

Progress report

English Today has entered its third year of publication. In our early days, various people pointed to various ailments that they perceived in the language and asked, 'What are you going to do about *this*?' We may not have done, or been able to do, or wanted to do, precisely what they hoped, but we can report at the end of our second year some solid achievements, not the least of which is a lively circulation in 50 countries round the world:

- David Crystal provided in *ET1* a succinct statement of the statistics of World English. His figures have been widely quoted since then (with and without acknowledging the source) and remain the most compactly authoritative to date.

- Peter Strevens provided in *ET2* a definition of Standard English which the UK Ministry of Education and Science has accepted as definitive for its purposes in a new report on the teaching of English in England and Wales (see p. 15). This document, with the Strevens quotation, has gone out to some 60,000 interested groups and individuals.

- Our double report on Plain English in *ET5* was unique in covering the very distinct campaigns on both sides of the Atlantic. When that issue came out, Chrissie Maher of the UK campaign had telephones ringing for several days. She told us recently that expressions of interest have reached her from all over the world. In addition, the UK campaign has adopted our dragon Gobbledygook and the Knight of Plain English as the cover cartoon for their latest book.

- In *ET6* David F Marshall wrote about English and the U.S. Constitution. He is also the author of the focus monograph on the same subject in the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, No 60, 1986 (edited by Joshua A Fishman; published by Mouton de Gruyter). As editor of *ET*, Tom McArthur was invited, among other commentators around the world, to review Marshall's monograph in the same issue. Of the 18 published comments, the *ET* item received pride of place in *IJSL* 60.

- In late 1985, the Reader's Digest (UK) sent in a review copy of its new usage book, *The Right Word at the Right Time*. In some ensuing correspondence the editor pointed out a number of errors of fact and problems of style and presentation in the book. The publishers put many of these right in the subsequent 1986 reprint.

- Following on the broadcasting of its TV series *The Story of English*, the BBC has invited David Crystal and Tom McArthur to contribute a series of 18 fifteen-minute programmes on the same theme for English by Radio (World Service), early in 1987.

- Hundreds of publishers, educational institutions and interest groups have now made contact with *ET*. In addition to the conventional pursuits of education and publishing we have heard from and are now co-operating with a wide variety of specialist groups: usage newsletters, societies for the protection of English, language and race relations groups, literacy and other campaigns, spelling-

reform groups, translators and interpreters, language awareness advocates, lexicographical innovators, teachers of English as a second dialect, as a second or foreign language, and as an international language (etc.). We hope in due course to make a directory available of such groups, and would like to hear from or about others who have not yet got in touch.

Recently we were asked why we did not have more to say about education and English teaching; well, Len Masterman, Pam Czerniewska and Richard Lloyd-Jones say quite a lot about these matters in this issue (pp. 9–16). Sometimes, it has been said that we should be more controversial: try Robert Claiborne's follow-on article to Frederic Cassidy's (pp. 27–33). Robert McCrum and his colleagues take us from Lowland Scotland through Ulster to Appalachia and Country-and-Western English (p. 23), while Ken Goodwin looks at Aussie Lit and Aboriginal writing in English. Dwight Bolinger – one of America's most famous linguists – discusses a truly odd little usage (p. 39), while from Haifa Ian Semple talks about English and the scriptures of the Baha'i Faith (p. 18). Meanwhile, Kaleidoscope lives up to its name with snippets on Desperanto, cathedral knaves and glass petitions, adrenalinathons, metamonsters, and a new kind of COYOTE. Now read on, into our third year.

Tom McArthur

The editorial policy of *English Today* is to provide a focus or forum for all sorts of news and opinion from around the world. The points of view of individual writers are as a consequence their own, and do not reflect the opinion of the editorial board. In addition, wherever feasible, *ET* leaves unchanged the orthography (normally British or American) and the usage of individual contributors, although the editorial style of the magazine itself is that of Cambridge University Press.

A Call for Papers

In *ET*'s files we have cuttings/clippings from a wide range of British and North American newspapers, and a scattering of material from many other sources. If readers would care to add to our files by sending in occasional (titled and dated) material from their local newspapers, etc., or even the odd complete sample of a specially interesting periodical, this would be a great help in widening the range of usage which we can quote in *From Our Files*.

Letters to the editor should be addressed to a branch of Cambridge University Press (for forwarding), or directly to:

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