

The last post?

● The British Empire, it seems, never quite ends. The Union Jack may now have fluttered down its pole in Hong Kong, but the imperial story is set to continue into yet another century, as Spain for example addresses once more the status of Gibraltar. Like everywhere else, there is an English associated with both these colonial remnants, and in this issue we look at the Hong Kong handover from not one but four perspectives – in effect now as part of the complex of English in China. I would like to acknowledge here the invaluable role of John Herbert, associate professor of journalism at Baptist University, Hong Kong, in organizing the second, third, and fourth articles.

● In my editorial comment in April's issue, I mentioned the wealth of articles and ideas for articles that arrive on my desk these days – and also the paradoxical dearth of letters to go in our popular *Post & Mail* section. I wondered if my remarks would prompt some replies – especially by email – but in fact they produced only one reply of any kind, an email from Karen Kreibohm in Berlin, who says:

'While I'm not exactly one of your cover-to-cover readers, I never missed the *Kaleidoscope* and *Post & Mail* sections – which I now miss very much. Flipping through the current issue, which arrived today, I had noticed even before reading the editorial that there were lots and lots of pages of solid black type. While I appreciate the scholarliness of the journal, I appreciated even more the entertainment value – bits and pieces of hey-wow-isn't-that-interesting things. And reading letters to the editor created a sense of belonging to an international group of word people. Maybe people these days get a similar sense of belonging through the Internet so they don't need to write or read letters to editors in journals? While I realize you've got an oversupply of material and I also think 64 pages is a good maximum number, I'm in favor of fewer and/or shorter articles and a more reader-friendly layout. I wonder what other readers think about it.'

I wonder too.

Tom McArthur

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