

From the Back Verandah

I've just had another history lesson — this time in Medieval monastic history.

It would seem that in the monasteries and nunneries the monks and nuns, being human, sometimes found it hard going saying their offices.

It's not difficult to see why.

With up to seven offices a day, the night one being required at 2 am, sleepiness and carelessness could easily take over. The result was a tendency to gabble the plainsong or mumble the reading. In this the monks were worse than the nuns.

In desperation, the Church ended up defining a special little demon named Tittivillus, whose sole mission was to go round collecting in a "poke" (a sack) every such

dropped or slurred syllable. When Judgment Day came around, his evidence would be tendered to help weigh the individual destiny of those in holy orders.

But his duties didn't stop there. According to social historian Eileen Power, in her 1924 *Medieval People*,

. . . when he was not engaged in picking up those unconsidered trifles which the monks let fall from their psalms, Tittivillus used to fill up odd corners of his sack with idle talk of people who gossiped in church; and he also sat up aloft and collected all the high notes of vain tenors, who sang to their own glory, instead of to the glory of God, and pitched the chants three notes higher than the cracked voices of their elders could rise.

— Fizzgig

BIKWIL

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One More Cordial Invitation

From time to time the Editorial page appeals for more contributions to *Bikwil*. Guess what? This issue continues that noble tradition.

Our Web site puts the request as follows:

To date, we've had poems and essays paying tribute to all manner of people, places and things, we've had funny stories and verse, we've had trivia and jokes. We've had art. We've had quirky quotations. We've had puzzles . . .

Just about anything can be the topic a contributor might feel moved to enthuse quietly about . . . Mind you, *Bikwil* being a place to be

constructive, we ask that, if you have an axe to grind, please sharpen it on the whetstone of affirmation.

And should you be currently suffering from writer's block, contributing to *Bikwil* might well be the cure. If you like, just share with us, in your own words, about how you got started in your hobby or leisure pursuit. Or draw or photograph for us a picture of some aspect of it.

In short, then, you are all cordially encouraged to submit essays, poems, short fiction, line drawings or photos, book/movie/TV/music reviews, etc. Apart from trivia and jokes, anything submitted must be original, though the use of a nom de plume is permitted.

Colophon

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Back Issues Are Still Available

Things are more like they are now than they ever were before.
Dwight D. Eisenhower

My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She's ninety-five now, and we don't know where the hell she is.

Ellen Degeneres

Quintessential Quirky Quotes

Names are not always what they seem. The common Welsh name Bzjxxllwcp is pronounced Jackson.

Mark Twain

There's a fine line between genius and insanity. I have erased this line.

Oscar Levant

Both T.S. Eliot and I like to play, but I like to play euchre, while he likes to play Eucharist.

Robert Frost

various plumes of these beautiful birds. The Raggiana and Superb Blue species in particular were both highly prized. The more plumes in a man's headdress the more virile he was supposed to be and in theory would attract the admiration of the ladies in the village. Very similar behaviour to the birds.

The people in the highlands have a hard life and take things pretty seriously but I found them to be very friendly and curious towards visitors. These people, from the Huli tribe, were only discovered by westerners in the late 1930's and most still live in a very primitive fashion. When we landed at Tari airstrip it was like stepping back to the Stone Age. Unforgettable.

Leaving Tari we flew to the Sepik region. The climate in the lowlands was more typical of the tropics. Being almost at sea level the weather was very hot and humid. The temperature didn't drop more than 2 degrees during the night making sleep very difficult.

The people living along the river seemed more relaxed, I think their lifestyle was not as harsh as their Highland cousins. They have also had longer contact with Western society and the children have a higher standard of

education. Many of the children are being taught English while some Tari folk could only speak basic pidgin.

The bird life was also different compared to Tari. Here I saw no birds of paradise – they seem to prefer the higher altitudes. The birds I found in the lowlands were more familiar to me, some of the species I had seen previously in North Queensland, such as Eclectus Parrot, Red-cheeked Parrot and Helmeted Friarbird.

I'm glad I decided to visit PNG at that time. The PNG tourist promotional slogan, which states "Tomorrow it won't be the same", is very appropriate.

PNG is changing, of course: the younger people are moving away from the traditional way of life and heading for the large towns and cities looking for work. This is the major cause of the problems being experienced today in places like Port Moresby and Mt Hagen, where the crime rate is out of control and Rascal gangs create serious problems.

Since 1992, I have often considered a second visit and still hope that one day I will achieve this desire.

— Giorni

Apology from the Front Porch

Long-time *Bikwil* readers may recall that in my *Verandah* column in Issue 7 (May 1998) I wrote a piece on the Lovely Miss Aimi Macdonald. She featured with John Cleese, Tim Brooke-Taylor and Marty Feldman in the British TV comedy series *At Last the 1948 Show*.

I have recently learned from "one who was there" that my article, though barely 200 words, came complete with three glaring errors of fact. My source is none other than Tim Brooke-Taylor himself, who emailed the editor in late March with the dismal truth.

So, seated on my hard stool of contrition, here I go with the necessary corrections.

First, David Frost was never in the show. I had confused *At Last the 1948 Show* with *The Frost Report*.

In the second place, to quote Tim, Aimi was not as silent as my mistaken memory had it, but "said a great deal and was brilliant".

Thirdly, I claimed that it was Marty and John who discovered Aimi in a West End cabaret.

Wrong! It was John and Tim:

[John and I] . . . were surprised to see we were so popular with the ladies there. We were too naïve to know what their game really was.

My mistakes show how careful you have to be when getting "information" from the Internet.

Tim, by the way, goes on to tell us that the title *At Last the 1948 Show* was the idea of stage director Trevor Nunn. He also mentions that he (Tim) and Aimi

. . . appeared at the National Film Theatre last year, as part of an *At Last the 1948 Show* evening and she's as lovely as ever.

Last year, too, he came Down Under for *The Goodies* convention, which was a roaring success.

He reminds us of another Aussie connection as well: that *The Goodies* Web site and magazine are "Oz inspired". In fact, he reckons that

Australia seems to know more about me than I do.

So: sorry, Tim, for this inconvenience we've caused you, and many thanks for your input.

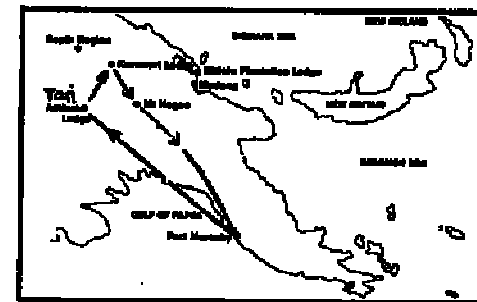
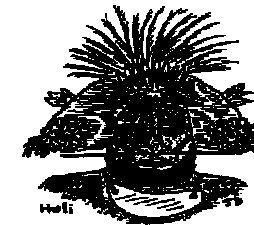
— Fizzgig

With Oranges

I thought today of her awakening
 Her movements a shadow
 In the predawn darkness
 A phantom floating
 No more than a chimera of shape
 A nude that Picasso might sketch
 No more than a few sloping lines that curve
 Toward soft inclines and rise gently
 Toward feathered intersections
 And fall toward full divergence
 Backlit in silhouette from the bedroom window
 Her breasts and buttocks
 The simple elegance of lines in
 Erotic waves and fluid motion

And as she moves near
 I smell the citrus of orange slices
 That is the fragrance and scent
 That forms a perfumed wake as she passes
 And the “sh” and “ch” sounds of her dressing
 Are a bird’s wings flapping
 A slight rustling of fabric
 A finch in the shrub
 I am the slave of her motion
 The serf of her smells
 The prisoner of her naked beauty
 Who wakes each morning in bondage
 To the changing shape of curves
 To the texture of delicate sound
 And a still life with oranges

— Doug Tanoury



Papua New Guinea (Niugini)

Back in 1992 I spent a week in Papua New Guinea on a trekking adventure tour, which gave me the opportunity to witness typical native lifestyle and observe the flora and fauna of this intriguing country.

I stayed 4 days in Tari (central highlands, altitude of 8000 feet) and 3 days in Karawari along the Sepik River (sea level). The contrast in people, climate, bird life and terrain was remarkable.

At Tari the weather was warm during the day and pleasantly cool at night. I was there in May, which is the start of the dry season - we had a few brief afternoon showers lasting about an hour.

The bird life at Tari was abundant and a good area for a variety of birds of paradise, bowerbirds, parrots, flycatchers and pigeons.

I was fortunate in seeing ten different species of birds of paradise. Birds of paradise are so named not because of their splendid plumage but because of the condition of the first specimens which were sent back to England.

The skins were collected from natives by white explorers, however all the skins collected were minus legs. The early naturalists therefore assumed that the birds had no legs and never landed on earth, thus spending their entire life flying in the heavens.

The individual names given to the various species are also very exotic, such as King of Saxony, Raggiana (PNG's emblem), Ribbon-tailed Astrapia, Stephanie's Astrapia, Short-tailed Paradigalla, and Lawe's Six-wired Bird of Paradise. Each one more outrageous than the next.

The males have the spectacular plumage, which is designed to attract the attention of the rather drab females. Unfortunately, the brilliant plumes also attract human hunters. The plumes were collected for the millinery trade up until the 1950's. This practice ended but the local natives still hunt the birds for their own head-dress adornment.

During my visit many of the local men in and around Tari could still be seen wearing

A Word in Your Pink Shell-like

(This is the conclusion to an article on dictionaries of slang.)

As you might expect, one of the hardest things about selecting words and phrases for a slang dictionary in fast-moving contemporary society is deciding on an answer to the question "how long is this expression going to last?" You'll appreciate, therefore, the dilemmas facing the compilers of the following dictionaries.

The *Macquarie Book of Slang* edited by James Lambert (1996, ISBN 0 949757 87 X) has wisely been subtitled *Australian Slang in the 90s*, so establishing itself squarely not only in place, but in time also. Even so, it does contain examples of long-used slang like "cobber" and "dunny", simply because such words have lasted the vernacular distance.

One feature I like about this smallish (270 pages) dictionary is the little introductory section that precedes each letter of the alphabet. This is divided into two parts, the first of which takes two words/expressions and discusses their history and/or usage, while the second takes a word/expression and offers some synonyms for it.

Thus we have the following from the history/usage viewpoint:

Acronym, a big ask, boofhead, bluey, chunder, cornstalk, dunny, dude, esky, egg, fang, fossick, gobsmacked, gone to Gowings, himbo, hatter, innie, indie, joint, jumbuck, Ken doll, kangaroo, larrikin, lair, moshing, mollydooker, the Net, nark, nollie, opposites, prat, ponce, quads, quiche-eater, raincoat, razoo, spam, scumbag, tin lid, two-bob, u-ie, unco, vegemite, wuss, wigwam, yobbo, stacking up zeds.

And the synonym treatment is given to:

Ankle-biter, back of Bourke, chunder, drop-dead honey, elephants, fair dinkum, come a gutser, hoe into, insane, josh, kaput, loser, mate, nooky, ocker, pedal to the metal, quoit, ruddy, slaughter, tin-pot, unreal, vino, whatsit, yes-man.

Turning to other general dictionaries of Aussie slang published in the 1990s, I find a more substantial offering in Lenie "Midge" Johansen's *Penguin Book of Australian Slang, A Dinkum Guide to Oz English* (1996, ISBN 0140255737). Almost double the number of pages in the *Macquarie Book of Slang*, could this, the second edition of Johansen's 1988 *The Dinkum Dictionary*, be the last word on the subject for a while? Time, of course, will tell.

At the end of the book, in her Word Lists, Johansen offers a brief appendix in the form of a useful thesaurus. Under headings like “Nationalities and Peoples”, “Heavy Drinkers and Alcoholics”, “Contraception”, “Women as Sex Objects”, there are enough insults and taboo phrases to keep those in search of more colourful language very happy a few weeks longer.

I should mention the Foreword by well-known Australian commentator Phillip Adams. This is an impassioned plea for the preservation of Australia’s unique slang — a funny piece but quite serious in purpose.

By the way, *Bikwil* back-page readers, Johansen teaches us a new meaning and spelling of *fizz-gig* — “police informer”.

Though not a dictionary, Bill Hornadge’s *The Australian Slang* (1980, ISBN 0 7269 3733 9) is a mighty good read and warrants consideration here. A sort of social history in 45 thesaurus-with-chitchat sections, Hornadge’s exploration of English Down Under concentrates on what Aussies say (our slang) rather how we say it (our pronunciation). Even so, he does cover the Australian accent, including the way we run our words together, collectively

known affectionately since 1965 as Strine — thanks first to the *Sydney Morning Herald* and later the book *Let Stalk Strine* by Afferbeck Lauder (Alistair Morrison, from Sydney University) and its 1966 sequel *Nose Tone Unturned*.

Of particular value is the chapter “Bazza McKenzie”, in which Hornadge pays tribute to satirist Barry Humphries, who in the 1960s single-handedly was responsible for the Aussie ocker image’s acceptance overseas.

The Ocker was there, of course, long before Barry Humphries came on the scene. But Humphries took him, lovingly shaped him in a marketable form and presented him to the world in the form of Barry (“Bazza”) McKenzie, the ultimate send-up of the bronzed Oz.

The question remains, however. How many of the scatological phrases and damning insults put into the mouth of Bazza did Humphries actually invent? Quite a few, I’d be prepared to wager, but not which:

I gotta go an’ point Percy at the porcelain

The one-eyed trouser snake

Go stick yer head up a dead bear’s bum.

To wrap this up, I want to praise two important general books on slang by Jonathon Green: *The Slang Thesaurus* (1988 reprint of

Poem for Easter

If I could write an Easter sonnet
it would not be about a bonnet
or a bunny or an egg. Why write
of them, when, near midnight
this Good Friday I have seen
the April moon, benign, serene,
companied by the southern stars.
I looked beyond slim metal bars
fixed to my window, through the pane
saw the moon’s slow, tender wane
to half itself, but no less bright,
an upturned bowl, a cup of light.
For a moment I saw more than gloss:
through glass clearly moon became a cross.

— Bet Briggs

played by the formidable pianist, Tommy Flanagan, one of my idols. Exhilarated by the elegant artistry of his trio, I splurged on a cab that swept me along the grand illuminated boulevards of the “city that never sleeps”. Just as there is a seedier side to New York, the jazz life can breed heartache. A viewing of the Broadway show *Sideman* on video at the Performing Arts Library Annex, recommended to me by Cleo Laine, reduced me to tears. The highs and lows of both jazz and its musicians are evocatively portrayed in the Ken Burns documentary simply entitled *Jazz*. Nine riveting episodes went to air in January 2001, taking a historical, musical and critical perspective on America’s gift to music. For Australian fans, *Jazz* will be shown on the ABC.

The day of the Conference dawned, and after registration among thousands of jazz delegates, I haunted the ballrooms of both the Hilton and Sheraton hotels for a feast of jazz performances, panel discussions, seminars, workshops, exhibits and research presentations, all focusing on the theme of jazz education. My paper *Marian McPartland’s Piano*

Jazz: A Model for Jazz Education was scheduled for Friday the 13th, but it proved to be a good omen as the topic attracted an audience of devoted listeners to the popular program. Apart from the Conference highlights, the peak experience for me was attending a solo performance given by Marian in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse in the Lincoln Center, the first time I had seen her in concert. She enthralled the audience with a sophisticated program of jazz standards and originals, and her pianism and quirky patter turned every head in the room away from the panoramic views of the New York skyline. Marian McPartland is a shining example of the rejuvenating power of jazz, as is saxophone player Neall Strand, who invited me to play piano on a second CD of *Mellow Jazz* in Colorado before flying home. Recording with American musicians was inspirational, and I returned home enriched by such a kaleidoscope of musical experiences, by renewing old friendships and cementing new ones, and by resonances of my previous visits to the jazz capital of the world. Long live jazz!

— Clare Hansson

This article has appeared previously in a different form in the Sydney Jazz Club *Quarterly Rag*, No. 98 (Jan-Mar 2001), and also in the June-August 2001 issue of the Queensland arts magazine *Perform*, under the title *All That Jazz in New York*.

1986, ISBN 0 14 051205 5) and *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang* (1998; mine has no ISBN, being issued by a book club, but you might try 0-304-34435-4).

There’s no doubt that an up-and-coming ultra-realist playwright could benefit from perusing *The Slang Thesaurus* on a regular basis — especially if she’s led a sheltered life. Yes, there’s a splendid array of vulgarisms on hand here, just waiting to be savoured. Barry Humphries notwithstanding, Americans seem to have a knack of coining imaginative and witty expressions for matters pecuniary, sexual, criminal and substance-abusive. Dare I quote any? Here are three of the more innocuous ones.

run up the side of your head (= assault you)

honeymoon (= early use of heroin)

lower than the spots on a snake’s ass (= a contemptible person).

Not that it’s all American slang. West Indian, Australian, Yiddish and UK phrases feature prominently too. I suppose you know that *yardie* is a West Indies word for “friend” and in Australia a *duck-shover* is “someone who uses unfair business practices”, while *shicker* is Yiddish for “drink” and the cockney rhyming slang *pimple [and blotch]* means “whisky”.

Being a thesaurus, Green’s collection is arranged by subject, not alphabetically, though there is an extensive index which includes the generic terms as well as the slang expressions. I should warn you, however, that the idea categories only loosely follow the model of *Roget’s Thesaurus*. Naturally, most of those in *Roget* would have no applicability. For this reason, the numbering is quite different.

The Cassell Dictionary of Slang is definitely a winner, and with it the slang lexicography mantle unquestionably passes from Eric Partridge to Jonathon Green. Over 1300 pages long, this book is an exhaustive coverage of English slang from the Elizabethan era up to the late 1990s. Not only are there 65,000 entries; there are also thousands of cross-references to related words.

Importantly, each entry is given a century or decade indicator, where the date represents approximately the expression’s earliest use. (Not all expressions from the past he lists, of course, are still in current use, though many are picturesque enough to deserve revival.) Geographic purview, too, is specified where relevant. One characteristic Green had wanted to include for each entry, but was deterred from for space reasons,

was a series of illustrative citations to show usage.

In his Introduction (all dictionary introductions are worth reading), under the heading “Insult and Offence”, Green makes the following comment: “The nature of slang is often, indeed almost invariably, rebarbative”. Interestingly, the dial has turned 180 degrees since the era of the first *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. So, instead of, say, Partridge’s squeamishness in the face of obscenity and indifference when confronted with racism, Green has gladly chosen to indicate derogatory expressions (to whomever directed) and not to mark “swear words” at all. Indeed, to some of the latter he devotes substantial analysis of their history.

Green has been criticised — gently, I might add — for giving less coverage of the slang of the armed services, some English Public Schools and universities, and some professions. “They were good enough for Partridge.” On the other hand, no one has done more to document the language of the young, urban, rebellious of the late 20th century.

Now, I realise that this essay has not been what you might call

concise, yet I know I’ve not touched upon many other slang books, especially some recent attempts to explain the mysteries of the Australian language. Such as Sir Les Patterson’s *The Traveller’s Tool* (1985), Gary Simes’ *Dictionary of Australian Underworld Slang* (1993) and *Hey, Hey It’s Saturday’s* John Blackman’s *Best of Aussie Slang* (1995). I haven’t even mentioned *The Oxford Dictionary of Slang*, edited by John Ayto (1998).

But let’s face it: there is a great deal of overlap in all slang dictionaries. As Jonathon Green says, “the nature of lexicography, there is little point in denying, bears within it a necessary strand of plagiarism”.

So, if I had to recommend just one book, it’d have to be Green’s own *Cassell Dictionary of Slang*. Similarly, anyone with a history bent who needs a full review of slang dictionaries through the ages need look no further than Green’s *Chasing the Sun*, a wide-ranging book referred to in this column before (Issue 9, September 1998), and no doubt due for future applause here.

— Harlish Goop

Jazz in Black and White

Have you ever heard snow fall? You don’t — it descends silently like a thick marshmallow cloak coating everything in sight with layer upon layer of pristine whiteness. After a 32-hour flight from my home in Brisbane to JFK airport in New York, the blinding spectacle of twelve inches of snow hurt my eyes as I gazed at Central Park. My hostess, a famed art historian, enticed me out into the frozen landscape to frolic with gay abandon. For a tropical Australian, it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Despite spending my first New Year’s Eve in the Big Apple, the spectacle of Times Square, freshly cleared by snowploughs, was best viewed on television. The first two days of 2001 were spent hibernating in a state of surreal suspension until my hostess left for her field trip in Egypt and I became custodian of her artistically lavish apartment and two feline friends.

The primary purpose of my visit was to present a research paper at The International Association of Jazz Educators’ Conference from January 10 to 13. Marian McPartland, jazz pianist, and host of the long-running radio program *Piano*

Jazz, is the subject of my PhD research, and the focus of my Conference paper. Meeting up with Marian again, after my appearance as a guest on *Piano Jazz* in 1999, rekindled my passion for the daunting task of writing a dissertation on her remarkable life in jazz. In the ten days leading up to the Conference, I spent long hours at the Institute of Jazz Studies in New Jersey, an invaluable jazz archive for a long-distance researcher. The journey involved three forms of transport, and on my last visit I was “arrested” for misunderstanding the complexities of the Newark Subway. Despite the intervention of two fellow researchers and my tearful pleading, a summons was issued. Oh, Praise the Lord, for leading me to a spiritually uplifting gospel service in a Harlem Baptist church to wash away my sins!

Seeking out live jazz as consolation, I returned to the enclave of Jazz at Noon, sitting in with a remarkable group of retired businessmen/musicians who have kept the flame of mainstream jazz flickering for 35 years. At one of the classiest club venues, The Jazz Standard, I drank in every note

far the finest deep indexing capability of all search tools I know for finding that elusive reference — over 3.7 billion pages indexed to date (the largest database of any search tool). Indeed, the more obscure your need, the more it seems to excel — a fact that certain other *Bikwil* readers are sure to applaud.

And it's fast, fast, fast — taking less than half a second to respond with its ranked list of results. Every time. All this, mind you, while servicing 100 million searches a day. Fantastic!

Apart from its speed, *Google* has two other features that set it apart. Firstly, it makes much use of “link popularity” to rank its findings. In other words, the more links a Web page has to it from other well-known pages, the more relevant *Google* considers it. Its other valuable feature is that for each result returned it shows an extract from the page found, and even highlights your search words.

Try *Google* or *CNet Search*, then. You'll not be disappointed.

— TR

Internet sites referred to above:

<http://www.yahoo.com/search.html>
<http://www.altavista.digital.com/>
<http://www.hotbot.com/index.html>
<http://www.lycos.com/>
<http://www.dogpile.com/>
<http://www.mamma.com/>
<http://www.go2net.com/search.html>
<http://www.profusion.com/>
<http://www.search.com/>
<http://www.directhit.com/>
<http://www.einet.net/index.htm>
<http://www.goto.com/>
<http://www.infoseek.com/>
<http://www.mckinley.com/>
<http://directory.mozilla.org/>
<http://www.google.com/>

Running for the 2:22

In London underground
you're breathless and
twitching for the next
train to sweep you away,
for the screech of brakes
every two minutes at most,
and you're wond'rous wild
in your velvet mini-minis
and pink feathered boa and
leather boots halfway crotchward,
tossing your half-smoked ciggie
into the face of a coming train,
an express all the way to Woking,
your long hair tossing like
the mane of a wild mare.

— John Birkbeck

Web

I've been asked several times which Internet search engine I recommend.

To start with, it has to be said that the term *search engine* is often too loosely used. It might seem pedantic, but sometimes it can be really quite important for the results you get back. There is in fact a crucial difference between a search engine and a directory.

A *directory* is list of sites organised by subject. The key point is that this categorisation is done by humans, who respond to suggestions on what sites to include. A bit like library cataloguers with a trolley full of new books.

The most famous of Internet directories is *Yahoo!*, which has been providing its Internet navigational guide since April 1994. *Yahoo!* today employs over 2000 people to compile its entries.

An important feature of directories is the fact that, as well as being able to initiate a computer search, you can browse them yourself, by category and subcategory.



Line

Although this wasn't the case when it began, these days a query initiated at *Yahoo!* is also simultaneously served by a true search engine. (Until recently it relied on *Inktomi*, but since July 2000 it has changed to *Google*, more of which anon.)

A *search engine* is a robot (i.e. a computer program) that travels around the Internet, capturing every word on every page it visits. This completely automated travelling around (or "spidering", as it is often called), takes place continuously, with every Web page (billions of them now) at present being revisited by each such engine once every two months on the average.

There are actually three separate parts to a search engine. First there's the spider, which goes on its merry way following links. Then there's the cataloguing robot which actually builds the index. Finally there's the searching software, which sifts through the millions of references in the index in response to your query.

Note that phrase "capturing every word on every page", above. Herein lies the power of true search engines. For, while a magazine like *Bikwil*, say, may get classified by a *Yahoo!* editor into this and/or that category, this is only done for the magazine as a whole. The search engine, on the other hand, will index deep down in the magazine, making entries, perhaps, for Bet Briggs, Miles Davis, Harlish Goop, Land 'o' Useless Facts, Edith Sitwell, among others (and they're just from our first issue).

So, on the face of it, why not just use *Yahoo!*? After all, it has human-classified *and* robot-indexed entries.

Fair question. Indeed it was *Yahoo!* that I myself used almost exclusively for about two years, but gradually I became aware of and tried out other indexes, such as *Alta Vista*, *HotBot*, *Lycos*, etc.

I stayed longest with *HotBot*. Then I discovered meta-search engines.

To do a meta-search just means to search from a higher level. In practice this involves your search engine looking at several indexes before returning the results. Some of the better known meta-search engines include *Dogpile*, *Mamma*,

MetaCrawler, *ProFusion* and *CNet Search* (now amalgamated with *SavvySearch*).

As you might expect, your chances of finding what you want are both increased and speeded up if you use a meta-searcher

That said, then, which is the best of the meta-search engines? In my opinion, it's got to be *CNet Search*. No doubt about it.

Why? Because it has the ability to send your query to 800 engines. The complete list can be dug out at the *CNet Search* site, but these are some of the major ones likely to be used for an average query:

- About.com
- AltaVista
- DirectHit
- Excite
- GoTo.com
- HotBot
- Looksmart
- Lycos
- NationalDirectory
- Open Directory
- Yahoo.

What I particularly like about *CNet Search* is how rapidly it integrates all the responses it finds into one list. Just remember to click on the "See more Web Pages" and "All sources" links.

As good as *CNet Search* is, usually I rush straight to the always impressive *Google*. Elegantly simple to look at, it has by