

## Scottish Language Dictionaries Word Collection: the Reading Scheme

SLD's Word Collection is central to the main aims of SLD: research on Scots language, and the publication and dissemination of the results. The information we gather for the Word Collection is being used to update all our publications including the Dictionary of the Scots Language website, the *Concise Scots Dictionary (CSD)* and the *Scots Thesaurus*.

Although it is the authoritative Scots dictionary from 1700 to the 20th century, the *Scottish National Dictionary* was completed in 1976 and its concise version, the *CSD*, in 1985, and it is vital that we update the material in both dictionaries. In order to maintain a record on Scots as it is used in speech and writing, our dictionaries must reflect words that are still in use, for example *gar* and *brae*, and words that have come into Scots in recent decades, such as *gadgie* and *schemie*.

The material we collect is also available to anyone who is interested in Scots language. Members of the public, school pupils, university students, and anyone conducting research projects can have access to our research by arrangement. If you'd like more information on the Word Collection, please see our website: [www.scotsdictionaries.org.uk](http://www.scotsdictionaries.org.uk) or email us at [mail@scotsdictionaries.org.uk](mailto:mail@scotsdictionaries.org.uk).

Material for the Word Collection is collected in two ways: through our Oral Collection (collecting Scots as it is used in speech) and through the Reading Scheme (collecting from written Scots). The reading of published work by volunteers is our primary means of collecting written data. It yields updates of material previously published in dictionaries, adds new material and can also provide earlier datings for existing entries.

Readers are supplied with a copy of the work(s) to be read. Works can include books of fiction, non-fiction or poetry, magazines and journals. The Dictionary of the Scots Language is available free online and we recommend readers use this resource for checking Scots words: [www.dsl.ac.uk](http://www.dsl.ac.uk). If a reader does not have access to the Internet or a copy of the *Concise Scots Dictionary*, we are happy to provide a *CSD*.

The aim of reading material for us is to find Scots words and phrases. We ask readers to underline any words or phrases which they think may be Scots, whether they are in everyday use or rare.

SLD relies on the generosity of publishers to stock our shelves for the Reading Scheme. Although publishers are very generous, in some cases SLD is unable to obtain books we need. In such cases we may ask if you are happy to read a book borrowed from a library, and if you are, we will ask you for the name of your local branch so that we can phone them and enquire if they have the books we are interested in. We will rely on you to obtain the book. When reading from a borrowed book Scots words, the sentence in which they are used and the page number can be written out on a sheet which SLD will give you.

Staff of Scottish Language Dictionaries (SLD) are happy to be contacted at any time by readers. We are usually available in the office Monday-Friday, 9.30-5. You can find contact details for queries at the bottom of every page of this document.

## Guidelines for Reading and Marking books for SLD

### How to choose which words to mark?

Mark words and phrases you believe to be in everyday use. It isn't necessary to mark every occurrence of every Scots word. Just underline:

- The first occurrence
- Any occurrence which shows a different shade of meaning or usage
- Any other occurrence which you think illustrates a meaning particularly well

Additional information, e.g. known to me, may be added in the margin.

### Is it Scots?

If you are in doubt as to whether or not material is Scots, you can check the Dictionary of the Scots Language [www.dsl.ac.uk](http://www.dsl.ac.uk), the *Concise Scots Dictionary* and/or a modern English dictionary.

If a word or phrase is in the *Concise Scots Dictionary*, it is Scots; do include Scots forms of English words, e.g. mither, faither.

If it is in neither an English dictionary nor on the Dictionary of the Scots Language website or the *Concise Scots Dictionary*, but you feel the word might be Scots, underline the word or phrase and write ?Sc in the margin.

### Marking the books

Please use a soft pencil for all marking.

Unless you are finding Scots on every page, in which case we can quickly find your markings, please list (also in pencil) the page numbers where you do find Scots in a column on the inside cover of the book.

Don't worry about underlining or noting too much; everything you mark will be checked and processed by an editor. Selected material is then entered into SLD's electronic database and will be processed for inclusion in future dictionaries.

**When in doubt, underline!**

### Some examples

Here are some examples that will help you give us information that we need. If you'd like more details on Scots grammar, you can see the "Scots Spelling and Grammar" page on our website [www.scotsdictionaries.org.uk](http://www.scotsdictionaries.org.uk) or request a printout of this information from us.

- Mark examples which show a different form of a word, e.g. singular and plural:

She taen the peerer-deeking ganzie and gaed it tae Maxie for his birthday. (Singular)  
The auld grannie had twa ganzies. (Plural)

- Mark verbs which use nae to form a negative:

The bairn wisnae born early.  
She didnae give Lisa even a smaa gift.

- Mark verbs in different forms:

A green yule maks a full kirkyaird. (Present)  
He wid .. try tae mak her feel as low as the grund. (Infinitive)  
She kent that it was Maxie's birthday. (Past)  
The porridge wis hotterin on the stove. (present participle)

- Mark verbs with prepositions:

Rosie wis mairried on his brither.  
She cawed ower Cathy's laddie.  
The womenfolks aa pit on their black tuggery.

- Mark verbs which take an object (transitive verbs):

Een of the bridesmaids deeked them binging avree thegither.

- Mark verbs which occur without an object (intransitive verbs):

Mi airms streeked sae far doon that I deeked like a monkey.

- Phrases: Mark any phrases which you think may be of interest, e.g.

There was a train got oot there frae Edinburgh aboot the back o' four o' clock.

Well, the government, ... ruthlessly scrapped the Corn Production Act and landed thousands and thousands of farmers on their beam ends.

I remember well ... a crofter who was a first-class stocksman but idle as get out, who smoked his pipe all day.

## Notes for Readers of Newspapers

If possible send the whole sheet of the newspaper where you found your citation.

Cuttings are acceptable if the following are indicated clearly:

- Publication name (e.g. Scotsman, Scotsman S2, Sunday Herald Magazine, Scots Magazine, etc)
- Date
- Page number
- Name of author (if known)

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or if you need your copy of the Concise Scots Dictionary. Queries should be addressed in the first instance to:

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0131 650 4149

**Thank you for your help!**