

# Blue Pencil

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW)  
ISSN 1030-2557

May 1989

---

## Next meeting 7 June 1989

The speaker at the next meeting of the Society of Editors, on Wednesday 7 June, will be Barbara Mobbs.

Barbara Mobbs is a distinguished and respected literary agent, well-established in Australian publishing. She has been responsible for publishing a number of successful Australian books including Peter Stirling's *So Different*.

Barbara will speak about the role of a literary agent and the way in which editors, together with authors and their literary agents, work together.

We look forward to hearing Barbara talk and hope you can join us at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli, on 7 June 1989 at 7.30 pm. Wine, soft drinks and eats will be served at a cost of \$3 if you ring and book by Tuesday 6 June and \$5 if you turn up without booking.

RSVP by telephoning Shirley Jones on (02) 86 3927. Please leave a message with her answering service if she is not in.

## Last meeting – Kirsty Melville

Guest speaker at our last meeting at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre was Kirsty Melville, publisher at Simon & Schuster.

In May 1987, Simon & Schuster, the world's largest publishing group, established a division in Australia. Previously employed by Doubleday, Kirsty undertook the responsibility of creating an Australian list for Simon & Schuster.

Most multinationals in Australia buy in their books and act as a distribution house for the parent companies. Prior to 1987, Prentice-Hall had acted as distributor for

Simon & Schuster's American and British titles. Once the decision was made to establish an Australian division, a total commitment to Australian publishing became evident – buy-ins and adaptations were not to become the backbone of the list.

Kirsty found that commissioning the right books was a gamble and at the same time an incredible challenge. To break into the market, the family was selected as a target. As there are five million homes in Australia, a shotgun approach to the target was considered a good bet.

Kirsty's abilities as a publisher became

---

quickly evident. In just two years she has had four best sellers, including *Babies* by Dr Christopher Green, *Baby Boomers* by Helen Townsend, *The Australian Country Diary*, and Jenny Kee's *Winter Knits*.

These best sellers are examples of successfully combining idea and author. With *Babies*, for example, Christopher Green was already a successful author, having published *Toddler Taming*. By approaching him with the idea for *Babies*, and offering him lots of money, he was lured away from another publisher.

In their first year Simon & Schuster published a couple of buy-ins. In the second year 30 titles were published and this year, 50 titles are scheduled. The creation of a backlist helps to generate future sales.

A general trade publisher, Simon & Schuster aims to publish for the international market wherever possible.

Packages are sometimes bought and co-publishing is considered, but books are basically commissioned from ideas. Publishing has everything to do with marketing and the market determines the style.

Although fortunate in being able to ride on the back of an American parent company, in some respects having such a large and important relation sometimes made it difficult for Simon & Schuster Australia to establish its own corporate identity. On the one hand, an established parent meant introductions throughout the book world, thus avoiding a lot of problems that inhibit unknown publishers. On the other hand, trying to distance the Australian division as an independent identity was fraught with misunderstandings. Kirsty related an incident at the Frankfurt Book Fair when she was mistaken for the Simon & Schuster

**Society of Editors (NSW), PO Box 254, Broadway 2007  
Committee 1989**

Kim Anderson (President). Ph 406 9222 (Weldon-Hardie) or 969 6853 (Impresa)

Anne Sahlin (Treasurer). Ph 660 2425 (freelance)

Christine Mackinnon (Minutes). Ph 419 6867 (freelance)

Jeane Balcombe (Newsletter). Ph 212 4600 (Community Child Care) or 713 9696

Jill Wilson (Catering). Ph 439 3307 (freelance)

Sue Butler (Library). Ph 805 9810 (Macquarie Dictionary)

Michael Wyatt. Ph 699 9491 (Keyword Editorial Services)

Ken McGuire (Freelance Register). Ph 449 4255 or 44 6192

Copyright 1989 by *Blue Pencil* and individual contributors. Reproduction in whole or in part is permitted if acknowledgement is made to *Blue Pencil*. Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor and views expressed by the editor are not necessarily those of the Society.

*Blue Pencil* is published irregularly by the Society of Editors (NSW). Typesetting and layout are done on an Apple Macintosh computer by The Creative Computer Company, 117 York Street, Sydney. Printing is done by The Paper Plate, St. Martins Tower, Sydney.

U.S. publisher's secretary!

Although the American parent is kept informed of publishing projects in their Australian division, it exerts no control over publishing proposals. It insists that the company line be toed as far as public relations, logos and other corporate matters are concerned, but otherwise the Australian division is on its own. All it needs to do is make money!

Kirsty values the close co-operation that has developed among the staff at Simon & Schuster. At first she worked alone, establishing office systems and working routines, writing a style manual for freelancers and, as well, commissioning books, acting as production manager and negotiating foreign rights. Kirsty's enthusiasm belies the hard work, long hours and professional isolation inherent in such a daunting task.

Prentice-Hall, also part of the Simon & Schuster group, situated across the road in more stylish premises, handled fax, photocopying and warehouse facilities. Poor office conditions had to be endured until Simon & Schuster, with their own list to support their overheads, could afford to move to better premises.

Having started from scratch, doing all the work herself, Kirsty is now in a position to employ more editorial staff. Editors are totally involved in all aspects of production and, because it is a small company, decision making is immediate and office activity non-stop.

Even though successful in her initial aims, Kirsty is moving on to explore other avenues. This year she is publishing a previously unknown fiction author. A vital and inspiring person, Kirsty's initial zeal has certainly not waned.

**Christine Mackinnon**

## Editing in Australia conference

The "Editing in Australia" conference, organised by the English Department, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra was held between 27 and 30 April 1989. Over 80 people attended.

In spite of the general title, the conference was organised by and directed at scholars working on texts from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. The purpose of the papers was to discuss the process of finding as many extra pieces of material relevant to the specific texts as possible, and examine how this information is collated and added to, and how it sometimes alters the original known text.

Of the twelve scholarly papers presented in the first one and a half days, only one touched on the complications and vicissitudes of preparing material for publication. Mary Jane Edwards of Ottawa, the general editor of Early Canadian Texts, gave a practical working paper on funding, collecting manuscripts, editorial procedure and publication. Only one hour was given to Philippe Tangi (Angus & Robertson/Collins), Craig Munro (University of Queensland Press) and John Curtain (Penguin).

Other publishing houses that sent representatives were the Australian Government Printing Service, Flora of Australia, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Oxford University Press, Deakin University Education Publications and myself as a freelance editor working for seven publishing houses. All of us hoped we were going to be informed of the latest attitudes, developments and needs in the publishing world. Unfortunately, this was not to be.

The scholars, it transpired, believe that house editors are sometimes responsible for "corruption", editorial interference and non-recognition of "authorial autonomy", and can alter the intent of the author. Editors in-house are seen as "commercial editors". Tangi and Munro were quick to point out that editors in-house are professional editors who are often restricted by the author's unwillingness to negotiate or collaborate with the publisher/ editor to produce a marketable product.

The scholarly editors stated that they are interested in the *process* of textual modification/alteration and the use of apparatus, and see the "commercial" editors as concerned with the *product*. From this statement comes the question, who is the client in the publishing house? The author or the public?

From this conference it is evident that there is a breakdown in communication between scholarly editors and editors in-house. When I told one academic that "scholarly editing" can also be understood as the editing of academic works his reply was, "How extraordinary!"

I must add that many publishing house representatives found the papers on James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*, "The Editing of Restoration Scriptorial Satire" and "Medieval to early nineteenth century editing" of little relevance to their day-to-day editing procedures and the application of new technology to publishing. The computer workshop was directed to the scholars and focused on how they could include their special textual material and apparatus. Several editors who had enrolled for that workshop pulled out because only a short program in the afternoon was relevant to general publishing.

The general feeling at the conference was that scholars would prefer not to have anything to do with editors in-house and use publishers merely for the distribution of their works.

**Robin Appleton**

## Report of Australian Society of Indexers meeting

A meeting of New South Wales members of the Australian Society of Indexers was held at the State Library of New South Wales on 26 April 1989. The meeting was chaired by Michael Wyatt and began with a talk by Ann Hall entitled "How I make a good living out of indexing".

The meeting then discussed whether there was a need for a New South Wales branch and, if there was, what form it should take, and what activities it should organise.

There was interest in the formation of a branch and it was decided by general consensus that some formal structure was appropriate. Five committee members were selected by nomination or by volunteering. They are Michael Wyatt, Gary Cousins, Carolyn Kearney, Alan Walker and Glenda Browne.

It was decided that the branch would have about three meetings per year and that these would include speakers, workshops, panel discussions (including problem-solving sessions) and group discussions, with short formal sessions included where necessary.

The branch will announce and report meetings in the AUSSI Newsletter, and will include a questionnaire in the newsletter to find out what interests members have.

## ***Images of Love and Religion***

This new book by Erica Veevers (sister of our very own ex-minute taker, Josephine Bastian) looks at the court of Charles I from the standpoint of its French queen, Henrietta Maria. It establishes the religious background of the queen's fashions of preciousness and Platonic love, linking them with her Catholicism and showing for the first time the importance of this new connection at the English court.

Published by Cambridge University Press, the book is currently available at the discount price of \$99. Contact CUP in Melbourne (Ph 03 568 0322) for further information on how to obtain a copy.



## **Library – recent acquisitions**

The Society has recently received the following publications:

*Fellowship of Australian Writers (NSW) Members' Bulletin* April-May 1989

*The Australian Society of Authors Newsletter* April 1989. This includes a discussion on the public lending right scheme and the cataloguing of paperbacks, and information on literary awards, including the Whitley Awards for zoological publications (unfortunately this arrived too late for Society members to submit entries, but they have been asked to tell us directly next time).

*Scholarly Publishing* Vol. 20 No. 1 October 1988. This includes:

“Science and the information society” by Bernard Dixon

“Publishers’ and librarians’ views on copyright and photocopying” by Paul Gleason

“On the differences of dictionaries” by Herbert C. Morton

“Publishing in libraries” by David Way

“A dictionary of Irish biography” by Aidan Duggan

“Is justice blind? An inquiry into peer review” by Michael McGiffert

“The electronic journal” by Daniel Eisenberg

*SBC News* (April/May 1989) with an insert called *SBC In House*, which has two very useful articles:

“The high cost of gobbledegook or the benefits of plain talk”, the text of a talk given by Robert Eagleson to an SBC lunch, and “The big squeeze” by Colin Wheildon, who also wrote *Communicating or just making pretty shapes* (which is also in the Society’s library). This paper is about his research on the readability of expanded and contracted type.

The latest issue of *The Editorial Eye* has articles on improving copy using speech writing techniques and creating long documents in Ventura, and the second part of an excellent contribution by Bruce Boston on editing logically.

Please note that in the list of library holdings published in the April *Blue Pencil*, the entry for *Scholarly Publishing* should have read 1982-1988, not 1982-1984. Since then we have also received the January 1989 issue.

If you would like to borrow or receive photocopies of any of these publications, please ring Juliet Richters on (02) 692 4390.



## Freelance Register entries 1989/90

Remember, the deadline for the receipt of entries is on or before Wednesday 5 July 1989.

This is a last reminder!

Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for entry forms to:

Ken McGuire  
Freelance Register  
126 The Comenarra Parkway  
Turrumurra NSW 2074  
Ph: 44 6192 or 449 4255



## Galley Club conference

The Galley Club of Sydney's 1989 conference will be held from 27 to 29 October at Leura Resort in the Blue Mountains.

"People, Craft, Technology: Can Publishing still be a 'Gentleman's Occupation'?" will explore aspects of publishing as a cottage industry through to satellite publishing, with the emphasis on the integration of skills old and new.

Enquiries to Avril Kinkela (02) 550 0366 or Linda Williams (02) 552 1720.

Society of Editors members please note, if you wish to announce events in the Galley Club's newsletter, please telephone the editor, Millicent Chalmers, on (02) 550 0366, FAX 550 9405 (the company is Anstat).

## USA conference

Anyone going to North America in September might be interested in "Editing into the Nineties", a conference arranged jointly by the Council of Biology Editors, the Association of Earth Science Editors and the European Association of Science Editors. Sessions include: creating an in-house style manual, scientific editing and the Third World, popularisation of science, copyright law and publishing, elements of journal design, and the freelancing editor.

It is being held from 10 to 14 September in Ottawa. Ring Juliet Richters on (02) 692 4390 if you would like to see the program.

## Seminar – Middle management skills in book publishing

This seminar will be held in Sydney on Tuesday 13 June and in Melbourne on Thursday 29 June. The cost is \$230 for Australian Book Publishers Association members (and anyone whose form is signed by an ABPA member employee) and \$280 for non-members, or \$200 and \$250 respectively if paid before 31 May.

For further information please contact Judy Vago on (02) 29 5422.

---

# MENT • IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT • IMPORT

---

## Proposed amendment to the constitution of the Society of Editors (NSW)

The Society of Editors (NSW) committee believes that membership of the society should be open to people who are interested in promoting the purposes of the Society, whether or not they are strictly speaking book editors. The committee believes there is a place for journal and magazine editors, script editors and people who in their occupation act in a general editorial capacity.

The committee, therefore, would like to amend Clause 4 of the Constitution, which currently states the following:

4. Membership of this organisation is open to:
  - (a) Any employee/employer who is engaged full or part-time in any aspect of book editing;
  - (b) any self-employed book editor;
  - (c) any former editor in either of the above categories.

## The committee proposes the following amendment:

4. Membership of this organisation is open to:
  - (a) Any person who is engaged full or part-time in editing;
  - (b) Any person interested in promoting the purposes of the Society of Editors (NSW).

The purposes of the Society of Editors are outlined in Clause 2, which currently states the following:

2. The purpose of this organisation shall be: to maintain and develop standards of editorial skills; to hold meetings,

the purpose of which is to discuss subjects of particular interest to book editors; to promote the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas among book editors.

## The committee proposes that the term "book editors" be replaced by "print editors" in this clause.

Members will be able to vote on the proposed changes at the general meeting on Wednesday 5 July 1989 at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre at 7.30 pm. As one third of the membership is required to constitute a quorum to vote on any change to the constitution, we urge members to attend this meeting, or, if you are unable to attend, to assign proxy to any committee member or other member of the Society of Editors (NSW). A proxy form is enclosed with this newsletter.

If you have any questions about the proposed changes, or you would like to discuss the proposed changes, please feel free to contact any of the committee members.

## Future meetings

Please note that the July meeting of the Society of Editors will be held on Wednesday 5 July and the August meeting, on Wednesday 2 August.

## Copy deadline

The deadline for contributions to the next (June) *Blue Pencil* is Friday 9 June.

This Newsletter is produced using Apple  
Macintosh – Desktop Publishing system.  
The printing of this Newsletter is also done  
inhouse within the same company.

*For all your typesetting, printing  
and graphic requirements.*

**The Creative Computer Company**

117 York Street SYDNEY 2000

Tel: (02) 261 1611; Fax: (02) 264 7161

*Contributions Welcome*

*Send letters, articles, reviews or cartoons  
about editing and publishing to:*

*Blue Pencil  
58 Rickard Street  
Five Dock NSW 2046.*

