

Do editors dream of becoming publishers?

If you want to make money, forget publishing and invest in shares or superannuation instead. If you dream of a lifestyle with liquid lunches and café society, get a job in sales and marketing. But if you're frustrated with freelancing, or you've been dumped in a downsizing, maybe it's time to reinvent yourself. . .as a publisher. In 2000, Brendan Atkins left a steady job—in which part of his work was editing and publishing—to form a writing, editing and publishing service called Big Box Publishing. Here is his story.

I'm lucky to have Jan, my partner and business manager, looking after all the administration and keeping the business running. That frees me up to find new work, write, edit and manage publications. She's the yin to my yang.

We invest all the proceeds from the consulting side of the business into our own publications, Square World Books. We have just four titles in the shops—we've only just begun—but here's what we've found so far.

You need an overview

The CASE *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* (<www.case-editors.org>) documents the full range of editorial tasks but most of us see

only a fraction of these in our day-to-day work.

It was during the GradDiplEdPubl at Macquarie Uni in 1995 to 1996 that my dream of becoming a publisher took shape. Along the way I found inspiration in *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho and *The Hero's Journey* by Joseph Campbell. More practically, you might want to refer to *Careers in Publishing and Bookselling* by Alison Aprhys, *An Author's Guide to Scholarly Publishing* by Robin Derricourt and the recent C-2-C (creator to consumer) project (<<http://c-2-cproject.com>>).

Because of the complexity and specialisations involved, you can't

really do it all yourself (though I know one self-published author who's trying to)—better to establish a network of graphic designers, web designers, illustrators, photographers, printers, a publicist and a distributor.

Beginner's luck

There's a wise proverb that says within each lesson lies the price to learn. And there's nothing like seeing hard-earned cash transformed into cartons of unsold books to make the lessons stick.

In December 2001, we published our first title, *Cosmopolitan Melbourne* to short but positive reviews. It's a great read, a fabulous guide to some of the

continued on next page

Inside

Freelance forum	2
New members	2
Know your words	3
Editing theses	4
Computer backups	5
The doctor is in	6
Ubud, Brisbane Writers' Festival	6
Sydney Writers' Festival,	
Melbourne Writers' Festival	7
News and notices	8
Conference diary	9
Professional development	10

Next meeting: Tuesday, 3 August 2004

Picture research with Jo Holder

Jo Holder, editor, writer, gallery curator and art historian will talk about various aspects of picture research.

As Jo is an experienced magazine editor, she understands the value of obtaining good visual material to enhance the text.

Chase away those winter chills! To warm the heart and soul the society will serve delicious, aromatic, mulled wine.



Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney (between Park & Bathurst streets, closest train station is Town Hall), 6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. Drinks and light refreshments provided. \$13 for members; \$16 for non-members and those who don't RSVP; \$7 for holders of a current Centrelink or DVA concession card.

Please RSVP to 9294 4999 (voicemail) or <brhed@pnc.com.au> (email) by Friday 30 July. September meeting: Tuesday, 7 September.

lesser-known treats of Melbourne and I love it.

But publishing that book six weeks after 9/11 was bad timing because (predictably?) the bottom fell out of both tourism and multiculturalism in Australia.

Then the author took a five-month sabbatical in Sweden. There's another saying: authors sell books. No author, no publicity. So there it was, our first book, overlooked—and I think overpriced. . .

Production issues

. . .and overproduced. *Cosmo Melbourne* features photos and illustrations, art stock, section-sewn binding, laminated and varnished cover. . . its 384 pages weigh in at 650 grams. It cost a small fortune to print, takes up lots of space and costs \$7.50 a unit to mail.

Direct marketing

We offered copies to all 800 organisations featured in the book, but the resulting small blip in sales didn't cover the print cost of postcards, stickers and envelopes (and the \$400 postage!). Our best result came from a simple fax order form inserted in a school library newsletter.

Finding a distributor

Unless you plan to sell solely online or by mail order, you'll need a distributor. My distributor's first words were: 'Brendan, next time you're thinking of publishing a book, give me a call—and I'll try to talk you out of it'. In a nice way, he's saying that publishing books is a poor investment strategy.

Either way, you'll need to take on publicity and marketing roles. And remember you're marketing to two groups—the bookshops (so they stock it) and the public (so they buy it).

Getting lucky

Our latest venture is a series of books by gifted Dutch psychologist Maja Jeffkins. Called *a woman's guide* (see <www.awomansguide.com.au>), they're a hit in the Netherlands and we've translated and adapted them with a stunning series design (by Wendy Rapee) and a fresh approach. We'll be selling English language rights to the UK and USA (note to interested publishers: I'll see you in Frankfurt!).

Why bother?

Publishers see only a small fraction of the \$1.5 billion annual retail book spend

in Australia—typically 25 per cent of the RRP once the distributor, retailer and author have taken their share.

If the book doesn't sell, the stores return the stock for a refund (but you still have to pay for editing, design, typesetting, cover photos, illustrations, printing, publicity, warehousing. . .and that's before you pay yourself.)

And every year sees tens of thousands of new titles published, with shorter shelf lives, bigger discounts, higher costs. . .and your titles are competing for the heart and mind of the consumer, not only with other books, but other goods: magazines, CDs, DVDs, movies, hairdos, clothing. . .why should they bother to buy it?

Why bother #2?

Of course there's an upside too. First, creating books is a great ad for our editing and publishing service. Second, being small we can find niches that bigger publishers overlook, such as translating the Dutch titles.

But best of all, we can stand on principle and promote an idea, like cosmopolitanism, rather than be ruled solely by a balance sheet.

Yep, if you're thinking of making big money in publishing, you're probably dreamin'. But if your dream is one of following your inner voice, and one day making a difference, there's a huge exciting world out here just waiting to be explored.

This is an edited version of a talk given at the society's November 2003 meeting. The talk was given jointly by Brendan Atkins of Big Box Publishing <www.bigbox.com.au> and Helen Bateman of Limelight Press.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members:

Elsbeth Callender
Paul O'Beirne
Debbie Lim
Jared Dunn
Judy Patrick
Juliet Arkwright
Val Marshall
Lynne Walsh
Carmel Gold

FREELANCING—A FORUM & FEAST

Want to know how to run a successful freelance business?

How do you put a price on your time? How do you deal with clients—their expectations and yours? How do you develop a brief, manage projects, and communicate with clients?

Four successful freelancers will discuss these questions and any others you can think of. This will be a stimulating dinner meeting and not-to-be missed opportunity.

If you want to know how to thrive in the famine and feast that is freelancing, join us at the Buon Gusto Restaurant.

The Freelance Forum will replace our September meeting.

Date: Tuesday, 7 September
Time: 6.30 for 7.00 p.m.

Venue: Buon Gusto Restaurant (Italian)
368 Abercrombie Street, Chippendale, map provided

Cost: \$35, drinks included
How to pay: please see insert

Bookings essential:
(02) 4731 5406 or email <brhed@pnc.com.au>

If you're using a credit card to book, please contact the society's treasurer, Janice Beavan. Tel: 9660 0335 or fax: 9660 9375.



Know your words

If you enjoy working with words, or you are in a job where you are regularly asked to find the meaning and etymology of English words and phrases, the Internet is a gold mine. No doubt, most regular Net users have their favourite dictionaries and thesauri bookmarked already, but if you haven't had time to explore word sites beyond these, there are some useful gateways available. Liz Edols shows us the way.

Sites for Serious Wordaholics

Most of the better directories and virtual library sites have good listings of etymology, linguistic and word reference tools, but some of the best collections of links have been put together by individual word fanatics.

One of the best known is *World Wide Words* (<<http://www.quinion.com/words>>), which has been a seven year labour of love for its creator Michael Quinion. It now has over 1 400 pages of information about English words and phrases including 'what they mean, where they came from, how they have evolved, and the ways in which people sometimes misuse them'.

The site design has been described as being 'on the beige side' but content is king here. In fact, there is so much information that it would take days to read it all. Quinion encourages readers to send their queries and comments and the site is regularly updated.

In the Question and Answer section you can find queries from all over the world including where did the expression the 'Dear John letter' come from and what is the origin of expressions such as 'fair dinkum', 'cloud nine' and 'cut the mustard'.

Click on the articles link to find serious minded discourses such as 'Beam me up Scotty! The linguistic legacy of Star Trek' and 'Cyberplague: a prefix out of control'.

Navigation tools are basic but effective—you can search, use the comprehensive alphabetical index, or explore the site via the various headings such as articles, reviews, turns of phrase, topical words, and weird words.

The 'Other Word Sites' link is an excellent starting point for exploring word sites on the Net. Mixed in with serious linguistic and etymological links are the quirky, such as *Mondegreens*, a site that looks at the creative mishearings of song lyrics, and *Maledicta*, a journal that specialises in learned discussions of obscene insults and curses.

Another excellent collection of word and language sites is Richard Lederer's *Verbivore* page (<<http://pw1.netcom.com/~rlederer>>). A verbivore, by the way, is someone who devours words. Major headings include etymology, grammar and usage, linguistic links, newsgroups, puns, word games, word and letter play, and the usual reference links containing dictionaries and thesauri. This site has more of an American focus than *World Wide Words*.

Judi Wolinski's *Word Play* site (<<http://www.wolinskyweb.net/word.htm>>) is for those who enjoy playing with the language. There are many good links to serious word sites here but also expect to find the not so serious and the bordering on ridiculous. Some of the sites listed include 'Book of Cliches: phrases to say in times of trouble', 'Complex statements for the simple minded',

'English to Pig Latin translator', 'Create your own Shakespearean insults', 'Horsename-O-Matic', 'Brain food: puzzles for the brain to gnaw on' and 'Never say neverisms'. This directory is organised as a long annotated, alphabetical listing.

Phrase Finders

Michael Quinion's *World Wide Words* mentioned above is an excellent site for finding the meaning and etymology of phrases but there are also a couple of other sites worth looking at.

The Phrase Finder (<<http://phrases.shu.ac.uk>>) is an A-Z searchable list of the meanings and origins of common words, phrases, sayings, quotes and cliches.

Word Spy (<<http://www.wordspy.com/index.asp>>) is a good place to find the meaning of newly coined words and phrases. Most of them are, of course, American in origin but, such is the globalisation of English these days, they spread quickly to other English speaking countries. Here are a few that you may have seen in the media recently: metrosexual, flexitarian, gadget porn, neuromarketing, portfolio worker and information pollution.

Word Games

Want to sharpen your word skills? *Fun with Words: the Word Play Web site* at (<<http://www.fun-with-words.com>>) is the place to go.

This site is 'dedicated to amusing quirks, peculiarities, and oddities of the English language' and contains over 500 pages of word puzzles, games, lists and facts. Find here examples of malapropisms, palindromes, anantonyms, heteronyms and references to many other obscure linguistic terms.

And if you are not quite up to speed with the latest abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms to use with text and online messaging, click on the *Net Lingua* link. TMI or BTDT, well, be sure not to miss the *Funny Signs* page which posts hilarious and unintentional misuses of English on signs all over the world.

English Use and Abuse

There are dozens upon dozens of sites that deal with correct spoken and written English. One of the best collections of links has been created by someone called Garbl, who has put together *Garbl's Writing Resources Online* (<<http://garbl.home.comcast.net/writing>>), a truly extensive annotated directory of online writing resources. Garbl's links cover grammar, style and usage, fat-free writing, plain language, wordplay, creativity, reference sources, and much more.

One site that does not appear in Garbl's pages is ex-Queensland teacher Jennifer Stewart's <<http://www.write101.com>>. *Write101* contains over 600 pages of pointers and articles on all aspects of writing and English usage. You can also sign up for a free weekly tips newsletter.

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Common Errors in English (<<http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors>>) is a long list of confused and misused words. Created by Paul Brians, a professor of English at Washington State University, the site also contains short explanations of common grammatical errors. One of the links worth looking at on this site is to Sean Igo's '*Garbage In, Garbage Out: errors caused by over-reliance on spelling checkers*'.

Oz Vernacular

Finally, take a look at our own richly imaginative use of the English language. Would you know what he was talking about if someone from Victoria said he had been jeffed, or a friend from Adelaide suggested you both go out and get rinsed?

If you are not familiar with these terms and you would like to know, go to the ABC Online *Australian Word Map* (<<http://www.abc.net.au/wordmap>>) and find all those colourful expressions that you have heard but never quite knew the meaning of. You can even add some of your own.

The Australian Word Map database is a co-production of ABC Online and the Macquarie Library. The aim is to map regional differences in our language and to celebrate its inventiveness. Many of the expressions rely on a certain descriptive aptness and a lack of political correctness for their impact.

Take, for example, 'aunty arms', also known in different parts of the country as 'bingo wings', 'good-bye muscles', 'tuckshop muscles', 'reverse biceps' and 'ta-ta flaps'. The last named probably describes the phenomenon best and no doubt it was an observant child who first gave life to the expression. (In case you haven't already guessed, 'ta ta flaps' or 'aunty arms' are the flabby bits under the upper arms that wobble when aunty raises her arm to wave goodbye or to accompany a shout of bingo).

Also worth checking out is the *Macquarie Book of Slang*, which is available free online at the Macquarie Dictionary site (<<http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/dict/slang.html>>). The MBS boasts slang for every occasion, including 'bikie slang, skater slang, surfie slang, schoolyard slang, rhyming slang, geek-speak, cop-speak, kids'-speak, teen-speak, plus all the old-time classic dinkum Aussie slang expressions.' The *Macquarie Book of Slang* can be browsed but is not searchable.

For a more detailed explanation of the origins and meaning of selected Australian words and phrases, go to the Australian National Dictionary Centre's *Australian Words* site at <<http://www.anu.edu.au/ANDC/Austwords>>. Also available from the ANDC site is a glossary of slang and peculiar words used in the A.I.F. during World War 1.

Liz Edols is a reference librarian and is studying editing and publishing at the University of Queensland. Reprinted with kind permission of the author, this article was published in Online Currents Vol.19 Issue.4, May 2004 <<http://www.onlinecurrents.com.au>>

Coming Events at Gleebooks July 2004

On Wednesday 28 July Milissa Deitz author of *My Life As A Side Effect: Living with Depression* and Gordon Parker author of *Dealing With Depression: A Common Sense Guide to Mood Disorders* discuss their respective works as they examine the complex issue of trying to determine exactly what constitutes depression, why people suffer from it and what can be done to help?

On Thursday 29 July Andrew Wilkie author of *Axis of Deceit: The Story of the Intelligence Officer who Risked All to Tell the Truth about WMD and Iraq* talks with Jane Cadzow to explain who he is and why he is willing to risk his career, his reputation and his own personal safety to tell Australia the truth about this controversial issue.

The talks will be held at Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Point Road, Glebe at 6.30 for 7.00 p.m. To book for full price (\$9) or concession (\$6) tickets please phone 9660 233 or email <events@gleebooks.com.au>

Editing theses

Editors have long been concerned about the ethics of editing student work that is to be submitted for academic assessment. Editorial intervention may misrepresent the student's academic ability or proficiency in English, and it may unfairly advantage students who have the means to pay for editorial services. In the absence of guidelines, committees of the State and Territory editors' societies have often found themselves in a difficult position when asked to adjudicate in particular instances.

I am delighted to announce that we now have an official national policy on the editing of theses. Please see <www.editorscanberra.org/theses.htm>. It was developed by the Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE) in collaboration with the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDOGS), representing the universities of Australia.

As the CASE representative, I have been negotiating with Professor Elaine Martin, head of the Postgraduate Research Unit of Victoria University, representing DDOGS, to draw up a policy acceptable to all interests. We had two meetings in Melbourne and a considerable email correspondence. Professor Martin reported that the academics were impressed with Australian Standards for Editing Practice and felt that it provided a sound basis for the policy.

Having gone through various drafts, the final policy was ratified by both DDOGS and CASE in May 2004. This is the culmination of three years of effort by CASE, which first approached the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee about this matter in April 2001.

Having been agreed at a national level by representative bodies, the policy has considerable standing. Although it is written specifically for higher degree theses, it can be taken as guidance for the editing of student work at any level. The policy sets out the roles of academic supervisors and editors, and stipulates requirements for acknowledging editorial services. It provides editors with a clear statement of their responsibilities in undertaking this type of work, and it should enable them to resist any pressure for inappropriate intervention.

Janet Mackenzie

Computer backups

Last month, Bruce Howarth looked at ways of improving the life and reliability of our computer. The bad news is, he says, that sooner or later, despite all the precautions we may take, our system will crash. At that point, we will need to use backups to recover our work. You have been making backups, haven't you?

There are several questions you need to answer about how you'd prefer to work before you can pick a backup strategy that suits you. Like so much in life, a backup strategy represents a compromise among several competing pressures.

Tradeoffs

Some level of backup is absolutely necessary. Think for a while about all the information stored on your computer, and what would happen if you lost every last piece of it. Billing information? The only copies of some manuscripts? Information you need for tax purposes?

Backups take time that you could be using for something more interesting or profitable. If backups require too much of your time or are too fiddly to do, you'll avoid doing them. But if you can start a long process and leave it while you do something else (like sleep), you are more likely to keep it as part of your routine.

You should do backups often enough that the amount of data and work that could be lost is tolerable. I'll assume that means once a day.

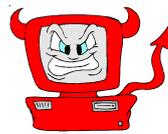
On the other hand, a system (properly cared for) will rarely lose all data. To assess work versus risk, assume a system collapses on average once every two years. Note this is an *average*; your next crash could be tomorrow or never.

When a system does crash, how long can you afford to take to get it working again? The time required includes the time to go out and buy a replacement disk drive, install it and the operating system, then the applications, then your data. Even without time spent diagnosing the problem, false starts and waiting for a technician, this is likely to be two days or more. If that's too long, then you need a fully functional backup system.

Application programs can be backed up differently to working files. You can store the distribution CDs (and backups of them), and the applications will only change if you apply upgrades from the Web (or service packs). Storing images of the applications will speed up the

restore process, but these need not be created every day. Some files, such as the temporary files created by applications, should not be backed up at all.

Backups are more often used to recover individual files that were deleted or corrupted by mistake than to recover crashed systems.



So it's a good idea to use a backup technique that allows individual files to be recovered easily, even if that means it takes longer to restore an entire system.

Typically, disk drives these days contain 5–10 gigabytes of disk records (more if you like keeping pictures). A complete backup to CDs would require 10 or more CDs, and would take a considerable time, with you sitting there feeding in a new CD occasionally. Even backing up to an external hard drive via a USB port is relatively slow, but can be left. Another possibility is a DVD writer. DVDs hold 5 GB or more.

How do you test your backup strategy? This is a very difficult and important question. Can you afford to trash your file system in the hope that an untried backup system will work? One IT professional I know did just this, several times, when he bought a new computer. When he was confident that he could recover from any problem, then he switched to his new computer and its new backup system. There are many folk tales in the IT industry about sites that religiously ran backups every night, then one day when they had to do a real backup, found that what they had was unusable. As well as the basic tests when you are setting up your system, every couple of weeks you should test that you can at least retrieve single files.

Backup techniques

Windows XP has a tool to do a complete backup of a disk, and to

restore it if necessary. However, this is slow, is not always necessary, and you need something to record the backup on. Also, the tool is more friendly on XP Professional than XP Home.

You can manually copy your current work to a CD every night. This is faster, but requires thinking, and unless you have CD/RW capability and can reuse the media, becomes expensive.

For my backup of working files, I use a second computer (a laptop) and a shareware program called FileSync (<www.fileware.com>). This program compares the contents of designated folders on the two computers, and when it finds different versions or missing files, it copies the latest version to the other computer (the copy can go in either direction). This still requires attention, as you don't want files copied back if they were deleted deliberately, but is quick and automatic enough for me. This 'system' has saved my bacon a couple of times when I've corrupted individual files.

There are many backup tools available, ranging from free, through shareware up to quite expensive systems. Decide what functions you want, find a program that does at least as much, then test it carefully before you risk your production system with it.

There are two extremes: at one end you can do nothing and hope piously that nothing will ever go wrong (go wrong, go wrong,...). At the other, you can buy a tape drive, lots of media and an expensive program that will give you a full backup every night. Neither of these seems appropriate for small office users; you have to decide for yourself what best suits your situation.

For more information

Any library in a TAFE or university that runs IT courses will have books on systems administration, where you can learn about backup. Vendors of backup programs on the Web often have tutorial material, although they do tend to inject more fear and trembling than seems really necessary.

The doctor is in

Hi Doc,

I do a lot of technical editing of work written by other people. I have been having trouble with the phrase at least (and similarly, no less than, and at the minimum). The trouble is trying to convince people they need to use exactly the opposite! Examples include:

. . .locks on C-class containers must be serviced at least every 6 months

. . .passwords must be changed at no less than 90 day intervals

. . .lock combinations must be changed every 2 years, at the minimum

If you actually parse these sentences, you see that could mean the opposite of what they intend! (Although, oddly enough, everyone knows what they mean. . .maybe this is an example of meaning shift?)

Using my 'editorial discretion' (I had access to the files!), I changed them to:

. . .locks on C-class containers must be serviced every 6 months or less

. . .passwords must be changed every 90 days or less

. . .lock combinations must be changed every 2 years, at the most

I know these are still all passive voice, but at least they convey the correct information, I hope! I suppose I could have used 'or more frequently', to get out of the whole comparative 'less/more' issue.

This comes up fairly often in security-related writing, so alternative suggestions are welcome! 'Lo Patient,

You're right to find problems in these examples, but I'm sorry to say that I don't think your solutions have completely eliminated the ambiguity. It's a widespread issue, in general journalism as well as in security-related writing, and it's less a 'meaning shift' than an illustration of how everyday language and mathematics are often uneasy bedfellows.

You're right to say that 'everyone knows what they mean'—though I'd rather put that as 'everyone knows what the people using those expressions are trying to say'. ('What the words mean' is not always the same as 'what the writer means by the words'.)

The problem is really what's often described as structural ambiguity. A clearer illustration of the problem is afforded by a statement like 'This

program is intended to help old men and women'. (As an old man myself, I can use that expression with impunity!) There's nothing to tell us whether 'old' relates to men only, or to men and women—is the program for all women, but only old men; or is it for old people of both persuasions? In speech, we'd get an intonational clue, but that's missing from print.

Similarly, in 'at least every six months', does 'at least' modify the period (six months) or the frequency (every six months)? Because 'every' sits immediately after 'at least', we do have a pointer, though not a perfectly clear one, to how the whole phrase should be interpreted. Indeed, it's hard to imagine that anyone using the expression 'at least every six months' really means 'less often than twice a year'. ('At least six monthly' would be a different proposition, but still lends itself more readily to one interpretation than the other.)

That's why I'm not really happy with 'every six months or less'. It's easy to associate 'or less' with 'six months', but it's equally easy to associate it with 'every six months'. Similarly, 'every two years, at the most' could be interpreted as 'the interval should not exceed two years' or 'the frequency should not exceed every two years'.

One of my golden rules is to be willing to admit defeat. When a simple adjustment doesn't do the trick, be prepared to do a major rewrite. (Nutcrackers work on walnuts, but it takes a sledgehammer to crack a rock.) Effective rewrites often need more words—but reducing word count at the cost of clarity is false economy at best.

Try these:

. . .locks on C-class containers must be serviced regularly. The interval between services should not exceed six months.

. . .passwords must be changed frequently—every ninety days, or more often.

. . .lock combinations must be changed periodically. Do not leave a combination unchanged for longer than two years.

These rewrites are not particularly elegant, but elegance should usually come a poor second to clarity. That's almost always true, and especially so when life, limb, or property is at stake.

Michael Lewis

Ubud, Bali, to host the first Writers' & Readers' Festival 11 to 17 October 2004

The Balinese mountain village of Ubud, home to one of the world's richest cultures, will host the inaugural Ubud Writers' & Readers' Festival.

It will include panel discussions, bilingual readings, workshops, cooking classes, art and textile exhibitions, book and magazine launches and film screenings, as well as dazzling performances of contemporary dance and music.

Travel information

Garuda Indonesia airlines has designed attractive packages from all major airports in Australia. These include return economy airfare to Bali, six nights accommodation at a range of Ubud hotels, full festival registration and airport transfers. These packages can be bought through Harvey World Travel.

Tel: 132 757.

Web: <www.harveyworld.com.au>.

Festival passes can be bought at the festival site in Ubud for \$A225. One day and single session passes available. <www.ubudwritersfestival.com>.



It will capture your heart and beguile your imagination on an island that has inspired the world for centuries.

Brisbane Writers' Festival (BWF) 27 September to 3 October 2004

The 2004 BWF will examine the issues surrounding illiteracy in Australia's indigenous and migrant populations. TAFE literacy students who have come from all corners of the globe and now live scattered across Queensland will showcase their stories and celebrate their achievements. There will also be discussions from literacy experts. Throughout the festival program there also will be events showcasing and working with Murri writers.

A full program guide will appear in the *Courier-Mail* on Saturday, 11 September and details will also be posted shortly on the Web at <www.brisbanewritersfestival.com.au/2004/>.

Sydney Writers' Festival 2004

It was two years ago, I think, I went to my first Festival. I wouldn't miss it, now. I dipped into Melbourne's that year too and liked it very much. However, Melbourne's didn't have a free programme. So, even though the cost for a session was low, I budgeted, planned and prioritised. There wasn't Sydney's Little Jack Horner feeling of open possibility and potential surprise.

The Wharf is a great spot for a writers' festival. You can mull over some knotty literary problem, or work through ideas sparked by a speaker as you wander along the Wharf, taking in a sunset over the Parramatta River or watching silvery sunlight bounce off windows around the Harbour; get snatches of conversation and greeting; watch as a writer and interviewer organise themselves.

There is something about being in a large, crowded room, listening as authors read from their work. A soothing, bedtime-storytime feeling with the bonus a curious, sleepy child never gets—we get to ask they author why they wrote a certain piece, or wrote it that way. Perhaps, too, the chord vibrates that ties us to our ancestors who sat in halls and huts listening to bards and minstrels.

There was nothing gentle, though, about Gail Bell's memoir—*Shot*—of her journey towards understanding the nature of trauma after being shot in the back as a teenager or the conflict between the need for privacy and public knowledge faced by journalists like Bruce Page in writing his biography of Rupert Murdoch or Barry Hill writing the biography of TGH Strehlow.

The Festival programme is usually available online or in bookstores or organisations like the Writers' Centre in the month before the Festival. However, I discovered that the most joyous way of entering the Writers' Festival is to let the programme go and just swim in it, floating on the words and ideas.

Having said this, some planning is a good idea. (I'd love to draw out the aquatic metaphor—but I won't.) I ducked, very regretfully, out of Geoff Page and Paul Hetherington talking about verse novels (how, for instance, do you balance a narrative's dramatic flow with verse's rhythms?) to get to Robyn Arianrhod who was chatting with

Robin Williams about Robyn's book *Einstein's Heroes*, which is about mathematics as a language, (I've always thought of maths as a foreign language—though not the way she describes it in her book). Like the organisers, I suspect, I underestimated the topic's popularity. I found myself with a bung ankle standing at the back of a packed and very hot Bangarra Mezzanine for an hour-and-a-half. But it was worth it.

This year, the Sydney Festival covered memoir, poetry, gender, research, languages, Iraq, indigenous writing, humour, crime, Watergate, cooking, James Joyce, biography and writing English. I didn't get to everything. Well, you can't, can you?

My contacts, however, had a great day in the Blue Mountains at sessions beginning with children's book illustrating and ending with a reading by playwright Gary Baxter; back in Sydney they got to sessions on researching the novel; suspense (I'm kicking myself for missing both); discussions on screen editing and writing developed from a screening of 'In the Cut'; and a discussion with David Brill, Michael Bowers and Peter Charley on how they cope with their work as war correspondents. I wanted to get to 'Figments of the Supernatural' at the Art Gallery of NSW, 'Research and Writing: Personal Journeys' (which I've been told was very good) and 'A Poetic Journey into the Cosmos' at the Sydney Observatory.

I also wanted to get to 'Writing Women's Lives', which was at the Richard Wherrett Theatre at the STC's new theatre—and here I have to put one *little* quibble. To keep a handle on overcrowding the original intent was to charge a nominal fee (\$2/\$5) for sessions there. In the end the STC issued tickets free. Unfortunately, someone forgot to pass the message on to the Writers' Festival management that tickets had to be obtained. There were, of course, people who, mysteriously,

knew—there always are. I was among those, however, who didn't.

I did get to hear how young poets from Germany and Australia found ways to interpret and translate each other's poetry—can you imagine finding a meaningful way to describe the ocean, poetically, in the language of a culture that is land-locked; and to appreciate the personal relationship that develops between a biographer and her or his subject when I listened to Paul Brunton talk about Miles Franklin and Paul Hetherington on Donald Friend; and, think about the currents and undercurrents of family relationships explored by Charlotte Wood in her novel, *Submerged Cathedrals* which she discussed with Caroline Baum.

The Sydney Writers' Festival is held at the Wharf, Darling Harbour, towards the end of May. As I said, I wouldn't miss it.

One question. Why do so many women in publishing wear capes or shawls?

Deborah Edward

The Age Melbourne Writers' Festival

The Age Melbourne Writers' Festival will be held from 20 to 29 August 2004.

The keynote address will be given by Jose Ramos-Horta—Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and East Timorese Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation—at the Melbourne Town Hall at 8 p.m. on Friday 20 August. The title of the address is *War and Peace, The Middle East and Iraq Cauldrons, Fundamentalism, Terrorism—Is There Hope?*

International guests include: Lynne Truss, Colm Toibin, Philippe Claudel, Carlos Ruis Zafon; David Denby, Debi Gliori, Xiaolu Guo and Xinran Xue.

Australian authors include: Helen Garner, Robert Dessaix, Peter Goldsworthy, Peter Robb, Peter Singer, Frank Moorhouse, Matthew Reilly, Nick Earls, Amanda Lohrey, Rodney Hall and Sophie Cunningham.

The official festival program will be distributed in the Age on Saturday 24 July. To join the festival mailing list, send an email to <info@mwf.com.au>. Tel:03 9645 9244 Fax: 03 9645 9344 Web: <www.mwf.com.au>.



Inaugural PEN Lecture 2004

This fundraising event for PEN, Sydney Centre features JM Coetzee, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003, with introductions by David Malouf and the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon Bob Carr, MP. It will take place at the Sydney Seymour Centre on Tuesday 27 July 2004 at 6.30 p.m.

Coetzee was described by judges of the 2003 Nobel Prize for Literature as a 'scrupulous doubter, ruthless in his criticism of the cruel rationalism and cosmetic morality of western civilisation. His interest is directed mainly at situations where the distinction between right and wrong, while crystal clear, can be seen to serve no end.' He has been awarded the Booker Prize twice, most recently for *Disgrace* and his most recently published work *Elizabeth Costello* was shortlisted for the 2004 Miles Franklin Award and will be released as a vintage paperback in July.

Bookings for full price (\$22) or concession (\$18) tickets can be made by contacting the Seymour box office on (02) 9351 7940

Byron Bay Writers' Festival 29 July to 1 August

The festival aims to examine the place of Australia in the world today, its changing image and reputation internationally and will explore the way in which this is represented by, or examined in, the written word.

In particular the program will examine the relationship of Australia with its Asia-Pacific neighbours and the effect we have on each other. Workshops will also be held from 26 July.

For conference session details, ticketing and workshop information please visit the festival website at <www.byronbaywritersfestival.com.au>

International Conference on the Future of the Book

Beijing, China 29 to 31 August 2004. Visit <www.Book-conference.com>.

International and Comparative Literary Studies (ICLS) 2004 Symposium: 'Textual ambiguity'

ICLS is hosting an International Symposium with the Schools of Languages and Cultures, English, Art History and Film and Media, University of Sydney. It will take place from 27 to 29 August.

The purpose of ICLS is to encourage interdisciplinary and cross-cultural scholarship and activities at the University of Sydney and in the wider community.

Panels will be held to explore ambiguities in social, literary, spatial and philosophical arenas.

Further details about registration, timetable and key speakers can be found at <www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/ICLS/events.shtml#program> and inquiries can be emailed to Paolo Bartoloni at <paolo.bartoloni@arts.usyd.edu.au>.

The Society for Editors and Proofreaders conference

This 'meeting of minds' will take place from 13 to 14 September 2004 at Royal Holloway College, Egham, Surrey

The focus of this year's conference is the impact of new technology on the publishing industry and how this is affecting the jobs we do. Learn about the challenges our profession is facing, and be inspired.

Workshop topics include:

- starting out—approaching potential clients
- negotiating skills
- working for a client
- computer housekeeping
- stress management
- on-screen editing.

Details of the fees for attending the conference are on the booking form, which can be downloaded from our website at <www.sfep.org.uk>, where there is further information about the conference and the SfEP. There are discounts available for individual members and associates who book early or who are attending the conference for the first time.

For further information about the conference and the full program, please visit our website or contact Jane Ward, email: <conference@sfep.org.uk>.

Library conference

The Australian Library & Information Association's Biennial Conference will be held in Queensland at the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre from 21 to 24 September 2004. The theme of this year's conference is 'Challenging Ideas'. Full details at <www/alia.org.au/conferences/alia2004>

Australian Science Communicators and Australasian Medical Writers Association national conference

'Science and Medicine: Connecting with Society' 26 to 29 September 2004 Greenmount Beach Resort, Coolangatta (just 300 m from the beach!)

This exciting conference will include a broad range of activities about the business of writing and communicating science and medical information. The program includes interactive plenary sessions, members' submitted papers, research insights sessions, and professional development workshops on a broad range of topics relating to communicating science and medical information through different media.

If you are involved in writing, editing or publishing in science or medicine, you will be sure to find something in the program to interest you. And with a planned attendance of about 200 like-minded folk from around the country and beyond, the conference will provide a wonderful opportunity for networking. For more information and draft program go to: <www.medicalwriters.org> or <www.asc.asn.au/conf/index.html>.

Janet Salisbury (*Canberra Society of Editors*)

Antiquarian Book Fair

The Australia and New Zealand Association of Antiquarian Booksellers (ANZAAB) will host the 20th International Antiquarian Book Fair at the Royal Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne from 15 to 17 October.

This is the first time the event will be held in Australia.

ANZAAB will also host the 37th Congress of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers in Melbourne from 8 to 13 October. For more information visit <www.anzaab.com>



ABA Conference 2004

This conference—of interest to publishers, booksellers and suppliers—is being held in Canberra at the Hyatt Hotel from 11 a.m. Saturday 14 August to 4 p.m. Tuesday 17 August.

Li Cunxin, author of *Mao's Last Dancer* is the opening speaker.

Visit the website at <<http://www.aba.org.au/annualConf.asp>>

Online Information conference

The Online Information conference (30 November to 2 December 2004 at Olympia Grand Hall, London), is recognised as the international meeting place for information professionals, librarians, knowledge workers, content managers and publishers.

Opportunities include networking, professional training and careers advice. Official 'call for speakers' is now closed but late submissions will be accepted at the discretion of the conference manager. <www.online-information.co.uk/o104/conference.html>

Call for papers: Australian Society of Indexers conference

The theme of the 2005 conference (18 to 19 March) will be 'Indexing: engage, enlighten, enrich'.

Areas of interest include indexing for museums, pictures, sound and moving images, history, the Web, newspapers, databases, back-of-book, and children's literature.

Papers may be presented as full conference papers, in workshops or round-table discussions. To obtain an expression of interest form or to register for the conference see the society's website <www.aussi.org/conferences/2005/papercall.htm>. Tel: (03) 9500 8715 or email: <mindexer@optusnet.com.au>

ICCE2004: International Conference on Computers in Education

This conference is hosted by RMIT University, Melbourne and will be held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre from 30 November to 3 December 2004.

For further information, go to <www.rmit.edu.au/bus/icce2004> or contact the ICCE2004 Conference Secretariat Tel: (613) 9682 0244 Email: icce2004@icms.com.au

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

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Blue Pencil

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Your comments and contributions are welcome. Mail them to the Editor, *Blue Pencil*, Society of Editors (NSW) Inc., PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007, or email Paula Grunseit <pgg@optusnet.com.au>.

Copy deadline for the September issue is Wednesday, 11 August 2004.

The views expressed in the articles and letters, or the material contained in any advertisement or insert, are not the responsibility of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

Advertising rates:

Full page, \$150; half page, \$80 (horizontal only); one-third page, \$50 (vertical or horizontal); quarter page \$40 (horizontal only); one-sixth page, \$30 (half of one column). Inserts: \$75 per hundred for DL-sized or A4 pre-folded to DL size. Circulation: approximately 375.

Membership

Membership of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. is open to anyone working as an editor for publication (print or electronic documents), and anyone who supports the society's aims.

Membership runs for a calendar year. 2004 fees are \$65 for new members (\$40 if joining after 30 June) and \$60 for renewals.

For a membership application form, phone (02) 9294 4999, write to PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007, or download an application from the society's website at <<http://www.users.bigpond.com/socednsw/>>.

Listing in the Editorial Services Directory

A print edition of the *Editorial Services Directory* is due to be published soon (new listings can no longer be accepted for inclusion in this edition). The online version is updated quarterly, with deadlines of 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December. Listing costs \$40 per year (\$20 for new entries added from 30 June 2004) in addition to the fee for membership of the society. New entries should be submitted using a template file available from Cathy Gray at <cgray@mpx.com.au>.

Committee meetings

All members are welcome to attend the society's committee meetings. Contact a committee member for details if you wish to attend the next meeting.

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Copy deadline for September issue:
Wednesday, 11 August 2004.

Professional development

Professional Proofreading

Date: Saturday, 21 August 2004 Presenter: Tim Learner, who has proofread more than 500 books.

Venue: City Tattersalls Club, 198 Pitt Street, Sydney

Cost: \$145 members, Society of Editors, \$175 non-members (lunch included)

Are you confident that your documents are free from errors that lurk, unseen, to sabotage your work? Are you responsible for checking other people's writing? Do you want to develop your skills so you can work as a proofreader? If so, this workshop will help you refine the skill of proofreading.

Design for Non-designers

Date: Saturday 8 September 2004 Presenter: David Whitbread

Venue: MacCallum Room, Holme Building, The University of Sydney

Cost: \$250 members, \$299 non-members (lunch included)

David Whitbread is the author of *The Design Manual* (UNSW Press, Sydney, 2001). Originally commissioned as a companion to the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*, *The Design Manual* won an Australian Award for Excellence in Educational Publishing in 2002. David was also part of the Snooks & Co. team that revised the *Style manual* for its sixth edition (Wiley, Brisbane, 2002). He was Head of Graphic Design at the University of Canberra until 1999. He is the editor of *Agenda*, the national newsletter for the Australian Graphic Design Association.

The workshop will cover typography, illustration, layout and principles of design, developments in design and the effect of the net on print.

Bookings

The society now accepts payment by credit card (MasterCard, Visa and Bankcard, but not American Express or Diners Card), cheque and money order. To book, please send a registration form to the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. PO Box 254, Broadway, with your credit card details or fax or phone your registration and credit card details to the treasurer, Janice Beavan, at the numbers given in the committee list on this page. Bookings will close one week before a workshop takes place.

Cancellation and refunds

The society will refund 100 per cent of the fee if you cancel four or more working days before the workshop, and 50 per cent if you cancel one to three days before. However, please note that there can be no refund if you cancel on the day of the workshop.

Manuals and handouts

The society can only provide manuals and handouts to people who attend the workshop. Please see the information about workshop bookings on this page.

For more information about the society's workshops, please email Pauline Waugh at <paulinewaugh@ozemail.com.au>.

Call for contributions

Do you have something to say? Have you been to an interesting conference or event? Contributions to *Blue Pencil* are welcome. We would like to publish your articles, book reviews or letters. Please email the editor at <pgg@optusnet.com.au>