



# THE EDITORS

Registered for posting as a publication. Category "B"

P.O. Box 567,  
Neutral Bay Junction 2089

JANUARY, 1982

NEXT MEETING....NEXT MEETING....NEXT MEETING....

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 17th Feb. at 7.00pm. at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli.

Please RSVP to Narelle Konte, 888-2733, by Monday, 15th February.

SUBJECT: How to use the Mitchell Library and its resources

SPEAKER: Paul Brunton, MS Cataloguer at Mitchell Library.

## LAST MEETING

Despite the petrol problems, there was still a good roll up to listen to Professor Arthur Delbridge, Sue Butler and Kevin Weldon talk about their roles in bringing The Macquarie Dictionary "into the world".

Professor Delbridge discussed his role in getting a clear idea of just what the community needs were for an Australian dictionary. He felt that we needed our own record of how we use language in our society. In selecting useful Australian (English) words for treatment in a dictionary, he had to look at current usage and how words had developed here. He spoke of a recent B.B.C. interview in which Australian was referred to as "vernacular English".

The 80000 head words and similar numbers of secondary and remaining ones were viewed as making a total vocabulary. General words were set apart from specialist words related to a particular discipline, skill, or area of interest. Professor Delbridge pointed out that the Encyclopedia of the World Dictionary was used as a base model for the Macquarie. From this volume were drawn out-of-date and

specialist words. The size of the publication meant that there had to be a priority list of words and phrases. All entries have Australian pronunciation; the ABC files were used to determine this.

In selecting general words, for example meals and houses, original meanings had to be modified to fit the Australian context. It was the circumstances of usage which led to these modifications. Because the dictionary reflects our progress in written and spoken language (as opposed to historical listings) the new game being played is "Is it in the Macquarie?" Professor Delbridge concluded by saying that the Macquarie Dictionary is already being used as a standard and respected source.

Sue Butler discussed her role as Senior Editor of the project and explained how they had "put it together". Sue explained their consideration of words that were borrowed from other languages. In accepting any entry, five citations were required. Approximately 100000 filing card entries had to be keyed into a computer for recording and retrieval. In the beginning the World Dictionary had been cut up to form the individual cards and these were then given priority listings.

Citations were selected and definitions written. Wherever necessary, consultants were selected to validate special content-area words. All writing was done in a style to suit the potential "Macquarie Dictionary reader". Then came the tedious task of filing back together again - a task that required carefully worked out procedures.

Having made rules for inclusions, there was also the need for exclusion; not only for individual entries but also for categories. To ensure consistency of application and checking, retrieval systems were built into the computer data base, for example, to retrieve entries in special fields, colloquialisms, historical entries, synonyms.

"From this point it was an endless round of proofs to the stage where both the Dictionary and I must have been 'overproofed'. One thing I had to keep in mind was the purpose of this dictionary, and so resist the urge to give in to the proofs. As other dictionaries are to come from

this and the overall data base, this was essential for any 'quality control'.

To keep the Dictionary alive and fresh, we need to research regionalisms' such as Melbourne, Sydney and Newcastle. We also realise that there are always new words and phrases turning up in our language. By forming a Macquarie Dictionary Society, we hope to obtain the necessary feedback to achieve these goals."

Kevin Waldon rounded off the evening by talking of his role in all the "dealings". His own involvement began with the purchase of \$200000 worth of "crappy" cards (the first lot was lost in the Brisbane flood) - the only record of the data purchased! He explained that the idea of such a dictionary came from Brian Clouston who looked at Random House College Dictionary as a base.

To achieve sales round 45000 meant an investment of some \$480000. Having expended some \$100000 up front Jacaranda gave the work back to Macquarie.

Kevin pointed out that the dictionary existed because of the understanding that one must believe in what one creates. In any such venture, teamwork is of great importance and the need for dedication from the members must be an "unwritten law"

#### FREELANCE REGISTER-DEADLINE

An addendum to the register will be distributed to all publishers early in the new year. If you wish to update the information or to correct any mistakes, please send it to the secretary by 28th February, 1982, together with \$2 if you are a member, \$5 if you are not.

#### MEETINGS FOR THE YEAR

Please note these dates in your diaries. The Editors will meet on:

17th February, 31st March, 12th May, 23rd June,  
4th August, 15th September, 27th October, with the  
Christmas Party during the week beginning 6th December.

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees are now due and payable.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The A.G.M. will be held on 31st March. Do not absent yourselves. The A.G.M. is an important meeting.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

It is expected that the results of the recent questionnaire will be given to the next meeting.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

Your committee has many ideas for future meetings. But - we would like to hear from you. Is there any topic you are waiting to hear discussed? Suggestions are most welcome.

## NEW ADULT EDUCATION ENTERPRISE

This year sees a new arrival in the active and varied field of non-vocational adult education.

SCOLA, Sydney Centre of Learning for Adults, is a new organisation providing stimulating and educationally sound courses in subjects such as philosophy, literature, history, psychology, economics, science and computers.

One of the lecturers is Meryl Potter, a member of The Editors. With a colleague she will be lecturing on "Cities of the Ancient 'Near' East". The course will trace the development of the cities from the first villages in Mesopotamia, Egypt, The Levant and Turkey. As with all SCOLA courses, no preliminary qualifications are needed, and there are no exams.

Each course is open to all people, 16 and over. They are of 12 weeks duration and will meet at Science Centre, 35-43 Clarence Street, Sydney, beginning 22 February. The fee for most classes is \$55. Advance booking is advised.

Phone 692 9662 for a free brochure or write to:

SCOLA,  
Post Office Box K705,  
HAYMARKET.N.S.W. 2000.