



**Friends of South Africa**

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Time flies! Christmas is in two days time... and most of us are absorbed in pre-Christmas stress - last minute shopping, planning menus, maybe getting a Christmas tree... Some of us are even looking forward to going home or looking forward to loved ones coming to visit or looking forward to a Christmas meal shared with family and friends. Well, we would like to give a BIG THANK YOU to our paid-up members and everyone who consistently supports us.



ATTENTION!! Our AGM is coming up in the next few months, we sincerely hope that we will see many of you at the AGM in 2011 (details to follow). We have new ideas and new projects that we would like to tell you about, so please mark it in your diaries. We hope to see you there...

***The FoSA team wish you and your family a peaceful and relaxing Christmas and a Happy New Year 2011!***

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## **A Brief Guide to South African English**

*by Elizabeth Raab*

My contribution to the FoSA newsletter will be somewhat different from the usual articles. Someone sent me this delightful Guide to South African English which I would like to share with you. My thanks to unknown sources, who unfortunately cannot be mentioned at the end. I wish I had thought of the following myself!



What is a braai? It is the first thing you will be invited to when you visit South Africa. A braai is a backyard barbecue and it will take place, whatever the weather. So you will have to go, even it's raining like mad and hang of a cold. At a braai you will be introduced to a substance known as mealiepap. Read further for an explanation of "pap."

Now that you know what a braai is, here are some other words and phrases you will encounter in SA, used by folk of all persuasions, genders and ethnic adherences. You need to know what they mean. Really.

Ag. This is one of the most useful SA words. Pronounced like the "ach" in German "achtung." It can be used to start a reply when you are asked a tricky question, as in: "Ag, I don't know," or a sense of resignation. "Ag, I'll have some more pap, then." It can also stand alone as a signal of irritation or of pleasure.

Ag siestog! another delightful expression originally from Afrikaans and heard all over the country. Mostly used to convey disgust and used with lots of feeling. However, it can also be used when someone sees a baby for the first time, (and then it means the baby is cute). Probably not heard quite so much these days, as everything has to be/should be politically correct.

Biltong. Similar to jerky, it is dried, salted meat and can be made from beef, ostrich, antelope or anything that was once alive and fairly large. It is usual for expat South Africans to say: "What I really miss is my biltong, man."



Blooming. Pronounced "blimming," it is roughly equivalent to "hellofa," as in "Ag, that pap I had at the braai made me blooming sick." For emphasis, "blooming" can be replaced by "bladdy" or "blerry," which in turn is a corruption of the Australian "bloody."

Doll. A term of affection between males and females. It is used mostly in the Jo'burg area. A corrupted form of "darling," it will be heard thus: "Your turn to take out the dustbin, doll." "But I took it out the last time, doll." The word garbage should not be used, it is too blerry pretentious.

Eish! This term is used by South Africans, both black and white, to express dismay or surprise. Not to be confused with "ice".

Fixed up. This means "good." An example is this discussion: "You don't have to take out the dustbin, doll. I took it out just now" (see below). "Fixed up, doll!"

Ja-nee. This is great way to answer a question if you really don't know the answer. It gives you time to figure out what you're going to say next. Maybe the conversation will have moved on and you'll be let off the hook. "Hows everyone? Ja-nee. Everyone's fine thanks, though I've been hellofa busy."

Isit?/Izit? This is a great word in conversations. Derived from the two words "is" and "it;" it can be used when you have nothing to contribute to the conversation.

Wazzup: "what's new", or "what's up?" General question which doesn't always require an answer.

Just now. Universally used, it can mean "previously, eventually" and sometimes "never." Equally, if someone did something in the last few minutes (or hours), it was 'just now.' If someone says he will do something "just now" it could be in 10 minutes or tomorrow, or maybe he won't even do it at all. In other words, sometime between now and death. I have already explained the meaning to my colleagues, so they are in no doubt.

Lekker. An Afrikaans word meaning nice, this word is used by all language groups to express approval. If you see someone of the opposite sex who is good-looking, you can exclaim: "Lekkerrr!" while drawing out the last syllable. But this is now considered politically incorrect in some areas.

Man, can be directed at anyone, male or female, just "sommer" (simply) tagged on for no apparent reason.



Sarmie. Sandwich.

Marmite. Contrary to American disinformation, Marmite is not discarded axle grease. Bought in small glass jars at supermarkets, Marmite is a salty vegetable extract and is the South African answer to peanut butter (American) or Vegemite (Australian). Generations have grown up with it on their school sarmies and have inflicted it on their own children.

No. This word has many meanings in South Africa other than the opposite of "yes." Your host at the braai is likely to say, "No, I see your plate is empty. You want some more pap?" Another example: the assistant at a shoe shop asks if she can help, you may reply: "No, I'm looking for some tackies" (see below). This means "Yes, I'm looking for some tackies."

Tackies. These are things you wear on your feet, like sneakers. Most people's sneakers in SA are pretty tacky.



Pap. Encountered at braais, pap is boiled corn meal. It has the appearance and consistency, and many say, the taste of plaster of Paris. Lots of South Africans love it.

Shame. Like "No," this word can mean the opposite of its meaning in other parts of the world. If someone shows you a baby, you can say "Ag, shame." This does not mean the baby is ugly, it is more accurate to say "Shame, hey." But if the baby really is hideous, it is appropriate to say: "Jislaaik." This may not be appreciated by the baby's parents.

Gogga. This is an insect, a bug and all three of the g's are pronounced as though you are about to spit. SA is rich in goggas, some of them cute - like the harmless mantis and the stick insect - but others are disgraceful especially when they fly. Some of the ones in KZN could challenge those in Florida any day.

Guava. Everybody knows that a guava is a fruit - and a bladdy lekker one too. It is especially nice stewed and served cold with smooth custard. Guava juice is refreshing at breakfast. But if you fall on your guava in SA it means backside, butt or bum. If you don't know it you simply have to try it!

Vrot. A wonderful word which means "rotten" or "putrid" in Afrikaans, it is used by all language groups to describe anything they really don't like. Most commonly it describes fruit or vegetables whose shelf-lives have long

expired, but a pair of tackies (sneakers) worn a few times too often can be termed vrot by unfortunate folk in the same room as the wearer. Also a rugby player who misses important tackles can be said to have played a vrot game - not to his face because he won't appreciate it. We once saw a movie review with this headline: "Slick flick, vrot plot." We enjoyed the headline more than the movie.

## Some Member News



We are very glad to announce the birth of a new FoSA member, little Joshua Knowles was born on 1.9.2010 at 00:58!

Josh was 52 cm and weighed 3,885 kg! Brad and Daniela we would like to congratulate and wish you many "sleepful" nights.

## Finance

Thank you to all those FoSA members that have already paid their 2010 Membership fees. To the rest, please remember to pay your 2010 membership fees to ensure that FoSA as a society carry on existing! See the FoSA account details at the bottom of the page.

Fees are as follows:	2010	2010/11
Individual	Euro 40	Euro 70
Couple	Euro 70	Euro 130
Student / Pensioner	Euro 25	Euro 40

All Friends of South Africa may submit texts, thoughts and ideas for the Newsletter. So, if you have anything which you would like published, or anything that you would like to share with the others, just send it to [fosa@fosa.at](mailto:fosa@fosa.at).

All the best from your FoSA Team!

Our mailing address is:  
[fosa@fosa.at](mailto:fosa@fosa.at)

Our account details:  
**Raiffeisen Landes Bank NOE - Wien Account # 6.322.002 BLZ 32000**

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