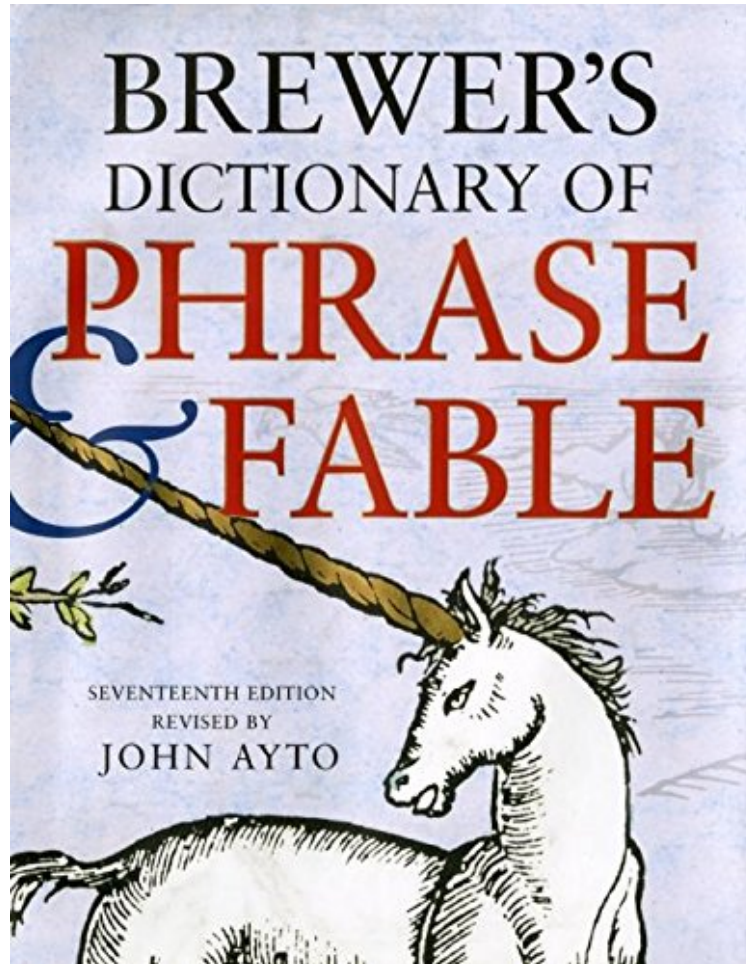


(Download) Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, Seventeenth Edition

## Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, Seventeenth Edition

*John Ayto*

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#544781 in Books Brewer, Ebenezer Cobham/ Pratchett, Terry (FRW) 2006-08-15 2006-08-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 7.25 x 2.50l, 4.58 #File Name: 00611212071326 pages | File size: 41.Mb

**John Ayto : Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, Seventeenth Edition** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, Seventeenth Edition:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. I immediately fell in love with thisBy CaraculiambroA big thick reference book, totally perfect -- beyond belief excellent. Six stars. (Attention : If I had known what this was, I would have paid hundreds for it. Hundreds.)For years, had been recommending this based on my purchases, but I had never heard of it (apparently the last man on earth to do so). Finally I decided to buy it sight unseen.I don't think I've ever been this happy with a reference book, except maybe when I discovered Roget's Thesaurus at the age of eleven. It's one of those reference works that is so engrossing that you want to read it straight through, although it's not designed for this.It's a collection of the origins of expressions. Have you ever wondered, for example, where the expression "chip on his shoulder" came from? If you consult even the largest unabridged dictionary, you'll get the definition of

"chip" and likely the meaning of the phrase, but something I constantly wonder about is how certain words morphed into certain phrases, something that dictionaries -- even dictionaries of etymologies -- never give you. This book fills that gap. I've been poring over it myopically for a week. Ever wonder where such expressions as "mind your p's and q's," "living high on the hog," and "the whole nine yards" come from? This is for you. But this dictionary has a lot else besides: definitions for Nicene Creed, Sir Walter Raleigh, Salmagundi, German measles, criss-cross, boondoggle, etc. I can't imagine any literate, book-loving person being unsatisfied with this tome. Only warning I have is that it's British, so many of the interesting expressions might not seem so interesting to you if you're American, since you've probably never heard of them. To be fair, the dictionary tries not to be country-specific, including many, many exclusively American expressions. Nevertheless, there's a persistent English tilt to the lion's share of the entries. Here's an example: "Bits and bobs": Odds and ends; a diffuse assortment of small items. Weather forecasters sometimes refer to 'bits and bobs of rain' meaning simply scattered showers. (p. 149) Uh, not in the U.S. they don't. Note: Currently this is in its 18th edition. The one with the unicorn on the cover is the 17th edition. I hope they did a better job on the binding with the 18th: with my 17th, the binding fell apart before I even got to the B's. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. One of the best reference books there is By David M. Giltinan Various editions of this book are available online in digitized form. But that shouldn't stop you from getting your own physical copy. Nothing can rival the joy of browsing through it - you're bound to learn something fascinating along the way. As Terry Pratchett says in the Foreword, it's a storehouse of "little parcels of serendipitous information of a kind that are perhaps of no immediate use, but which are, nevertheless very good for the brain." First published in 1870, Brewer's has flourished for over a century. It has always been the reference book that "reaches the parts others cannot", the option you try if what you are looking for is not in a standard dictionary or encyclopedia. Even if you don't find what you're looking for, chances are you'll uncover something even more interesting. The fact that it has reached its 17th edition (published in 2005) suggests that it clearly meets a need, even if its exact scope can be hard to pin down precisely. Certainly, one need look no further with a question about 'traditional' myths and legends - from the Erymanthian boar to the Swan of Tuonela, from Aarvak and the Abbasids to zombies and Zoroastrians, they're all covered. The latest edition updates the mythical pantheon to include such creatures as the Balrog and Nazgl, Voldemort and Dumbledore, the Psammead and Zaphod Beeblebrox, to name only a few. This edition incorporates many new features to tempt the reader -- a listing of idioms from Spanish, French, and German, first lines in fiction, assorted sayings attributed to Sam Goldwyn, curious place names in Great Britain and Ireland, the dogs, horses, and last words of various historical and fictional figures. So, while looking for information on freemasonry, you may find yourself diverted to learn that French people don't have "other fish to fry", instead they have "other cats to whip". But as always, it's the weird tidbits, stumbled across by sheer accident, that are the real delight. For instance, I could certainly have gotten through my entire life without knowing about the blue men of the Minch. But knowing that they are legendary beings who haunt the Minches (the channels separating the Outer Hebrides from the rest of Scotland), occasionally bothering sailors, enriches my life. The added information that they are either kelpies or fallen angels, and are reputed to drag mariners to the bottom of the sea if they fail to answer questions in rhyming couplets (in Gaelic, naturally), fills me with unutterable glee. As do most of the entries in this terrific reference book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Comprehensive and intriguing By Becky Radcliffe Somewhere between a dictionary and an encyclopedia but infinitely browsable this substantial tome is full of curiosities and the sorts of things and expressions which are so familiar that you never even thought to wonder about their derivation but which are rooted in myth, history and literature of which one may be otherwise quite unaware. Definitely more satisfying than using the web as every time you look something up you discover half a dozen intriguing other entries on the pages you pass en route to the word or phrase you were seeking!

Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable is one of the world's best-loved reference books. First published in 1870, this treasury of 'words that have a story to tell' has established itself as one of the great reference classics. The first port of call for tens of thousands of terms, phrases and proper names, and a fund of fascinating, unusual and out-of-the-way information. At the heart of the dictionary lie entries on the meaning and origin of a vast range of words and expressions, from everyday English phrases to Latin tags. Alongside these are articles on people and events in mythology and religion, and on folk customs, superstitions and beliefs. Major events and people in history are also treated, as are movements in art and literature, famous literary characters, and key aspects of popular culture, philosophy, geography, science and magic. To complete this rich mix of information, Brewer and his subsequent editors have added an extraordinary and enticing miscellany of general knowledge: lists of patron saints, terms in heraldry, regimental nicknames, public house names, the principal English horse-races and famous last words. For the Seventeenth Edition of Brewer's the entire existing text has been revised and updated and more than 1500 new articles added. These include: words and phrases (best thing since sliced bread, bling, where the bodies are buried); characters and places from fantasy literature and film (Gollum, Hogwarts, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Voldemort); political, celebrity and sporting nicknames (Butcher of Baghdad; Dubya); miscellaneous arcana (Chorasman Waste, dilligrout, dwile flonking). This first new Brewer's of the 21st century maintains and respects the book's 135-year-old tradition, while offering a wealth of fascinating new material to reflect the 'phrase and fable' of a changing world.

Every page contains some gem (Daily Telegraph)It is a liberal education simply to browse through it... (The Augusta Chronicle)It retains the serendipitous charm which has kept the book going for a century. (Times Literary Supplement)...a best-selling barometer of popular culture since Victorian times (The Sunday Times)About the AuthorJohn Ayto is a writer and lexicographer. He is the author (with Ian Crofton) of Brewer's Britain and Ireland. His other authorial credits include The Oxford Dictionary of Slang, The Bloomsbury Dictionary of Word Origins and Twentieth Century Words. He was a contributor to the Oxford Companion to Food. He lives in London.