

CHAMBERS

Words, Wit and Wisdom

éclair /ā-kler', -klār or i-/ *n* a cake, long in shape but short in duration, with cream filling and *usu* chocolate icing. [Fr *éclair* lightning]

Over **100** years of
The Chambers Dictionary

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CHAMBERS
WORDS, WIT
AND WISDOM

100 YEARS OF
THE CHAMBERS DICTIONARY

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Chambers

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Photographs of William and Robert Chambers and The Chambers Institute are reproduced by kind permission of the Scottish Borders Council Museums and Galleries Service.



*The Wit And Wisdom Of
The Chambers Dictionary*



A person who looked up the word “éclair” in a standard dictionary would be extremely surprised to find it defined as *a cake, long in shape but short in duration*. However, this sort of humorous definition is by no means unfamiliar to users of *The Chambers Dictionary*. Chambers has always been a little different from its competitors.

Ever since it first appeared in 1901, under the name of *Chambers’s Twentieth Century Dictionary*, Chambers has gained a deserved reputation for having a uniquely witty style. Over the hundred years of its existence it has not only secured the trust of its users with its comprehensive coverage of English, but has also delighted them with its distinctive and often unexpected humour.

The entry for “éclair” is perhaps the best known, but by no means the only punning definition in the dictionary. The editors’ taste for wordplay is found again and again:

massage someone’s ego to flatter someone, rub someone up the right way

road hog a swinishly selfish or boorishly reckless motorist or other user of the road

xylophagan one of the *Xylophaga*, a genus of boring bivalves

This playfulness is also often to be found in the juxtaposition of incongruous terms for humorous effect, as in the following definitions:

comb out to search thoroughly for and remove (eg lice, men for military service)

lead out to conduct to execution or a dance

perpetrate to commit or execute (*esp* an offence, a poem, or a pun)

fish to catch or try to catch or obtain fish, or anything that may be likened to a fish (such as seals, sponges, coral, compliments, information or husbands)

Another typical type of definition that has delighted generations of users is the sarcastic commentary on humanity:

jaywalker a careless pedestrian whom motorists are expected to avoid running down

middle-aged between youth and old age, variously reckoned to suit the reckoner

waist-line a line thought of as marking the waist, but not fixed by anatomy in women's fashions

odour of sanctity a fragrance after death alleged to be evidence of saintship; facetiously applied to the living who have denied themselves the sensual indulgence of washing

This sardonic style is especially suited to the definitions of items whose existence might be considered questionable, as in this example:

table-turning movements of tables (or other objects) attributed by spiritualists to the agency of spirits, and by the sceptical to collective involuntary muscular action

At other times, definitions amuse by providing examples of the very thing they purport to describe:

bafflegab the professional logorrhea of many politicians, officials and salespeople, characterised by prolix abstract circumlocution and/or a profusion of abstruse technical terminology, used as a means of persuasion, pacification or obfuscation

These are just a few examples of the characteristic style that has won Chambers so many admirers. We shall see many more in the following pages as we look at the origins of the dictionary and trace its development over the past hundred years.

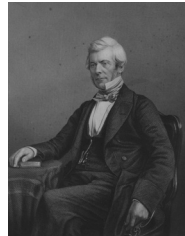


Who Was Chambers?

Although *The Chambers Dictionary* in its current form derives from Thomas Davidson's work of 1901, the Chambers name goes back further still.

The publishing firm of W.&R. Chambers was founded by William Chambers, who was born in 1800 in the town of Peebles in the Scottish Borders, and his brother Robert, born in Peebles in 1802. Their father had capriciously changed his surname to "Chalmers" when he was a schoolboy, but the sons reverted to the original spelling of the name – otherwise we may now be talking about *The Chalmers Dictionary*.

The family had been prosperous mill-owners, but the family fortunes took a disastrous turn during the Napoleonic Wars, and William and Robert grew up in times of hardship. The story goes that their father, feeling pity for the many French prisoners-of-war in Peebles, gave them cloth on credit. On their departure, the French prisoners promised that they would repay their debts as soon as they returned home, but they never did. The family was ruined, and in 1813 left Peebles for Edinburgh, leaving only Robert, who remained to complete his schooling.



William Chambers

In Edinburgh, William was forced to find work to help support the family, and was apprenticed to a bookseller for four shillings a week. The profession suited him well, as he was a passionate reader. However, he was so poor that he could not afford to buy candles, so he would rise at dawn to read by the early-morning light.

Robert was also an avid reader. His bookishness was probably increased because he had a deformity in his feet which left him unable to join in games at school. Like his brother, he went to great lengths to pursue his passion, even swapping his sandwiches for books. Although he was clever, his family could not afford to send him to university, so he too moved to Edinburgh, where he rented a one-roomed shop, and set himself up as a bookseller. He was just 16 years old. William's apprenticeship came to an end when he turned 18 and he joined Robert in the shop.

Although their beginnings were modest, they began to do well. They soon extended their interests from simply selling books to publishing them, investing some of their profits in the purchase of a small hand press. Although they had no training in printing or binding, William and Robert published 750 copies of *The Songs of Robert Burns* in about 1819. This was the nearest thing to a guaranteed best-seller in 19th-century Edinburgh, and brought further profits and some fame. They took work printing bills and notices and other successes followed, including *Traditions of Edinburgh*, written by Robert and published by the brothers in 1824.

In 1832 they began to publish *The Chambers's Journal*. This was a weekly, 16-page journal containing articles – many of them written by Robert – on subjects such as history, religion, language and science. It was an immediate success. Within a few years the weekly circulation had risen to 84,000 copies, and the brothers had achieved a measure of financial security. This new-found security did not, however, mean that they worked less diligently. In

fact, both William and Robert displayed an extraordinary capacity for work. William is said to have worked sixteen hours a day, and to have begrudged time spent eating to such an extent that he always bolted his food and allowed himself only fifteen minutes for his meals.

The Chambers's Journal was followed in 1834 by *Chambers's Instruction for the People*. This was a series of sheets on subjects such as science, maths, history, geography and literature, bound in sets. Eventually around 170,000 sets were sold, amounting to over 2 million individual sheets. This publication also saw some success abroad; a US edition was published, and it was translated into French and – more surprisingly perhaps – Welsh.

In 1835, the brothers started work on *Chambers's Educational Course*, a series of short works and schoolbooks. There were eventually more than 100 titles in this series on almost every subject. 1859 saw the publication of the first part of *Chambers's Encyclopedia*, which was published in 520 parts between 1859 and 1868.

In 1861, they published their first dictionary, edited by Arnold J. Cooley. This was followed in 1867 by *Chambers's Etymological Dictionary*, which was compiled by James Donald. (It is presumably entirely coincidental that William Chambers also kept a donkey that answered to the name of Donald.) A larger version of Donald's dictionary, *Chambers's English Dictionary*, was published in 1872, with a second edition in 1898; then the Reverend Thomas Davidson produced a new, compact edition of the English dictionary, *Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary*, in 1901.



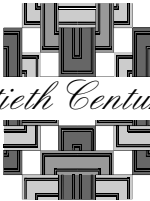
Robert Chambers

Educational publishing made William and Robert famous. Robert was a learned man in his own right, and as well as contributing many of the articles for the *Journal*, and writing books for his brother to publish, was a leading proponent of the theory of evolution, whose work is credited as a forerunner of Darwin's *Origins of the Species* and caused considerable controversy. Both brothers were philanthropists: they gave money to restore St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh; William was Lord Provost of Edinburgh twice; and they both received honorary law degrees (William from the University of Edinburgh, Robert from the University of St Andrews). By the end of the 19th century, W.&R. Chambers was one of the largest English-language publishers in the world.

William never forgot his original home of Peebles. In 1849 he bought the estate of Glenormiston, five miles from the town. Then, in 1859, he presented to the town a large building in the High Street. Ever mindful of bringing knowledge to the masses, he altered the building to include a library, reading rooms and a museum. To this day the Chambers Institute remains one of the principal buildings of the town.

Although he was the younger of the two, Robert died first, in 1871. William outlived his brother by twelve years, dying in 1883. They are commemorated in Peebles by a plaque on the wall of the house where they were born, and their name is still attached to some of the most popular reference books in the world.





The First Twentieth Century Dictionary

Although William and Robert Chambers had published an English Dictionary as early as 1861, it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that *The Chambers Dictionary* took shape in anything like its current form.

In 1901, the year of the death of Queen Victoria and of the first transatlantic wireless message, the Reverend Thomas Davidson produced a shortened version of James Donald's dictionary, entitled *Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary*. As well as being an ordained clergyman, Davidson was an experienced lexicographer, and had produced two earlier dictionaries for Chambers. In preparing the *Twentieth Century Dictionary* he was concerned to produce a dictionary that contained all of the words that a user might wish to look up, but was easier to carry and handle than its cumbersome predecessors.

He produced a dictionary that covered much the same number of words as its predecessors, but was printed on thinner paper, and with smaller type. Moreover, the definitions were compressed and condensed to produce a much more portable volume, which could be carried about and could sit easily on a table or shelf.

This new dictionary fortuitously coincided with the start of the new century, and the name of the *Twentieth Century Dictionary* captured the feeling that this was a new style of book for a new age.

The basic format of this dictionary and many of the conventions it introduced were to be retained for the next hundred years,

although the content was to undergo constant revision to keep pace with changes in language use.

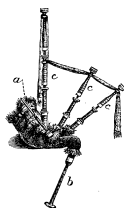
A striking feature of the first edition of the dictionary was the inclusion of many line drawings to illustrate the meanings. A selection of these has been reproduced in this booklet to give a flavour of what the dictionary looked like in 1901.

Illustration of an Aplustre from the 1901 edition



... the ornament rising above the stern of ancient ships, often a sheaf of volutes ...

Illustration of Bagpipes from the 1901 edition



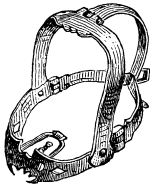
... a musical wind-instrument, consisting of a leathern bag fitted with pipes ...

Illustration of a Jester's Bauble from the 1901 edition



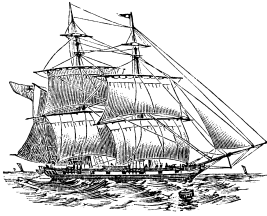
... a stick surrounded by a head with ass's ears, and forming the mock emblem of the court jester ...

Illustration of Branks from the 1901 edition



... a scold's bridle, having a hinged iron framework to enclose the head and a bit or gag to fit into the mouth and compress the tongue—used so late as 1772 at Langholm, and till 1856, for immorality, at Bolton-le-Moors in Lancashire ...

Illustration of a Brig from the 1901 edition



... a two-masted, square-rigged vessel ...

Illustration of a Chasuble from the 1901 edition



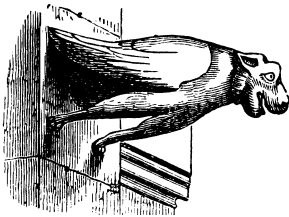
.... a sleeveless vestment worn over the alb by the priest while celebrating mass, once round or elliptical, now rectangular, with a hole in the middle to slip over the head. It seldom hangs much lower than the hips ...

Illustration of a Diving-dress from the 1901 edition



... the water-tight costume of a diver,
with special provision for receiving air
...

Illustration of a Gargoyle from the 1901 edition



... a projecting spout, conveying
the water from the roof-gutters
of buildings, often representing
human or other figures ...

Illustration of a Life-belt from the 1901 edition



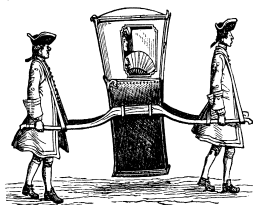
... a belt either inflated with air, or with cork attached, for sustaining a person in the water ...

Illustration of a Pillory from the 1901 edition



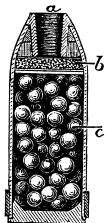
... a wooden frame, supported by an upright pillar or post, and having holes through which the head and hands of a criminal were put as a punishment, disused in England since 1837 ...

Illustration of a Sedan-chair from the 1901 edition



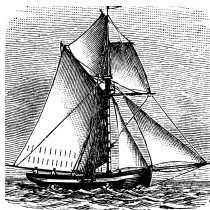
... a covered chair for one,
carried on two poles generally
by two bearers ...

Illustration of a Shrapnel Shell from the 1901 edition



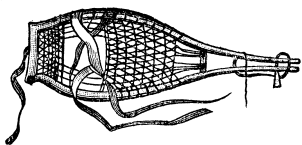
... a shell filled with musket-
balls, called after its inventor,
General Shrapnel who died in
1842 ...

Illustration of a Sloop from the 1901 edition



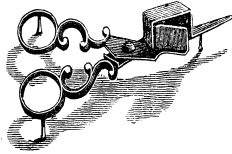
... a light boat: a one-masted cutter-rigged vessel, differing from a cutter, according to old authorities, in having a fixed bowsprit and somewhat smaller sails in proportion to the hull ...

Illustration of a Snow-shoe from the 1901 edition



... a great flat shoe worn to prevent sinking in the snow...

Illustration of a pair of Snuffers from the 1901 edition



... an instrument for taking the snuff off a candle ...

Illustration of Spatter-dashes from the 1901 edition



... coverings for the legs, to keep them clean from water and mud, a kind of gaiters ...

Illustration of a Sporrán from the 1901 edition




... an ornamental pouch worn in front of the kilt by the Highlanders of Scotland...

Illustration of a Surcoat from the 1901 edition



... an overcoat, generally applied to the long flowing drapery of knights anterior to the introduction of plate-armour...



*A Century Of Dictionary Making
And Dictionary Makers*



Chambers's *Twentieth Century Dictionary* quickly became a favourite. It was relatively compact, and yet it contained a huge vocabulary of literary, rare, dialect and Scottish words. Users soon discovered and delighted in a number of idiosyncratic definitions such as those for **abloom** ("in a blooming state") and **sea serpent** ("an enormous marine animal of serpent-like form frequently seen and described by credulous sailors, imaginative landsmen and common liars").

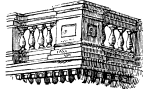
It is the fate of dictionaries that no sooner are they published than they begin to become outdated. The early years of the twentieth century saw many discoveries in science and other areas of human activity, and these gave rise to a huge number of new words and meanings. Nevertheless, Davidson's edition of the dictionary remained in use until 1952. From time to time alterations were made to the printers' plates, and the dictionary was periodically augmented by supplements which covered the many new words which had entered the language since 1901.

In 1914, Davidson left Chambers to take charge of a church in south Ayrshire, and the editorship of the dictionary was taken over by William and Liddell Geddie. The Geddie brothers picked up on Davidson's occasional idiosyncratic definitions, and produced many more of their own. Most of the quirkiest definitions that are to be found in the dictionary originate from this period, including Liddell Geddie's celebrated definition of **éclair**.

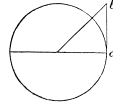
Some of the Geddies' definitions have been reworded in later editions to comply with modern tastes. The dictionary no longer defines a **baby-sitter** as "one who mounts guard over a baby

Illustrations from the 1904 edition

Baluster



Tangent



to relieve the usual attendant" or the **Land o' the Leal** as "the home of the blessed after death – heaven, not Scotland".

By the middle of the century, it was clear that it was no longer sufficient to add supplements of new material to Davidson's text. The entire dictionary was overhauled: every existing entry was subjected to scrutiny, and some were discarded altogether. A huge number of new words and phrases were added, reflecting the advancements of science, social changes and linguistic developments. The editors were aware in particular of the "virtual drying up of the Atlantic as a speech barrier" as the influence of American English increased.

The result of the brothers' work was the *New Mid-Century Version of the Twentieth Century Dictionary* which was published in 1952. This version of the dictionary was over 150 pages longer than the original 1901 edition, but was still of a manageable size. A further supplement of new words was added in 1959.

The brothers received considerable assistance from Miss Agnes Macdonald, who had joined Chambers in 1944, and worked as an assistant editor. In 1958 she took over the editorship of the *Twentieth Century Dictionary*, and the dictionary entered a new era.

Miss Macdonald is remembered as a formidable figure. She was known as "Nancy", although no-one at Chambers would dare call her that to her face (and probably would not even in today's

Illustrations from the 1901 edition

Lichgate



Sepal



more informal atmosphere, in the opinion of those who remember her).

She took a dim view of some of her predecessors' more flippant definitions, considering them to be inappropriate in a book which was now used widely throughout the globe as an educational reference tool, and many of these entries were modified or discarded when a new edition was published in 1972.

This edition incorporated a huge amount of new material. The process of collecting cuttings from newspapers had been started by John Dickie, who had taken over care of the dictionary after the Geddies. For the 1972 edition a vast quantity of material was pasted into "Miss Macdonald's notebooks", and this was fed into the new edition, making it 20 per cent longer than its predecessor. Its title also changed to simply *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, dispensing with the possessive 's.

Miss Macdonald's edition won considerable acclaim, and she was awarded the OBE in 1973 for her services to publishing. However, she had been working under the strain of failing health, and died in 1974, shortly after retiring from Chambers.


The next edition of the dictionary was published in 1983 under the supervision of Betty Kirkpatrick, who had worked under Miss Macdonald as a principal assistant editor. She realised the great affection with which Chambers' humorous definitions were held by readers, and took the opportunity to reinstate many of those that had been omitted by her predecessor.

By the 1980s, Chambers had become established as the dictionary of choice for aficionados of crosswords and word games. Many leading crossword compilers appreciated the dictionary as a treasure-trove of unusual vocabulary, and recommended potential solvers to consult it. Chambers also became the official dictionary of Scrabble[®], and dedicated players of that game began to devote themselves to studying the dictionary for words which would help them to confound their opponents.

On occasion, however, the dictionary did not move swiftly enough to satisfy some of its users. In the 1960s an aspiring crossword setter was asked to provide a cryptic clue for the word **miniskirts**. On finding that the word had not yet been added to the dictionary, he came up with: "Abbreviations not in Chambers, but should not be looked up anyway!".

As the 1980s progressed, a new title was sought for the dictionary in order to stress its continuing relevance beyond the twentieth century. The edition produced under Catherine Schwarz in 1988 bore the title *Chambers English Dictionary*, but this title was abandoned in 1993 in favour of *The Chambers Dictionary*, the name that was also used for the last edition of the twentieth century, published in 1998.

The process of producing dictionaries had by now become very different from the days of Thomas Davidson and William Geddie. Today's editors benefit from the latest technology, which allows for much more frequent revisions. Nevertheless, successive editors have sought to retain something of the character of Davidson's work. Although the current edition of *The Chambers Dictionary* is almost two-thirds as long again as the first edition, it remains, in contrast with its competitors, relatively easy to handle; yet it still contains a range of vocabulary unmatched by any other single-volume English dictionary, and it still delights its readers with its uniquely witty definitions.



The Evolution Of The Language (1)

New Words



Every new edition of the Chambers Dictionary has recorded the latest words to enter the English language. Taken together, the lists of new entries form a fascinating chronicle of the evolution of language and culture through the twentieth century.

As early as 1905, the editors were aware that new words needed to be added to make the printed dictionary complete. A single-page supplement printed at that date includes some very familiar words, such as **aeroplane** and **electron**, alongside others which have not progressed into the mainstream of the language so smoothly:

NEW WORDS.

Acetone, a'se-tōn, *n.* one of a class of carbon compounds in many respects similar to the aldehydes; also called *Ketone*. [From *Acetic*.]

Aeroplane, a'evrō-plān, *n.* a form of flying-machine; a small plane for aerostatic experiments. (Gr. *1905*, *air*, *L. planus*, plain.)

Aitroscope, a'i-tē-skōp, *n.* an instrument containing several lenses and mirrors, so arranged that an observer can see beyond intervening objects.

Carburettor, kar-bū-ret'tor, *n.* an apparatus for charging gases with carbon.—Also **Carburet'ter**.

Dephlegmata, de-fleg'mā, *v.t.* (*dehō*) to free from water.—*n.* **Dephlegmation**, **Dephlegmat'or**.

Electron, ē-lek'trōn, *n.* a particle or corpuscle vastly more minute than anything heretofore contemplated by science—in mass about a thousandth part of that of a hydrogen atom; and identified with the charge of negative electricity with which it is indissolubly associated. [From the root of **Electric** (q. v.).]

Formalin, form'al-in, *n.* a powerful antiseptic and germicide.—Also **Formaldehyde** (see **Aldehyde**).

Marconigram, mar-ō'n-gram, *n.* a message transmitted by 'wireless' telegraphy. [From *Marconi*, the inventor of the system, and *Gr. gramma*, that which is written.]

Mercerize, mē'ōr-iz, *v.t.* to treat cotton so as to make it appear like silk. [From *Mercez* (1791-1866), the inventor of the process.]

Motor-garage, mō'tor-gā'r-āzh, *n.* a depot where motor-cars are stored or repaired and provided with accessories. [*Motor* and *Fr. garage—gar*, dock, railway station; from the High-German root found in **Avare** (q. v.).]

Ouite, o'uit, *n.* *Sombroero ouano*.

Paraldehyde, pār'al-de-hīd, *n.* a colourless liquid, of disagreeable taste and smell, used to produce sleep. [See **Aldehyde**.]

Radio-activity, rā'di-ō-ak-tiv'i-ti, *n.* the power of producing photographic or electric effects by a

process identical with, or analogous to, radiation, observed in uranium, thorium, radium, and other substances.

Radioscope, rā'di-ō-skōp, *n.* an instrument for detecting radiation. [See **Radiant**.]

Radium, rā'di-um, *n.* a substance derived in 1898 from pitch-blenite or black oxide of uranium, and found to have perhaps a million times more radio-activity than uranium. [See **Radiant**.]

Röntgenize, rōnt'gen-iz, *v.t.* to treat by the Röntgen rays or X-rays—those dark or invisible rays (discovered in 1895 by *Röntgen* of Würzburg) emitted under the influence of an electric current from a glass bulb highly exhausted of air, and able when passed through the human body to imprint on a photographic plate a shadow picture of the bones or of bullets, &c., embedded in the flesh.—*n.* **Röntgenography**, photography by these rays;

Röntgenology, the study of the rays; **Röntgen-copy**, observation by means of them; **Röntgenotherapy**, healing by means of them.

Serendipity, sē-en-dip'i-ti, *n.* a love for rare old books and other articles of virtue.—*adj.* appertaining to this. [Coined from *Serendib*, a character in the *Arabian Nights* who went about picking up odds and ends and piecing them together. Serendib was also the Arabian name for the island of Ceylon.]

Spiatharoscope, spī-ath'ar-skōp, *n.* an instrument devised by Sir W. Crookes for observing the scintillations produced in zinc sulphide by a small fragment of a radium compound placed near it. [*Gr. spīatharia*, a spark, and *skōpein*, to see.]

Sulphonal, sul'fō-nal, *n.* a chemical compound used as a hypnotic and anæsthetic, and derived in part from potassium sulpho hydrate.

Telephony, tel-ē'fō-ni, *n.* the transmitted influence of a male by whom a female has previously conceived upon her subsequent offspring by another male. [*Gr. tēlē*, at a distance, *phōnia*, a begetting.]

Trional, trī'ō-nal, *n.* a drug used as a hypnotic, akin to sulphonal, but safer.

The 1936 Supplement

By 1936, the dictionary included a supplement of new words that ran to forty-seven pages and chronicled the startling changes that had taken place since the beginning of the century.

The horror of the First World War had led to the appearance of **shell-shock**, **trench-fever** and **gas-mask**, while the Russian Revolution gave us **Bolshevik** and **Soviet**. The happier times of the Roaring Twenties saw the inclusion of **jazz**, **ragtime**, **boot-legger** and **talkies**, although young men of the time had to beware of the **vamp** ("a featherless bird of prey"). The seeds of another war can be detected in the inclusion of **Fascist**.

The emergence of the motor-car and aeroplane as modes of transport account for many of the new words appearing in the early decades of the twentieth century, including **dashboard**, **windscreen**, **garage** and a new sense of **park**, while other new forms of transport included the **biplane**, the **helicopter** and the **taxi**.

Various fields of human endeavour contributed words to denote new concepts: from science came **relativity** and **vitamin**, from art **Cubism** and **futurism**, and from psychology **behaviourism** and **psychoanalysis**. But alongside these can be found more mundane items. The dictionary gave a cautious acceptance of **phone** ("a colloquial abbreviation of telephone") and the golf terms **birdie** and **eagle** (which it regarded as American slang). Other words found in this supplement include **lipstick**, **cafeteria** and **suitcase**.

<p>Jazz, <i>jaz</i>, <i>n.</i> an obstreperous form of rag-time music ; a dance thereto.—Also <i>v.z.</i></p>
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The New Mid-Century Version (1952)

By the time that the 1952 edition of the dictionary was published, another war had contributed new words to the language. The late 1930s saw **Nazi** and **blitz** appear, soon to be followed in the 1940s by **atom bomb** and a new sense of **holocaust** (“a huge slaughter or destruction of life”). Other words from wartime were **evacuee** and **ration-book**. Meanwhile, a taste of things to come in the second half of the century appeared in the form of **apartheid** and **cold war**.

Huge leaps forward in science and technology led to the emergence of many words: **radar** was introduced, along with **jet-propulsion**, while advances in medicine led to the inclusion of **antibiotic** and **penicillin**. New materials such as **nylon** and **plastic** were included, and the environment was altered by the emergence of the **skyscraper**. The emergence of the **roundabout** and **traffic-lights** hints at a vastly increased use of road transport.

For those more inclined to stay at home, there were plenty of ways to spend one’s leisure time, such as doing a **jigsaw puzzle**, playing with a **yo-yo**, or reading a **thriller**. The word **radio** was now used to refer to what previously been called a wireless, and this was now augmented by **television**. The mid-century edition of the dictionary also hints at the coming rock’n’roll age with the inclusion of **juke-box** and **disk-jockey** (“one who gives a recital of gramophone records”).

ra'tion-
book, -card, a book, card, of coupons or vouchers for rationed commodities

The 1959 Supplement

The years immediately following the 1952 edition saw significant social and political developments, many of which were reflected in the supplement of new words compiled in 1959.

The post-war years had seen the arrival of the **motorway**, **social security** and the **comprehensive school**, all of which appear for the first time in the 1959 supplement.

The influence of American culture is notable among the new arrivals of this time, with words such as **bebop**, **beatnik**, **cool cat** (“one who appreciates avant-garde types of jazz, a hipster”), **sweater girl**, **tee shirt** and **motel**. The advent of **rock’n’roll** is accompanied by the appearance of **record player**, **album** and **discotheque**.

Political events exerted a strong influence on the development of new vocabulary in the post-war years with **brinkmanship**, **McCarthyism** and **Nato** all featuring.

Technological innovations first recorded in the 1959 supplement include **aqualung**, **laser** and **lie detector**, while among the latest idiomatic phrases to be included were **far-out** (“of jazz or its addicts, more up to date than ‘cool’”), **the cat’s whiskers** and **keep up with the Joneses**.

<p>discothèque, -theque, <i>dēs-kō-tek</i>, <i>n.</i> club for dancing to gramophone records. [Fr.]</p>

The 1972 Edition

The 1972 edition includes many new words that emerged during the colourful and turbulent decade of the 1960s.

The 1960s witnessed the first man in space, and accordingly the 1972 edition introduces new vocabulary such as **space probe** and **Lunar Excursion Module** into the dictionary. Other science and technology newcomers include **genetic engineering, fibre optics, the pill** and **hologram**.

Demonstrations against political and social inequality in various parts of the world prompt the inclusion of the term **civil rights** for the first time. The appearance of the terms **nuclear weapon** and **nuclear warfare** reflects the mounting concerns regarding the Cold War.

The broader range of cultural influences to which English speakers were subjected in the post-war years is discernible in the arrival of **au pair** (from French), **pizza** (from Italian), and **sauna** (from Finnish).

New arrivals such as **hippy, psychedelic** and **swinging** ("with it, fully alive to, and appreciative of, the most recent trends and fashions in living") illustrate the popular culture of this era. **Mini-skirt** appears for the first time in the 1972 edition, along with such new terms as **à go-go, groovy** and **Flower People**.

<p>Flower People, colourfully dressed adherents of a cult arising in the mid nineteen sixties which rejected materialism and advocated universal love</p>
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The 1977 Supplement

The major shifts in social conventions and political attitudes that were reflected in the 1972 edition continued to generate new words as the 1970s progressed. Many of these were captured in a supplement added in 1977.

The women's liberation movement prompted terms such as **male chauvinist** and **Ms** to appear for the first time. The peace movement and anti-war protests are reflected in the addition of **nuke** and **sit-in**.

The rapid advancement of computer technology and space exploration is reflected in the addition of words such as **database**, **chip**, **teleprocessing** and **black hole**. The inclusion of **listed building** and **greenhouse effect** illustrates the tension between technological advancement and the preservation of historical and environmental resources.

New forms of entertainment gave us **Frisbee[®]**, **skateboard**, **safari park** and **chat-show**, which all make their first appearance in the 1977 supplement. Popular culture of this time is also represented by **teeny-bopper** ("a teenage girl, who follows enthusiastically the latest trends in pop-music, clothes etc") and new idiomatic phrases such as **blow the whistle** and **the name of the game**.

<p>Ms, <i>miz</i>, <i>n.</i> title substituted for Miss or Mrs before the name of a woman, to avoid distinguishing between the unmarried and the married.</p>
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The 1983 Edition

A major new edition published in 1983 included recently-minted new words as well as several older words which had hitherto escaped the notice of the editors.

A great many words associated with computers entered the dictionary at this point, including **byte**, **floppy disk**, **BASIC** and **bar code**. This subject was to prove a most productive area for new words for the remainder of the century.

Aside from the virtual world, the recently-concluded Falklands War had brought **Exocet** and **yomp** ("to carry heavy equipment on foot over difficult terrain") into the mainstream of the language.

Concerns over social class are reflected by the inclusion of the **social climber**, who may have enjoyed the arrival of **nouvelle cuisine** and the **Jacuzzi**[®], as well as the attentions of the **pa-parazzi**. Two less fashionable newcomers were the **wimp** and the **train-spotter**.

This edition saw the arrival of **aerobics** into the language, as well as the accompanying **leg-warmers**. For those of a less energetic disposition, there was the **Rubik's cube**[®] and the **fan-zine**.

Other phrases added for this edition included **fast food**, **nitty-gritty** and **get-rich-quick**.

<p>floppy disc (<i>comput.</i>) a storage device in the form of a thin, bendable disc.</p>

The 1988 Edition

Many of the new words which entered the dictionary in the 1988 edition reflect the economic boom of the period. Terms such as **yuppie**, **conspicuous consumption**, **venture capital** and **power breakfast** (“a high-level business discussion over breakfast”) exemplify the concept of **Thatcherism** – a word which also occurs for the first time in the 1988 edition.

When people were not making money in the eighties, they were likely to be in the gym getting ready to **pump iron**, or perhaps riding a **mountain bicycle**, listening to a **ghetto-blaster** or visiting a new **theme park**.

A new disease called **AIDS** entered the dictionary, while the debate about abortion led to the inclusion of **pro-lifer**.

Other words entering the dictionary in this period reflect an explosion of interest in world cuisine, with words such as **coulis**, **linguini**, **pesto** and **star fruit** making their first appearance, and also in alternative medicine, with the inclusion of **aromatherapy** and **reflexology**.

Among the latest technological innovations included in the 1988 edition were the **camcorder**, the **smart card** and the **cell-phone**. Elsewhere, scientists were developing the idea of the **genetic fingerprint**.

<p>Thatcherism <i>thach'ər-izm</i>, <i>n.</i> the policies and style of government associated with Margaret <i>Thatcher</i>, British prime minister 1979 —</p>

The 1993 Edition

Advances in mass communications provided a plethora of new words as the Chambers Dictionary entered its tenth decade. The 1993 edition saw the word **Internet** included for the first time (curiously as an alternative form of **internetting**), and the appearance of **virtual reality**. Other technological newcomers included **car phone** and **voice mail**.

Elsewhere, a burgeoning interest in environmental issues led to the arrival of **biodiversity**, **ecofriendly** and **eco-tourism**, while some new political creatures appeared in the shape of the **spin doctor**, the **europhile** and the **euro sceptic**.

Among the hazards of life in the 1990s were **ethnic cleansing** and **repetitive strain injury**. Worrying about **negative equity** ("the situation, caused by a fall in house prices, in which a person owns property that is worth less than the value of his or her mortgage") might cause a person to become a **chocoholic**, but a solution might be at hand in **liposuction** ("a surgical process for the removal of excess, unwanted fat from the body").

New musical trends given entries in the 1993 edition included **hip-hop** and **techno**, while **Rollerblades®**, **bungee jumping** and **crop circles** also appeared for the first time.

Other new entries in this edition included **proactive**, **out to lunch** and **political correctness**.

<p>political correctness (<i>adj</i> phrase politically correct; <i>orig US</i>) the avoidance of expressions or actions that may be understood to exclude or denigrate groups or minorities traditionally perceived as disadvantaged by eg race, sex, disability, class, political alignment or sexual inclination; the use of recommended alternative expressions intended to be non-discriminatory</p>

The 1998 Edition


1998 saw the final edition of the dictionary's first century. As in the previous edition, technology led the way. The **information superhighway** was now established in the lexicon, along with other Internet-related words such as **newsgroup**, **browser** and **cybercafé**. There were, however, concerns about the ability of computers to cope with the coming millennium, giving rise to further new terms in **millennium bug** and **millennium compliant**.

The ever-widening range of exotic foods entering the language was reflected in the inclusion of **Balti**, **ciabatta**, **crostini** and **masala**, as well as the **cafetière**.

New words such as **touchy-feely** ("involving emotion and personal contact as distinct from intellectual activity") and **tree hugger** ("an environmentalist"), as well as the arrival of **reiki** and **Prozac**[®], indicated a desire to move away from the stress-filled eighties, but there were new hazards in the shape of **road rage** and **drive-by** shootings.

Other new arrivals in this edition included **alcopop**, **new lad** and **girl power**, as well as a new currency called the **euro**, while among the latest colloquial phrases to be admitted were **from hell**, **in-your-face** and **the full monty**

<p>millennium compliant (<i>comput</i>) able to deal with dates after the end of 1999 without error.</p>



The Changing Face Of The Dictionary

Just as the content of the dictionary has evolved over the past hundred years to reflect the changing times, so too the physical appearance of the book has gone through a series of transitions, as the publishers have sought to present the mass of information in the book in a clear and attractive way.

Chambers is always readily identifiable by its red cover. Yet even such a signature feature as this has seen changes over the various editions of the book. The shade has varied from a restrained salmon-pink colour to a more eye-catching fire-engine red. Moreover, the covers of the different editions also vary with regard to design. Dictionaries printed in the first part of the century have an elaborate design, while those from the middle part of the century are simpler, with lettering that looks rather tall and spidery to modern eyes. Recent editions have sought to convey the authority appropriate to a dictionary by a squarer lettering style.

Similarly, the insides of the book have changed in appearance over the years. Successive designers have sought to bring the appearance of the dictionary into line with modern tastes, employing a range of typographical innovations, while at the same time retaining the basic structure of the text. With each new edition there has been more and more material to incorporate, and yet the designers have also been conscious of the need to make the book easy to read: the size of type has tended to increase to make the dictionary easier to use, and more recent editions give an impression of having more space on each page, and a greater contrast between different typefaces used. The

aim has always been to pack as much information as possible into the book without making it difficult for the user to find and decipher that information.

There are several features of the **1901 edition** which have not survived into modern editions. Besides the striking illustrations, the first edition also boasts ornate capitals at the start of each letter of the alphabet. In this edition, space is saved by starting a new letter of the alphabet on the same page, with only a horizontal line separating it from the previous letter.

Lynx, *lynks*, *n.* a genus of *Felidae*, with the body elevated at the haunches, long fur, a short tail, the ears tipped with black.—*adj.* **Lynx's**, **an**, **Lynx-eyed**, sharp-sighted. [L.—Gr.]
Lyon Court, *l'run kōrt*, *n.* the court in Scotland with

Lythe, *lit'h*, *adj.* (*Spens.*) pliant, flexible. [*Lithé*.]
Lytta, *lit'ā*, *n.* a longitudinal vermiform cartilaginous or fibrous band on the upper surface of the tongue in carnivores—the 'worm' of a dog's tongue. [Gr.]



the thirteenth letter of the alphabet, belonging to the labio-nasal class of consonants. **M** = 1000; **M̄** = 1,000,000.—**M-roof**, a roof formed by the junction of two common roofs, so that its end is like the letter M.

Ma, *mā*, *n.* a childish contraction for *mamma*.
Ma'am, *mām*, *n.* a colloquial contraction of *madam*—vulgarly **Marm**, **Mum**.
Mab, *mab*, *n.* the name of a female fairy: the queen of the fairies—hence any fairy. [*W. mab*, child.]
Mab, *mab*, *v.t.* and *v.i.* (*prov.*) to dress untidily.
Mabinogion, *mab-i-nō'ji-on*, *n.* a collection of four Arthurian romances, embodied in the 12th century, embraced with seven other prose tales in the *Red Book*, or *Hergest*, a Welsh MS. of the 14th century—the whole published and translated by Lady Charlotte Guest in 1838. [*W.* 'children's tales']
Mac, *mak*, a prefix in Scotch names, meaning *son* (of). [*Gael.* and *Ir. mac*, son; *W. map*, *mab*, also *ap*, *ab*.]
Macaberesque, *ma-kā-bēr-ēsk*, *adj.* pertaining to, or like, the Dance of Death. [*Fr. La Danse Macabre*, Low L. *Machaberosum chorea*, the dance of the Maccabees, prob. because the seven brothers whose martyrdom is recorded in the 7th chapter of the 2d Book of Maccabees played an important part in the earliest form of the 14th-cent. drama on the subject.]

prepared from the glutinous granular flour of hard varieties of wheat, pressed out through a perforated vessel into long tubes, and then dried: a medley:



M-roof.

something fanciful and extravagant; a fool; a fop:—*pl.* **Macarō'nis**, **Macarō'nies**.—*n.* **Macaronic**, a confused heap, a medley; a macaronic poem.—*adj.* **Macaronic**, **Macarō'nian**, like a macaroni, trifling, affected: of a kind of burlesque verse, consisting of modern words Latinised, or Latin words modernised, intermixed with genuine Latin words. [Old It. *macaroni*—*maccare*, to crush.]
Macaroon, *mak-a-rōon'*, *n.* a sweet biscuit made chiefly of almonds and sugar. [*Fr.*—It. *macaroni* above.]
Macassar-oil, *ma-ka'sar-oil*, *n.* an oil much used for the hair, imported from India and other Eastern countries. [From *Macassar* in Celebes.]
Macaw, *ma-kaw'*, *n.* a genus of large and beautiful birds with a long tail, found in tropical America, closely allied to the parrots. [Brazil. *macao*.]

Another feature of the first edition is the use of initial capital letters for each defined word – a convention which users must have found unhelpful when they wished to know whether a word should be capitalised or not.

The illustrations and ornate capital letters disappear in the **1952 edition**, and a heavier, squatter typeface is used, bringing the page design closer to modern ideas of what a dictionary should look like. Entry words are no longer capitalised, and the page number is moved from the foot to the top of the page, changing places with the key to pronunciation.

One innovation in this edition was the modification of the symbols used to indicate pronunciations. This included the introduction of the "schwa" (ə) in place of a dotted e to represent unstressed syllables. Soon after the publication of this edition, one irate lady is reported to have written to the publishers demanding her money back because her new dictionary "had a lot of upside-down e's in it"!

nicker

lite—*kupfer*, copper, *nickel*, a mischievous sprite, goblin, because the ore looked like copper-ore but yielded no copper.]

nicker, *nɪk'ər*, *v.t.* (Scot.) to neigh; snigger—*n.* a neigh; snigger; loud laugh.—Also **nicker** (*nɪk'k'ər*).

nicker, *nɪk'ər*, *n.* a water-monster or water-demon. [O.E. *nicor*.]

nicker, *nɪk'ər*, *n.* a clay marble (also **knicker**): the round seed of a *Caesalpinia* (or *Gulandina*), used for playing marbles (also **nick'ar**). [Cf. Du. *knikker*, North Ger. *knicker*.]

nicknack, &c. Same as **knick-knack**, &c.

nickname, *nɪk'nəm*, *n.* a name given in contempt or sportive familiarity.—*v.t.* to give a nickname to, [M.E. *neke-name*, for *eke-name*, with *n* from the indefinite article; see **an**, **eke**, **name**.]

nickum, *nɪk'əm*, *n.* (Scot.) a mischievous boy.

nicol, *nɪk'l*, *n.* a crystal of calcium carbonate so cut and cemented as to transmit only the extraordinary ray, used for polarising light.—Also **Nicol's prism**. [From William *Nicol* (c. 1768-1851) of Edinburgh, its inventor.]

nicotian, *nɪ-ko'ti-ən*, *adj.* of tobacco.—*n.* a tobacco smoker.—**Nicotiana** (*-shi-ə'nā*), the tobacco genus of Solanaceae.—*n.pl.* (*-ā'nā*, *-ā'nā*) the literature of tobacco.—**nicotinamide** (*-tɪn*), a member of the vitamin B₃ complex; **nicotine** (*nɪk-ə-tɪn*), a poisonous alkaloid (C₁₀H₁₄N₂) got from tobacco leaves.—*adj.* **nicotinic** (*-tɪn'ɪk*).—*n.* **nicotinism**, a morbid state induced by excessive misuse of tobacco.—**nicotinic acid**, a white crystalline substance, a member of the vitamin B₃ complex, deficiency of which is connected with the development of pellagra. [Jean *Nicol*, who introduced tobacco into France (1560).]

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night

niellated (*nē'*).—*n.* **niell'ist**. [It. *niello*—L.L. *nigellum*, a black enamel—L. *nigellus*, dim. of *niger*, black.]

Niersteiner, *nēr's(h)hīn-ər*, *n.* a Rhine wine, named from *Nierstein*, near Mainz.

Nietzschean, *nēc'h-i-ən*, *adj.* of Friedrich *Nietzsche* (1844-1900) or his philosophy.—*n.* a follower of Nietzsche.—**Nietzscheanism**.

nieve, *neivo*, *nēv*, *neif*, *nief* (*Shak.* *neave*, *neave*), *nēf*, *n*, the fist.—*ns.* **nieveful**, a closed handful; **nie'vie** (*-nie'vie'*)-**nick-nack'**, a Scottish children's pastime, a mode of assigning by lot, by guessing which hand contains something, the holder repeating a rhyme. [M.E. *nefe*—O.N. *nēfi*, *nēfi*; cf. Sw. *nåfve*, fist.]

nieve, *nē'fi*, *n*, the earth's hypothetical core of nickel and iron. [Chemical symbols *Ni* and *Fe*.]

niff, *nɪf*, *n*, (*dial.* or *slang*) a stink.—*adj.* **niffy**.

niffer, *nɪf'ər*, *v.t.* (Scot.) to barter.—*v.i.* to haggle.—*n.* an exchange; hazard. [Possibly **nieve**.]

niffnaff, *nɪf-naf'*, *n.* a trifle; a diminutive person.—*v.t.* to trifle.—*adjs.* **niff-naff'y**, **niff'y-naff'y**, fastidious.

Nifheim, *nɪv'hām*, *n.* (*Scand. myth.*) a region of mist, ruled over by Hel. [O.N. *Nifheimr*—*mīf*, mist, *heimr*, home.]

nifty, *nɪf'ti*, *adj.* (*slang*); chiefly U.S.) fine: spruce; smart.—*n.* **niffiness**.

Nigella, *nɪ-je'l-ā*, *n.* a genus of ranunculaceous plants, with finely dissected leaves, and whitish, blue, or yellow flowers, often almost concealed by their leafy involucre.—*Nigella damascena* is called love-in-a-mist, devil-in-a-bush, and ragged lady. [Fem. of L. *nigellus*, blackish—*niger*, black, from the black seeds.]

The **1972 edition** was produced using a slightly larger size of print in an effort to make the text easier to use. In an attempt to pack as much information as possible into the book, many words which had previously been awarded their own entries were now “nested” inside larger entries (for example, words like *metastable* and *metatarsus* were subsumed into the entry for *meta*-). As a result, the 1972 text appears rather cluttered to modern eyes, with many long and dense entries.

Another space-saving innovation in this edition was the inclusion of lists of words beginning with common prefixes such as *re-* and *un-* without definitions at the foot of the pages on which they belonged. These panels of “listed entries” have remained a feature of the dictionary.

rem'edilessly (or *-med'*).—*n.* **rem'edilessness** (or *-med'*).—*no* remedy (*Shak.*), of necessity; what remedy?, how can it be helped or avoided? (*obs.*)
[A. Fr. remède, O. Fr. remede—L. remedium.]
remember, ri-mem'ber, v.t. to keep in or recall to memory or mind; to mention, record (*obs.*); to commemorate (*obs.*); to bear in mind as something to be mentioned (*Shak.*); to bear in mind as one deserving of honour or gratitude, or as one to be rewarded, tipped, or prayed for; to remind (*arch. or dial.*); to bethink (*reflex.*; *Shak.*); to occur to (*impers.*; *arch.*); to recall to the memory of another (often as a greeting). —*v.i.* to have the power or perform the act of memory; to have memory (with *of*; *Shak.*, *Milt.*; now *Scot.* and *U.S.*).—*adj.* **remem'berable**.—*adv.* **remem'berably**.—*ns.* **remem'berer**;
remem'brance, memory: that which serves to bring to or keep in mind; a reminder; a souvenir; a memorandum; a memorial; the reach of memory; (*in pl.*) a message of friendly greeting; **remem'brancer**, one who or that which reminds; a recorder; an officer of exchequer (*King's Remembrancer*).—**Remembrance**

remitting: remittance; **remitt'al**, remission: reference to another court, etc.; **remitt'ance**, the sending of money, etc., to a distance: the sum or thing sent; **remittée**, the person to whom a remittance is sent.—*adj.* **remitt'ent**, remitting at intervals.—*adv.* **remitt'ently**.—*n.* **remitt'er**, one who makes a remittance.—**remitt'ance-man**, one dependent upon remittances from home; **remittent fever**, a severe type of malaria in which the temperature falls slightly from time to time. [*L. remittere, remissum—re-, back, mittere, to send.*]

remnant, rem'nant, n. a fragment or a small number surviving or remaining after destruction, defection, removal, sale, etc., of the greater part: esp. a remaining piece of cloth: a tag or quotation: a surviving trace: trace of a fact (*Scott*). —*adj.* **remnant**, remainder. [*remanent*.]

remonstrance, ri-mon'strəns, n. a strong or formal protest, expostulation.—*adj.* **remon'strant**, remonstrating: (*cap.*) Dutch Arminian.—*n.* one who remonstrates: (*cap.*) a Protester (*Scott. hist.*); (*cap.*) a member of the Dutch Arminian party whose divergence from Calvinism was

rémarr'iage, n.
rémarr'y, v.t. and *v.i.*

rémod'el, v.t.
rémonetisá'tion, -z-, n.

rémon'tise, -ize, v.t.

There were signs of modernisation in the appearance of the abbreviation etc in place of the now outdated &c, which had been used in the earlier editions.

The appearance of the text was improved in the **1983 edition** by the adoption of a larger page size. A new typeface allowed entry words to stand out more clearly from the surrounding text, and more helpful cross-references were added. The removal of the comma which had previously stood between the entry word and its pronunciation also helped to produce a less cluttered page design.

A significant innovation in this edition was the use of numbers to differentiate between identically spelt words (homographs). Previously there had been no way of indicating that there might be more than one word with the same spelling, or of telling the user which of several identically spelt words might be the object of a cross-reference.

globulin got in peas, beans, etc.—*n.pl.* **Legūminó'sae** (-sæ) an order of angiosperms characterised by the legume, including Papilionaceae, Mimosaceae, and Caesalpiniaceae.—*adj.* **legū'minos** pertaining to pulse: of or pertaining to the Leguminosae: bearing legumes. [L. *legūmen*, pulse, prob.—*legēre*, to gather.]

lehr. See **lear**².

lei¹. See **leu**.

lei² *lā'ē*, *n.* a garland, wreath. [Hawaiian.]

Leibni(t)zian *līb-nī'si-ən*, *adj.* pertaining to the great German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm *Leibniz* (1646–1716).—*n.* **Leibni(t)zianism** the philosophy of Leibniz—the doctrine of primordial monads, pre-established harmony, fundamental optimism on the principle of sufficient reason.

Leicester *les'tər*, *adj.* of a long-woolled breed of sheep that originated in *Leicestershire*.—*n.* a sheep of that breed.—**Leicester(shire) plan** a comprehensive school system, started in Leicestershire in 1957, which avoids the use of very large schools and also makes full use of free modern methods of learning.

ledger, leiger. Forms of **ledger**.

leiotrichous *lī-ō'tri-kəs*, *adj.* straight-haired.—*n.* **leiot'-richy** (-ki) straight-hairedness. [Gr. *leios*, smooth, *thrix*, *trichos*, hair.]


This clearer page design was largely retained in the 1988 edition, although the page size was again increased slightly.

The final move towards the current dictionary design came with the **1993 edition**. Definitions were now separated by semi-colons rather than colons. In line with modern practice, many full stops that had appeared after abbreviations were removed. Some abbreviations were now expanded to make them easier to understand (for instance *B.* became *Bible*), and the etymological notes at the end of entries were also reworked.


A further stage in the process of modernisation was the incorporation of abbreviations into the main body of the text. Previously these had been listed in a supplement at the back of the book.

fox 'trotting; *pa t* and *pa p fox 'trotted*. — **fox and geese** a game played with pieces on a board, where the object is for certain pieces called the geese to surround or corner one called the fox or prevent him from passing. [OE *fox*; Ger *Fuchs*]
foy¹ foi, (*Spenser*) *n* allegiance. [Fr *foi* faith]
foy² foi, (*dialect*) *n* a parting entertainment or gift. [Du *foof*]
foyer *foi'ā* or *foi'ər* (Fr *fwā-yā*), *n* in theatres, a public room, an anteroom; the entrance hallway of a hotel, etc. [Fr, from L *focus* hearth]
foyle and **foyne**. Spenserian spellings of **foil¹** and **foin**.
fozy *fōz'i*, (*Scot*) *adj* spongy; lacking in freshness; fat; slow-witted. — *n* **fōz'iness** softness; lack of spirit. [Cf Du *voos* spongy]
FP *abbrev*: fireplug; former pupil; Free Presbyterian.
fp *abbrev*: fortepiano; freezing-point.
FPA *abbrev*: Family Planning Association.
FPS or **fps** *abbrev*: foot-pound-second.
Fr *abbrev*: Father (*relig*); franc; France; French; Friar; Friday.
Fr *chem symbol*: francium.
fr *abbrev*: fragment; franc; frequently.
fra *frā*, (*Ital*) *n* brother or friar.
frab *frab*, (*dialect*) *vt* to worry. — *adj* **frabb'it** peevish.
frabjous *frab'jəs*, *adj* *perh* joyous; surpassing. — *adv* **frab jously**. [Invented by Lewis Carroll]
fracas *frak'ā* or *frā-kā'*, *n* uproar; a noisy quarrel: — *pl* **fracas** (*-kās*). [Fr, from Ital *fracasso*, from *fracassare* to make an uproar]

In 1998 a new typeface was introduced for entry words, giving the dictionary its current appearance.



The Evolution Of The Language (2)
New Meanings



When a new edition of a dictionary is published, attention is usually concentrated on new words which have been defined for the first time. These new words are often the most striking examples of how the language is evolving, but alongside these, the existing entries have often been revised as words come to be used in new ways. Many words have acquired striking new meanings or even had their meaning completely changed over the course of the last century.

Acid

The 1901 definition explains an **acid** in the scientific terms of the period:

one of a class of substances, usually sour, which turn vegetable blues to red, and combine with alkalies, metallic oxides, &c to form salts

When the editors revised the dictionary in 1952, the definition was updated to reflect advances in scientific understanding:

one of a class of substances, many of them sour, containing hydrogen replaceable by a metal to form a salt

By 1972, however, the word had acquired a whole new meaning, and the main definition was supplemented by a secondary one:

L.S.D. or other hallucinogenic drug (*slang*)

Besides acquiring a new sense in its own right, the word has also been used in combination with other words to generate a num-

ber of significant terms over the course of the century. The terms **acid chip** and **acid test** appeared in 1952, and have since been joined by, among others, **acid rain** (1983) and **acid house** (1993).

Chip

The word **chip** has acquired a variety of different meanings since the first edition. At that time, it was principally recognised as a verb:

to chop or cut into small pieces: to hew: of chickens, to break the shell of the egg in hatching: to pare away the crust of bread, &c:
to bet

But the word also had two noun senses:

a small piece of wood or other substance chopped off: (*slang*) a sovereign

Over the subsequent editions, the entry gradually increased in length as more and more different meanings of the word were recognised. Several new noun senses were added to this entry in 1952, including the sense of “a counter” (later expanded to “a small, flat piece of wood, plastic, etc used to represent money in certain games”), and also the now indispensable sense of:

a thin slice, esp. of fried potato

The 1977 supplement heralded a significant new meaning of the word:

a minute piece of silicon or other semi-conducting material, on which one or more microcircuits can be printed

In 1983 another new sense reflected the word's use in the world of sport:

a hit or kick which sends a ball high into the air over a short distance

The different editions also reveal how the word has been used to generate a number of common phrases: **chip on one's**

shoulder was included in 1952, followed later by **when the chips are down** (1959) and to **have had one's chips** (1972).

Click

The evolution of the definition of the verb **click** provides another example of how different meanings can attach themselves to one word over time.

The 1901 edition offers only one meaning for the verb:

to make a light, sharp sound

This sense has remained the principal meaning throughout the last hundred years, but it has spawned a number of more specific and technical variations. By 1952 the verb had also acquired a slang sense:

(*slang*) to fit into place opportunely or successfully, esp. to succeed in coming into relations or sociability with a person of the other sex

By the 1998 edition, the definition of the slang sense had been reclassified as “colloquial” and reworded in order to reflect more accurately the way in which the word is currently used. Furthermore, the verb has acquired a further meaning, this time from the world of technology. Thus the entry for the verb is now significantly longer than it was in the first edition of the dictionary:

to make a light, sharp sound; to fit into place opportunely or successfully, esp to be naturally compatible, either socially or sexually, with another person (*colloq*); to press and release one of the buttons on a mouse to select an option on the screen (*comput*)

Coffin

The entry for **coffin** has included a range of different meanings of the word over the history of the dictionary.

In the first edition the word has the expected meaning:

the coffer or chest in which a dead body is enclosed

The editors of the 1952 edition offer an early, obsolete sense of the word, as well as giving the more familiar one, this time with a more concise definition:

(*obs*) a pie-crust: a chest for a dead body

By 1972, the nuclear industry had found a new use for the word, and this was appended to the existing senses:

(*obs*) a pie-crust: a chest for a dead body; a thick-walled container, usu. of lead, for transporting radioactive materials

By 1998, the editors no longer felt it necessary to include the obsolete sense, but had found a further meaning:

a box for a dead body; a thick-walled container, usu of lead, for transporting radioactive materials, a flask; the horny part of a horse's hoof

The phrase **drive a nail in one's coffin** has been present since the first edition, while the slang term **coffin nail**, meaning a cigarette, did not appear until 1983.

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An advertisement from *The Chambers's Journal* of 1937 shows the value of the dictionary to crossword enthusiasts.

Computer

The word **computer** is almost synonymous with the twentieth century, and its developing significance is reflected in the successive editions of the dictionary.

In the 1901 edition, the word is only one of several nouns derived from the verb “compute”. There are no technological implications:

Computant, Computer, Computist, a calculator

In the 1952 edition, early prototypes of the computer informed a slightly more detailed definition:

computer, a calculator: a large machine carrying out calculations of several stages automatically

By 1972, computers were commercially available and used by institutions, researchers and smaller companies. The increased significance and application of computers is reflected in an expanded definition:

a calculator: a machine or apparatus, mechanical, electric, or electronic, for carrying out, esp. complex, calculations, dealing with numerical data or with stored items of other information; also used for controlling manufacturing processes, or coordinating parts of a large organisation

Computers are now used widely in business, education and recreation, and have generated a large number of related concepts. The 1998 edition of the dictionary contains many subentries for related words, including **computerese** (“the jargon used by people who deal with computers”), **computerization**, **computer crime**, **computer dating**, **computer game** and **computer literate**.

Mouse

The humble **mouse** has come a long way in the last hundred years, having changed from something that no-one would want in the house, to something that few of us, whether at work or at home, can do without.

In 1901 our furry friend was:

a little rodent animal found in houses and in the fields

However, the mouse has always been a versatile creature, and the word is also used to mean “part of a hind leg of beef”, “a black eye”, “a match for firing a cannon or mine”, or “a small cushion for a woman’s hair”.

In the 1972 edition the mouse had acquired a further meaning, coming to represent a certain human type:

a timid, shy, colourless person

But by 1988 the mouse had gained new powers:

a device which is moved by hand over a flat surface thereby causing the cursor to move correspondingly on screen
(*computing*)

The mouse had reached the technological age, and once “linked to a computer terminal by an electrical wire” in 1993, it had acquired a major new significance. By 1998 the mouse was emblematic of the computer age, as exemplified by the new term **mouse potato**:

(*slang*) a person who spends a great deal of time using a computer, esp for leisure

Ozone

The evolution of the dictionary entry for **ozone** gives a further illustration of the way that scientific terms have attracted more and more detailed definitions over the century.

The 1901 edition seems to be rather tentative:

name given to a supposed allotropic form of oxygen, when affected by electric discharges, marked by a peculiar smell

The 1952 edition gives a more specific scientific definition, and also adds a characteristically humorous supplementary definition:

an allotropic form (O_3) of oxygen, a powerful oxidising agent with a peculiar smell: an imagined constituent in the air of any place that one wishes to commend

By 1998 there is still more detail:

an allotropic form (O_3) of oxygen present in the atmosphere, once regarded as health-giving, but toxic in concentrations such as may occur in industrial areas, having a pungent smell, formed when ultra-violet light or an electric spark acts on oxygen or air, and used in bleaching, sterilizing water, and purifying air; loosely, fresh bracing air

In more recent editions, the entry has also acquired a number of subentries, including **ozone layer**, **ozone depletion**, **ozone-friendly** and **ozone hole**, which indicate the increased awareness of the role of ozone in the environment.

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An advertisement from *The Chambers's Journal* of 1917, when the dictionary cost the equivalent of 17½ pence.

Punk

Our final case study shows how a word can acquire a completely new meaning over the course of a century.

The 1901 entry for **punk** bears little relation to the modern meaning of the word:

rotten wood used as tinder: (*Shak.*) a strumpet

By 1972, the editors had recognised that these senses were not related, and the “rotten wood” sense was moved to a separate entry. Moreover, the word had acquired a wider application as a term of abuse, and this is reflected in the dictionary entry of that year:

n. a prostitute, strumpet: anything or anyone worthless:


balderdash: a foolish person: a homosexual, often a boy (*slang*)

adj. rotten: worthless: miserable

The sense of “anything or anyone worthless”, recorded in the 1972 edition, was seized upon and applied to a new cultural phenomenon of the late 1970s, and by 1983, the dictionary has a lot more to say about the word:

a follower of punk rock, often recognisable by the use of cheap, utility articles, e.g. razor blades, plastic rubbish bags, safety-pins, as clothes or decoration ... **punk rock** a style of popular music of the late 1970s, rhythmical and aggressive, with violent, often obscene lyrics, inspired by a feeling of despair at the cheapness and ugliness of life

By the 1998 edition, the original meaning of the word had been relegated to the end of the list of meanings as the newer applications of the word had become more widely recognised than the original one.



The Ones That Got Away...

Although more and more new words and meanings are added to the dictionary with each edition, it has never been a policy of the editors to remove existing words to make room for them. Even words that become obsolete may still be of interest to the reader of a historical text, and these are normally retained, although they are often labelled as “archaic” or “obsolete” to indicate that they are no longer in common use.

Nevertheless, there are a few words which have not survived from the 1901 edition of the dictionary to the current version. The most wide-ranging cull took place before the 1952 edition. William Geddie identified two sorts of words which he felt could safely be omitted: “ghost words, which come from copying or reading amiss, and dictionary words that somebody with a Greek or Latin Dictionary has concocted but nobody so far as can be discovered has ever used”.

Since that edition, editors have been reluctant to dispense with existing words. Only one word was deleted in 1972 from the 1952 edition. This was the word **agene**, a flour whitening agent. Even the removal of this word was commented upon by several correspondents, and it was subsequently restored to the dictionary.

It is perhaps tempting fate to draw attention to words which editors have chosen to discard as no longer worthy of a place. Nothing is more certain than that any list of these will invite pleas for the restoration of the words into the dictionary. Nevertheless, it is interesting to look at a selection of words that appeared in the original *Twentieth Century Dictionary* but have since been judged as surplus to requirements.

The following words all appeared in the 1901 edition, but have fallen out of the dictionary over the years:

- dacryoma** *n* a stoppage of the tear duct
decacuminated *adj* having the top cut off
derbend *n* a wayside Turkish guardhouse
desudation *n* a violent sweating: an eruption of small pimples on children
effodient *adj* habitually digging (*zoology*)
essorant *adj* about to soar
famble *n* the hand (*slang*)
fiskery *n* friskiness (*Carlyle*)
flipe *vt* to fold back, as a sleeve
geggery *n* trickery (*Scot*)
jaunder *vi* to talk idly (*Scot*)
Jehoiada-box *n* a child's savings-bank
lectual *adj* confining to the bed
neogamist *n* a person recently married
nuciform *adj* nut-shaped
numerotage *n* the numbering of yarns so as to denote their fineness
panidrosis *n* a perspiration over the whole body
pantogogue *n* a medicine once believed capable of purging away all morbid humours
parageusia *n* a perverted sense of taste

Illustrations from the 1901 edition

Aventail

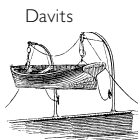


Parbuckle



presultor *n* the leader of a dance
ramollescence *n* softening, mollifying
rigescent *n* growing stiff
rimple *vi* to wrinkle
rockel *n* a woman's cloak (*provincial*)
roytish *adj* wild, irregular (*obsolete*)
sabrina-work *n* a variety of applique embroidery-work
sagesse *n* wisdom
salebrous *adj* rough, rugged
sammy *vt* to moisten skins with water
sarn *n* a pavement
savonette *n* a kind of toilet soap: a West Indian tree whose bark serves as soap
scavilones *n* men's drawers worn in the sixteenth century under the hose
tarabooka *n* a drum-like instrument
tayo *n* a garment like an apron worn by South American Indians
tervy *vi* to struggle (*provincial*)
tortulous *adj* having swellings at regular intervals
wappet *n* a yelping cur
warth *n* a ford (*provincial*)
whinnock *n* the smallest pig in a litter: a milk-pail (*provincial*)
zythepsary *n* a brewery (*obsolete*)

Illustrations from the 1901 edition



Beside the ones that got away, it is also interesting to consider the vast number of words that never were. These are words that have been suggested for inclusion in the dictionary at one time or another, but which the editors decided were insufficiently established in the language to merit inclusion in the dictionary.

In the preface to the 1952 edition, William Geddie cites the example of one reader who was disappointed not to find the word *myristicivorous*, meaning “feeding on nutmegs” in the dictionary, and had recommended its inclusion. Geddie was not inclined to add the word, but by mentioning it in his preface he did grant it a place “on the doorstep” of the dictionary, and it was included in later editions.

As the dictionary has been adopted as the official arbiter for Scrabble[®], many frustrated players of that game have urged the editors to admit words solely on the grounds that their inclusion would improve their scores. However, a word has to earn its place in the dictionary, and only ones that have become established over a period of time are allowed in.

The monitoring of new words is now systematically carried out by Chambers' *Wordtrack* reading programme. This programme ensures that readers are constantly monitoring newspapers, magazines, books and other sources for words that might be added to future editions of the dictionary. The process throws up a huge number of words, and besides those words which do become established in the language, there are also many that are too ephemeral or too restricted in use to earn a place.

Thousands of words have been considered for inclusion in the dictionary at one time or another but have never quite made it into the book. Some of these relate to concepts that were presumably considered too obscure even for a dictionary with as broad a range as Chambers:

asymmetric hindquarter syndrome a disease affecting pigs, characterised by the afflicted pig having different sizes of right and left thigh

baffle jelly a deposit which builds up in air-conditioning plants and hot water systems of large buildings, and provides a breeding ground for disease

cinqasept a visit to one's lover between the hours of five and seven o'clock

cowpat roulette a now outlawed German game in which villagers bet on which plot of land will be the first to receive a cow's calling card

grille-peerer one of a group of clergymen in the 1940s who used to haunt the stacks in the London Library to look up the skirts of female members browsing above

interrobang a punctuation mark consisting of a question mark superimposed on an exclamation mark

jogger's paw inflammation of a dog's paw caused by its owner dragging it along while jogging

left-facedness the theory that the left side of the face is more expressive than the right

neutercane a tropical storm that has not yet been christened with one of the female names reserved for hurricanes

A number of the discarded words relate to people who pursue unusual interests and activities:

blurbist a person who writes copy for the cover of a book

chillihead a person who is knowledgeable about chilli

Dylanologist a student of the songs of Bob Dylan

gorehound an aficionado of violent horror movies

inphulaphist a collector of cigar bands

Joyceolatry hero worship of James Joyce and his works

pocillovy the hobby of collecting egg cups

Turpinologist an enthusiast of the outlaw Dick Turpin

weirdiana outlandish collectible items

Many words from the reject pile demonstrate the tremendous malleability of the English language. Inventive souls have playfully combined existing words to come up with new terms:

car-cooning making one's car more homelike in preparation for spending large amounts of time in it while commuting

celebrat a badly-behaved celebrity

golden milkshake a payment to dairy farmers to induce them to reduce production

nutrobabble jargon used by the health food industry

shrediquette the recommended code of conduct for snowboarding

vegucate to teach about vegetarianism

Some inventors of new words have gone back to classical roots to fill a perceived gap in the language:

lethologica the inability to remember the right word

logophage someone who has to eat his or her words

Although these words may never receive the official sanction of a place in the dictionary, many of them have provided the editors with interest and amusement:

berkship the state of being a berk

burger to convert a cow into fast food

gonking pretending to play a guitar while listening to music in one's own home

Hamburger Dad a divorced father who sees his children only at weekends to take them out for a fast-food meal

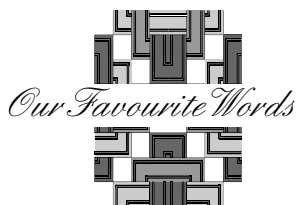
hamster buying buying things in large quantities in order to hoard them

kini the bottom half only of a bikini

morphineuse a female morphine addict

uber-tomato a genetically-engineered, supposedly superior tomato

yippies young imprisoned professionals, fraudster yuppies



The *Chambers Dictionary* has inspired affection and loyalty from its readers over the past century because, besides being a reliable guide to current English spellings and meanings, it is a treasure-trove of the unusual and the bizarre. Even those who have been familiar with it for many years are frequently surprised by a hitherto unnoticed gem while browsing through it.

Some words are appealing for their own sakes because of a pleasing combination of sounds:

beblubbered *adj* disfigured by weeping

deliquesce *vi* to melt and become liquid by absorbing moisture

discombobulate *vt* to disconcert, upset

flimp *vt* to rob (someone) while a partner hustles

goluptious *adj* delicious; voluptuous

impossible *adj* incapable of co-existing

mulligrubs *n pl* colic; sulkiness

obumbrate *vt* to overshadow

pilliwinks *n pl* an instrument of torture for crushing the fingers

pinguitude *n* fatness

pulchritude *n* beauty

refulgent *adj* casting a flood of light; radiant; beaming

roscid *adj* dewy

rutilant *adj* shining; glowing ruddily

scroddled *adj* (of pottery) made of clay scraps of different colours

spoffish *adj* fussy, officious (*archaic*)

squabash *vt* to crush, smash, defeat

suaveolent *adj* fragrant

syzygy *n* conjunction or opposition; the period of new or full moon

tintinnabulation *n* bell-ringing

unguligrade *adj* walking on hoofs

vug *n* a Cornish miner's name for a cavity in a rock, *usu* lined with crystals

Many of the most pleasant-sounding words are dialect words:

crinkum-crankum *n* something that is full of intricate twists and turns

dumbledore *n* the bumblebee

ferntickle *n* a freckle

forky-tail *n* an earwig

glimmer-gowk *n* an owl

grufted *adj* dirty, begrimed

humdudgeon *n* low spirits

scunge *vi* to slink about; to borrow or scrounge

snuzzle *vi* to grub or root

wamble-cropped *adj* sick at stomach

wapper-eyed *adj* blinking

Chambers is particularly comprehensive in its coverage of Scottish words, many of which have a striking sound:

carnaptious *adj* bad-tempered, cantankerous

clamjamphrie *n* rubbish; nonsense; rabble

clishmaclaver *n* gossip

collieshangie *n* a noisy wrangling

fantoosh *adj* fashionable; pretentious or showy

mirligoes *n pl* dizziness

moudiewort *n* a mole (the animal)

nipperty-tipperty *adj* finical; mincing

ramgunshoch *adj* rough

rumgumption *n* common sense

sculdudry *n* breach of chastity; bawdy talk or writing

stotious *adj* drunk

tattie-bogle *n* a scarecrow

wag-at-the-wa' *n* a hanging clock with exposed pendulum and weights

wanchancy *adj* unlucky, dangerous or uncanny

whigmaleerie *n* a trinket or knick-knack

Many of the most evocative words in English are terms of abuse. Chambers does a fine line in insult and invective:

bed-swerver *n* a person false to their marriage vow (*Shakesp*)

blatherskite *n* a garrulous talker of nonsense (*dialect*)

doddypoll *n* a blockhead (*obsolete*)

fizgig *n* a giddy or flirtatious girl

gawpus *n* a silly person

gerund-grinder *n* a pedantic teacher

grammaticaster *n* a piddling grammarian (*archaic*)

hen-hussy *n* a man who meddles with women's affairs

horse-godmother *n* a fat clumsy woman (*dialect*)

humgruffin *n* a terrible person

mutton-thumper *n* a clumsy bookbinder

nipcheese *n* a stingy person

slip-string *n* a rogue, someone who richly deserves hanging (*dialect*)

Some of the most charming words in the dictionary relate to folklore and fantasy:

bull-beggar *n* a hobgoblin, etc (*dialect*)

Lob-lie-by-the fire *n* a brownie who works by night for his bowl of cream

shellycoat *n* a water goblin dressed in shells; a sheriff's messenger (*Scots*)

urchin shows *n pl* appearances of elves or goblins

Another subject to contribute richly to the dictionary is weather-lore:

mackerel sky *n* a sky streaked with long, parallel white masses of cloud

merry dancers *n pl* the aurora borealis (*Scots*)

thunder-plump *n* a heavy fall of rain in a thunderstorm

weather gleam *n* a bright aspect of the sky at the horizon (*dialect*)

At times it is not so much the word itself as the concept that it describes that produces a smile:

buttock-mail *n* the fine formerly exacted by the church in commutation of sitting on the stool of repentance (*Scots*)

dandy-horse *n* an early bicycle without pedals, driven by kicking the ground

gardyloo *interj* the old warning cry in Edinburgh before throwing slops out of the window into the street

mallemaroking *n* carousing of seamen in icebound ships

omoplatoscopy *n* divination by observing the cracks in a burning shoulder-blade

presentment of Englishry the offering of proof that a person murdered belonged to the English race, to escape the fine levied on the hundred or township for the murder of a Norman (*history*)

taghairm *n* (in the Scottish Highlands) divination; esp inspiration sought by lying in a bullock's hide behind a waterfall

On other occasions the reader is charmed by the poetic language used in the definition:

aestivate *vi* to pass the summer esp in a state of torpor

gloop *vi* (of a thick viscous substance) to bubble or plop slowly and heavily, esp with a soft thick plopping or popping sound

kilfud-yoking *n* a fireside disputation (*Scots*)

nepenthe *n* a drink or drug causing sorrow to be forgotten

quaking-grass *n* a moorland grass of the genus *Briza* with pendulous, panicked, tremulous spikelets

Tom Tiddler's ground *n* a place where wealth is to be had for the picking up

Some words appeal because they express their meaning so aptly or inventively:

angels' share *n* the amount of a spirit lost in the cask through evaporation

burn-the-wind *n* a blacksmith (*Scots*)

fishyback *n* transportation of freight containers and trailers by ship or barge (*US*)

snootful *n* enough alcohol to make one drunk

sockdologer *n* a conclusive argument; a hard or decisive blow (*old US slang*)

tosticated *adj* fuddled; perplexed

two-pot screamer *n* a person who gets drunk on a comparatively small amount of alcohol (*Australian slang*)

Sometimes the reader is delighted to find that a word exists for a particular concept:

deipnosophist *n* a person who converses learnedly at dinner, a table-philosopher

Ralph *n* the imp of mischief in a printing house

ultracrepidate *vi* to criticize beyond the sphere of one's knowledge

yump *vi* in rally driving, to leave the ground (in one's vehicle) when going over a ridge or crest

At other times one is surprised that a word for a certain concept should exist at all:

batology *n* the study of brambles

callipygous *adj* having beautiful buttocks

genethliac *adj* relating to a birthday or to the casting of horoscopes (*obsolete*)

kakistocracy *n* government by the worst

leiotrichy *n* straight-hairedness

paneity *n* the state of being bread

Finally, Chambers also includes a wide range of arresting and amusing idiomatic phrases:

bring one's hogs to a fine market to make a complete mess of something

broach the admiral to steal some liquor from a cask in transit or in store

burn the water to spear salmon by torchlight (*Scots*)

cry roast meat to publish one's good luck foolishly (*archaic*)

cry stinking fish to decry one's own goods

dree one's weird to undergo one's destiny (*Scots*)

give leg bail to run for it

give someone his kale through the reek to reprimand someone severely (*Scots*)

have a crow to pluck with to have something to settle with someone

have a rod in pickle to have a punishment ready

have the black ox tread on one's foot to experience sorrow or misfortune

mops and brooms half-drunk

not know a B from a bull's foot to be very ignorant (*old slang*)

outrun the constable to go too fast; to get into debt

pad the hoof to walk, trudge

sit or ride bodkin to be wedged in tight between two others

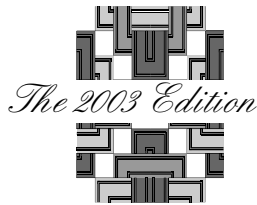
the bishop has put his foot in it it has burnt while cooking (*obsolete*)

the bitch goddess material success as an object of worship

the grey mare is the better horse the wife rules her husband, or is the more able partner

whip the cat to practise small economies

wigs on the green a fray



The dictionary-maker's work is never complete. Just as the arrival of the **aeroplane** and the **suffragette** at the start of the twentieth century called for updates to the first edition of the dictionary, so the arrival of **dotcoms** and **text messaging** at the start of the twenty-first century has called for a new edition to bring the dictionary up to date.

Indeed, the pace of technological and social change is such that more new words than ever are being coined. Areas such as biotechnology, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, medicine and computing regularly give rise to new terms that need to be covered in dictionaries. Moreover, there is ever more diversity in people's experiences in their domestic and social lives: every year new forms of entertainment and new pastimes become familiar and develop their own vocabularies. All this means more work for the lexicographer.

To ensure that each new edition of the dictionary offers the fullest range of words and meanings, Chambers operates *Word-track*, a reading programme that collects around 500 new words and meanings every month. In preparation for the 2003 edition, the editors have considered 75,000 suggestions for new words and meanings before making over 10,000 additions to the dictionary.

Some of these additions maintain the Chambers tradition of humour. For example, readers will find **mullet** defined as "a hairstyle that is short at the front, long at the back, and ridiculous all round" and **boy band** as "a pop group, targeting mainly the teenage market, composed of young males chosen because they look good and can dance and sometimes even sing".

By combining Chambers' traditional humour with the fullest coverage of new words and meanings, the 2003 edition of the dictionary aims to serve a new generation of word lovers. But the story will not end here. No doubt there will be a need for further regular revisions as the twenty-first century progresses. Although *The Chambers Dictionary* was originally conceived as a dictionary for the twentieth century, it seems certain that its story will in fact last much longer.

Let us finish this celebration of the first hundred years of the dictionary by looking at some of the words that have entered the dictionary for the first time at the start of the twenty-first century:

air rage *n* uncontrolled anger or aggression on an aeroplane, esp endangering the safety of fellow-passengers (*informal*)

barista *n* a person who is employed to make coffee in a coffee shop

beer goggles *n pl* a supposed source of impaired vision due to drinking alcohol, causing potential sexual partners to appear more attractive than they really are (*slang*)

biopiracy *n* the development and often patented use by the more technically advanced countries of materials native to developing countries, eg medicinal plants, with no fair compensation to their country of origin

bling bling *n* jewellery, esp of a large and conspicuous style; conspicuous wealth (*slang*)

blonde moment *n* a temporary period of stupidity, supposedly characteristic of women with blonde hair (*slang*)

C-list *adj* belonging to an insignificant or unadmired group (of celebrities, etc)

coolhunter *n* a person who studies and advises on probable trends in fashion (*informal*)

cyberterrorist *n* a person who attempts to cause disruption through the use of computers, eg by spreading a computer virus

dataveillance *n* the monitoring of individuals through data records created by their use of credit cards, the Internet, mobile phones, etc

docusoap *n* a television series that follows the lives of real people over a period of time

ego-surfing *n* the activity of searching for one's own name on the Internet

featurette *n* a brief feature, *esp* a short documentary film dealing with an aspect of the making of a feature film and included on a DVD of the feature film

gastropub *n* a pub that specializes in providing food and wine of a standard more typical of a fine restaurant than a traditional pub

hacktivism *n* the practice of hacking into and sabotaging a computer system, *esp* a government or military one, in order to make a political protest

iris recognition or **iris scanning** *n* a security system which uses a digital camera to detect the unique marks on a person's iris and map these to information on a database in order to confirm the person's identity

name and shame to make an announcement exposing the alleged perpetrator of a misdemeanour to public opprobrium (*informal*)

personal shopper *n* a person employed by a retail outlet to advise individual customers on their specific requirements and to give them practical help in selection and purchasing

pharming *n* the commercial production of substances from transgenic plants or animals for medical use

reality TV *n* a genre of television programme which takes members of the general public as subjects, either presenting their daily lives as if they were soap operas or observing them in artificially contrived situations

ringtone *n* a characteristic sound or tune made by a mobile phone when ringing

set-top box *n* a device that allows a conventional television set to receive a digital signal

silver surfer *n* an older person who enjoys using the Internet (*informal*)

T-commerce *n* the use of television as a medium for commercial transactions such as shopping and banking

text *vt* and *vi* to send a text message (to)

text message *n* a short message, often using abbreviations, typed and sent by means of a mobile phone

tweenager *n* a child who, although not yet a teenager, has already developed an interest in pop music, fashion and exasperating his or her parents

WAP *abbrev:* Wireless Application Protocol, a technology that enables the Internet to be accessed on a mobile phone