

# travelogue

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screen; the title of the language function (or situation) appears as a header on the screen; and key exponents are set out in the lower part of the screen. Every assistance is thus given to the viewer to know when a language point is being dealt with and exactly what the language point is.

This is a video for the tourist first and the language student second; since most language students in the UK are also tourists it fulfils a real need: that of introducing students to the enormous variety of the UK and preparing them for their visit.

As such it will be valuable in the country of departure most of all but also useful in the U.K. as part of a students' orientation. Invariably bland and unvaryingly optimistic it may be, but indispensable nonetheless.

Barry Cusack is a freelance training and management consultant based in Hastings, England.

# Get to know Great Britain

**Spotlight on Britain** (Second edition) Susan Sheerin, Jonathan Seath & Gillian White OUP 1990 £4.85

**An A to Z of British Life** (Previously published as Dictionary of Britain). Adrian Room OUP 1990 £7.50

What's the significance of *Oak Apple Day*? When is it celebrated? What's a *dog's nose* in the North Country? And who or what, is a *Paul Jones*? If you can answer all these questions, then you probably don't need *An A to Z of British Life*, either that or your name's Adrian Room!

## Bryan Robinson

Do you have a recipe for *haggis*? Do you know (Are you old enough to remember) when *Love Me Do* by the Beatles, first entered the British Top Thirty? And what is the meaning of the Gaelic word "*clan*"? It's *Spotlight on Britain* which can provide you with the answers here.

In many ways these two new, revised editions are complementary. In 11 chapters, *Spotlight* gives a region-by-region description of the United Kingdom, a concept which the authors admirably clarify for everyone's benefit. To this they add an update on "In and out of school", which clearly aims their book at teenage EFL students who are looking for something which they can identify with. Every chapter is followed by a Glossary at a pre-intermediate/intermedi-

ate level. It is attractively illustrated with colour photos, maps, and charts throughout.

The authors of *Spotlight* have included a wide range of straightforward activities including True/False, "Write the questions for these answers", "Look and practise" and slot-filler types. All of these make reading the book an active process, and although there's no apparent underlying syllabus the book should provide teachers with a useful resource which learners will be motivated to read.

By way of contrast, *An A to Z of British Life* is much more of a teacher's book, and a reference book. There are over 3,000 entries, in alphabetical order, clearly cross-referenced, and with an "Index by Topics", such as People, London, and Tradition. The presentation is clear, and the book is easy to use. What's more, there are plenty of black and white illustrations which serve to entertain the user, as much as to aid understanding.

Incidentally, just to show how difficult the business of dictionary compiling can be, there is one surprising omission from the People section of the A to Z: Margaret Thatcher, Edward Heath, Michael Heseltine and Cecil Parkinson are the four prominent Conservative politicians mentioned - with Heseltine getting the longest write-up - but what of John Major? Well, you can't win them all, can you? Bryan Robinson is soon to take up the post of Head of Studies at Academia Britannica/International House, Cordoba, Spain.

# Exemplary dictionary

**Penguin English Student's Dictionary** Ed. by L.A. Hill Penguin Books, £6.25

This dictionary is designed for students at intermediate to advanced levels. It claims to define "40,000 words and phrases", covering 65,000 expressions, compounds and derivatives.

How contemporary is it? Not included are the following: *poll*

printed in a different, sans serif typeface. (The defining vocabulary is not however listed in the book.) This works fairly well: (words in italics in the examples below, are those set in sans serif).

## Martin H Manser

Microscope: instrument that has lenses to make it possible to examine very small objects; disease

it back to s.w).

The examples are of the traditional kind that give a great deal of information about the meaning of the word in the other words chosen in the example, e.g. at *impersonal*: you must try to be impersonal when reviewing staff salaries.

The grammatical information is kept fairly simple. Thus: *ablaze* is a 'pred.adj' (predicative adjective); *data* is marked 'pl/n' (also