

SOME SOUTH AFRICAN 'SCHOOLBOYISMS'

The following expressions seem to us to fall under the general heading of 'schoolboyisms'. Although many of them may by this time have surfaced in the world of adult colloquialisms, they all seem to have originated among schoolboys. Our somewhat arbitrary choice is calculated to elicit response and comment, irate or the reverse, from our readers. We have classified these expressions under the following headings: References to people and races; References to things; References to actions and activities.

References to people and races

'Our History onnie's a smart ou'.

Our History teacher is a fine fellow.

'Onnie' obviously from 'onderwyser', and 'smart' has lost its value as descriptive of style, fashion or grooming, and has become 'fine' or 'lekker'.

'A charra'.

An Indian.

'He's a tit oke'.

He's a good sort.

'A laitie'' or 'a pik'.

A small or young person.

'Auntie'.

A form of address to a lady who is in fact not related to the speaker.

'Main man'.

('He schemes he is a main man').

A V.I.P.

'Hairy back'.

A derogatory description.

'Rock-spider'.

Another derogatory description.

‘Rope’.

(Thick, hairy, coarse and twisted).

Another derogatory description: coarse as regards appearance, behaviour or background; unrefined.

‘A gom’.

(The ‘g’ pronounced as in Afrikaans).

Yet another derogatory description.

‘A gwar’.

A detestable person.

‘A goffel’.

An African miner.

‘Ag, he’s a heavy ou, hey’.

Descriptive of the deep-thinker or introvert, but more closely related to the description given of one who fails to display characteristics in accordance with the norm of a particular society.

‘Jusslike, he’s plenty strife, that ou’.

He gives one a hard time.

‘Jusslike’ is very hard to pinpoint; it is probably derived from ‘Just like’ or ‘Jesus like’. The latter possibility reminds one of the dilemma when one has religious obligations and, not wishing to blaspheme by exclaiming ‘Jesus!’, one substitutes ‘Jussiss’. This proves equally effective in that the exclamation allows everyone to understand the tone of one’s feelings at that precise moment.

‘She’s in a dwaal’.

She is in a dreamlike state, distraught.

‘You look like a proper japie’.

You look scruffy.

References to things.

‘I don’t graft geogo (jogo).’

I do not appreciate the study of Geography.

‘Marlies’.

Marbles.

‘It is just such a big house’.

It is a large house.

'That's an up-to-date car, that'.

That is a fine car.

'That's a lekker pyp'.

(Overheard at the hot-rod races).

That's a nice pipe? Probably refers to the exhaust pipe, or may be due to an unconscious analogy: 'rod' and 'pipe'. The Afrikaans for 'hot-rod' is apparently 'knor-tjor'. We would be interested to know whether this term has found its way into colloquial English in South African schools.

'Bread' or 'dollars'.

Money.

'Fietsie'.

Bicycle.

'Cab'.

Motor car.

'Tackies'.

Car tyres.

'Sweet'

Everything is fine.

'It's goor' (pronounced as in Afrikaans).

It is unpalatable.

'Connie'.

Condensed milk.

'Tjoekie'

Gaol.

'What a gemors!'

What a mess or mix-up!

'Sarmie' or 'sammidge'.

Sandwich.

References to Actions and Activities

'Come let's go goef' (or goof)

Let us go bathing

'See you at the goefies' (or goefs)

I shall meet you at the swimming baths.

'He gave us a long spraak'
He gave us a lecture

'groove on'
To like something

'I handle to do'
I enjoy doing.

'I've a burden to do that'
I would very much like to do that.

'He's a nurd'
He's an idiot (fool)

'Don't give me hassel' (Spelling?)
Don't annoy me.

'It's too much hassel'
It's too much trouble.

'Sending it'
Driving fast.

'For skops'
For fun.

'I'm going to dop'
Going to fail (an examination)

'Bombed out of his mind'
Drunk or drugged.

'Freaked out'
Exhausted

'It's vrekke' ('v' pronounced as in Afrikaans)
It's dead

'Causing grief' or 'causing gal'
Being troublesome

'Get weaving'
Get busy

'To kip'
To sleep

'Come saam' or 'come with'
Come with me

'Go and graze'
Have a meal

'Can I lend your pencil? '
 May I borrow your pencil?

'You lieg, man'
 You are lying

'I'll throw you with a stone'
 I shall throw a stone at you.

'Start wikkeling'
 Get a move on!

'Sight that cherrie' or 'Spot that cherrie'
 Look at that girl

'Check that, hey! '
 Look at that...

'He sends us strop'
 He gives us a hard time

'It sends me'
 I like it

'Wipe that smile off your bakkies'
 Stop laughing (grinning)

'Did you make an eina? '
 Did you hurt yourself?

'He's *only* upset'
 He is very angry

'I skopped the ball'
 I kicked the ball

'anderste'
 Moody

'I don't support him
 I do not like him

'Don't catch a fit'
 Calm down (Do not become annoyed)

'Kamma-kamma'
 Pretended

'Let's donder him'
 Hit him

'He charfs he's handsome'
 He thinks he's handsome.

'That's a fat charf'
 That is a lie

'Catch a fat charf'
 Woo a girl