

DORIC DICTIONARY

Doric is the traditional dialect of the North East of Scotland. It has its roots in the farming and fishing communities that made up the area. In the last 20 years it has seen a revival and is gaining more recognition and being taught at schools.

The list below shows favourite Doric / Scots words or phrases with their Dictionary definition and comments underneath.

Aberdeenshire Council would like to thank pupils and staff at Banff Academy, in a project with the Elphinstone Institute Aberdeen University for providing a Doric Dictionary to use on the website: <http://banffmacduffheritagetrail.co.uk>

Auld

Auld. Old. Compare with Old Scots Ald.

Aye!

Aye. Yes. Unknown.

Bairn

A child, baby, infant. Old Norse Barn.

Baltic

BALTIC, prop.n. Sc. printers slang usage with def. art.: a jocular term for a watercloset (Edb. 1800–74), sc. as being a chilly place, often frozen in cold weather.

Black Affrontit

Ashamed or deeply embarrassed, from Old French Affronter.

Blether

To talk foolishly or in a trivial way; to prattle, speak boastfully; a chatterbox, from Old Norse blaðra – to utter inarticulately, move the tongue to and fro.

Bonnie

Bonnie, Bonny, Beautiful, pretty. Late 15th century.

Bonnie

Bonnie, bonny, boannie. Beautiful, pretty, good, excellent, fine. Origin not known, although my 8 year old told me it was because of the French word bonne - good. Good theory.

Bosie

To cuddle. NE Scots, reduced form of bosom.

Bourach. Whit a Bourach!

A crowd, group, cluster. A disorderly heap or mess. A muddle, a mess, a state of confusion. Probably from Gaelic, búrach a mess or shambles. Alternative spellings boorach, bourack, bourock.

Breenge

A violent or clumsy rush, a dash, a plunge; to barge forward recklessly. Unknown origin.

Clipe

Usually Clype. One who tells tales. Also to be talkative, gossip. A variety from Banff is Clypach - a gossip, late 18th century. From Old English cleopian, call, name.

Contramacious

Contermacious, contramashious. Perverse, self-willed, obstinate. Altered from English Contumacious, with influence from French contre and Latin contra.

Coo

A cow. Related word Kye. Cows are also known as Nowt and beasts in the North East. From Old English Kú. Pronounced as in Scots in Germanic languages such as Norwegian and German.

Cooshie Doo

Cushie, cushy, cushie-doo. The ring dove or wood pigeon. From Old English cusceote.

Couthy

Of people: agreeable, sociable, friendly, sympathetic. Of places or things: comfortable, snug, neat. Compare with Old English cuð, known, familiar. Eth uppercase: Ð, lowercase: ð; also spelled edh or eð) is a letter used in Old English, Middle English, Icelandic, Faroese (in which it is called edd), and Elfdalian. It was also used in Scandinavia during the Middle Ages but was subsequently replaced with dh and later d.

Cowpit Yow

To cowp is to overturn, upset or ruin; to overbalance, fall over or capsize or become bankrupt. COWPY. A sheep that has overturned on its back and is unable to get up. From Old French, couper, to strike.

Cuddie

Cuddie, cuddy. A donkey, horse. Origin unknown. However this is also an old Northumbrian (Geordie) word for donkey. The Scots language has its origins in old Northumbrian.

Cyaav

In the same way as SNYAAV is a form of SNAA or snow – an old form, still used in some settlements along the coast and inland on the farms, CYAAV, to fuss.

Dinna

Dinna, dinnae. Don't. [Dae + Nae].

Dookers

A swimming costume. To dook, the act of ducking or diving; a bathe, a swim; to dip or immerse. From Middle Dutch and Middle Low German duken.

Dreich

Of weather or scenery – dreary, bleak. Also extensive, persistent, tiresome, hard to bear. Of people, depressed, doleful, dull, boring. Of tasks, difficult. From Old Norse drjúgr – enduring, ample.

Drookit

Drenched, soaked. Compare with Old Norse drukna, to be drowned.

Dug

Dug, doag. Dog. From Middle English dogge.

Eejit

Idiot, fool, stupid person. From Middle English Idiot.

The 5 Fs – Fa? Fit? Fit wye? Far? Fan?

The Doric form of 'wh' is 'f', as in Fitehills, or a quartz rock in Fitehills called the Fite Coo. This is unique to North East Scots. The story goes that in a North East shoe shop the question "Which foot fits which foot?" is more likely to be "Fit fit fits fit fit?".

Fit Like?

How are you? In Orkney a similar greeting is used, but with wh-: Whit like? From Old English hwaet.

Fly Cup

A quick or surreptitious cup of tea. From Scots Fly meaning shrewd + cup.

Foggie Bummer

Foggie Bummer – a bumble bee. Also Foggie Toddler, immortalised in a William Soutar (the Perth Poet) poem.

Foonert

Foonert or foundert: in a state of collapse, exhausted, overcome by cold. Origin Middle English foundren.

Foostie

Foostie, fousty, fooshtie, fooshty. Stale, musty, mouldy. From Old French foust.Old Scots foistit.

Furri boots ya gan?

A form of Far aboots ye gaan? Furry Boots City is a jocular name for Aberdeen, emerging in the 1990s.

Futret

Also futrat, whitret. An animal of the genus Mustela, mainly the weasel, stoat or ferret. A small, thin, sharp featured person. A restless or furtive person. From Middle English, Middle Scots whitrat – a white rat. Immortalised in Scotland the What's Ballater Toy Shop sketch. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzS3AdzZ0Nw>

Ganzie

Gansey, ganzie. A Guernsey, a jersey, especially one worn by a fisherman. The word is now used as an everyday word for any kind of sweater.

Gan About Hens

Going about. From Old Norse gangr, Old English gang. One of a few new Doric words for modern things, e.g. a sitootery, for a conservatory.

Glaikit

Also Gleekit. Foolish, stupid, thoughtless, irresponsible. First referred to in the 1500s.

Grunny

Grunny. Grandmother. Doric pronunciation, with a U.

Gutties

Guttie. Something made wholly or partly of rubber. Gym shoes. A guttie ba is a golf ball. From the Malay getah, meaning gum.

Haein

Hae, hiv. To have, or to own. From Old Scots, ha from 1560, and hae from 1570.

Halliracket

Halliracket, hallyracket. Frivolous, crazy, boisterous.

Haver

To talk in a foolish or trivial way, speaking nonsense. To dawdle, potter about, fuss. To make a pretence of being busy. To vacillate. Haivers! Nonsense! Popular from the Proclaimers song 500 miles.

Haud Yer Wheesht

Be quiet, shut up!, hush. From the late 1600s. Probably Onomatopoeic. First used in the 14th century.

I dinna ken fit ta dee

Ken. To know, understand or perceive. From Old Norse kenna to know, teach, tell.

ill tricket

Prone to play tricks, mischievous. e.g. "A richt ill-tricket cratur, aye up tae something."

Jings!

Gosh! Oor Wullie is the iconic wee Scottish laddie from the fictional town of Auchenshoogle. Wullie loves life, fun and laughter with the help of his lifelong pals Fat Bob, Soapy Soutar, Wee Eck. The full phrase he often uses is Jings! Crivvens! Help ma Boab!

Jougal

This word seems at first sight to be unique to Banff. It is known by quite a few adults and bairns around the school. I (Dr F) was taught it by a member of Portsoy Pipe Band, who commented on a handsome dog walking past at a Highland Games, saying "that's a richt joogle!" The word has its origins in the indigenous traveller community, and has passed over into Banff talk from the traveller secret language – the cant (chant), which also has words like gadgie, cuv, neddies, yarras, whammelin cocavies and stumers. We have pupils and parents who understand these words.

Knackered

Knackered is in the Oxford English Dictionary. It is possibly derived from Knacker's Yard. It is interesting that Koben thought it was Scots. It is certainly used in Scottish English speech.

Loch

A lake or a pond. Applied to all natural lakes in Scotland, except for the Lake of Menteith (where they used to have great outdoor curling matches - bonspiels). In this case Lake is probably derived from the Scots Laich, meaning low lying land. Loch, from Gaelic, loch.

Loon

Loon, loun. A young man, boy. Late 15th century. Possibly Flemish origin.

Malagaroose

Also Malagruize, malagroose. To dishevel, disarray or spoil. 'Dinna malagarooze it!' Don't damage or spoil it.

Maugre

A Scots word. As well as this meaning, the word also means ill-will, displeasure, spite. 'in mauger of' in spite of. From Old French maugré.

Nae Muckle

Muckle, meikle. Large in size or bulk, big, great, late 14th century. Much in quantity, degree, a great deal of, late 14th century. From Old Scots mekill, mykill, a.1400, muckle, late 16th c., much, great(ly). Compare with Old English micel, Old Norse mikill, great, large. **Neep** A turnip, a swede. From Old English næp, Latin napus.

Nowt. A pairk o Nowt

Nowt. Cattle. One head of cattle. An Ox or steer. From Old Norse naut. Finlay the jannie uses this word for cattle or kye, and some pupils too.

Numptie

A foolish person. The first dictionary example is from the Scotsman of January 7 1989: "...the MacDiarmid-led backlash of 60 years ago against Scottish kailyard numpties, ...". The word began in Scotland and spread through the UK.

Oolet

Oolet, hoolet, an owl. Borrowed from Middle French hulotte.

Peelie-wally

Peelie-wally. Sickly, feeble, pallid, thin and ill-looking. Also peelie-wersh. Original probably an imitation of a whining feeble sound.

Piece

This refers to The Jeely Piece song, by Adam McNaughton (1967) as a social comment on housing conditions in Glasgow. The first two verses:

*I'm a skyscraper wean; I live on the nineteenth flair,
But I'm no' gaun oot tae play ony mair,
'Cause since we moved tae Castlemilk, I'm wastin' away
'Cause I'm getting' wan meal less every day:*

*Oh ye cannae fling pieces oot a twenty story flat,
Seven hundred hungry weans will testify to that.
If it's butter, cheese or jeely, if the breid is plain or pan,
The odds against it reaching earth are ninety-nine tae wan.*

Pleiter

Pleiter or plowter. Dable with the hands or feet, usually in a liquid, splash aimlessly in mud or water, wade messily through wet ground. Compare with Dutch ploetern, dabble in water.

Poots

POOT, n.1, v. Sc. form of Eng. pout, a sulky expression, to sulk. In pl. in phr. i the poots, = †Eng. “Eng. in the pouts”, in the sulks (Ork. 1915 Old-Lore Misc. VIII. I. 45; Sh., Ork. 1966). Adj. pootie (Bnff., Abd.), pootsie (Ork.), sulky, given to sulking. A verb poots has been formed from this phr., = to sulk (Ork. 1966). [put].

Pucklie

Pucklie. Collective noun. A small number of individual items. Pronounced exactly as it looks. Thus, you would pour “a suppie watter on a pucklie tatties and bile them up for yer denner“. Of course, you would need “a pickie saat” (a pinch of salt) in your tatties.

Quine

A young woman, a girl. A female child, a schoolgirl. Origin: Old English cwene a woman, wife, mistress or queen. Compare with Norwegian Kvinne, woman.

Scutter

Messy or difficult work; a nuisance. To scutter about – to mess about. In other parts of Scotland meaning is subtly different: to do something in a slovenly or bungling way, make a mess of; to spill or splash about; a time-consuming or irritating occupation.

Shooglie / shoogly

Shaky, unsteady, tottery, insecure. e.g. yer jaicket’s on a shooglie peg – you are in a precarious position, you are likely to lose your job. Middle English shoggen, compare Low Mid German schocken.

Skitter

Anything dirty or disgusting, a mess, rubbish. Also skitter – trifling, small, inadequate. Of course it also means diarrhoea. From Old Norse skýtt, stem of skyóta – to shoot, propel, dart.

Smirr

Fine rain, drizzle; sometimes fine sleet or snow. A smirr o rain – fine rain, drizzle. Perhaps onomatopoeic.

Sotter

A mess, a muddle, a confused mass, chaos; the noise made by something boiling, fying or bubbling up.

Sotter. Fit a Sotter!

Compare with German dialect sottern.

Speir

To ask a question, inquire, make inquiries; to seek out an opinion, Speir at – to put a question to. Speir efter – to inquire about a person or a thing. From Old English spyrian; compare with Norwegian spørre – to ask.

Spikin

Also spikkin. From Old English spæc.

Stotter

Stotter, or stoater. A term of admiration, mainly for females; an excellent example. Stot is to stop, bring to a halt, pause, hesitate. So stotter means someone who brings you to a halt due to their attractiveness. From Middle Dutch, Middle Lower German stōten.

Strushle

Untidy, slovenly, disorderly. A strush can also be a disturbance, squabble; a commotion. Probably onomatopoeic.

Thraan, thrawn

Thrawn. Perverse, obstinate, intractable, sullen, surly. Twisted, crooked, distorted. Of string or thread fashioned from strands twisted together. From Old English ðrāwan.

Thrapple

The windpipe, the throat, the gullet. From the 1400s.

Vratch

Vratch. A despicable person capable of vile, wicked behaviour. From Old English/ Scottis wrecca, wræcca an exile. Examples: "He telt me a hillock o lees, the vratch." (He told me a heap of lies, the wretch).

Wasnae me!

Wisnae, wisna, wasnae, wasna. Was not. Was +nae.

Wheesht. Haud yer Wheesht!

Be quiet, shut up!, hush. From the late 1600s. Probably Onomatpoeic. First used in the 14th century.

Wifie

Woman. An old fashioned little girl. A diminution of wife.