I’m always reminded after spending some time off the island, hanging out with mainland folks that, even though I wasn’t born and raised in Newfoundland, I sometimes still talk like I was. I don’t have the accent – I prefer to call mine “Generic Maritime” – but I’ve picked up a lot of Newfoundland sayings and slang from my parents and my almost dozen years of living in St. John’s.

Phrases like “I’m rotted with the weather. It’s some cold out, wha?” or “I’m after squatting my finger in the door” make perfect sense to me but left some of my fellow WITS attendees scratching their heads.

One of the things I love about my current home and parents’ homeland is the language. It might sound a little like the Irish, but it’s really its own unique thing. We even have our own dictionary! We love taking existing words and using them in a completely different way. Or we make up our own to suit our needs.

First up, reading the title of this post, you’re probably thinking “What the hell’s a CFA?” In short, unless you’re from Newfoundland, it’s you. CFA stands for Come From Away and it refers to all non-Newfoundlanders.
I think everyone should come visit Newfoundland so I put together a little guide of a few common slang terms and phrases to help you out when you come see us. Now, you don’t have to go using them yourself but this should help you understand us locals during your time here. ;)

NEWFOUNDLAND WORDS

- **CFA**
  - Come From Away. Someone who isn’t from Newfoundland.
  - Example: “George Street is full of CFAs tonight.”

- **B’y**
  - Though originally a short form of ‘boy’ it’s actually gender neutral and isn’t interchangeable with ‘boy’. It adds emphasis to a phrase.
  - Example: “Yes, b’y”, “Go on, b’y”

- **Some / Right**
  - Used similar to ‘very’. On a scale, right is more than some.
  - Example: “It’s some cold out.” or “She’s right pretty.”

- **After**
  - We sometimes use this word instead of ‘have’ to mean in the past.
  - Example: “I’m after buying the wrong lightbulb.” instead of “I’ve bought the wrong lightbulb.”

- **Wha**
  - Similar to the Canadian “eh?” We throw it in to make sure that you’re paying attention.
  - Example: “It’s some sunny out, wha?”

- **Luh**
  - We apparently have a complex or something about people not listening to us. This one roughly means “Look!”
  - Example: “Luh. Missus over there’s wearing leggings as pants.”

- **Buddy and Missus**
○ What you call someone when you don’t know their name. Missus can also refer to your female better half.
○ Example: “Buddy on the corner.” “Missus, get me a beer from the fridge.”

- Rotted
  ○ Annoyed. Pissed off.
  ○ Example: “It’s snowing in April. I’m rotted.”

- Crooked
  ○ cranky, grouchy
  ○ Example: “You’re right crooked today. Did you get up on the wrong side of the bed?”

- Mauzy
  ○ Damp and warm. Muggy.
  ○ Example: “It’s a mauzy old day out there today.”

- Fousty
  ○ Musty, off-smelling
  ○ Example: “I left dirty laundry in a plastic bag and now it’s fousty.”

- Blocked
  ○ Busy, crowded, packed.
  ○ Example: “We went to the bar, but it was blocked. There was a line-up to get in.”

- Squat
  ○ Squished, smashed.
  ○ Example: “I stepped on a spider and squat it.”

- Stunned
  ○ Temporary lack of intelligence, dumb.
  ○ Example: “Buddy’s some stunned. He left his car running with the keys locked in it.”

- Shitbaked
  ○ Scared, terrified.
  ○ Example: “When I saw the moose charging at me I was shitbaked.”

- Arse
- Ass – it just sounds nicer when we say it.
  - Example: “Look at the arse on d’at!”

- Skeet
  - You say “white trash” we say “skeet”. Aggressive, uneducated, unruly people usually associated with loitering and petty crimes.
  - Example: “Some skeet held up Marie’s Mini Mart again last night.”

- Stogged
  - Full
  - Example: “I’m stogged. I couldn’t possibly eat any more.”

- Sleeveen
  - A scoundrel, a rascal
  - Example: “Get out of here you little sleeveen. You’re after stealing my lunch.”

- A Time
  - Funny, happy, social setting
  - Example: “Man, we had a time last night.” | “It was quite a time at Joe’s this weekend.”
  - Reverse: No so much a time. Something that wasn’t very much fun.

- Not Fit
  - Exceptionally bad
  - Example: “It’s not fit out today so it’s the perfect time for a Netflix binge.”

- Chummy
  - A thing which you may or may not know the proper word for. Along the lines of thingamajig, whatsit, or doodad
  - Example: “Pass me that chummy would ‘ya?”

- Streel
  - An unkept person. A bit of a mess.
  - “You’re not leaving the house like that are you? You look like a streel.”

- Racket
NEWFOUNDLAND SAYINGS AND EXPRESSIONS

- How ya gettin’ on?
  - How’s it going?
- Knows ya can’t go.
  - You’ve got some energy.
- Get on the go.
  - To get going or to have a good time.
- Get on the beer.
  - You’re not literally sitting on a case of beer. But you are going drinking…a lot.
- The arse is gone out of ‘er.
  - It’s all gone to hell.
- Be there the once.
  - Be right there. We use “the once” to mean right away, soon.
- Go on in out of it.
  - Remove yourself from the situation.
  - Alternate: Go home out of it.
- Whatta y’at?
  - What are you doing? How’re you doing? What’s up? A proper response might be “Nuttin’ b’y.” or “This is it.”
- Who knit you?
  - Where are you from? Who are your parents? Usually uttered after you’ve done something foolish.
- Best kind
  - Good. Satisfied.
  - “How ya getting’ on, b’y?” “Best kind.”
  - “We’ve got cod for supper tonight. Is that alright?” “Yes, best kind.”
● I dies at you.
  ○ I think you're exceptionally funny.

Pro tip: Don’t use the term ‘Newfie’. For some, it’s offensive no matter what. For others, it all depends on who’s saying it and how. So when you want to refer to the people live on this rock in the North Atlantic, they’re Newfoundlanders.

Another little tip for your first visit to Newfoundland, don’t be alarmed if someone working in a store or restaurant calls you ‘sweetheart’, ‘my love’, or even ‘me duckie’ – they’re not coming on to you…it’s just a thing we say.

The few words and phrases I listed out here are pretty common ones but they’re really just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Have you heard any others that stood out to you as being particularly Newfoundland? I’d love to hear them.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVOURITE NEWFOUNDLAND SAYING OR WORD?
A CFA's Guide to NEWFOUNDLAND SLANG