Harbour
bath (tub)	Bib and Bub
bed	roses red (roses) Bill and Ted Roberta Flack = sack Roberta
beer	Ray Steher, Australian rugby player. Terry Dear, Australian radio personality.
belly	Ned Kelly, Notorious Australian bush ranger.
bet (to have a)	cast a net
bill (account)	Jack and Jill, What we get at the end of a restaurant meal.
blonde	magic wand, as in good sort.
bog (defecate)	hollow log One takes a bog as opposed to leaving it.
booze	Laperouse (Larpa) To be, or plan to be on the Larpa suggests rather more than a quiet social drink. Sydney suburb.
boss	pitch and toss Of shearing shed origins but now used to describe authority in the workplace.
bowl (cricket)	Coca-Cola
bowlers (lawn)	rock and rollers A somewhat facetious but not unkind term for the mostly elderly folk who play lawn bowls.
brandy	Fine and Dandy Champion Australian racehorse.
bread	lump of lead
broke	hearts of oak Often describes lack of success at the racetrack.
broolly (umbrella)	Aunt Molly
bum	deaf and dumb
butter	kerb and gutter
cab (taxi)	Sandy McNabb
can (beer)	Neville Wran NSW premier 1976-1986
cancer	Bengal Lancer civil answer Spanish dancer Jimmy Dancer

cash	sausage and mash Oscar Asche Aussie actor
change	Kembla Grange Money, Keep the Kembla. A racetrack south of Sydney.
cheque	goose's neck Gregory Peck nervous wreck
chilly	Picadilly
chunder	up and under The chunder or technicolour yawn, has become an Australian institution. Chunders always contain carrot fragments even when none have recently been eaten.
clock	dickory dock
cobber (mate)	thief and robber
cock (penis)	eight day clock The popular clock which lasted eight days when fully wound somehow contrasts with the average male appendage.
cold	soldiers bold (soldiers)
cook	babbling brook Army and outback cooks not noted for their culinary skills.
cop (policeman)	John Hop
Grap (shit)	Andy Capp
crock (unwell)	butcher's hook "I'm feeling a bit butchers." Some times used for look as in "Have a butchers at this."
cunt	Ballina Punt When one refers to another as a Ballina there is obviously a serious level of animosity between the two. "Some prefer All quiet on the Western Front"
curry	Arthur Murray When Indian restaurants were changing Australian's eating habits, Arthur Murray was teaching us to dance.
dance	Jack Palance US film actor.
daughter	ten furlongs = mile and a quarter
dole	rock and roll The curious custom of being paid for not working. "He's on the rock and roll."
dollar	Oxford scholar Rhodes scholar
dope (drug)	Bob Hope A broad term for all illegal drugs.

double (racing)	froth and bubble
drink	cuff link
drum (racing tip)	deaf and dumb
drunk	elephant's trunk Being "elephants" is more socially acceptable than being drunk. Wally the monk (molly the monk)
dunny	Gene Tunny The classic Australian outhouse. US heavyweight boxer.
ears	ginger beers
erection	State election
eyes	mince pies
face	Martin Place boat race
fart	horse and cart " Who horse and catred ? "
fat (erection)	Larrikin's hat "I've got half a larrikan."
feet	Plates of meat
ferry	Chuck Berry As seen on sydney Harbour.
finger	onkaparinga Engagements are formalised by placing the Frank Thring on the Onkaparinga. South Australian Blanket manufacture.
flowers	Cobar showers
flu	Dan McGrew influenza
flush (poker)	barmaid's blush
food	Rodney Rude Australian comedian.
fork	Duke of York
fridge	Brooklyn Bridge (refrigerator)
fuck	Donald Duck (Donald) "Did you get a Donald?"
full (drunk)	Roy Bull "I got a bit Roy Bull last night" Rugby league player.
function	Bondi Junction Sydney's best known suburb.
gay (homosexual)	Doris Day Hollywood actor.
gin	Vara Lynn (vera) Wartime English singer

	Huckleberry Finn
gin and water	mile-and -a-quarter
girl	twist and twirl
glass (beer)	forward pass
gloves	turtle doves
Greek	bubble and squeak Werris Creek Can be used for leak-urinate.
grouse (good)	Mickey Mouse In Aussi-speak, grouse means good and extra grouse means very good. Whilst grouse is rarely used today, Mickey Mouse remains. A Mickey Mouse result is a good result, although it can sometimes mean inferior quality "a Mickey Mouse watch."
guts	comic cuts (comics) He hit him in the comics.
hair	Fred Astair American actor/dancer born Fredrick Austerlize (1899-1987)
hands	German bands
harlot	apple charlotte
hat	tit for tat
head	Kelly Ned
heart	jam tart rasberry tart
horn (erection)	early morn Most erections occur in the early morn. Sarah Vaughan (Sarah) , US jazz singer.
horses (races)	tomato sauces
idiot	Beecham's Pill
jew	four by two (fourby) Usually spoken about Jewish people not to them.
jewellery	tom foolery (tom)
keg (beer)	Jersey Flegg Australian rugby league player.
kids	billy Lids (billys)
knackers (balls)	Jatz Crackers An Aussie biscuit.
knees	gum trees Gypsie Rose Lee(s)
lair (a dandy)	teddy bear One, who by showy dress or ostentatious manner, achieves general contempt.
lay	Johnny Ray US singer.
leak (urinate)	Werris Creek

	To have a Werris is classic Australian rhyming slang for urinating.
legs	bacon and eggs fried eggs, Ginger Meggs.
lie	pork pie Politicians are good at telling porkies.
lift (car ride)	Malclm Clift (Malcolm) Australian rugby league player and coach.
look	Captain Cook (captain) The original Cockney for "look" was "butchers hook." Now, have a captain at this is the common term.
matches	Jack Scratches
mate	China plate (China) The common form is China which is so often abbreviated that most are unaware that plate is attached. Used widely by Australian males even though no real evidence of mateship exists.
meal	Leonard Teal Australian actor.
milk	Acker Bilk (Acker) English Jazz musician
missus	cheese and kisses (cheese) She who must be obeyed.
money	Bugs Bunny bread and honey
mouth	north and south Pronouced "norf an souf."
nod	Murray cod Refers to betting on credit or "on the nod." An Australian inland river fish.
nose	I suppose Queensland shearing shed origins where it applied to a sheep's nose.
on credit	on the Murray cod
party	gay and hearty "We're having a gay and hearty next week."
pecker (penis)	Boris Becker A German tennis player of some note.
pee	you and me "I'm going for a you and me."
perve	optic nerve The careful study of attractive young ladies. "Have an optiv at that ! "
pictures	flea and itches Classic 1930's RS. People caught the bread and jam (tram) to the flea and itches. The term was very appropriate to many of the picture theatres of

	the time.
piddle	Nelson Riddle US bandleader. Jimmy Riddle.
piano	goanna
pie (meat)	dog's eye
piles	farmer Giles
plate	Reg Date Australian soccer player.
piss	hit and miss This is the most popular term. angel's kiss Johnny Bliss (Johnny) Australian rugby league footballer. snake's hiss Shirley Bliss (Shirley) Ex Miss Australia.
pissed	Adrian Quist (Adrian) To some, being Mozart, Brahms, or Schindlers, more accurately describes the state of inebriation. Most RS. users however prefer to be a bit Adrian. Mozart and Liszt An unlikely alliance of the 18th century Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and 19th century Hungarian Franz Liszt. Schindler's List A Hollywood movie based on Thomas Keneally's book, Schindler's Ark.
pocket	sky rocket
poof (homosexual)	horse's hoof
poofter	wooly woofter
pom (pommie)	to and from
poor	Archie Moore Describes a temporary shortage of funds rather than a permanent state of povrerty. US heavyweight boxer.
port (wine)	Goldsborough Mort Early sydney trading company.
price	curry and rice When asking the price of an item, Australians often use the term "emmachist ? "
pub (hotel)	rubbity dub (rubbity)
pull	Roy bull Australian rugby league player.
punch	cut lunch
purse	grey nurse
queen (homosexual)	grey nurse

rain	Frankie Laine US singer
razor	Dawn Fraser Champion Australian swimmer.
rent	Duke of Kent
ring	Frank Thring Australian actor.
river	Shake and shiver
road	frog and toad To hit the frog is one of the most popular of all RS phrases.
root	Angus & Coote The getting of a downtown jeweller was long a sexual boast of young Sydney men. A Sydney jewellery firm. Also Ron Coote, Australian rugby league player.
rum	Dad Mum
sack (bed)	hammer and tack
sauce (tomato)	dead horse
set	each way bet
sex	Vincent's and Bex Old Aussie headache powder.
schooner (beef)	Lilly of laguna (Lilly)
scotch (whisky)	Gordon & Gotch
scotch & water	Gordon and ten Obtained from Gordon & Gotch scotch and ten (furlongs) = mile and a quarter = water
shakes	Joe Blakes Usually the aftermath of a serious drinking session. = ducks and drakes
shark	Noah's (Noah)
sharks	after darks
shave	Dad and Dave
sheep	willow the weep
sheila (woman)	Charlie Wheeler Women today prefer not to be called sheilas or charlies.
shirt	Ernie and Bert
sister	blood and blister
shit	Edgar Britt Refers to the function rather than the end-product. One goes for an Edgar. Famous Aussie jockey. Jimmy Britt (boxer). Hard hit
shits	tom tits Emotional rather than physical. One gives another the tom tits.

shivers	Hawkesbury Rivers A convenient rhyme despite the fact that there is only one Hawkesbury River. A river north of Sydney.
shoes	Basin Street Blues
short (of money)	Holmes a Court Being shorts of money was an experience unknown to the late Australian business tycoon, Robert Holmes a Court.
shout (bar)	Wally Grout When its your Wally its your turn to buy the next round of drinks. Aussie Test cricketer of the 60's.
shower	fairy bower. Tyrone Power, Hollywood actor.
sick	Tom and Dick
silly	Uncle Willy Don't be Uncle Willy.
sin	Vickers Gin
sister	skin and blister
six (cricket)	Tom Mix
skin	thick and thin
slang	Jack Lang Ex Premier of NSW
sleep	Bo Peep
smoke	laugh and joke
snake	Joe Blake
snooze	Tom Cruise Hollywood actor.
soap	Cape of Good Hope
socket (golf)	Davy Crockett The fear of all golfers.
socks	Joe Rocks
soup	loop-the-loop
speech	Bill Peach One may be called upon to make a Bill Peach at the next Bondi Junction (function). Aussie TV personality.
stairs	apples and pears
steak	off break Cricketing term.
story	John dory What's the JD ? What's happening ? an Aussie coastal fish.
suit	bag of fruit
sweaty	Long Jetty A NSW town.
swim	Tiger Tim

Sydney	steak and kidney
taxi	Joe Maxi
tea	you and me "Let's have a cup of you and me."
teeth	Ted Heath English band leader. Barrier Reef
telephone	Al Capone This popular term immortalises the Italian-born Chicago crime boss who somehow managed to die of natural causes in 1947. eau de cologne
thief	tea leaf Applies to those engaged in petty theft rather than serious crime.
tie	Nazi spy
time	Harry Lime Of the film "Third Man" fame. What's the Harry Lime ?
tip (racing)	egg flip
tits	brace and bits Some prefer Eartha Kitts or each way bet = set.
titties	brace and bits Some prefer "Eartha Kitts" or "each way bet" = set
toes	these and those
tool (penis)	April fool
toss (cricket)	Joe Loss English bandleader.
tote	giddy goat
towel	Baden Powell Founder of the Boy Scouts movement
tram	bread and jam
trots (harness racing)	red hots Early harness racing was notorious for arranged race results. Red hot is slang for crooked.
trousers	council houses
try (rugby)	meat pie
tub (bath)	Bib and Bub
turd	Henry the Third Describes the tangible result of defecation as well as being a derogatory and very unkind description of another.
turner (cricket)	bunsen burner A cricketing term for a wicket which is taking spin.
uncle	Simon and Garfunkle
undies (underwear)	Reg Grundy's Aussie TV identity.
urinate	snakes hiss

waiter	hot potato Pronounce potato as "potatah" and the sense is maintained.
wanker	merchant banker The term wanker was originally used to describe those who were perceived to be regularly engaged in masturbation. Now used in a broader sense to identify those whose behaviour is unusual, unplesasant or generally unacceptable.
wash	lemon squash
water	squatter's daughter
wave (ocean)	Indian brave
whisky	gay and frisky
wicket (cricket)	Wilson Pickett
wide (cricket)	Frank Hyde Aussie rugby league player and commentator.
wife	trouble and strife (trouble)
wine	Lindsay Kline Australian cricketer of the 60's
winner	baked dinner Punters seek a baked dinner more than they seek a baked dinner.
wog	Dapto Dog During WW2, wog was a common and not unkind description of those of Middle Eastern origin. Today it seen as racist and usage is not recommended.
worries	River Murrays (river) Usually abbreviated to rivers as in no rivers or no wucking furries.
Yank	septic tank A somewhat unfortunate but essentially good natured reference to Americans. An upmarket dunny.

Conclusion

Rhyming Slang is a miscellaneous collection of phrases based on words which lend themselves to special treatment. Originally made popular by the quick-witted and waggish Cockneys in London's East End, rhyming slang spred to other parts of the world and in particular to Australia.

While rhyming slang tended to be used by those who frequented pubs, clubs and racecourses, it also became popular with a broader public particularly when a substitute was required for a more direct and perhaps socially unacceptable word. Most rhyming slang words deal with everyday matters and despite a preoccupation with drinking, gambling, body parts and others.

Rhyming slang has its rules. It consists of two or more words the last of which rhymes with the word replaced. Where applicable, the shedding of the second or rhyming word is encouraged. Even in a daily life, some of them are still in use for kids in Australia. As follows:

< Food and Drink >

dead horse (tomato sauce), dag's eye (meat pie), Dad and Mum (rum), Angus Murray (curry), Gypsie Lee (tea), Huckleberry Finn (gin), kerb and gutter (butter), loop the loop (soup), Mother Machree (tea), soft as silk (milk), squatter's daughter (water), Tom and Sam (jam), Uncle Ned (bread), stop thief (beef)

< Wear >

bag of fruit (suit), East and West (vest), four by twos (shoes), tit for tat (hat), cry and laugh (scarf), dead wowsers (trousers), fiddles and flutes (boots), keys and locks (socks)

< Animal >

Joe Blake (snake), Joe Ree (bees), a macaroni (pony), chock and log (dog), apple sauce (horse)

< Others >

Betty Grable (table), Teddy bear (chair), bat and ball (hall)

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