

# Blue Pencil

Newsletter of  
The Society  
of Editors  
(NSW) Inc.

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## Remembering our past

*At our 30th Anniversary Dinner in July, Dr Jeremy Fisher, Executive Director of the Australian Society of Authors, spoke about the importance of remembering, beginning with an acknowledgement of the Cadigal people of the Eora nation. This extract captures some of the recollections about publishing, editing and editors, and some of the views about the industry, that he shared with us that evening.*

It is a great pleasure to be here tonight to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Society of Editors. I have had a very long association with the society, but the truth is that I cannot remember if I was at the first meeting. Thirty years is a very long time ago and much has happened since.

Forgetting is a problem we should resist. In that context, it is wonderful that these days we can make our Acknowledgement of Country as a matter of course. In doing so we celebrate the fact that we no longer deny the existence of the original inhabitants of this land and ignore our own history. One of my concerns at this point is that in a generation or so we will have forgotten the cultural legacy currently available to us in print form and that our reality will be defined only by what is online. Google's attempts to digitise all the world's printed information do not encourage me. Remember, Google has brokered agreements with the Chinese government whereby users

of Google China can only access censored information. The filters our own government is attempting to install on internet service providers, supposedly to protect our children, are really tools that prevent the free flow of information. Books have a long and honourable subversive tradition. The Bible is a prime example. *Das Kapital*

another. Samizdat publishing in the USSR yet another. And the burning of books has frequently been a symbol of the stifling of dissent. These are things we should not forget. So much can happen in our lives that we tend to erase the past, and, for me, that is a mistake.

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**Next meeting: Tuesday, 1 September 2009**

### The challenges of self-publishing

As a writer and sub-editor with some 30 years of experience, Maureen Shelley, co-author of *Eat Happy*, has found that writing a book—as opposed to articles and reports—is a demanding task. Having that work edited by someone else proved more confronting. For an author, self-publishing is a roller coaster journey, one that Maureen and co-author Rosemarie Robertson have been travelling this year. Marketing a book is another completely separate job that the self-published author needs to undertake. Maureen will speak about her experiences in selling words. She will also speak about her experiences as a writer and sub-editor for a major metropolitan daily newspaper, as a book reviewer for a major metropolitan newspaper and as a book censor.

**Maureen Shelley** has worked for News Limited for the past nine years as a senior journalist, mainly with *The Daily Telegraph*. As a features sub-editor she edits the work of state, national and international writers. She also writes weekly on real estate, history, education, family, the arts and books. Her first published work was *The Report on the Community Consultations with People with Disability on the Proposed Disability Discrimination Act*, known as The Shelley Report (1992). As chair of Australia's censorship appeal body for seven years, Maureen has had to ban books. Her new book, *Eat Happy*, taglined as recipes for life, is for people with depression and for their families. It gives recipes and measures for people to feel energised, stay calm and in control.

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, 6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. Please check the noticeboard by the lifts for the meeting room location. Drinks and light refreshments provided. \$15 for members and students; \$20 for non-members and those who do not RSVP; \$7 for holders of a current concession card or student card. Non-members who book and do not attend must still pay.

Please RSVP to (02) 9294 4999 (voicemail) or the email address <editorbruce@optusnet.com.au> by Friday, 28 August 2009.

**October meeting: The Society of Editors (NSW) and The Galley Club of Sydney joint meeting on Production and Editing; Tuesday 6 October.**

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Remembering where we have been and from what we come is an essential part of us knowing who and what we are and, in that vein, I want to remember and acknowledge a fine woman named Olga Zimoch. Olga was a founding member of this society. She does not deserve to be forgotten. Being an invisible editor is one thing, and Olga was an impeccable editor, but being a forgotten person is another and that is why I would like to talk about her.

### Olga Zimoch

She was born Olga Zukowska on 9 January 1919 in Wilno, Poland. She graduated in medicine before the Second World War, intending to be an ear, nose and throat surgeon. Of course, the war intervened and once her skills were identified, Olga was deported by the Nazis to Germany, where she treated Poles and others working as slave labour in the mines. After the war she worked for the United Nations Refugee Relief Agency.

In 1947 she married Franciszek Zimoch in Bamberg, Germany. Olga's marriage was dissolved three years later in 1950 in Sydney. Why, I don't know.

What I do know is that she came to Australia without her husband, as a Displaced Person. At some time after the end of the war, and presumably before her marriage, she had discovered that her mother, her fiancé, indeed all

the people in her village, had been killed. I cannot imagine how she coped with this and what it did to her. The term 'displaced person' merely hints at the physical and psychological turmoil she must have suffered.

Australia did not exactly welcome her with open arms. Olga rightly felt that she should be able to practise medicine but her qualifications were not recognised. The medical profession in Australia is still a very closed shop, but it was much more so back then. Foreign graduates were forced to jump through ridiculous and expensive hoops to prove their equality with Australian doctors. As a refugee with no assets,

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### '...teachers' salaries have increased markedly since then, but the case is not the same for editors.'

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she was never able to get enough money together to enable her to study to qualify as a medical practitioner in Australia.

This embittered her considerably since she felt European degrees were far superior to any offered by Australian universities. However, she put that to one side and used her enormous reserves of self-discipline to complete a course in Advertising Copywriting while she held down a variety of menial jobs. Once she had her new qualification she worked first for Woolworths, then for the Australian Consumers' Association on *Choice*, and then for John Wiley as a book editor. In 1976, she was appointed Chief Copy Editor at *The Medical Journal of Australia* and a year later I came under her charge as a junior copy editor. Although I had just completed a university degree and a graduate diploma, Olga showed me that these had taught me nothing about the invisible craft of editing and she proceeded to share her incredible knowledge with me.

It was Olga who introduced me to the Society of Editors. In 1979, when the Society of Editors was founded, I had been working at *The Medical Journal of Australia* for two years. I had completed my Graduate Diploma of Education on a Department of Education scholarship in 1977.

My salary at the *Journal* was about \$7,500, which was about the same as I would have received as a new teacher. Of course teachers' salaries have increased markedly since then, but the case is not the same for editors. Still, what I was earning was four times what I had been living on. With my first pay I bought new shoes, clothes, LPs—Joni Mitchell, in fact, and I still have them—and a bottle of wine—Stonyfell Metala—instead of the \$2.50 flagon of D'Arenburg Grenache, which had been a weekly purchase throughout my student days.

### *The Medical Journal of Australia*

The *Journal* in those days is another thing we should remember. Even in 1977, its offices existed in a time warp. They were in Glebe in what we knew as The Printing House. When I started, the ground floor was taken up by hot metal typesetting machinery and printing presses. As well as the *Journal* and *The Medical Directory of Australia*, the Australasian Medical Publishing Company typeset and printed *Oceania*, *Southerly* and numerous other scholarly publications. The company's management and other services took up the two floors above the production and printing floor.

The editorial offices were on the top floor. The medical editors began each morning by reading the papers. Reuben Hertzberg, the editor of the *Australian Journal of Ophthalmology*, would often drop in for morning tea, which was a time when the entire staff gathered together to discuss the day's work as well as current events and cricket. Ronald Winton, the editor when I joined, liked to discuss music, literature, theology and history, and, given he was a passionate Christian and that Hertzberg was Jewish, morning teas could be lively, but very civilised, intellectual debates—except of course for the bloody cricket.

Perhaps because of the bloody cricket, the *Journal* seemed much the same as it must have been when it was initiated by Henry William Armit, the first editor, in 1913. Mervyn Archdall joined Armit as assistant editor in 1922, then became editor in 1930.

### Beatrice Davis

Archdall is an important figure in the history of Australian editing as he was

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### NEW MEMBERS

Bridget Brennan  
Julia Collingwood  
Joanna Egan  
Therese Hall  
Katie Jackett  
Zehra Jemal  
Emma McKibbin  
Liz Menzel  
Claire O'Connor  
Kate O'Donnell  
Diana O'Shea  
Annette Sayers  
Rowena Tyler  
Allison Watkins  
Chris Winslow

the person who trained perhaps the most famous of Australian editors, Beatrice Davis. She worked at the *Journal* for seven years. He was also responsible for her move to books. He moonlighted as a book editor for Angus & Robertson but when he became editor of the *Journal* his workload prevented him from continuing so he passed the work over to Beatrice.

She worked freelance with Angus & Robertson for some years until Walter Cousins offered her a job and as a full-time editor in 1936.

She did not leave Angus & Robertson until March 1973 when she was retrenched, along with most of the existing editorial staff, by the new management of entrepreneur Gordon Barton, who bought the company in 1970.

Barton's management team was led by Richard Walsh, appointed as publisher in 1972. Walsh is still around as a publisher and a few nights ago I sat near him at the Miles Franklin Awards. This is all part of a rich history because Beatrice, at Franklin's request, was one of the judges of the Miles Franklin Awards for many years, almost to her death. These are the circles we weave. This is our history. This is why today we have the Beatrice Davis Editorial fellowship and we should remember why and how things came to be.

It was her years at Angus & Robertson that made Beatrice the most influential editor in Australia, acting as unofficial arbiter of almost all that comprised Australian literature, publishing Ion Idriess, Colin Simpson, Miles Franklin, Xavier Herbert and numerous other famed Australian writers.

Another connection I have with Beatrice is more tenuous, but insightful. In 1973, Angus & Robertson's educational list was sold off to McGraw-Hill. Twenty years later I would move to McGraw-Hill and inherit most of these titles, or what was left of them, in my role as publisher. While I was not directly responsible for it, one title was Tom Hungerford's *Diseases of Livestock*, then in its ninth edition. It was an internationally recognised textbook, published in Australia and exported to the world, an example of the strength of Australia's publishing industry in so many sectors. These achievements should be celebrated but our working lives are so harried

that we can rarely take the time out for pats on the back—and besides we are a naturally modest lot.

But that creates problems for us. Right now, the Federal Government is considering a report written by the history-hating, free-market economists of the Productivity Commission. These people hate history because it teaches over and over again that when markets are completely deregulated—the free market economist equivalent of nirvana—markets implode. The Productivity Commission wants to destroy the jobs of Australian editors and the livelihoods of Australian authors because it is blind to history.

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**'...we can rarely take the time out for pats on the back—and besides we are a naturally modest lot.'**

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The writers and editors of Australia will never be defeated! At least, I hope not.

But let me return to medicine and the *Journal*. Ronald Winton had worked as Mervyn Archdall's deputy for ten years before succeeding him in 1957. Winton lived alone in Drummoyne in a waterfront unit almost under the Gladesville Bridge to which he once invited the *Journal* staff for a party. He was highly respected in medical circles worldwide, being elected Chairman of the International Congress of Christian Physicians and Chairman of the Council of the World Medical Association at various times.

Winton himself never married. A rare bachelor at a time when marriage and families were essential adjuncts to masculinity, he was as much a priest as he was a doctor.

Dr Arthur Gwynne, who would replace Winton, had been a member of a number of Antarctic research expeditions. I once innocently asked him whether he had been with Mawson and he quietly replied that he wasn't *that* old.

The two other doctors on the editorial staff were Dr Laurel Thomas (or Cunningham, the name under which she wrote fiction), and Dr Jill Forrest, who was also the University of Sydney carillonist. This mixture gave the *Journal* editorship a broad spectrum of

the arts, science and philosophy. It was a wonderful environment in which to be tutored in the craft of editing.

I learned quickly about SI Units, millimetres of mercury, titres, and the structure of scientific articles. And I also gained an appreciation of the precise and accurate English that Olga Zimoch demanded of her sub-editorial charges.

Olga had replaced the formidable Dorothy Tremlett, who had been chief sub-editor for decades. Dorothy popped in from time to time for morning tea, which was presented on a wheeled trolley with assorted bone china cups and saucers. The trolley would be pushed into the middle of the reception area and the staff and any visitors would stand around it. The editors were served first, then other staff could pour their tea.

However, the Australasian Medical Publishing Company was not faring well. As a printing company, it was way behind the times, still using hot metal typesetters and old printing machines.

It was a whirlwind introduction to printing for me, though. The compositors were all artisans and skilled enough to recognise upside down and back to front any grammatical or measurement errors that might have crept past the proofreaders.

But economics ruled. Within six months of my starting work at the journal, the printing presses were gone and the printing outsourced to Granville. Two computer keyboards replaced the numerous hot metal typesetting machines. The number of compositors fell similarly. With no printing staff, and fewer typesetters, staff levels dropped dramatically, except on the editorial floor.

### **Indexing in the early days**

After I had passed Olga's sub-editorial tests and could be trusted with some autonomy, the index to the *Journal* was added to my workload. I was handed a wooden box divided into three sections and a pile of orange index cards. My job was to go through each issue of the *Journal* and type a card for each author. Then I had to index each article by its title and subject and use subentries indented below the main entry. I would add extra entries for the keywords and for diseases, drugs and conditions. I

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# IPed notes

## *News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited, August 2009*

The big news at the beginning of this month was that the 2009 accreditation examination will go ahead on Saturday, 12 September. There are some 90 registrants for the exam, 13 of them not being members of a society of editors. Clearly, the value of having 'AE' after one's name is being recognised.

The IPed Council met by teleconference on Sunday, 2 August. The budget for 2009–10 was a major topic of discussion. The Institute is in a financial position that will allow it to fund routine activities and current projects. However, to implement major future projects such as, for example, the research and development of on-screen and online exams and training materials, we will almost certainly need to find support from outside funding bodies.

Another topic discussed was the report of the survey of members conducted earlier this year by Rosemary Noble, the Society of Editors (Victoria) councillor, on behalf of the IPed

Council. This is an interesting and illuminating document that identifies, among other things, the wide range of activities that the members of the societies would like to see IPed engage in. A copy of the report is on the IPed website.

The council endorsed a letter to be sent to Peter Garrett, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, expressing IPed's concern about the possible implementation of the recommendations of the recent Productivity Commission (PC) research report 'Restrictions on the parallel importation of books'. A copy of the letter is on the website. (See page 5)

The main recommendation of the PC report is that:

*The Government should repeal Australia's Parallel Import Restriction (PIRs) for books. The repeal should take effect three years after the date that it is announced.*

The council believes that such a move would have a severe negative

impact on many people in all areas of Australian publishing, starting with local authors and flowing through to editors, book designers and typesetters, publishers, paper suppliers, printers and booksellers. The sole benefit promoted by the PC is a reduction in book prices, which we are not convinced will occur.

Our South Australian colleagues are working hard, refining the program and logistics for the 4th IPed National Editors Conference to be held in Adelaide on 8 to 10 October 2009. Registrations are already well above one hundred. The latest program can be found at <[www.editors-sa.org.au](http://www.editors-sa.org.au)> or via the IPed website. There are some wonderful speakers and just about every presentation has an intriguing title. You'll want to be there.

**Ed Highley**  
**Secretary**  
**[www.iped-editors.org](http://www.iped-editors.org)**

## Tiered membership

**The society's tiered membership system will work as follows:**

### Categories

This membership year (2009) the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. will offer members the option of three categories:

1. Existing members (as at 31 December 2006) can remain an ordinary member at the current fee (\$70/75) with the current entitlements; or
2. Existing and new members can become a professional editor member at the current ordinary fee with the current ordinary entitlements, provided you have two years' experience in a paid editing role and can supply two letters confirming your experience; or
3. Existing and new members can become an associate member at a reduced fee (\$50) with reduced entitlements (an associate member cannot vote at an election, cannot become an office bearer and cannot be listed in the *Editorial Services Directory*).

### Phasing in a new system

Before January 2011 all ordinary members will be asked to choose either:

1. Professional editor member status; or
2. Associate member status.

Four years should be sufficient time for those seeking professional status to gain professional experience if they do not already have it.

### Experience

Professional editor members must have at least two years' in-house experience as an editor or the equivalent freelance or part-time experience. For example, if you worked half-time as an editor for four years (part-time or freelance) then that would be an acceptable equivalent to two years full-time work as an in-house editor. Professional experience must be in a paid editing role. As professional members may have had career breaks, there is no limit on how long ago the professional editing experience was obtained. Professional editor members will be asked to provide details of their experience and two letters (in English) that can be checked by a subcommittee appointed for this purpose. The subcommittee will simply confirm the statements supplied by the third parties. The letters can just be a statement of the years of experience in an editorial role. See the essential **Professional Editor Membership form** for more details about requirements.

### Corporate Associates

A new category of Corporate Associates is also available. Publishing companies and other businesses and organisations that support the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.'s aims can become Corporate Associates. For an annual fee of \$400, Corporate Associates of the society will receive five copies of *Blue Pencil* each month and two copies of the current *Editorial Services Directory*, five free admissions to each monthly meeting and two free admissions to one special event per year, such as the Christmas dinner. The usual member rates on professional development courses and workshops will apply for up to five attendees from the Corporate Associate organisation (a saving of approximately \$95 per person).

**The Committee**  
**Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.**

# IPeD response to Productivity Commission

IPeD.

To advance the  
profession of editing

Institute of Professional Editors Limited  
GPO Box 1464  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Australia

ABN 74 129 335 217

3 August 2009

The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP  
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

## **Productivity Commission report on importation of books**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Institute of Professional Editors to express our serious concern over the possibility that the Government might accept and implement the recommendations of the Productivity Commission's research report 'Restrictions on the parallel importation of books'.

The main recommendation is that:

*The Government should repeal Australia's Parallel Import Restrictions (PIRs) for books. The repeal should take effect three years after the date that it is announced.*

Having considered the evidence available, we believe that such a move would have a severe negative impact on many people in all areas of Australian publishing, starting with local authors and flowing through to editors, book designers and typesetters, publishers, paper suppliers, printers and booksellers. While this list is not exhaustive it nevertheless already equates to a significant pool of employment. Furthermore, the local publishing industry is a crucial part of our nation's cultural infrastructure that we feel should be protected rather than abandoned for a benefit that is by no means certain to occur.

The Productivity Commission's sole rationale for the recommendation is that it will benefit readers by leading to lower prices for the trade books that are the mainstay of general bookselling. While we are, of course, in favour of lower prices, we do not believe that the Commission has made a cogent case that this will actually happen. Indeed, a parallel case could be put that prices might in fact rise, given that the recommendation may lead to reduced competition in bookselling. There is thus a high risk that the local publishing industry may be seriously disadvantaged for no economic or social benefit.

Minister, given the gravity of the matter, I am confident that you will give this submission your personal attention.

Yours faithfully,

[Signed]  
Virginia Wilton

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title and subject and use subentries indented below the main entry. I would add extra entries for the keywords and for diseases, drugs and conditions. I would file each card in alphabetical order in two sections, subject and authors. At the end of the six months that made up each volume of the *Journal*—two volumes were published each year—I would sub-edit the cards, reducing duplications and sub-heads, then carry the box of cards down the stairs to the compositors. One day the inevitable happened and I dropped the box and had to bring it back to my desk and refile the cards.

Then there were the problems that needed to be solved and the amusing entries that could be created. The *Journal* liked to publish details of unusual cases. Foreign bodies—that is strange items found in human bodies—were the cause of much amusement. Inclusion of these cases demonstrated that the editors had a sense of humour. Eventually, I was trusted enough to be offered the chance to write some of the editorial content. Sometimes, this consisted of a book review. Publishers were aware that doctors were good book buyers, so the *Journal* received far more books for review than it could find space for.

One book I delighted in bringing to readers' attention was *An Exaltation of Larks or, the Venereal Game* by James Lipton. The book had been brought to my attention first by Ann Sahlin, who a number of you here will have known. She was interested in editing and I introduced her to the society and this started her off on a productive freelance career that lasted from around 1986 until around 2002. Ann loved language, the etymology and poetry and the richness of English. I acknowledge and remember her as a great, unsung editor.

### Meetings in the 1970s

The first meetings of the Society were held at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre. Olga and I would travel over the Bridge together to meet, eat and drink with the likes of Barbara Ker Wilson, Jacqueline Kent, George Morrison, Elaine Russell and other now-renowned editors. Bruce Champion, who worked for Wiley, was the catering officer, bringing cartons of wine every month and ensuring we had enough food to last the evening.

I kept up my involvement and found myself on the Committee and, in 1986, President. At one point when I was President, the Society of Editors Victoria asked us to help put together a biography of Beatrice Davis. I asked Jacquie Kent whether or not she was interested. I checked my facts on this with her recently, wondering if this was the catalyst for her to go on to write her award-winning biography, *A Certain Style: Beatrice Davis, a literary life*. Jacquie replied: 'You did ask me whether I was interested, and I called Beatrice and asked her whether she would co-operate. She said, "No,

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**'...as in all writing and editing, perseverance and persistence are vital components.'**

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dear." Just like that, no ifs or buts. Tony Barker, who had worked with Beatrice at Angus & Robertson, got the gig and subsequently wrote the booklet for the Victorian Society of Editors. When I came back from New York after the Beatrice Davis Fellowship I thought, okay, there's a book here, applied to the State Library and was awarded the Currie Fellowship to do some work on Beatrice Davis. She had died by then. The more I looked into it, the more I thought that here was a chance to write an interesting book on publishing, giving space and recognition to the general lunacy of the industry, and to bring back into the limelight someone who had done a lot for Oz Lit. So that's where it started.'

So Beatrice joins us again. Jacquie not only went to New York on a Davis scholarship, she came back and wrote an award-winning book about her. So we have to remember and recognise and celebrate that this organisation has quite a few runs on the board.

### Achievements of the society

While I was president, we began discussions about formal training for editors. It took some years to evolve but it took form as the Macquarie Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing. Pam Peters aids my defective memory by advising that this began in 1989, when I, Margaret Olds, Judith Miller, Rex Finch and Pam as Course Director acted as a steering and advisory committee. The committee continues to meet

biannually, with representatives from the Australian Publishers Association, Society of Editors, Australian Society of Technical Communicators, and government publishing. In 2007 the course was accredited by the Australian Publishers Association (one of only two such courses in Australia), a very gratifying outcome to this endeavour but again an indication that, as in all writing and editing, perseverance and persistence are vital components.

Pam Peters retired at the end of 2007 and her role as director of the program has been taken over by her Macquarie colleague Michael Lewis.

The society has played a role in establishing the Institute of Professional Editors, which provides accreditation for editors on a national basis. This is a development we never dreamed of back in 1979. It is a major achievement for the profession of editing in Australia and we should not forget these achievements,

But more than that we should not forget the quiet achievers whose work is the very backbone of this Society—the Olga Zimochs and Ann Sahlins of this world who were dedicated to their invisible craft.

Let us remember these editors. Let us celebrate their craft. Let us raise our glasses to them, and to this Society of Editors, and let us humbly say 'thank you'.

**Jeremy Fisher** worked as an editor and publishing manager for nearly 30 years before moving into rights management and advocacy roles. He became President of the Society of Editors (NSW) in 1986 and was a member of the Board of the Australian Publishers Association from 1998–2000. In 1984 Fisher was awarded the inaugural Gold Medal of the Australian Society of Indexers (AusSI) for his indexing of The Australian Encyclopaedia, 4th edition. As a writer, he was first published in 1974. In 2004, Fisher was appointed Executive Director of the Australian Society of Authors.

## Workshop report: Writing and Editing for the Web

*On 6 August, the Society of Editors (NSW) held the second of three fully-booked workshops on writing and editing for the web, presented by Simon Hillier.*

The web is a relatively new medium, and one which offers a huge potential market for writers and editors. But it also means having to relearn many of the techniques we take for granted when producing offline content.

Simon Hillier from Get There Writing Services has been writing and editing online content since the late 1990s. After starting with lastminute.com and travel.com.au, he has since developed websites and email newsletters for organisations ranging from small businesses to multinationals.

‘My goal today’, he said, ‘is to help you gain a clearer understanding of how people read on the web—and teach you the most effective ways to communicate with them.’

The workshop brought together participants from the public and private sectors, both in-house and freelance. Interests ranged from search engine optimisation (SEO) to converting print copy for the web, producing blogs and ‘snackable’ email newsletters, and laying out pages for optimal onscreen readability.

We began by looking at readers’ motivations for visiting the web, and their behaviour online. Interesting statistics were that almost eighty per cent of internet users always scan pages, and many read only the first two words of a paragraph.

Web writing, like news writing, is about getting to your point fast: the inverted pyramid model. To catch readers’ attention, online content should also be fifty per cent shorter than offline. It must look good and make a big first impression.

But where offline copywriting is about ‘sell, sell, sell’, the online approach is ‘help, help, sell’. It is all about knowing your audience, understanding what they want, and catering to their core beliefs, feelings and desires. Everything else flows from that. Give readers the right advice, and they are more likely to stay with you.

‘Be real’, said Simon. ‘Make sure the voice you use works for your brand—who you are and who your audience is.’

Next, we discussed page layout. Using screen shots from websites—good and bad—Simon demonstrated different ways of structuring information, breaking up material into easily digestible ‘chunks’, and helping readers get to what they are looking for faster.

This also assists the website administrator. The better organised a website (and article) is, the more effective it will be in attracting readers. SEO is important, but retaining and encouraging repeat visits can only be achieved by careful consideration of audience wants and needs—and helping fulfil them. Break information

down into chunks: subheadings, short paragraphs and bullet points. Avoid jargon. By concentrating on key words and phrases, not only will your site be easier for readers to use, it will also be easier for search engines to find.

After lunch, we discussed the ‘dos and don’ts’ of effective email marketing, ways of increasing website traffic, and the differences between offline and online media releases. We did exercises on identifying and understanding an audience, writing copy using features and benefits, writing attention-grabbing headlines, and producing reader-friendly content.

The day finished with a short discussion of Web 2.0, the technologies that are breaking down distinctions between producers and consumers—blogs, social media and so on.

It was a lot to cover in one day but the excellent workshop notes contained plenty of detailed advice, illustrations and further reading to flesh out the discussion.

By the end, more than one of us was looking forward to being able to say to clients, ‘Simon says ...’

Many thanks to Simon Hillier, and to the society’s Professional Development Coordinator, Meryl Potter, for organising the workshop.

**Lachlan Jobbins**

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### **2009 National Editors Conference, 8 to 10 October, Adelaide**

The program for the fourth IPEd National Editors Conference is now available from the website <[www.editors-sa.org.au/](http://www.editors-sa.org.au/)>. Registrations can be made at <[www.sapro.com.au/editors/register.htm](http://www.sapro.com.au/editors/register.htm)>. Earlybird registrations for the conference have now closed. The cost for the full conference is \$485 for society members.

Keynote speakers include Neal Porter, Julian Burnside, Wendy McCarthy and Natasha Stott Despoja.

Topics for panel discussions are:

Children’s book publishing and editing; Turning the tables: editors being edited; Paying it forward: the editor as mentor; Into the unknown: the future for editing; The ethics of representation; Editing science.

## **Freelancers do lunch, 27 August**

The next freelancers' lunch will be held at Jan's Cafe, Crown Gardens, 63 Crown Street Woolloomooloo, at noon on Thursday, 27 August. Mains cost about \$10 to \$14. The cafe is two blocks down from William Street. Buses 324, 325, 326 and 327 for William Street leave the city frequently.

The society organises these informal freelancers' lunches every second month or so. The invitation to lunch is cordially extended to other freelancers who work in the publishing industry.

There is no need to RSVP. See you there!

## **Indigenous Literacy Day, 2 September**

The Indigenous Literacy Project (ILP) is a partnership between the Australian Book Industry and The Fred Hollows Foundation that raises funds to purchase and supply books and other culturally appropriate material to remote communities where The Foundation works. The third Indigenous Literacy Day will be held on Wednesday, 2 September 2009. On that day participating bookshops, publishers and businesses will donate a percentage of their sales (or make a donation) while schools hold fundraising activities.

## **Asialink residencies, closing date 4 September**

Applications for the 2010 Asialink arts residencies close on 4 September. The Asialink Residency Program provides a grant of up to \$12,000 towards travel, living and project expenses. Residencies will be offered to writers of all genres to further professional development and bilateral engagement in Asia. For more information about requirements visit <[www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/](http://www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/)>.

## **History Week, 5 to 13 September**

History Week showcases the rich, diverse history being produced by organisations and individuals across the state. During History Week, various

institutions across NSW open their doors to present the latest in historical research and fascinating stories about our past. To view the full program of more than 200 events visit <[www.historycouncilnsw.org.au/](http://www.historycouncilnsw.org.au/)>.

## **Tom Frame in conversation with Larry Buttrose, Tuesday, 8 September**

Larry Buttrose, who spoke at our August meeting, will talk with author Tom Frame about his recent book *Losing My Religion: Unbelief in Australia* at Gleebooks on 8 September from 6.30 p.m. Details and bookings at <[www.gleebooks.com.au/](http://www.gleebooks.com.au/)>.

## **Galley Club AGM, 9 September**

The Galley Club of Sydney will hold its Annual General Meeting on 9 September, from 6.30 p.m. at The Harbour View Hotel, Lower Fort Street, The Rocks

The Galley Club is a volunteer-run industry group, catering to people in publishing, production and printing. Please contact <[president@galleyclubsydney.com.au](mailto:president@galleyclubsydney.com.au)> for more information or if you would like to submit your nomination for any of the open positions.

## **Brisbane Writers Festival, 9 to 13 September**

Details of the program for 2009 are now available on the festival website at <[www.brisbanewritersfestival.com.au/](http://www.brisbanewritersfestival.com.au/)>.

## **Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers Conference, 15 to 17 October, Sydney**

The 2009 conference of the ANZ Society of Indexers will be held at the Citigate Central Hotel, 169–179 Thomas Street, Sydney, with the theme 'The Practice of Indexing'. The conference will concentrate on practical, 'how to' aspects of indexing. The organisers

wish to encourage new indexers and people interested in indexing to attend. Special information sessions will be arranged for people new to indexing. Conference information and updates can be viewed at <[www.anzsi.org/site/2009\\_Conf\\_news.asp](http://www.anzsi.org/site/2009_Conf_news.asp)>.

## **PLAIN Conference, 15 to 17 October, Sydney**

The PLAIN Language Association International (PLAIN) is holding its seventh biennial conference in Sydney from 15 to 17 October 2009. The conference, with the theme 'Raising the Standard', will be hosted by the Plain English Foundation. Details are available at <[www.plainenglishfoundation.com/](http://www.plainenglishfoundation.com/)>.

## **BELS exam, 7 October, Adelaide**

The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) will hold an exam on the afternoon of 7 October 2009, in conjunction with the National Editors Conference in Adelaide. The exam will be held at the SA Writers' Centre.

BELS was founded in 1991 to evaluate the proficiency of manuscript editors in the life sciences and to award credentials similar to those obtainable in other professions.

The certification exam is a three hour multiple-choice test of scientific editing in English. It resembles the standard tests used in many professions to certify practitioners. The program is designed to assure employers or clients of editors that a Board-certified editor has established a high level of credibility. Editors who successfully complete the certification examination may use the designation ELS (Editor in the Life Sciences) after their names.

For more information on applying for candidacy and registering for the examination, please visit the BELS website at <[www.bels.org/](http://www.bels.org/)>.

## **Frankfurt Book Fair, 14 to 18 October**

The website for information about the fair is <[www.buchmesse.de/en/fbf/](http://www.buchmesse.de/en/fbf/)>.



## Ubud Writers and Readers Festival, Bali, 7 to 11 October

Details of the festival and tickets are available from the website <[www.ubudwritersfestival.com/](http://www.ubudwritersfestival.com/)>.



**Follow the Society of Editors (NSW) on Twitter:**

**<http://twitter.com/SocEdNSW>**

**Copy deadline for the October issue of**

*Blue Pencil*

**Tuesday, 8 September 2009**

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007; Voicemail: (02) 9294 4999  
<[www.editorsnsw.com](http://www.editorsnsw.com)>.

### **Blue Pencil**

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Assistants: Moira Elliott, Catherine Etteridge, Lachlan Jobbins, Julie Harders and Nicky Shortridge.

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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 the Editor at <[bluepencil@editorsnsw.com](mailto:bluepencil@editorsnsw.com)>.

**Copy deadline for the October issue is Tuesday, 8 September 2009.**

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

### **Advertising rates**

Full page, \$375; half page, \$200 (horizontal only); one-third page, \$125 (vertical or horizontal); quarter page \$100 (horizontal only); one-sixth page, \$75 (half of one column). Inserts: \$200 per hundred for DL-sized or A4 pre-folded to DL size. Circulation: approximately 400. Please note that the committee reserves the right to decide whether advertisements are appropriate for this newsletter.

### **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 is available in different categories.

Membership runs for a calendar year. The 2009 fees are \$70 for ordinary member or professional member renewals; \$75 for new professional members (\$45 if joining after 30 June); \$50 for associate member renewals or \$55 for new associate members. Interested organisations can become corporate associates for \$400 per year.

To obtain a membership application form go to the Society of Editors (NSW) website <[www.editorsnsw.com](http://www.editorsnsw.com)>, phone 02 9294 4999 or write to PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007.

### **Listing in the *Editorial Services Directory***

The society's *Editorial Services Directory* is available online at <[www.editorsnsw.com/esd](http://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 available from Cathy Gray at <[esd@editorsnsw.com](mailto:esd@editorsnsw.com)>.

### **Committee meetings**

All members are welcome to attend the society's committee meetings, generally held on the second Tuesday of each month. Please contact a committee member for details if you wish to attend the next meeting.

## 2009 COMMITTEE

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### Regional members

Regional members living more than 200 km from Sydney may receive a 40 per cent discount on the cost of the society's workshops (excluding computer-based workshops).

## Professional development

**Successful Proofreading**

**Date:** Thursday, 10 September 2009

**Time:** 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

**Presenter:** Meryl Potter

**Venue:** City Tattersalls Club, 198 Pitt Street, Sydney

**Cost:** \$195 for Society members, \$290 for non-members

This practical, interactive workshop covers proofreading from first pages to printer's proofs. It explores the different demands of proofreading at each stage of the publishing process. Cost includes lunch and refreshments. Please register by Thursday, 20 August 2009.

**Copy Editing—Getting Started REPEAT WORKSHOP**

**Date:** Thursday, 17 September 2009

**Time:** 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

**Presenter:** Meryl Potter

**Venue:** City Tattersalls Club, 198 Pitt Street, Sydney

**Cost:** \$195 for Society members, \$290 for non-members

This interactive workshop looks at the skills copy editors need and their role in the publication process—from book publishing to the corporate world. While this course assumes no previous knowledge, participants might find it useful as a refresher or to help prepare for the accreditation exam. Cost includes lunch and refreshments. Please register by Thursday, 27 August 2009.

**Manuscript Assessment and Reader Reports**

**Date:** To be advised

**Plain English**

**Date:** To be advised

### 2011 National Editors Conference, Sydney

The conference committee has made great progress in the past few months and we will be delighted to announce the 2011 conference theme and venue details at the Adelaide conference in October 2009.

In the meantime, save the dates:  
**7 to 9 September 2011.**

Catherine Etteridge  
Conference Convenor

To register for workshops use the enclosed form or download one from the website. Please note that workshops require a minimum of 10 registrations by the closing date to go ahead.

For more information about the workshops, email Meryl Potter at <education@editorsnsw.com>.