

# HIGH WIRES AND HAUTE CUISINE

While editing *English Today*, I have developed a fellow feeling for tightrope-walkers and chefs. Certainly, *ET*'s success will depend on keeping one's balance and getting all the ingredients right. The magazine now exists, with a name, a logo and a shape. The first two – we hope – will become well known; as for the third, it is not meant to be fixed and final. It will evolve. Your comments, correspondence, supplementation, refutation, participation, bouquets and brickbats will all contribute positively to that evolution.

In the next issue we open the *Post & Mail* section. Write to us, and we will try to ensure a fair coverage of your views. You may also have ideas about what our regular features should be doing, about who should write for us, or what they should write about. Let us have them. You may feel that *ET* over-emphasises X, misrepresents Y, underrates Z, and has forgotten its Ps and Qs. Tell us, and we'll look into it.

In this issue, my main concern has been to cast our net widely enough and well enough – to bring in history, geography, statistics, social issues, literature, lexicography, etymology, usage, linguistics, institutions, technological change, and other languages besides English. The result? Well...

**History** There is some of it on most pages, but particularly in Richard Bailey's and Derek Brewer's articles.

**Geography** In just over 40 pages we say something about just over 60 states and territories.

**Statistics** David Crystal matches the planetary pie chart on our cover with the realities of people on the ground.

**Social issues** Jenny Cheshire looks at sexism in language, Alan Maley talks about linguistic genocide, and *Kaleidoscope* covers Islam and westernization.

**Literature** Derek Brewer's article is the first in a series on the literatures of English around the world.

**Lexicography** Between them, Betty Kirkpatrick and

Della Summers bring into their interviews no fewer than ten dictionaries.

**Etymology** Try the *ABC of World English*, *Kaleidoscope*, and *A Way with Words*.

**Usage** David Crystal raises a variety of issues on page 27. Why not take him up on some of them?

**Linguistics** This appears at many points, but particularly in the specially commissioned reviews by Connie Eble, Stanley Ellis, Jeremy Harmer and Peter Trudgill.

**Institutions** *ET* interviews Alan Lee Williams of the English-Speaking Union, while Alan Maley represents the British Council in India.

**Technological change** Computerease gets in on page 29.

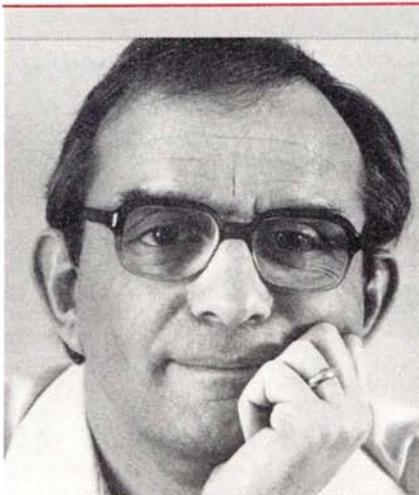
**Other languages** Count how many come up, from French, Spanish and Latin through Arabic, Tamil and Chinese, to the poignant story of Oubykh.

That is the balance and the mix this time. April's issue will be similar as well as different (See *Forthcoming*, page 49).

No doubt many publications about language will compete for people's attention in 1985. *ET*, however, is the first anywhere to bring the foreign and the native user of English together, to cover the interests of the *littérateur* as well as the linguist, to cater for the amateur as well as the professional. Not easy, but eminently worth the effort, which is why I sympathize with tightrope-walkers and chefs.

Tom McArthur  
Editor

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.



TOM McARTHUR was born in Glasgow in 1938. A graduate of both Glasgow and Edinburgh universities, he has been in turn an officer-instructor in the British Army, a school-teacher in the Midlands of England, Head of English at the Cathedral School, Bombay, organizer of courses for overseas students at the University of Edinburgh, and associate professor of English at the Université du Québec. He has written for many periodicals, including *The Birmingham Mail*, *The Times of India*, and *The Scotsman*. His publications in linguistics, lexicography and language teaching include the *Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English*, *A Foundation Course for Language Teachers*, *The Written Word*, and the co-editing of *Languages of Scotland*.

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