

The cutting edge of obscurity

Pamela Hewitt entertained Style Council 2004 delegates with tales of the cliché.

There's a war going on, a war against cliché. This is no mere skirmish. It's a fight to the death!

Did I say 'fight to the death'? Why is it that whenever I talk about clichés, they start pouring out of my mouth, like a raging torrent. *Oh dear. Raging torrent.*

It was Martin Amis who declared war on cliché. 'All writing', he said, 'is a campaign against cliché. Not just clichés of the pen but clichés of the mind and clichés of the heart.'¹ And that, in a nutshell, is my concern here. *Surely I didn't actually say 'in a nutshell'.*

Clichés start out life fresh and fit to travel. Because they are apt and catchy, they are repeated. From such promising beginnings, they age badly, becoming stale prose, then tired similes and ultimately turning into dead metaphors. Whatever power clichés once had has leaked away from overuse by lesser writers over too many years.

Most first drafts need to be trawled for clichés. Why do literary critics and linguists and editors keep hammering away about them? How come writers

don't get the point? It's hard work to write well, that's why. Few writers use cliché deliberately, but they are handy, the first thing the mind grabs and throws onto the page. It's easier than coming up with something arresting and energetic.

One of the exciting things about original writing is the opportunity it gives the reader to see something in a different way, through the eyes of the observant writer. The reader (sometimes the lucky editor) sees a brilliant image and thinks, 'Yes, that's just exactly right, that's just what it's like'. Sometimes the words fall together so compellingly that you marvel not that the writer has got it down on paper, but that it has never been done before.

By way of contrast (there I go again), there are words that go together like—how can I put this? Like fish and chips. Like chalk and cheese. Like ...

A bull at a gate
a motley collection
a towering inferno
a train of thought...

It's the known, the expected, the unoriginal. Don Watson compares the cliché to 'an old wheelbarrow or darned sock we can use over and over again; something with which we "make do"'.²

The word cliché originates from a French printing term. The cliché was a metal plate, used to print an image, rather than text. This plate could be used over and over again. And it was. So, before a cliché became a cliché, it was a metaphor. In Cultural Revolutionary China, the People's Daily had ready-made hot metal character sets for political clichés like 'our-great-leader-and-teacher-Chairman-Mao'. They might as well have printed 'blah, blah, blah'. The separate words had become meaningless. It's the familiarity of the cliché that makes it into a conglomerate.

Most writers would be horrified to think that their work harboured a single one. But cliché doesn't only operate at the level of imagery. It also creeps into characterisation (the ugly criminal, the sweet innocent young girl who also happens to be breathtakingly beautiful). It rears its banal head in matters of plot and it is the *staple diet (whoops)* of genre fiction (the happy-ever-after ending of romance and the predictable racism of fantasy fiction's descriptions of humanoids or trolls).

Stereotypes sit uneasily in literature. As Anne Bernays discovered when she taught writing, 'The knowledge that people aren't always what they seem was

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Next meeting: Tuesday, 7 September 2004

Freelancing—a forum & feast

This freelancers' forum replaces our September meeting.

The panellists will discuss setting up a business, creating a business plan, managing projects, liaising with publishing houses and negotiating. The challenges of working with a manuscript, legal issues such as copyright, defamation and insurance will also be discussed.

The venue is Buon Gusto Restaurant (Italian) 368 Abercrombie Street, Chippendale. The cost is \$35, drinks included. For further details please see page 2 and the insert in this issue.

October meeting: Tuesday, 5 October.

Janet Mackenzie talks about her new book *The Editor's Companion*.

a startling notion to more beginning students than I like to acknowledge. I thought everyone knew that a person who smiles all the time may very well have a troubled and even murderous heart.³ In my editing practice, I've had cause to comment to an author that it's enough for Rhiannon to be beautiful and blonde, she doesn't have to be a platinum blonde. Her eyes don't have to be gentle and aquamarine and her skin so flawless that she doesn't need make-up. Just blonde and beautiful will do!

Another writer, seeking to put across the idea that a character was heartless asserted that 'he was a cruel man'. Less than convincing. A step up from telling is generally held to be showing. You want to demonstrate that a character is cruel? Then show him being cruel. Here, the ultimate cliché would be a flashback to the man's childhood habit of pulling the wings off flies. Heard that one before? To avoid clichéd characterisation, the editor might recommend introducing something unexpected. Instead of an action, what about an absence of response? Here's a possible scenario. A man takes his two-year-old daughter to the park. The child falls over and cuts her knee. She wails at the pain and sight of blood. The father ignores her. He has done nothing, but the lack of the expected human response to console a child in distress—especially a small child, especially his daughter—is all the cue the reader needs to infer characterisation.

What is the editor to do? The *first line of defence* (hmm) is to gather together the examples of originality in the text, the adjective-noun combinations that surprise and delight the reader. Even a mediocre manuscript will have a handful. They show what the writer can do. When they find a work that is heavy with cliché, editors can point out opportunities for deletion, simplification or substitution of fresher images.

Sometimes I appeal to their sense of adventure. 'Black as ink' is just what readers expect, I might say. Why not surprise them?

I have suggested to an author that to say 'hell for leather' and 'wet its whistle' is too much in one sentence. I've ventured that the first time a writer described someone's hair as a mop, it was an effective comparison. Not now.

There are very few good reasons to use cliché. But they exist. The possibilities include emphasising the banality of a character or a situation, or employing humour. Sometimes there's a case to leave a cliché or two in the dialogue. And there are authors who can toss a cliché onto the page and make of it a signal or a game. It can be like a knock at the door or a bell chiming—just about any passage of Gertrude Stein's writing uses set phrases knowingly, effectively. More often, these literary tics are accidental and they pull down the work.

There is a kind of hierarchy of acceptability for cliché. H.W. Fowler said of the hackneyed phrase: 'All would be well if the thing stopped at the mind but it issues by way of the tongue, which is bad, or of the pen, which is worse.'

If first drafts were perfect, editors would starve. A little humility is, *ahem, in order*, when picking other people's writing to bits. Most of us speak first draft, many of us write first draft, and the climate can be very drafty for editors who live in glass houses...

My favourite cliché came from a good manuscript which now gets five stars from readers on Amazon. The central character, whose life ends tragically, is still beautiful, young and happy. But even then, 'there were dark clouds looming on the horizon'. My comment? Not dark clouds! Not looming!! Not on the horizon!!!

Footnotes

1 Martin Amis, *The war against cliché: essays and reviews 1971–2000*, Vintage, Random House Australia, 2001, xv.

2 Don Watson, *Death sentence: the decay of public language*, Knopf, Random House, Milsons Point NSW, 2003, p. 76.

3 Anne Bernays, 'Pupils glimpse an idea, teacher gets a gold star', in *Writers on writing: collected essays from the New York Times*, Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 2001, p. 26.

This paper, presented by Pamela Hewitt at Style Council 2004 was first published on the Style Council website at <<http://www.shlrc.mq.edu.au/style/papers04.htm>>.

A selection of papers from the conference will be published on the site.

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.



Style Council 2004

The Style Council conferences have become an institution for editors and other professionals whose business is the written word—a uniquely Australian institution, according to the international magazine English Today. Pam Peters of Macquarie University is Convener of Style Council. She reports on this year's conference.

The fourteenth Style Council took place last month (9 to 11 July) at the State Library of NSW, with over 80 participants from all States, including Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania. Its theme was 'Public and Professional Discourse', launched by Neil James of the Plain English Foundation with a wide-ranging paper on the historical causes of unplain English, as well as its impacts on institutions, professions and businesses, in cumbersome and customer-unfriendly communication.

Other speakers (Paul Bennett, Deb Doyle) took up the theme from the editorial side, focusing on the practicalities of achieving plain English with their clients. A panel of speakers on 'the cutting edge of obscurity' (including Bill Krebs, Pam Hewitt and Bruce Heilbuth) stimulated lively debate on whether editorial intervention typically resulted in shorter versions of the document. Conclusion: it might or might not be true, according to the kind of text you were editing.

Political discourse was illuminatingly discussed from the point of view of producers and consumers by Andrew Tink MP and Heather Forbes of ABC News and Current Affairs. The public voices of government and opposition are often polarised, and news broadcasters have the challenging task of creating unbiased accounts of events from their outputs.

Corporation-speak has its own kinds of strategic bias. Michael Lewis identified it in metaphors drawn from arenas such as health ('robust system') and military action ('on-the-ground advice'); and Dr Alan Jones (no relation to the controversial broadcaster) found it in environmental allusions i.e. 'greenwash' in annual reports—where the correlation with policy and action is not to be assumed.

For editors, there was special interest in the ethical issues associated with editing PhD theses. The topic was illuminated from both the teaching and the editorial side, with speakers from ANU (Mandy Scott) and the University

of South Australia (Ruth Trigg, Barry Jeromson, Nicole Marwick) working to enhance the students' writing capacities, and Janet Mackenzie from the Victorian Society of Editors presenting the new national policy on editing theses, noted in last month's *Blue Pencil*. The policy is framed in relation to the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*, which gives it firm benchmarking, although it is not mandatory for either academics or editors, and remains to be tested.

Online communication was on the conference agenda, as in the previous Style Council (Brisbane 2002), especially its uses in supporting education and recreation. Donna Gibbs described from her research how online participation brought some otherwise reticent students out of their shell; and author Matthew Reilly provided an amazing demonstration of how a novel can be published free online and still (probably) make a profit when it appears as a regular paperback a few months later. Of course it depends on the novel and the author, so publishers at large may not be able to capitalise on the model of *Hover Car Racer*.

The frontiers of professional discourse were opened up with Peter Roger's paper on how speech therapists work through translators to diagnose the speech difficulties of speakers of languages other than English—a situation where the structural differences between English and non-European languages are critical. Also live from the workplace, the divergent language of judges speaking (a) to the assembled court and (b) to fellow jurists was discussed by Roly Sussex as part of a large legal project in Queensland.

The very different writing required of Arts undergraduates (mostly essays), and of Arts graduates downtown (reports, position papers, analyses) was highlighted in a paper by Susan Thomas from Sydney University's English Department.

Altogether, Style Council 2004 provided a kaleidoscope of facets of professional and public discourse from

an engaging variety of speakers, and evaluations confirm that the participants found it very worthwhile—'in the best Style Council tradition'.

An added highlight, for those who attended the Greek banquet on Saturday evening, was the excellent after-dinner speech of former diplomat Cavan Hogue.

The next Style Council will probably be held in Melbourne in 2005, on current language-in-context issues, and taking further some of the 2004 themes.

Papers from Style Council 2004 will be published in either electronic or print form. For further information, please contact the Style Council administrator: <adam.smith@ling.mq.edu.au>.

New title from Keesing Press

Between the Lines: A legal guide for writers and illustrators by Lynne Spender

The Keesing Press has just released a new plain English guide to the law for professional writers and illustrators.

The book aims to answer commonly asked questions such as:

- What is a legally binding contract?
- Do I have to pay tax on my literary award?
- What should I do if I think I've been defamed by a review of my work?
- How much should I accept as an advance?
- How do I go about changing my agent?
- What do I do if my supervisor publishes my work in their name?

The book will be reviewed in the October issue of *Blue Pencil* and is available from the Australian Society of Authors PO Box 1566 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.

For further information, phone Jeremy Fisher or Jill Dimond on (02) 9318 0877 or email <asa@asauthors.org>.

Workshop report

The society's professional development workshop Wired words: writing and editing for the web was presented by Pamela Hewitt on 8 May 2004. Paula Grunseit attended.

Beginning with some history, Pam asked us to think about how far we've come—from the Rosetta stone and silent films to hypertext and the Internet—and to compare our online reading experiences with reading a book. The consensus is that the former is far more interactive than the latter.

She also stressed early on and often during the day, despite the many studies and prescriptions about Web design and usability, that such rules are not set in stone and this kind of science is in its infancy. As each website will have its own purpose and audience, a flexible, creative approach is far better than following one particular set of guidelines.

Why is there so much bad writing on the Web?

Historically, the Web has been the domain of IT people and I am sure many of us working with Intranets or the Internet find it frustrating when content becomes less important due to imposed technical or technological constraints. Whizzbangery and bad design can obscure content and meaning and editors are not often consulted during the web design process. This needs to change if the quality of sites is to improve.

As an information manager (we used to be called librarians), I have to say that editors are not the only ones being left out of the picture. I often notice that the two roles of content manager and designer tend to be filled by one person. As Pam points out, each area requires quite specific skills and there is a niche for editors in the content area.

'...There's a marketing job for editors...convincing people to put more effort into the text of their website.'

Roger Green

For many years, the focus of formal library studies has been shifting further away from its historical, bookcentric focus to incorporate more IT/computer-based subjects. These skills are essential for the many tasks librarians—or should that be cybrarians?—carry out including

conducting online research, managing databases, websites and Intranets, indexing in online and print environments, producing online and print publications.

Although this shift has been progressing for some time, the stereotype of the bespectacled, chignon-wearing, book-stamping, shushing librarian remains and the media perpetuates it—by the way I have nothing against the chignon and have been known to sport one on occasion.

The situation is improving but organisational culture is still catching up with the changes. Although the dress code may differ, perhaps the same could be said of editors? Traditional roles evolve and editors have to move confidently into the technological arena to stake their claim. Looking at the amount of bad writing on the Web, it seems there are a lot of jobs out there waiting for us!

So what are some of the differences about reading in a Web environment as opposed to on paper? We tire more easily, our eyes move in a certain way around the screen, we tend to scan and skim. Our reasons for being there are probably different—we're probably looking for a quick fix of information and we may jump off to other points on the web via links.

'Shovelware'—someone dumps a shovel full of text onto a Web page. Can it be stopped? The bad news is that up until now editors have been noticeably absent from webteams. Keeping in mind that if writing is bad in print, it will be bad on the Web, the good news is that there is a lot of work for us out there in cyberspace so start 'chunking'...

These are some of the points affecting editing and writing for an online audience and that brings us back to the

importance of audience. We have to maintain a clear idea of who our audience is—sometimes on the web that may not be so easy. Although some sites target a very specific market, the Net is such a fluid and navigable environment, it is also true to say that anyone could end up on your site.

What are some of the techniques editors can use to write good material for the Web?

Pam thinks that editors do well to take their plain English skills into the online environment and, by doing so increase the credibility of a site.

'Some editors think that the Web has nothing to do with them.' Juliana Madden

The practical component of the course equipped us with a toolbox of tips, techniques and suggestions for Web writing and editing. We applied some of these in writing exercises including chunking (breaking text down into short sections), abstracting and writing blurbs.

We thought a lot about links—when, where and how to use them. Links are not only a design issue—using them is an editorial decision.

We learnt that online style guides are good reference points and there are many sites dedicated to Web design and usability. Usability guru Jakob Nielsen's site is at <<http://www.useit.com>>but there are plenty of others to visit.

Specifically related to *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*, the course contained the right balance of theory and written exercises. A very useful day.

The society's workshops are advertised each month in the professional development section of Blue Pencil.

If you have recently attended a workshop and would like to write about it for the newsletter, email Paula at <pgg@optusnet.com.au>.

Please see page 8 of this issue for August and September workshops.



Book review

ABC Classic FM's Word of the Day by Kel Richards (with interruptions by Clive Robertson)
Sydney: ABC Books & Audio/BBC Audio Australia, 2004,
176pp., ISBN 0733312748 AUS RRP \$16.95

Logophiles will welcome this compendium of words and phrases selected from ABC Classic FM's 'Word of the Day' segment. The book provides a useful archive of Kel Richards' insightful investigations into lexical questions which are often posed by the program's audience. As the Introduction puts it: 'the Words of the Day are no longer ephemeral'.

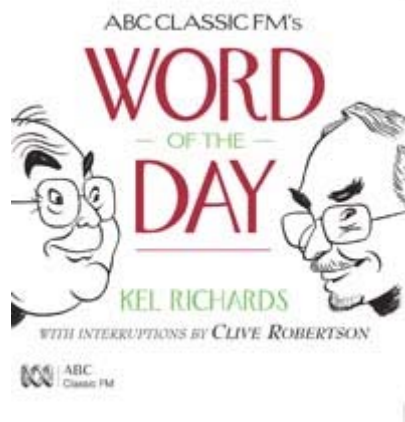
Entries range from familiar words with colourful histories, like *crib* or *stuff*, to phrases with obscure origins that we use everyday without a second thought (e.g., *hair of the dog*, *the whole nine yards*) and such exotic items as *lagniappe* ('a gratuity') and *pogglethrope* ('someone who is perpetually pleased with themselves').

We learn the process by which *nice* has been redeemed from its earliest senses of 'foolish' or 'lascivious' to its current pleasant state. Richards traces the origins of *wooden spoon* back to the unfortunate member of the famous Wedgwood family who came last in the Cambridge finals examination of 1824. *Throttlebottom*, an American slang term for 'a purposeless, incompetent holder of office' is revived, just in case there might be a contemporary use for it.

There are more recent coinages too: *googlewacking*—the game of trying to find pairs of words which have exactly one result when typed into the Google internet search engine; *testipop*—an evocative rendering of the 'sudden change in pitch of voice often experienced by teenage boys'.

In many ways this is a companion volume to Richards' earlier collection, named *WordWatch* (2001) after his segment on ABC NewsRadio. Drawing heavily again on listeners' queries, *WordWatch* has the same kind of range of vocabulary and the same focus on tracing the origin and development of expressions. There are even a few entries which appear in both books, where Richards has new insights or explanations to add. For example, an alternative derivation of the phrase *bob's your uncle*—from the phrase *Bob's your uncle and Fanny's your aunt*—is suggested in *Word of the Day*.

The new volume has shorter and fewer entries (about 200 compared to about 400), and has a more playful tone and format. *Word of the Day* is genuinely pocket-sized, and includes Richards' 'terse verses'—witty amalgamations of the week's featured words (although the necessary alphabetical rather than chronological organisation of the entries makes the placing of the verses in the text rather random).



Another extra feature comes in the form of Clive Robertson's comments or 'interruptions' which are inserted into many of the entries. Fans of the radio program may well enjoy this attempt to replicate the banter between Robertson and Richards, but they might equally find the exchanges come across as stilted and somewhat pointless in print. Richards rarely gets the chance to respond to the asides which are sometimes clever but more often sarcastic, as in 'you're such a help, Kelvin', or just plain contrary: 'I think you're wrong'. Robertson's contributions tend to come across like those of a schoolboy trying to draw attention away from the teacher and onto himself by making facetious remarks from the back of the classroom. This is an unnecessary distraction when the teacher is so entertaining and informative in his treatment of this rich and varied subject.

Adam Smith

This review was first published in the most recent edition of Australian Style.

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 José Ramos-Horta—Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and East Timorese Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation—at the Melbourne Town Hall at 8.00 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?*

Irshad Manji, author of *The Trouble with Islam*, and a recipient of Oprah Winfrey's First Annual 'Chutzpah Awards,' will present *The Last Word* at the Melbourne Town Hall at 8.00 p.m. on Sunday, 29 August and speak on *Confessions of a Muslim Reformer: Why I Fight for Women, Jews and Pluralism*.

Irshad Manji describes herself as 'a Muslim voice of reform'. 'But I remain a hugely ambivalent Muslim because of what's happening "on the ground"—massive human rights violations, particularly against women and religious minorities—in the name of Allah.'

International guests include: Lynne Truss, Colm Toibin, Philippe Claudel, and Carlos Ruis Zafon.

Australian authors include: Helen Garner, Robert Dessaix, Peter Goldsworthy, Peter Robb, Peter Singer, Frank Moorhouse, Matthew Reilly.

The official festival program was distributed in the *Age* on 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>.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members:

- Nelma Akhund
- Frances Doyle
- Glenda Downing
- Beth Everitt
- Kerrie Eyers
- Helen Gosper
- Susan Irvine
- Mitchell Lewis
- Linda Littlemore
- Samantha Malagre
- Patricia Potts
- Alastair Spate
- Sue Tronsor
- Kim Turner
- Nicki Wormald



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 will appear in the *Courier-Mail* on Saturday, 11 September and details can be found on the Web at <www.brisbanewritersfestival.com.au/2004/>.

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>.

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>.



The International Chemical Information Conference & Exhibition 2004

The conference will be held in Annency, France from 17 to 20 October 2004. Subjects include: trends in data sources, software, search engines, indexing and analysis. For further information, contact Infonortics Ltd. Email: contact@infonortics.com URL: <http://www.infonortics.com>.

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/ol04/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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<http://www.users.bigpond.com/socednsw/>

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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

The society's Editorial Services directory is available online at www.editorsnsw.com/esd/. New listings and updates can be added quarterly as follows:

- online only: July (deadline 30 June); October (deadline 30 September)
- print and online: January (deadline 31 December); April (deadline 31 March).

The cost is \$40 per year (\$20 for new listings received from April to September) in addition to the fee for membership of the society. New listings 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.

2004 COMMITTEE

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Copy deadline for October issue:

Wednesday, 8 September 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 18 September 2004 Presenter: David Whitbread

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

Cost: \$250 members, \$299 non-members (lunch and *The Design Manual* 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. He was Head of Graphic Design at the University of Canberra. 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 Club), 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>