

# CRUG-NAIL MP

by Harry Dunn

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Your average Aussie bloke  
Isn't at his best in the science of linguistics,  
He has trouble with those tricky foreign words,  
He might be better at theology, cosmology or ballistics:  
Foreign names can be exasperating  
To a man in singlet, Blundies and short shorts,  
He's into things like dodging tax and other minor rorts  
Like compo for shonky injured backs,  
But you won't find him boss-dutchessing,  
Sycophancing, ballet dancing, opera or schmooze,  
He's a boaster and a liar and a raconteur of sorts  
And he gives it all he's got;  
He likes illegal fags and booze,  
Football, two-up on Anzac Day  
And other contact sports.  
He 's up with all the sporting news  
But a gifted linguist - he is not.

When we Aussies confront a foreign name  
We dismantle it, one letter at a time,  
The way they do in Blighty,  
Does someone know a method better?  
No way, mate, not likely!  
We dismantle foreign names  
Methodically untangling  
So is it any wonder, then,  
Those names sound somewhat different  
When your Aussie word-smith has completed  
His sorting and his mangling  
To make them sound more *English*,  
It's forever been the same.

Now, to give you one example,  
Take the case of Jordan, C  
MLA for Bass,  
Representing you and me,  
A lady well respected,  
But her surname's mis-pronounced  
By local dignitaries, separately and *en masse*,

And by folks like us, the hoi polloi,  
Some of whom by convicts were begot,  
Good folks, one and all  
Living in the land that time forgot,  
But Rhodes Scholars - we are not.

Of course, we have no problem,  
Even those who aren't so bright,  
Pronouncing Jordan's given name  
And we mostly get it right,  
Except, perhaps, some German friends  
(Don't ask me who they are)  
They have their own ideas about the letter J  
And say it as they would in Deutschland,  
Not as *we* would say it, as in Johnnie,  
But Y as in Yonnie, January and Yinnar  
And words like Yutland, Yamaica, and Yohanssen  
And the German positive ... das *Ya*.

So Yordan, take a bow, fraulein Bass MP  
A lady often seen with family  
In the Crug - Nail family car,  
And your reputation as a polly ...  
Well, that's still squeaky-clean.  
And we hope that you'll go far.

But, our problem's with your *surname*,  
Mis-pronounced a dozen ways,  
By blokes like Bill-the-slaught  
And Snowy-on-the-bus,  
And also by some academic types,  
The better-healed and better-taught,  
They mangle it as well,  
Just like the rest of *us*.

We've all heard those local versions  
Of the Crugnale fam'ly name,  
The enduring favourite - ***Crug-Nail***,  
An abomination widely still in use,  
To our enduring shame  
Then there's Crugnall, Crungle and Crungarli  
Not to mention Croongali and Crun - gail  
And others as outrageous

Coined by local folks:

The main problem seems to be  
A bothersome encumbrance,  
That silent letter ... G,  
Silent as it is in Italian words well-known  
Words like bolognaise, lasagna,  
Imbroglia, Bologna and Castagna  
Where we have no problem silencing that letter  
So, why do we still voice it when we say Crugnale?  
We Aussies don't voice the silent G  
When we utter *English* words like cough and right,  
Align, benign, and sign  
And the Spanish word *Espagna*.

And there's yet another reason for our mis-pronunciation  
And that's our way of saying U  
We Aussies pronounce it as in bug and snug and rug,  
Although we manage to soften it a bit,  
When we refer to fancy brands like Gucci and Ferrugia  
Not to mention Mussolini ...  
It's also said that way in Hindi, Swahili and Urdu  
And most other tongues around the world,  
Except for us, we English speakers,  
That's me and them and him and you.

But there's more....

More excuses for why we get it wrong:  
It's that letter E at the end of Crugnale  
We Australians treat that final E as if it isn't there  
As when we utter *English* words  
Where the final E is silent  
Words like tale and ale and mate and craze  
But we also know some words  
Where that final E is always voiced -  
Words like *Pasquale* and *finale*,  
Words that rhyme with Harley and pearl-barley,  
Not to mention the E in Albanese  
Not said A as in Albanaze,  
Barnaby please note.

So, Jordan C and Crugnales everywhere,  
Please excuse our awful mangling

Of your fam'ly name,  
It's not that we don't care,  
It's our rigid Anglo schooling that's to blame,  
And when you're introduced,  
At parish pump forget-me-nots  
As Crug-nail, Crungle or whatever  
Then it's time to correct your introducers  
By informing them, however,  
That although your surname's spelt C r u g n a l e,  
We should pronounce it *Croon* as in *moon*  
Followed by two syllables, as if spelled *Yarli* -  
That's *Yarli*, as in *barley*  
And Crug-Nail... it most certainly is not.

It can't be all that difficult for us  
To say it like it is, not the way it looks  
- Apart from folks like my old city mates,  
Bill, the abbatoir's gun slaught,  
And Snowy-On-The-Bus -  
But these old Aussie locals  
May not be the way to go  
For guidance on the vocals  
Of old Italian names  
Like Cardinale and Crugnale,  
Better go to someone in the know.\*\*

So, distinguished local member, Jordan C  
MLA, Lower House MP  
How about a rubber stamp, electronic or even pad and ink  
Which clearly shows the way your name is said,  
Who cares what some knuckle-draggers think,  
And it should read:  
My name's pronounced CROON-YARLI it *rhymes with BARLEY*  
And put this thing to bed!

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Jordan accepts CROON-YARLI as an acceptable phonetic rendering of her married name,  
and also offers two alternative phonetics:

*Crew-nya-lee*, said with an Italian accent, short and sharp, and

*Kru-nya-li*, ( her spelling )

So, dear readers, take your pick.

Anything but CRUG-NAIL