

ET interactive?

No. Not *English Today* in cyberspace – or at least not yet. Rather, it could be a move towards more discussion and fuller reader involvement: something that email can make easier for everybody, including those who don't yet or won't ever use it directly.

As regular readers know, the POST & MAIL section has always been highly popular, yet in the last two years or so it has virtually dried up. More people have been sending in full-length articles than shorter comments and many others simply haven't had the time to write. Yet at the same time they have expressed their regret that *other* people haven't been continuing with 2 letters. And as editor, I have particularly regretted this development. My own share of the blame is that often I haven't in recent years had the time to answer conventional letters promptly (or at all) or – importantly – to coax a letter to the editor out of someone I know has something to say.

But that could change. In this issue, POST & MAIL is back in full form, but adapted hopefully to POST & (E)MAIL (p. 62). There are eight letters of varying lengths in this issue, one of which has a response from me while another has responses from me and from a recent contributor, Ross Smith. Such an approach makes possible a regular reader-contributor-editor exchange not possible when the basic means of contact worldwide was stamp-and-envelope. That medium is still of course vital for many reasons (including delivering *ET* every quarter), but most contributors now have email and I can therefore not only involve them more (and more quickly) in editing but also ask them for a reply to a reader's comment or query, get it quickly, and drop it neatly into its slot for the next issue.

Such an approach can make *ET*'s on-going debate easier and more satisfying for everybody. Readers should also feel free to use email and fax for editorial matters (to me) and administrative matters (to Cambridge University Press): addresses in the column on the right. These days, I can guarantee a surer response to email or fax than conventional post, although I also hope to speed that up too.

Tom McArthur

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