

## Win some, lose some

There are times when things flow smoothly and times when they don't. *ET* has recently experienced both, relating to matters raised in *Comment* in *ET*61 (16:1, Jan 00), which celebrated fifteen years of publication.

In that issue, I sought to highlight the range of contributions published since we began in 1985. As part of this, I took points raised by Nigel Ross in his neatly titled 'Signs of International English' (*ET*50, Apr 97). In that article, he analysed Anglo-hybrid shop signs in Milan in Italy. For my response, I chose signs in Zurich in Switzerland and in Uppsala in Sweden, and called my piece 'Interanto: the global language of signs' (*ET*61, Jan 00). What I noted in Switzerland and Sweden paralleled what he had found in Italy.

Since then, *ET* has published a growing number of reports on signs and ads in various places, all focusing on both hybridity and the prominence and prestige of English. The present issue continues the trend, with Maria Schlick's second report, which not only extends her study of shop signs in towns in Austria, Italy, and Slovenia (in *ET*70, Apr 02), but takes on England as well. She is also noteworthy in having made the subject central to a project for a master's degree, now successfully completed.

But win some, lose some. In the same editorial (Jan 00), there was a sidebar with the title '*ET*electronic', referring to an e-forum we planned to start up, in which readers, contributors, and others could interact under the adjudication of editorial board member Alan S. Kaye of the University of California Fullerton. When, much later, the service went on-line, *ETe* had hundreds of hits but unfortunately nothing to hit on because of a dispiriting series of technical faults. When these were at length by and large cleared up, I wrote a piece on the language of what is now known simply as '9/11'. This was reproduced in *ET*69 (18:1, Jan 02), along with news about *ETe*, and accompanied by two early on-line responses. But by this time, unfortunately, both the momentum and the moment were lost, and the project did not thrive.

Cambridge University Press has therefore with great regret decided not to continue the service. But we do have in this issue our largest surveys to date of hybrid shop signs: from both Europe and Japan. Lose some, win some.

Tom McArthur

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**Letters to the Editor:** write to Dr Tom McArthur, Editor, *English Today*, 22-23 Ventress Farm Court, Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 8HD, UK. Tel 01223 245934, Fax 01223 241161. Email: Scotsway@aol.com

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