

Even dolphins are divided by east-west language bar

Julia Horton

Telling a Glaswegian that he sounds like he comes from Edinburgh is not for the faint-hearted. It may result in that famous West Coast invitation to “away ‘n bile yer heid” [Go away and boil your head].

The famous, fast-talking Glesca patter is a world away from the more plummy vowels of the Scottish capital’s citizens whose less abrasive way of communicating has even been likened to that of the more polite parts of England.

However, new research has found evidence of a similar language divide in the dolphin world, with those on the West Coast using different frequencies to communicate than those on the east.

The study suggests that the two populations of white-beaked dolphin could

be distinct sub-species, something which some people have doubtless long suspected is also true of the residents of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Both frequency pitches used by the dolphins are too high for humans to hear naturally, but computer analysis of acoustic recordings by the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust has detected a noticeably different range.

Olivia Harries, marine biodiversity officer at the trust, said: “We compared east and west coast clicks of white-beaked dolphins and we found that they were at a different frequency.”

“Other research [elsewhere] on other types of dolphins, such as Pacific whites, has found the same thing; we are looking at the potential that there are two sub-species of white-beaked dolphin in Scotland.” Post mortem examinations

on Pacific-white dolphins revealed sub-species with significantly differently shaped skulls, which were thought to account for the different frequencies.

About 80 per cent of all European populations of white-beaked dolphins are found in UK waters, most of which are off the coast of Scotland and the north-east of England. Although not endangered, they were proposed as a conservation “priority species” for marine protected areas (MPAs) which the Scottish government is currently consulting on.

Explaining the significance of the study, Ms Harries added: “This research is incredibly important for the management of the species because it is likely that it is not just their clicks which will be different. We also found that different species of dolphins produced different frequency clicks so we

can now analysis all our acoustic data going back to 2003 to see which kinds of dolphins were found where, which should give us a much better idea of their distribution and populations.”

The Scottish Environment Link green charity alliance, said the study highlighted the need for strategically-sited MPAs for cetaceans and suggested that threats, including noise pollution from offshore energy projects, posed a greater risk than previously feared.

Sarah Dolman, the alliance deputy convenor, said: “Currently we manage white-beak dolphins as if they are just one homogeneous population throughout Scottish and UK waters.”

“The fact that there seem to be smaller, discrete populations of white-beaked dolphins, means that damaging activities at sea could have much more

serious impacts than first thought.” However, Dr Marianne Rasmussen, an expert in white-beaked dolphins at the University of Iceland, questioned the study’s reliability. “White-beaked dolphins produce different clicks depending on where you record on the echolocation beam [which is] very narrow, so if you record ‘off-axis’ clicks their frequencies are very different.”

Scottish Natural Heritage, (SNH) invested £5,000 in the research, along with £5,000 from the Scottish government. Morven Carruthers, SNH marine policy advice officer, cautioned: “We cannot be certain at this stage whether there are two sub-populations or not.”

In 2010 a Scottish study revealed that there were two types of killer whale in UK waters, not one as previously thought.



Royal favourites: Olivia Bleasdale, right, Virginia Fraser, centre, and Alicia Fox-Pitt, far right are all friends of Kate and William who may be asked to act as godparents

Royalty takes a back pew as Kate and William pick godparents

Valentine Low, Roya Nikkhah

Prince George’s godparents will not include a single member of the Royal Family or the Middleton family, according to sources close to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

Three godparents were named yesterday, all close friends of the couple rather than the royal grandees chosen as godparents for heirs to the throne in previous generations.

Those named are Fergus Boyd, a friend since the University of St Andrews; Emilia d’Erlanger, a long-term friend of William who has known the Duchess since their days at Marlborough College; and Hugh van Cutsem, one of the Duke’s oldest childhood

pals. By going for trusted friends rather than trawling through the ranks of royalty — both home-grown and foreign — and the aristocracy, the Cambridges appear yet again to be striking out on their own rather than adhering to tradition.

Assuming that Prince George will have six godparents when he is christened on October 23 at the Chapel Royal, St James’s Palace — and given the couple’s track record, perhaps nothing can be assumed — three are yet to be named.

However, it is understood that a number of people once considered possible contenders can now be ruled out. They include Thomas van Straubenzee and James Meade, who



jointly delivered a speech at William and Kate’s wedding, his former principal private secretary Jamie Lowther-Pinkerton and his former nanny, Tiggy Pettifer.

Prince Harry is not on the list, and neither are either of the Duchess’s siblings, Pippa and James Middleton. No immediate relations of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, have been chosen.

Another close friend now thought to be out of the frame is Catriona Foyle, a friend of Kate’s from Marlborough College who has a young son and was photographed walking in Kensington Gardens with the Duchess during her pregnancy.

The list appears to be quite different from godparents chosen in the past. Prince William’s godparents included ex-King Constantine of Greece, Princess Alexandra, the Queen’s cousin, and the Duchess of Westminster.

The three names to have emerged thus far were reported by *The Sunday Times*. Hugh van Cutsem, a co-founder of Kepler Partners LLP, which provides consultancy and marketing for hedge funds, is likely to be a popular choice with



the Royal Family. His family were neighbours of the Queen for many years when they leased Anmer Hall on the Sandringham Estate in Norfolk, now earmarked as the Cambridges’ country home.

His father, also called Hugh, was a close friend of the Prince of Wales, who attended his funeral last month with William and Harry. Mr van Cutsem’s wife, Rose, runs Maggie & Rose, a children’s club close to Kensington Palace where Prince George is likely to have his first play dates.

Mr Boyd, 31, famous for sitting next to William when he said “Wow, Kate’s hot” as they watched the Prince’s future wife walk down the catwalk at a St Andrews fashion show, has been a friend of William since Eton.

Ms d’Erlanger, 31, the co-founder of d’Erlanger and Sloan, an interior design company, is understood to have advised the Duchess on the renovation of the couple’s Kensington Palace home.

Possible names for the remaining godparents include Oliver Baker, who lived with the couple at Balgove House on the Strathtyrum Estate while at university, and Alasdair Coutts-Wood, another friend from Balgove House, who played rugby with William.

Also in the frame is Alicia Fox-Pitt, a friend of Kate’s since Marlborough College, who tried in 2007 to recruit Kate to the first all-female crew to cross the Channel in a dragon boat.

Lady Virginia Fraser, the daughter of Lord Strathalmond, and Olivia Bleasdale, are both friends from St Andrews.

I don’t want to breed another me, wildlife presenter says

Alex Spence

Chris Packham is so self-critical that it has prevented him having children, the *Springwatch* presenter said yesterday.

“I don’t like myself to want to reproduce myself,” the naturalist told BBC Radio 4’s *Desert Island Discs*.

Packham, 52, has a teenage stepdaughter from a previous relationship, which he said was unexpected and rewarding but had not convinced him that he should have children of his own.

Asked what he thought was wrong with him, Packham said: “How long have we got? I’m very self-critical.”

“I think that’s a healthy thing. I

want to continually try to improve what I do ... It’s difficult for me to perceive any success in the things that I do.”

Packham, pictured left, who worked as a wildlife cameraman and photographer before joining the BBC on *The Really Wild Show* in 1986, said that he preferred spending time with animals.

“I’ve enjoyed some very rich human relationships, but those that I get from animals ... are pure

Chris Packham: “I’m very self-critical”

and they’re honest,” he said. Relationships with other people are “far more complex and when they go wrong they can be a lot less palatable”, he added.

“I know my dogs will never fail me. They will always bounce off the ceiling when I go home, and they will always bring me joy when I take their leads off and they bound across the beach.”

Packham recounted a childhood obsession with the natural world and warned that too many children now were put off spending time in the countryside.

“We have painted it as a dark and dirty and dangerous place to be, and it is none of those things.” He recalled

studying zoology at the University of Southampton, where he missed only one lecture in three years and seldom went to the student pub.

He said that his life changed at the age of 14 when he stole a bird from a kestrel nest.

He said: “It defined the rest of my life. Because I loved that bird and that was the first time I had learnt to love something.” He added that the bird’s death affected him “profoundly”.

Packham, who lives with Charlotte, a zookeeper, chose the collected works of F Scott Fitzgerald as his book and a pair of binoculars as his luxury on the desert island.

