

Thoroughly pregnant

The tragicomedy of error has been haunting me for some time, caught between *ET*'s relative laissez-faire and the obsessive perfectionism of *The Oxford Companion* (see CrossworLd). Of course, printers, writers, editors, and publishers generally seek the perfect text, but the day after publication they find that once again it has eluded their collective grasp.

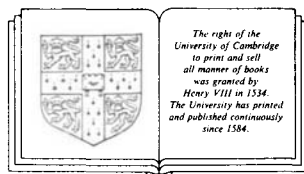
Take Tony Fairman's letter to the Editor in *ET*30, which I entitled 'Asymmetrical impregnation'. He has pointed out that in the letter he 'actually wrote "He pregnanted my eldest sister", not "he pregnated"'. The original copy did go forward as 'pregnanted', but the typesetter 'corrected' it (probably unthinkingly), and no one noticed afterwards. The typesetter did it again on the contents page of *this* issue, but this time we were watching. Such slips can occur at any stage of production; they are sometimes harmless, sometimes amusing, and sometimes they damage the writer's intent. Mr Fairman rightly asked for an erratum note 'in the interests of accuracy and scholarship'. This is it, with our collective regrets.

There are some changes in this issue, arising from the sheer quantity of valuable material that has been arriving. To make room for realia such as concordances, book displays, and illustrations I have omitted *Kaleidoscope* and *News*, and to do some justice to the many books that have for months been arriving for review have introduced the section *Recent titles*, which seeks to do more than simply list what we have received. I propose to run such a section for several issues, and would welcome readers' views on its value.

Finally, this is the first issue in which writers with mainland European links have predominated: from Germany Reinhold Freudenstein writes on the controversial subject of peace education; Torkil Christensen and Paul Christophersen, both of Danish background, contribute to the 'great debate' on the international standard language and who should teach it; Félix Rodríguez González writes from Spain on US slang; Glyn Hughes, a Welshman, has sent in from Finland a feature on Fractured English; Reinhard Hartmann, an Austrian living in England, reviews two books on translation; and Ludwig Deringer from Germany discusses an increasingly popular American colloquialism. It's all grist to the global mill.

Tom McArthur

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