

The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase, Saying, and Quotation

SECOND EDITION - 14 NOVEMBER 2002

The *Oxford Dictionary of Phrase, Saying, and Quotation* is a unique thematic collection which groups together phrases, sayings, and quotations on over 350 topics, offering and explaining apt turns of phrase from across the ages. Now completely revised and updated, this book is an ideal resource for well-chosen words on a given subject, and a browser's paradise for those interested in language to explore the links between quotations and other familiar sayings.

More than 20% of the material in the second edition is new, including proverbs and sayings on a wide range of subjects such as: THREE STRIKES AND YOU'RE OUT (at *Crime*), IT'S NOT A BUG IT'S A FEATURE (Computers), BECAUSE I'M WORTH IT (*Self-esteem*), and NOBODY FORGETS A GOOD TEACHER (*Teaching*). Phrases such as GENERATION X, CORRIDORS OF POWER, BIG TENT, and IT GIRL have made it into the new edition. New subjects covered include *American Cities and States*, *Computers and the Internet*, *Health and Fitness*, *Management*, and *the Paranormal*.

George W. Bush is quoted in the new edition with these words of wisdom 'TO THOSE OF YOU WHO RECEIVED HONOURS, AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS, I SAY WELL DONE. AND TO THE C STUDENTS, I SAY YOU, TOO, CAN BE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.' His predecessor, Bill Clinton, is also included. Pat Buchanan gives a topical twist to the phrase SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD commenting, 'EVERYONE HAS A SKELETON IN THEIR CLOSET. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BILL CLINTON AND MYSELF IS THAT HE HAS A WALK-IN CLOSET.' This is just one example of how the new edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of Phrase Saying and Fable* emphasizes the link between phrases, sayings, proverbs, and quotations.

Another example is the US business expression TRIPLE WITCHING HOUR, an informal name for the unpredictable final hour of trading on the US stock exchange before the simultaneous expiry of three different kinds of options. This is linked to THE WITCHING HOUR, traditionally midnight, a time when witches are supposed to come out and anything can happen: the idea is found most famously in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* 'Tis now the very WITCHING TIME of night When churchyards yawn.'

CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT is now an established phrase for punishment exceeding the bounds of what is regarded as an appropriate penal remedy for a civilized society; it comes originally from the Eight Amendment (1791) to the American Constitution: 'Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.'

The second edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of Phrase, Saying, and Quotation* will be published on 14 November 2002. For further information or to arrange an interview about this book please contact Claire Turner on 01865 353911 or email turnerc@oup.co.uk

New Proverbs and Sayings

- **It's not a bug, it's a feature** - late 20th century saying
- **It's life, Jim, but not as we know it** - late 20th century saying associated with the television series *Star Trek*; the saying in fact comes from the 1987 song *Star Trekkin*
- **A politician is an animal who can sit on the fence and yet keep both ears to the ground** - mid 20th century American proverb
- **All your base are belong to us** - derived from the poor English translation of the Japanese video game *Zero Wing*, released 1989

New Phrases

- **licensed to kill** supposedly indicating that an agent is authorized by the Security Service to kill when engaged in counter-espionage; *associated particularly with Ian Fleming's thriller-hero James Bond*; at **Murder**
- **triple witching hour** in the US, informal name for the unpredictable final hour of trading on the US stock exchange before the simultaneous expiry of three different kinds of options.
- **cruel and unusual punishment** punishment which is seen to exceed the bounds of what is regarded as an appropriate penal remedy for a civilized society.

New Quotations

- 'Silence is often a good policy on some subjects in politics, but silence is regarded as a sort of sin now, and it has to be filled with lots of gossip and soundbites.' **Douglas Hurd** (at *Silence*)
- 'Anything which says it can magically take away your wrinkles is a scandalous lie.' **Anita Roddick** (*Appearance*)
- 'In every generation there is a Chosen One. She alone will stand against the vampires, the demons, and the forces of darkness. She is the Slayer.' **Joss Whedon** (*The Supernatural*) [*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1, opening words]
- 'My parents were convinced that I would one day become Mr Average, but almost 30 years on I am still an A1 freak.' **Boy George** (*Conformity*)
- 'Chicken Tikka Masala is now a true British national dish...' **Robin Cook** (*Britain*)
- 'When you're up to your ears in alligators, it is difficult to remember that you are there to drain the swamp.' **Donald Rumsfeld** (*Management*)
- 'I grew up in Europe, where the history comes from.' **Eddie Izzard** (*Europe*)
- 'Skyscrapers are as much a reality as urbanization itself ... What do we do if we don't build high? Give up and live in bunkers? And then what, fret about death by nerve gas or germ warfare?' **Norman Foster** (*Architecture*)
- 'I love fishing. It's like transcendental meditation with a punch-line.' **Billy Connolly** (*Fishing*)
- 'We are ready for any unforeseen event which may or may not happen.' **George W. Bush** (*Preparation and Readiness*)
- 'When you are up there, it's like trying to hang on to a telegraph pole in an earthquake' *90 feet up the mast of her boat Kingfisher* **Ellen MacArthur** (*The Sea*)
- 'How do you put a value on a 6ft hamster? We don't sell too many of those.' *valuing items from the Millennium Dome for auction* **Derek Sadler** (*Value*)