

Walking Made Easy

By [Douglas Milton](#)

This little glossary arose from a telephone conversation with Liana Burgess, during which she mentioned that although she loved the Enderby books she'd always been slightly puzzled by Easy Walker's slang in *Enderby Outside*. I've heard the same complaint from others to whom I've introduced Burgess through his most enduring character, so I thought some sort of mini-dictionary might be useful. Some of the idioms - as earthy and colourful as anything in Burgess - are true examples of Australian or Strine, while others may be derived from Eric Partridge's *Slang Dictionary*, my copy of which has, damn it all, disappeared from my shelves, but the majority would seem to be the delightful inventions of the man himself. I owe to Andrew Biswell the information that Burgess reviewed a dictionary of Australian slang round about the same time as he was working on *Enderby Outside*

. Books under review were grist to Burgess's mill, and nothing was wasted on him. It's instructive, for instance, to compare a list of the books he covered for

the Observer

with the contents of

Earthly Powers

, to name but one, and it's quite possible that Easy Walker sprang, larger than life and twice as hilarious, from those same pages.

This glossary is far from complete, and many of my translations are guesswork. If any *Newslett*

er readers can come up with more convincing ones, so much the better. Now clap your mincers on this lot, brads.

You skirted? You got the big drop on? Are you mad? (Origin unknown)

The whole thing donk donk = genuine. Aussie slang, also 'dinkie-die'.

Gritty shitty. Lots of imported Cockney rhyming slang in Oz.

Swizer swig.

Some shitsack's been on the jabber. Some unreliable fellow has been talking.

Swing us two bulgies of arry-arry. Two large glasses of arak, please.

I won't blart it. Blurt.

Never know who's flapping. Talking - from Oz 'to flap one's gums'.

Boojie little rathole A rather bourgeois little town.

Gobblers Coppers - corruption of bobbies?

Shemmy Roads, railway (presumably from Fr 'chemin , chemin de fer'.

Lemon-pip Jeep.

Antonio From Cockney 'all on me Antonio', meaning alone + amusing link with AB. I feel like Charles Kinbote writing this stuff.

Wash me ends I wash my hands, but with coarser implication.

Brad Brother. A Burgessian contribution to Australian from the Russian.

Mincers Eyes (cockney, mince pies)

Barbar black shit A non-PC but amusing wordplay on Baa-Baa Black Sheep.

Racketytoo Racket, caper.

Sprids Things, shenanigans. Origin unknown, at least to me.

What you on normal? What is your vocation in civilian life?

The whole sewn-up boogong... The entire thing explained to you beautifully.

Crouch Eat, presumably from crunch/lunch.

Popseeds Poppy seeds.

Shishcakes Hashish cakes (bit obvious, I know).

Marhum a.k.a. mahjoun, toffee laced with hashish, deceptively strong and much favoured by William Burroughs in his Tangiers days.

Jalooty Sorry, no idea. Sounds like Arabic. By the way, did you know that you can find 'lobscowse', one of Burgess's favourite Northern dishes, in Arabic dictionaries? Some Liverpudlian sailor must have left the recipe behind. I thought you might like to know that.

Mazooma for pozzy Money for Papa. Possible reference to Pozzo in Waiting for Godot.

Poor old reticule Jocular for poor old bag.

Dunny Australian outdoor toilet. There is a classic Oz humourous book on the subject of dunnygaspers called The Specialist, never been out of print.

Bert Bloke.

Pongalorum Stink, pong.

Zook Nose, mouth? Wish I had an Arabic dictionary to hand.

Gooled up Eaten up, snapped up (spelt 'ghouled up' later in book)

A pompey One would think 'a dishful', but Pompey is English slang term for Portsmouth, so possibly a mouthful?

Jarvey Victorian slang for cabman or cab, but in this context 'bloke'.

Crookidy Ill (Oz)

Shufti Take a look (Arabic).

Towsermouth Panting (Burgessian invention, from Eng. Towser, affectionate name for a dog).

We'll march on markers Sorry, no idea, it's probably staring me in the face. Any suggestions?

Once this lot's dooby-dooed. Once we've sorted this out. Eerie anticipation of Malcom McDowell's 'Singing In The Rain', nicht wahr?

Maybe you minced it all masterman. Perhaps you saw it already (*Masterman Ready*, a children's book of the sea by Captain Maryatt, and a witty piece of invented rhyming slang on AB's part).

The whole bimbang kadoozer The entire bar (boozer)

Nowsy wowsy Now. There is an old Scottish joke about a pub landlord who had a gay Alsatian guard-dog which, when summoned to deal with troublemakers, would extend a limp paw and whimper 'Bowsy-wowsy!' Doubtless AB would have heard it.

What-does-your-dad-do Variation on how's-your-father, cockney for thingamabob (in this case, the big world).

The jarvey as todded it... The chap who passed away (from der Tod, obviously). With an echo of 'on one's tod', rhyming slang for alone, from Tod Sloan, a Victorian jockey. For after all, one does tod it on one's own in the end.

Swapping fumblers... Changing hands.

Donk flag... Top quality flagellation.

Shoving up the old kazerzy Well, you can guess.

My shekels and sherbet. Burgessian baroque flourish or grace-note meaning same as above.

Bozzles... Things. Origin unknown.

No up-my-tickle. No mucking about, no mistake.

Saucepan-lid Kid, still used up the East End.

All-the-same Name, with implication of 'what's in a name?'

Arsee plum-and-apple RC chapel.

Turn-the-handles Candles.

His best whistle His best suit (whistle and flute)

Keeping double-Scotch Keeping watch

Toots Feet (tout suite)

Uncle Head (Uncle Fred)

Near-and-far Car (Easy Walker's use of rhyming slang is becoming a bit mechanical by this stage. Indeed Enderby intuits that it is not, after all, his natural idiom but 'a home-stitched patchwork of patois').

Forked me on the cobbles Took me by surprise, I think

No rare-with-Worcester no mistake (my steak)

Pennywise probably some pun on pennywise, pound foolish, but can't work it out.

Sling-your-hooks books

I like Easy Walker - one of the uncomplicated life-enhancers who take life as it comes. See also Nabby Adams and Greg Gregson in *Beard's Roman Women*.

