

## Enthusiasm on display at AGM

*It was pleasing to welcome 33 members to the AGM at Macmillan on 26 January and even more pleasing to witness the enthusiastic participation and interaction of the members in relation to the matters on the agenda. Minutes will be circulated next month, but in the meantime the chair's report presented at the meeting is reproduced below and followed by a brief report on page 7.*

**P**EG has continued to move forward and develop as a professional association despite some slow progress on certain projects during 2007.

Internally, we concentrated on our **image**, working towards finalising a new, more professional-looking **logo** for the Group. This took far longer than anticipated, with much moving backwards and forwards in consultation, and I am aware that some members feel that we did not do a very good job. However, the majority seem satisfied, and I trust that in time our new look will come to be associated with professionalism and quality work. I must thank my committee for their patience with all the decision-making.

The other aspect of our image that we worked on is our **Website**. The intention here is to develop a site that is a useful resource and is easier to maintain and update than the current one. André Snyders is assisting in making things happen in this regard and hopes to have the new site ready in a few months.

Looking outward, our biggest achievement this year was our presence at the Cape Town **Book Fair**, and here we

owe John Linnegar and Kristina Davidson a very big vote of thanks. They came up with good ideas and put a lot of time into making sure we had a good-looking stand and got maximum bang for our buck. As you will have read in *PEGboard*, the feeling is that we really raised our profile at that event, and the intention is to repeat it this year. In the long run, this will benefit all members by raising awareness of WHERE to find an editor as well as WHY one is necessary.

PEG is growing, both in years and in **membership**, and we passed the 200 member mark around the end of 2007.

*[Continued on page 3]*

### Our new logotype

You will see that this issue of PEGboard is graced with the new PEG logotype, which was ratified at the AGM. We will be adopting a new masthead for the newsletter incorporating it, but there was not time to finalise it before this issue went to print. All will therefore be revealed in the next issue.

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## The Editor's Inkspot



PEG is fortunate to have found a fairly healthy balance between inward-looking and outward-looking activity. *PEGboard* tries to achieve the same balance. We look inwards for social contact, for training, and for advice on how to face up to our clients. We look outward at projects in the publishing world, at government policies, and at technological advances that make our jobs easier (or more complicated).

The AGM is necessarily an inward-looking event and for some it was a chance to put faces to the names they have seen on the e-mail chat group. I did not publish a single profile in *PEGboard* in 2007 but I have repented and resolved to put more faces and personalities into these pages. John Linnegar is the new deputy chair of PEG and his profile is in this issue. I had lunch with Tiffany Markman recently and her profile will appear in a future issue. Tiffany is also a member of PEG and runs the sort of business that many other PEGgers would probably like to have one day, and the good news from Tiffany is that there is plenty of work to go around.

Good news for those of us who edit in (or translate into) English: Madagascar's 2007 constitution reintroduced official languages and English is on the list this time. Malagasy remains the national language but the 'official languages' that have been reintroduced are Malagasy, French and English. The inclusion of English is apparently to improve relations with the neighbouring countries (where English is used), and to encourage investment. The market in Antananarivo for editors and translators familiar with these languages is bound to improve.

It was a privilege to attend the launch of Cyril Ramaphosa's biography and to listen to the speakers at the event. It was easy enough to book a place and find a seat, but I suspect most people are simply too busy to spend time at this sort of event. The time is the privilege. The author, Anthony Butler, spoke well about writing in South Africa and thanked his editor for making the book much shorter than it might have been. Shortening is generally what we do to the text, even if we make the process longer. To edit is to choose, and some authors have no scruples about leaving the tough choices for the editor to make. Cyril Ramaphosa spoke about his fascination with written constitutions and the effect they have on people and countries. He was involved in writing our national constitution so he must know a thing or two about difficult choices and how to shorten things.

I have read half of David Crystal's book called *The Fight for English*. A brief review of it will appear in the next issue of *PEGboard* but this book needs more than a review; it needs a debate. I have enjoyed the facts Crystal presents as much as I have enjoyed disagreeing with the conclusions he reaches. Crystal wants us to resist Lynne Truss's prescriptive approach to punctuation and tries to 'present a compelling case for saying no to zero tolerance' but I think that depends on who he thinks he's talking to. Editors might have a hard time swallowing his argument and I would be interested to hear from other PEGgers who have views on Lynne Truss and *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*. ☺

From page 1

Not bad from a start of 21! Once again we owe John Linnegar a debt of gratitude, because he really promotes PEG at his courses. This year we turn 15 and we will have to think of an appropriate way to celebrate this.

One of the consequences of this growth is that it is becoming more difficult to find members who have the space to accommodate a larger group for **meetings**. It looks like we will have to make some changes in this regard in the coming year. We already started last year with the implementation of a small fee to cover meeting costs. Despite the fact that we had to cancel two of our planned meetings last year, there is strong support for these gatherings as an opportunity for networking as well as professional development.

I am very pleased to report that our grouping in the **Cape** strengthened further in 2007 and I foresee them becoming a fully-fledged branch this year, with more regular meetings and activities. Then we can start working on KwaZulu-Natal!

One of the areas in which progress was slow this year was **professional** development, but some work has been done behind the scenes and I hope we will see another product from this subcommittee before too long. However, members in Gauteng

were very fortunate to have John Linnegar present a series of **training** courses for PEG members. The feedback has been very positive and I hope these will become regular events on the PEG calendar in Gauteng and Cape Town.

In addition to all this, the regular work and services have continued – the 2007 **directory** was printed on time and has been a useful resource on the Web, and four issues of **PEGboard** were published. The e-group has developed into a useful internal resource, where members are able to discuss problems and reduce the feeling of isolation that so often comes with working on one's own. Admittedly, the debate gets a little heated at times but the benefits far outweigh the negatives of the extra Internet traffic in most members' minds.

This overview confirms that PEG is alive and well and offering members a variety of benefits. Let us not forget the everyday administration that goes into maintaining the group, and I would like to thank Lulu for keeping our membership and financial records in such good order and Liz for the minutes and other organisation that she does.

In fact, all our committee members have done a lot of work over the year: Diana Coetzee (Vice-chair),

Lulu van Molendorff (Membership secretary and treasurer), Liz Trew (Secretary), John Linnegar and Kristina Davidson (PR and Marketing), André Snyders (Newsletter), Sharon Montgomery (Communications), Anna Wallis (Training info), Pat Barnard (Directory), Eleanor-Mary Cadell (Professionalism) and Stuart Marr (Webmaster).

I would also like to thank them all personally for their support over the year. I would further like to thank Carin Lichtenstein for acting as our meetings coordinator for the first few months of the year, Paul Schamberger for working with Eleanor-Mary on professionalism, and Judith Marsden for assisting with mailing of **PEGboard** and the directory once again this year.

Finally, I would like to see us make progress with professionalism this year. On a number of occasions the question of accreditation or some sort of 'categorisation' of members has come up and I suspect that you will be consulted in the coming months on this matter.

Thank you for your support as members this year, and please help us by letting us know what you want from PEG. *Marion Boers*

[See page 7 for AGM highlights ]



*Part of the 2008 PEG Committee at the AGM: (ftr) Stuart Marr, Anna Wallis, Mary Hazelton, Marion Boers, Hester van der Walt, John Linnegar, Kirsten Whitworth, Lulu van Molendorff and Isabelle Delvare*

## John Linnegar

John Linnegar has been elected as PEG's deputy chair and will be part of the team that leads and guides PEG through the next few years. If all goes as planned, John might be the chair of PEG, so now is perhaps a good time for PEGgers to find out a bit more about John.

John has been a member of PEG for almost five years now, and helped to get the Western Cape branch up and running. Many will already know that John runs editorial training courses, but that is only a small part of his experience in this field. John has worked as a lexicographer and a copy editor, and even though he started out working on law books, he has also worked for educational publishers and dictionary publishers. PEG will need to consider a few thorny issues over the next few years and it is good to know that John will be able to draw on his broad experience. John believes the publishing industry in South Africa is now riding the crest of a wave. Apart from school books, where the market is tough and hard to predict, most segments of the industry are still growing and developing. Editors and trainers need to be brave to accept the challenges that this growth brings.

After working as a secondary school teacher, John entered the world of book publishing as a trainee copy editor for law books at The Rustica Press in Wynberg, Cape Town, which had been closely associated with Juta & Co since just after WW1. In fact, the editorial department John joined was then Juta's one-and-only editorial department involved in copy editing its publications. John explains, 'During this time I learnt my craft (especially the intricacies of law editing) from a number of legal

luminaries/leading writers on the law in South Africa, and was tasked with compiling an expanded form of Juta's House Style Manual for Law Publishing, which is still Juta Law's 'bible' to this day. This was to be the first of several house style manuals I was called upon to compile.'

### Striking out as a freelancer

After four years at Rustica, John chose to begin work as a freelancer. John's first proofreading project for one of his new clients, Reader's Digest, was its English-Afrikaans Dictionary. John later became a special contributor to that ambitious harbinger of 'new' histories of SA, the *RD Illustrated South African History*, which went into several reprints and revised editions. From 1986-1988 John spent two years at the CSIR's National Institute for Road and Transport Research, where he headed up the institute's publishing arm. John's link with Juta was restored in the most remarkable way. John explains, 'Hardly had I returned to Cape Town than, working on the roof of my home one day, a former Juta colleague drove by, noticed me, stopped and chatted – and the next thing I knew was that I had loads of law editing in my lap! I've been a freelance copy editor ever since, and can't recall ever having had to worry about a lack of work.'

John worked as the South African proofreader on the new South African Concise Oxford Dictionary and was asked to compile a 32-page *Oxford Dictionary of Kif and Colourful Words*. Despite having no prior experience of writing software user manuals, John was contracted by an IT developer to learn the software (GhostWriter) and document its functionality for 'naïve' users.



Plain language was the watchword; all jargon had to be carefully explained or translated into plain English and user problems with using the software anticipated.

As John explained, 'Another novelty I enjoyed immensely while working for the IT developer was marketing communications, a field I hadn't studied towards but felt wonderfully "at home" in. This entailed not only the creativity of copy writing but also led to my writing and editing the company's quarterly external newsletter to clients. It was hard work putting it all together, but the exhilaration of seeing it in print and getting feedback and contributions (the ultimate compliment, in my opinion) from clients was inexpressible.'

### Adding training to the mix

PASA approached John in 1999 to take over the training of its Basic Copy Editing and Proofreading course in the Western Cape. More than a basic course was required, and training in Gauteng had become dormant since PASA's own training NGO had folded. John has added training courses to his repertoire, and this has now developed into a full-blown business, much of it repeat business, particularly now that most publishing houses in SA have disbanded their inhouse publishing function/facilities in favour of the outsourcing option. ☞

# Laborious and frustrating

*Brian Brown*

Some years ago, I was involved in an accreditation process. It was long, laborious and frustrating and I hope that the following information might provoke a more structured discussion than I was able to employ during my project.

## **What's in it for me?**

This question, however nicely formed, will be on the lips of most members. We seem to be a disparate group ranging from members who carry out occasional editing to make an extra buck to those whose income depends on their editing work. I suspect that most are probably self-employed, so the answer is likely to focus on three issues:

- higher professional standing;
- more formal, and improved, fee structure; and
- more profitable work as a result of the other two factors.

I found that achieving these outcomes was rather more difficult than it appeared.

## **Accreditation options**

The options that would achieve the above focus for PEG members could cover a breadth of formality, such as:

### *Examination*

This would require PEG to determine the relevant subjects, which would have to include proficiency in a language of choice. In SA it would be inappropriate to offer accreditation in only one language. Study material would have to be written (in different languages) for each subject and that material would have to be accepted by the DoE, college or university for it to be officially accredited. A delivery process would be determined, probably through

distance learning in view of the location of members throughout South Africa (or beyond?) and the relevant tutoring processes set up, probably in conjunction with educational colleges or universities. Most important, assessment would need to be realistic (as suggested by Mindy for her publishing degree), perhaps based on strategic case studies rather than purely theoretical questions. This process would require new material to be written for every course to avoid the threat of year-on-year copying.

### *Recommendation*

Accreditation by recommendation could involve a process through which a member's application would be supported by recommendations from several acceptable clients and/or several existing accredited members. The latter requirement would encourage membership meetings to which aspiring applicants could be invited in order to meet existing members. However, the spectre of discrimination could loom large if work for publishers, newspapers or government offices was deemed acceptable but the editing of a PhD thesis was not.

### *Completed work*

Accreditation on the basis of a required number of previous work examples gives rise to questions of confidentiality and copyright. Editors would need to seek the written permission of clients, and refusal because of confidentiality would, of course, not be a reflection of editorial ability. An editor who works mostly on work that is highly confidential might have difficulty producing the required number of work examples even if he or she is a long-established

and experienced editor.

### *Combination*

Elements from any of the above might be combined.

### *Compliance*

If accreditation aims to increase the professional standing of members in the eyes of business generally and clients specifically, it would be necessary to implement some form of compliance procedure to enable clients to complain about perceived wrongs. I have to disagree with Samuel Murray's assertion that quality cannot be defined because, in the service industry, the only thing that can be defined is the quality of our work. Editing quality is measured in terms of number of errors (post editing), the quality of edited flow and continuity, and adherence to the client's objectives. These are the factors about which a client is likely to complain if they are not addressed by accredited editors, and these are the compliance factors (plus complaints about non-professional behaviour) that PEG would have to monitor.

Having re-read this information I have found, with regret, that it might appear to be a very negative personal view. It is not intended to be. I have tried, with a little hindsight, to provide a practical framework within which accreditation can be discussed objectively. However, I suppose that my conclusion, taking into account an experience for which I was well paid for all its frustrations, would be that perhaps we should start by making haste slowly.

[Note: This is a short excerpt from Brian Brown's longer article on accreditation.]

# Quoting correctly

Some time ago Cecilia de Vos Belgraver (aka The Wordshop) typed up a short summary of the correct use of quotation marks and made it available to PEGgers on the e-mail chat group. Cecilia's summary is based on Chapter 8 of RL Trask's *Guide to Punctuation* published by Penguin.

The use of quotation marks, also called inverted commas, is very slightly complicated by the fact that there are two types: single and double. Trask says single quotes are perhaps more usual in South Africa. A pair of quotes encloses a direct quotation, i.e. repetition of someone's exact words. Anything that is not part of those exact words must be placed outside the quotes, even if it means using two sets of quotes, because the quotation has been interrupted.

When you are not quoting exactly what was said you can do one of three things: (1) drop the quotes, (2) rewrite the sentence so that you use the exact words, or (3) move the quotes so they enclose only that portion of the sentence that are the speaker's exact words.

A quotation is set off by quotation marks and *nothing* else. A sentence containing a quotation is punctuated exactly like any other sentence apart from the addition of the quotation marks. You should not insert additional punctuation marks into the sentence merely to warn the reader that a quotation is coming up: that's what the quotation marks are for. Here is an example of a mistake:

President Nixon declared: - 'I am not a crook.'

President Nixon declared: 'I am not a crook.'

The style that Trask recommends is

President Nixon declared 'I am not a crook.'

On the other hand, the presence of quotation marks does not remove the necessity of using other punctuation which is required for independent reasons. Look at these examples:

According to Thomas Edison, 'Genius is one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration.'

'The only emperor,' writes Wallace Stevens, 'is the emperor of ice cream.'

The colon is NOT being used merely because a quotation follows. Instead it is doing what colons always do: it is introducing an explanation of what comes before the colon. He uses another example in which Mae West is quoted and says of this example that the quotation inside the quote marks begins with a capital letter if it is a complete sentence, but not otherwise. Look once more at two versions of the Edison sentence:

According to Thomas Edison, 'Genius is blah blah blah.'

Thomas Edison declared that genius was 'one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration.'

One situation in which the use of single instead of double quoted can be a nuisance i.e. when the quotation contains an apostrophe, especially near the end: Professor Cavendish concludes that 'The Turks' influence on that Balkans has been more enduring than the Greeks' ever was.'

Things can get complicated when you cite a quotation that has another quotation inside it. In this rare circumstance, the rule is to set off the internal quotation with the other type of quotation marks. So, if you are using double quotes:

The Shadow Employment Secretary declared, "Describing the unemployment figures as 'disappointing' is an insult to the British people."

If you have a long quotation which you want to display indented in the middle of the page, you need not place quotes around it, though you should make sure to identify it explicitly as a quotation in your main text.

Occasionally you may find it necessary to interrupt a quotation you are citing in order to clarify something. To do this, you enclose your remarks in square brackets (never parentheses).

These two nations [America and Russia] seem set to sway the destinies of half the globe.

Trask goes on and on with wonderful examples that will help you make sense of the rules. ☺

## New members

Welcome to our new members:

Sharon Ball (Pretoria)  
Beverley Boland (Johannesburg)  
Nicky Carter (Johannesburg)  
Veronica Curtis (Johannesburg)  
Caroline de Gersigny (Johannesburg)  
Lesley Fahey (Johannesburg)  
Terence Friend (Johannesburg)  
Juliet Gillies (Johannesburg)  
Marié Henning (Pretoria)  
Gavin Lewis (Johannesburg)  
Linda Louw (Cape Town)  
Lynn Morkel (Johannesburg)  
Sue Munro (Johannesburg)  
Sandra O'Kennedy (Hartbeespoort)  
Diane Peacock (Johannesburg)  
Linda Rheeder (Pretoria)  
Rose Richards (Somerset West)  
Amanda Simpson (Johannesburg)  
Daphne Stokoe (Pretoria)  
Isabel Swart (Cape Town)

# Sensible sending

Derrick Hurlin

*There have been some mutterings on the PEG e-group as a result of people hitting Reply without thinking and everyone else being subjected to reams of personal or irrelevant mail. Derrick has kindly summarised some pointers in this regard that will hopefully help the more technically challenged and avoid some of the frustration. It might even be worth cutting the article out and keeping it to hand!*

**W**hen you get e-mails, are you irritated by the long list of addresses at the top? Your address is also in there, so it is disclosed to everyone and they can right-click on the name to get the e-mail address. This exposes you to spam and viruses. Please ensure that your e-mails do not contain the lists of people you send to. Here's how:

## When you send an e-mail to more than one person:

- If you don't want to disclose the mailing list on your message, do NOT use the *To:* or *Cc:* boxes for addresses. Always use the *Bcc:* (blind carbon copy) box for listing multiple e-mail addresses.
- To see your Bcc option, left-click the little icon next to the word *To:* and your address list will appear. So will three windows, labelled *To*, *Cc* and *Bcc*.
- Click on the first address you want to receive a copy, then hold down the *Ctrl* key and click on all the other addresses to receive a copy. They will all be highlighted. Then release the *Ctrl* key, and click on the *Bcc* button, and all the highlighted addresses will be copied into the *Bcc* window. Done! It's that easy.
- Do not enter anything in the *To* panel. Your message will auto-

matically say 'Undisclosed Recipients' in the *To* field of the people who receive it. No destination addresses will appear on your message.

- The same applies when sending to group addresses – put them in the *Bcc* box.

If you want to send a *Bcc* to someone who is not on your mailing list, do the following:

- Click on *View* at the top of the message panel. In the drop-down menu that appears, click on *All headers*. In the 'sending' panel of your message, another window will appear, labelled *Bcc*. Just type the address(es) in there.

## When you reply to a message

When you click *Reply*, the window that appears for you to write in usually contains a copy of the original message. Unless you have a reason to leave it there, you should delete it. Here's how:

- When you have finished writing your reply message, don't move the cursor. Hold down *Shift* + *Ctrl* together, then press *End*. Everything below your message will be highlighted. Then press *Delete* (or *Backspace*) and the highlighted piece will disappear.

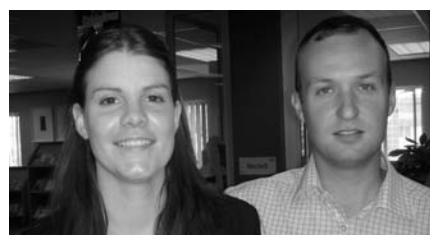
## When you forward a message

When you *forward* an e-mail, highlight all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message, and delete them. And don't forget the rubbish at the bottom of the e-mail as well.

But remember – you MUST click the *Forward* button first, then you will have full editing capabilities in the message. If you don't click on *Forward* first, you won't be able to edit the message at all. ☹

# AGM highlights

- The new corporate ID was ratified. A policy for its usage by members and others will be compiled and a letterhead, business card and new *PEGboard* masthead will be developed.
- Marketing efforts came under discussion. A number of useful suggestions on where and how to promote PEG and our profession were put forward.
- A competition to recognise editorial excellence was proposed.
- It was suggested PEG should collect statistics relating to editing.
- Meetings and training were discussed. Members should note that as a general rule Gauteng meetings will be held on the last Saturday of January, April, July and October, except where there is a public holiday on the weekend in question, in which case the meeting will move to the previous weekend.



The PEG newsletter team – Kirsten Whitworth and André Snyders

- New committee members were elected (see page 2).

Thank-you to the members who volunteered for the committee. Kirsten Whitworth has also agreed to help with PR and the newsletter, without being on the committee.

**UP BookFest & eBook Fair**  
Pretoria 05–08 March 2008  
See [www.bookfest.up.ac.za](http://www.bookfest.up.ac.za)

## Heed this lament

**C**ongratulations to Cynthia Kemp for winning our first PEG competition. Cynthia's lamentation wins her a copy of *Walking on Eggshells*. PEG members were invited to adapt Ian Frazier's style (but use the same register) and submit a paragraph on the 'Lamentations of the Editor'. The only other entry (below) was submitted by the editor, who may not win his own competition. The editor laments the fact that only one entry was received and trusts that future competitions will be more closely contested.

**Cynthia Kemp** (with acknowledgement to Descartes)

As an editor, you think, and therefore you edit. Take heed of this. Also, you surely do know that you edit, and therefore you think. This comes to pass because you edit the utterings and thoughts of authors. Now think on this: do authors think, and therefore write? Or do they write, and only then begin to think? After careful deliberation (something you and all other editors are prone to do), you will surely come to a conclusion, namely this: authors think that they write, and therefore we edit. And because we edit, authors think that they write. That is the way it is. And verily, it works well as a system.

**André Snyders**

Though the shiny adjectives pour forth from the pages of your Chambers, use them not. I say to you again, even though they are long and clever-sounding, use them not; neither in the opening paragraph nor in the concluding remarks. Behold, you have typed them one after another, making big heaps on the page so that the reader cannot see the verbs, and, lo, even now the prepositions are obscured, as worms in the dust. Neither shower your prose with quasi-adverbs nor with

officialese and jargon; cast these out and let them not be a stain on your usage. Though the deadline is near and the supervisor has begun her almighty wailing, be clear in your purpose and in your thinking. Let your objects act clearly upon your subjects, that the light of meaning may find your reader, even in the darkness of the methodological mist and the rocky ground of your token-value analysis. But keep your Latin phrases close by your side, that they may be a support and a close friend when the arguments are long and ambiguity falls on your reader from the high places. ☞

## Strait and narrow

**T**his is an excerpt from Michael Quinion's regular newsletter on language and words available at [www.worldwide-words.org](http://www.worldwide-words.org), which we thought members might find interesting. The answer has been shortened.

**Question:** I am a journalist who was about to write a headline containing the words 'strait and narrow', which I believe is the proper usage, from the Bible. However, I am fairly sure that readers would be more familiar with 'straight and narrow'. Faced with the choice between being correct and being thought incorrect – or vice versa, I chose to phrase the headline an entirely different way. Am I being too much of a stickler?

**Answer:** Both have been widely used down the centuries. However, the evidence is that you would have been safe, and indeed better advised, to use 'straight and narrow' for both your British and your US readers.

We often use 'straight and narrow', in the sense of morally correct and law-abiding behaviour, as a clipped version of the full saying, variously

'the straight and narrow way' or 'the straight and narrow path'. As you say, it's from the Bible, specifically the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter 7, Verse 14) in the King James Version: 'Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'

The oldest sense of 'strait' is of something restricted or confined (it derives from Latin 'stringere', to bind tightly, which is the root of our 'constrain', 'strict' and 'stringent', among others); that's why that obsolete method of restraining lunatics called the straitjacket is correctly spelled in that way. These days we know it mainly in the sense of a narrow stretch of navigable seaway, as in the Straits of Gibraltar. Its other extant meaning refers to a situation of difficulty, distress, or need, but it usually appears only in the fixed phrases 'dire straits', for a situation of great need or extreme danger (a phrase known from the last decades of the nineteenth century), or 'straitened circumstances', for a person who is living in poverty.

The Gospel writer was using 'narrow' and 'strait' in similar senses to reinforce each other in successive phrases, but the writers who borrowed the image and the reference conflated them into a single phrase. So 'strait and narrow' is a tautology, which may by itself be enough reason to avoid using it. There is a common sense image behind 'straight and narrow' that has helped it to be accepted, since it can be said to contain the idea of a road which is direct and undeviating, the true path of virtue that leads us unswervingly to our destination without succumbing to byways of temptation.

'Straight and narrow' is now by far the more common spelling, both in the UK and the US, which is given as standard in dictionaries. Anyone who insists on 'strait and narrow' may well be regarded as pedantic. ☞