

OBJECTIVES
Of
THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH SOCIETY

Registered Charity No, 272901

The objects of the Queen's English Society are, according to its constitution, "to promote the maintenance, knowledge, understanding, development and appreciation of the English language as used both colloquially and in literature; to educate the public in its correct and elegant usage; and to discourage the intrusion of anything detrimental to clarity or euphony". In short, we aim to defend unashamedly the precision, subtlety and marvellous richness of our language against debasement, ambiguity and other forms of misuse.

The Society strongly advocates the formal teaching of English in schools; it agrees with the testing of pupils and with the need for all teachers to correct their pupils' errors in a helpful way. Children must be brought up to recognise that there is a formal structure to the language, and that the literature of the past is a worthy and useful source of writing style. We also lobby government and the BBC about the standards of English broadcast via the written and spoken media.

We hold regular branch and society meetings in London, to which guest speakers are invited, and at which are debated a wide range of germane subjects. These meetings are usually held at the New Cavendish Club near Marble Arch, of which the Society is a corporate member. We also publish a quarterly journal, *Quest*, which has been sent to members since 1979. A recurring theme throughout *Quest* has been the serious attempt to assess the changes that are now taking place within the language almost on a daily basis. The editor always welcomes submissions on this theme.

The total membership of the Society is now about one thousand, and this includes a good many overseas members. But more members are needed to help us in the tasks we have set ourselves: writing articles; promoting *Quest* and the website; commenting to editors in an attempt to improve standards; organising conferences; supplying responses to requests for views or information; fund raising; and even getting themselves featured on radio and television to expound the Society's views! There is also a need for volunteers to carry out the many small but very important administrative tasks which are essential to the Society's continuing existence.

The Society hopes to attract those who are interested in, and knowledgeable about, the English language. However, members are not required to be experts on the niceties of good English, and are certainly not required to drop their accent in favour of RP; what is needed is no more than a concern for standards and good English.

Such a commitment to standards does not preclude the acceptance of change; nor does it mean, however, that change should be mindlessly celebrated for its own sake. Change should be the outcome of a rational debate about how best to use English. The English language enables a sizeable portion of the world to consider and communicate the most sophisticated of abstract ideas, as well as the most complicated of concrete realities. We misuse it at our peril.