

## Never a cross word

Foremost among the many satisfactions in editing *ET* are the contributors and the ways in which they come to be contributors.

One contributor has been quietly with us from the start, providing readers with verbal challenges in every issue. Frank Palmer is known worldwide in his more formal persona as F. R. Palmer, a noted grammarian of English and particularly of the English verb. Frank has been a marvel of steadiness, delivering puzzle upon puzzle for quarter after quarter. We recently agreed, however, that the old order does eventually change. Worldwide puzzlers competing for those excellent prizes (five every time) will be sorry to see the cryptic flow come to an end with the 66th puzzle in this 66th issue. We have been lucky to have him sustain this brilliant work for such a long time. Many thanks, Frank.

In every issue I have been fascinated by the coming together of writers and topics, often planned but equally often coincidental, as people with similar interests just happen to submit related material at the same time. This was true of Li Lan and Li Yongyan, with their parallel email analyses in *ET*64, and also of Lee-Wong Song Mei, Andrew Preshous, and Su-Hie Ting, with their accidental medley on Singaporean and Malaysian English in *ET*65. I am used to interesting surprises, but that one is in a class of its own.

The current issue is no exception. Bryan Garner – with another contribution in a crucial area, plus another interesting comment from Andrew Dalby in *The Linguist* – has responded to my piece on editing and error in the last issue (extending our dialogue in important new ways). Joanna Radwanska-Williams and Eva Lai I met in early 2000 during a memorable semester at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. We talked and later emailed, and the results are an essay presenting (intensely and often poetically) a multilingual banyan-tree model of language, and (for the first time to my knowledge) an account of free-enterprise English in China. Rahela Banu and Roland Sussex I met at a lively conference on world English sponsored by OUP at the Australian National University in Canberra in late 1999. Now they present a report on English 'sign language' in Bangladesh that notably complements other 'international sign' articles we have published.

Tom McArthur

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