

If you experience difficulty viewing this message, you can [view it online here](#).



NEWSLETTER

Volume 39 Number 11, December 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

December dinner meeting - book now!
 accrEDITed
 November dinner meeting report
 Outstanding Service Awards - November 2009
 IPEd notes
 The digital revolution: Publishing in the 21st century
 The last freelance lunch for 2009: a report
 Permissions & clearances guide
 RMIT's celebrated writing course turns 21
 The Wheeler Centre is launched
 Book review: L2Es and Oscar Brittle
 2009-10 Freelance Register
 Fancy organising a freelance lunch?
 VWC news
 Dear Ed ...
 Dates for your diary
 Newsletter news and season's greetings
 Membership matters
 Changing of the guard
 Apology

CONTACT DETAILS

PO Box 176
 Carlton South VIC 3053

Email: newsletter@socedvic.org
 Web: www.socedvic.org

Dates for your diary

Next dinner meeting

Silly Season dinner meeting
 Wednesday, 16 December 2009

Book towns and writers' festivals seminar

Thursday, 10 December 2009, 5.45–7.15 pm

Summer school: Editing & proofreading workshop

Tuesday, 19 January 2010, 10am–4pm

Digital Revolution, Melbourne

Monday, 15 February 2010

December dinner meeting - book now!

December (Silly Season) dinner meeting

Wednesday, 16 December, 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm

Lanai Bar

**113 Queen St (cnr Little Collins St), City
 (car parking on site, kerbside, or near Queen Victoria Market)**

Come along for some fun and merriment with fellow Society of Editors members, with a buffet dinner and complementary wine. Back by popular demand – our literature-themed trivia quiz!

PLEASE NOTE BOOKING DETAILS FOR DINNER MEETINGS

- Book with Lu Sexton at bookings@socedvic.org by 5.00 pm on Monday, 14 December.
- State if you are a Soc Eds member, or a member of VWC, ASTC, ANZSI, APA, or a student.
- Please state if you are a vegetarian.
- Cost: \$25 members, \$20 students, \$30 non-members. (Pay cash or cheque on the night; no credit card facilities available.)
- If you need to cancel, please contact Lu as soon as possible.
- If you cancel after 7.00 pm on the day before the meeting, Lu will contact you and ask you to pay as if you had attended.
- People who arrive on the night without a booking will be unable to attend.

Newsletter news and season's greetings



This is the final newsletter of 2009. The Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members a happy and healthy festive season and all the best for the year ahead.

You can still send in your comments, contributions and suggestions during the break and they will be kept in the newsletter vault until 2010. We look forward to continuing to provide you with the latest Soceds action from February.

accrEDITed

Report on the 2009 IPEd accreditation exam

The Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) held its second accreditation exam on 12 September 2009. Of the 85 candidates who sat the exam, 43 passed. IPEd congratulates all successful candidates and welcomes them to the community of Accredited Editors.

Overview of 2009 candidates

Just over half (51%) of the candidates sat the exam in Melbourne (23 candidates) and Canberra (21). Numbers for the other centres were Perth (13), Sydney (10), Brisbane (8), Adelaide (6) and Hobart (4). Seventy-two candidates (84%) were members of a state society of editors.

Seventy-seven candidates (91%) sat the exam for the first time. At registration, 80% of candidates provided some information about themselves. Of these, 50% reported that they had six or more years working as an editor; 14% had only one to two years' experience. Of the candidates who provided information about their area of editorial practice, 49% described themselves as generalists and 51% as specialists.

As the pass rate of 51% for the 2009 exam is significantly lower than the 2008 rate of 66%, the Accreditation Board is working to determine whether the result relates to any particular characteristics of the 2009 candidates.

Feedback from 2009 candidates

IPEd undertook a formal feedback process after the 2009 exam and received a response from 40% of candidates. Time allowed for the exam was a concern for some. However, many candidates also recognised – and agreed – that the bar is set high. IPEd and its Accreditation Board endeavour to respond to candidates' concerns while also meeting their responsibility to ensure an equitable, consistent and fair, yet rigorous, assessment of editors' knowledge and skills.

Parity of 2008 and 2009 exams

As in 2008, the exam was developed by a team of Distinguished Editors and Accredited Editors appointed by IPEd. Key positions are advertised and remunerated.

The Accreditation Board is confident that the 2009 exam was closely comparable to the 2008 exam, as a result of steps taken during the development and marking processes.

In response to feedback from candidates in 2008, the board modified the 2009 exam to allow additional reading time, and directed the exam development team to reduce the length of the copyediting extract in Part 2. The copyediting extract, author queries sheet and one question in Part 3 were provided as loose pages in response to difficulties candidates reported with the layout of the 2008 exam.

A significant development in 2009 was the institution of a trialling phase. Six Accredited Editors, who passed the exam in 2008, sat (and passed) the 2009 exam under test conditions. Their papers were marked and their results, as well as their detailed feedback, informed the finalisation of the exam by the development team.

Marking and moderation process

As in 2008, candidates' papers were marked by a team of Distinguished Editors drawn from the Assessors Forum. The 2009 markers met in Adelaide after the exam to begin marking papers. They discussed the varied approaches of candidates to each question, and worked to extend the marking guide to accommodate this while maintaining consistency across the whole group. Everything possible was done to ensure the utmost fairness to candidates. The weekend meeting was followed by several weeks of email correspondence on specific points as marking proceeded.

The Moderation Committee then reviewed the overall results. Exam papers that were borderline were re-marked by different markers to ensure an accurate and consistent assessment. Comparisons of papers marked independently by two or more markers showed extremely close agreement

*Jackey and Rachel
Newsletter coeditors*

Membership matters

SocEds welcomes as full members Kellie Abbott and Peter Douglas (distant). New associate members are Mi Fon Lew, Camille Cain and Shane Russell. We hope you find your membership valuable and enjoyable.

*Ron Thiele
Membership Secretary*

Changing of the guard

A congratulations to our very own Rosemary Noble who has been elected as IPEd chair until the next AGM. We know she'll do a great job.

Apology

The Society of Editors (Vic.) apologises to Wendy McCarthy for referring to her as Mary McCarthy in last month's *Newsletter*. The inspiring conference speaker was in fact Wendy, not Mary.

Advertising

For advertising rates and enquiries, please contact us [here](#).

PDF of this newsletter

Download a [PDF copy of this newsletter here](#).

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

THE COMMITTEE

(sometimes to a fraction of a percentage point) among markers.

During the entire marking and moderation process, all papers were identified only by the candidate reference number to ensure that candidates' confidentiality was protected at all times. Candidates who fail the exam receive a brief report from the examiner on their performance and areas of weakness to help them plan their next steps towards future accreditation.

Next accreditation exam

The Accreditation Board is working towards providing an onscreen accreditation exam, and has started planning for the next exam, which it expects to hold in 2011. As part of its planning, the board will be looking closely at candidates' feedback and the results from the exam.

IPEd Accreditation Board

TOP

November dinner meeting report

November's dinner meeting had a twofold purpose: besides featuring that month's guest speaker, it served as the Victorian book launch for *Editors in Conversation 2*, the second book published under the auspices of the Occasional Series on Australian Editors (OSAE).

The EIC2 launch was kicked off by a speech from Bryony Cosgrove, an editor and lecturer with over 25 years of editorial experience and a winner of the Fellowship of Australian Writers Barbara Ramsden Award. Bryony pointed out the appropriateness of the title, as editing 'is indeed a form of conversation with authors', and hailed the editors featured in the book – Nick Hudson, Basil Walby, Ruth Dixon, Jackie Yowell, Janette Whelan, Barbara Ker Wilson, Colin Jevons, Teresa Pitt and Julie Watts (several of whom are Honorary Life Members in the Society) – as representing the best of Australian trade and academic editing.

Each of them, Bryony noted, has contributed much to both their craft and the publishing industry through their teaching, mentoring, committee work and presentations at conferences, workshops and writers festivals, and all have in common those personality traits that are the mark of a true editor: 'a willingness to turn a hand to almost anything, driven by a love of words and pursuit of perfection'. She then regaled the audience with personal anecdotes of the editors interviewed for the book, many of whom she has worked with at some point over the past three decades.

Nick Hudson, author of *Modern Australian usage*, is famous for his grammar lecture at RMIT's editing program, wherein he debates Fowler's rules on relative pronouns, sings the praises of collective nouns and despairs at the confusion between 'may' and 'might'. Basil Walby was instrumental in getting RMIT to offer a formal training program in editing in the first place, and was also behind the suggestion that the Society of Editors offer a prize for that program's top student.

Like many editors, Ruth Dixon loves not only words but typefaces, too; unlike the rest of us, she's had the pleasure of working in London with the designer who created the typeface Albertus. Her co-interviewee Jackie Yowell gave Bryony her first job at Penguin in 1981, and was universally loved there by authors, agents, editors and – 'the true test of one's worth' – even the design department.

Bryony praised Janette Whelan for pointing out how important it is for editors to be widely read and to have sufficient life experience, as well as to have a good understanding of the entire publishing process and the role of other departments. Bryony was a trainee editor working in 1979 under Barbara Ker Wilson, who prepared an annual children's calendar with a bunyip as the main character; Bryony's job was to 'be the bunyip' and reply to all the children's letters that came in. Barbara was also the inaugural president of the NSW Society of Editors, and it wasn't until Bryony had read *EIC2* that she realised that Barbara did all the cooking for the meetings she had attended!

Colin Jevons originally attained a science degree and got into the profession somewhat by accident, starting off as a publisher's sales rep before being

convinced to give editing a try; Bryony remarked that versatility like his was a 'hallmark of the talented editor'. Teresa Pitt, who 'knows where a lot of the bodies are buried' (figuratively, we trust), has long been an advocate for professional recognition and decent salaries for editors, once locking horns with a young Malcolm Turnbull in his capacity as Kerry Packer's lawyer at ACP.

Julie Watts also worked at Penguin in 1981, where she was well known for her warmth and compassion. Julie championed *Mao's last dancer*, the autobiography of international ballet star Li Cunxin, from bullet-point synopsis to award-winning bestseller, children's book and feature film.

Last but not least, Bryony acknowledged all the hard work put in by the OSAE committee members who produced the book: Kerry Biram, Di Brown, Jenny Craig and Wendy Owen. (Information on purchasing your own copy of *Editors in conversation 2* will be on SocEds' website soon.)

After dinner we moved on to the future of Australian editing with a talk by Bel Monypenny, the editor of *Voiceworks*, a quarterly, national literary magazine dedicated to publishing the work of writers under 25. Bel made her way into editing the old-fashioned way, doing work experience at Allen & Unwin and an internship at *Sleepers* as a manuscript coordinator, then becoming a publishing assistant at Cengage by day and a member of the *Voiceworks* editorial committee and a freelancer for Allen & Unwin by night. Along the way she volunteered for as many editorial and writing opportunities as she could. She began her job as *Voiceworks* editor in March of this year, and is also currently enrolled in RMIT's editing program (where she greatly enjoyed Nick Hudson's grammar lecture).

She praised *Voiceworks*, now in its 21st year, and its publisher, Express Media (funded by Arts Victoria), for giving young Australian authors the chance to get their first professional publication – not to mention payment for their work – and, importantly, for giving constructive feedback to every writer who submits to them, whether their work is chosen or not. Bel said it's an exciting time for Express Media, which recently moved offices into the Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas (now renamed the Wheeler Centre), and she has a vision for *Voiceworks* to move up to 'the next level': she hopes to help it turn into a top-quality literary journal that will serve as a bridge between student/self-published magazines and 'the big kids' such as *Meanjin*, *Overland* etc. She also wants to make sure that young readers are cultivated as much as young writers, and to that end has set up reading groups for under-18s.

Regarding the continual hand-wringing about the changing roles of the editor today, Bel pointed out that every industry faces changes in the digital era, and feels that publishing is finally getting past 'the fear of the electronic'; editors, like everyone else, will need to be adaptable and, she hopes, will look forward to the new and exciting doors opening in the publishing industry's future. Melbourne's literary scene is flourishing, she noted, and she feels very lucky indeed to have a role in helping guide its future writers at *Voiceworks*.

Ali Lemer





Photos courtesy of Kerry Biram.
View more photos [here](#).

TOP

Outstanding Service Awards - November 2009

The following is the transcript of Soc Eds' President Melanie Dankel's speech at the November dinner meeting, when she presented the Outstanding Service Award to Diane Brown, Kerry Biram and Jenny Craig for their contribution to the Society.

As president of the Society of Editors Victoria I have great pleasure in announcing that Diane Brown, Kerry Biram and Jenny Craig are tonight each being presented with the society's Outstanding Service Award.

This award, made on behalf of the society's committee and members, is bestowed on those the committee agrees have made a major contribution to the works of the society and the editing profession in general. Since Diane established the Occasional Series on Australian Editors working group in 2004, Diane, Kerry and Jenny have worked extremely hard to document the editing history of honorary life members of societies of editors across Australia. In doing so they have made sure such collective knowledge and expertise is recorded and archived for the benefit of all interested in the history of editing and publishing in Australia.

The task has been enormous and time consuming. The finished products not only consist of two wonderful books of interviews and anecdotes with invaluable information for all of us engaged in the business of editing, but the Occasional Series working group has also organised archival print, photo and audio material for the Manuscripts Collection at the State Library of Victoria, and have liaised with the library's Manuscripts Librarian and SLV Digital Preservation Specialist to facilitate archival deposits of all this important work.

I can't imagine how many hours have been collectively spent on this project over the last five years! As well as organising and overseeing all interviews and transcripts, Diane, Kerry and Jenny have worked through the difficulties of funding for the project, contracts, copyright and printing, cover design, typesetting, indexing, sales and marketing, publicity for the project, and planning book launches such as this one and those associated with the national conferences in Adelaide and Tasmania. This wonderful team has also given the society meticulous records of all its activities with detailed budgets and financial records.

While honouring Diane, Kerry and Jenny with these awards, I am sure they would think it remiss of me not to also acknowledge other people involved with the project at various stages, and they should be mentioned here –

Wendy Owen, a member of the group specifically associated with *Editors in Conversation 2*; Deborah Candy, Kate Indigo, Janet Mackenzie, Renée Otmar and Anitra Nelson associated with the first volume, *Editors in Conversation*, and Lan Wang for her support and typesetting expertise and her efforts in helping the group upload and maintain news of the working group and archival material on our website.

A special acknowledgement and thankyou should also be made at this time to Professor Wallace Kirsop, the former Director of the Centre for the Book, Monash University. Wallace and the centre have been great supporters and sponsors of this project since its inception, and the society is honoured to have had such support and to see you here tonight. And I know that the OSAE working group would also like me to take this opportunity to thank the presidents and committees of the other four state societies of editors who have helped to sponsor the two books: the Society of Editors (Tasmania), the Canberra Society of Editors, the Society of Editors (NSW) and the Society of Editors (Queensland).

Unfortunately with the launch of this book we are also seeing the retirement – so to speak – of these three outstanding members from this project. It is time for them to focus on other things. We should also wish you, Di, much success and happiness in your move from Victoria to South Australia – you will be missed. The OSAE subcommittee therefore is without members but it is not disbanded. If you are keen to continue the project the Victorian Society will support you.

Thank you, Diane, Kerry and Jenny for all your efforts and hard work in capturing so much of our important history for us to all learn from and enjoy.

Melanie Dankel
President - Society of Editors (Vic)

TOP

IPEd notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited

www.iped-editors.org

November 2009

What do editors want?

Following the IPEd plenary session at the national conference in Adelaide in October 2009, participants were asked to prioritise and comment on seven activities (detailed in the analysis below) that had been identified by the IPEd Council as areas of potential activity for the Institute. The activities were listed on a form headed 'What do editors want?' that respondents (there were 56) completed and dropped into the IPEd suggestion box at the conference desk.

Thanks are due to Rosemary Noble, the IPEd Councillor for the Society of Editors (Victoria), for the following analysis of responses.

A significant number of respondents urged IPEd to:

- find ways to ensure IPEd can act like a peak body (standardise membership criteria across the societies; involve the state societies more; work on getting a secure financial base; concentrate on just a few activities)
- get the accreditation scheme bedded down and develop the next portfolio stage (specific suggestions to the Accreditation Board included holding just one exam in one venue biennially).

In order of priority, the other activities identified were as follows (additional comments pertaining to those activities are shown in brackets):

1. Engaging in marketing/communications/promotion of editing (including promoting to corporations, businesses and agencies; providing an IPEd lapel badge for all members; starting up a national e-newsletter; promoting a members' blog on the website)
2. Coordinating professional development opportunities (including national mentoring system; recognising other pathways to success besides accreditation; developing a national register of training people and courses)

3. Continue to develop standards (including making sure the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* are up to date and inclusive of new technologies and areas of specialist interest)

The above three priorities ranked quite a bit higher than the following:

4. Establishing a national register of accredited editors
5. Accrediting tertiary courses
6. Providing employment brokerage information (some not sure what this meant; insurance deals; pay scales; developing templates for freelancers)
7. Fostering relationships with other like-minded groups – editors, writers, publishers, indexers, illustrators etc.

Other potential activities mentioned by just one or two delegates were:

- taking over the production of the next edition of the *Style Manual*
- developing awards and scholarships
- fostering special-interest groups.

The IPEd Council thanks all respondents for their contributions, which will inform its planning in the year ahead and beyond. To all editors and their families and friends, it extends its best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Ed Highley
Secretary

TOP

The digital revolution: Publishing in the 21st century

Publishing symposium in Australia, February 2010

The digital opportunities and challenges offered to the world of literature and publishing will be discussed at The digital revolution: Publishing in the 21st century symposium, presented by the Australia Council for the Arts in partnership with the Australian Publishers Association.

You are invited to join international industry leaders Richard Charkin (Bloomsbury Publishing), Stephen Page (Faber & Faber), Michael Tamblyn (Shortcovers for Indigo) and key Australian speakers including Elizabeth Weiss, Victoria Nash and Susan Hawthorne in a one-day symposium to discuss what digital technology means for the Australian publishing industry.

Registration is essential.

Monday, 15 February 2010, 8.15 am – 6.30 pm at the State Library of Victoria Conference Centre, Entry 3, Latrobe Street.

Included in the day's program is a networking drinks session to end the event.

To register, please download the Program/Registration form [here](#). We expect a strong response, so please don't delay. Limits per organisation may apply.

Travel, accommodation and registration assistance is available to regional and interstate small trade publishers on application. To apply please download the Award Application form [here](#) and submit to the APA by Friday, 11 December 2009. You must also register to attend the symposium.

TOP

The last freelance lunch for 2009: a report

On Tuesday, 24 November, from 12.30pm, some 22 of Melbourne's finest, fittest and freest freelancers gathered at The Fitz Cafe, in Brunswick St Fitzroy, and a good time was had by all.

The *maitre d'* of the room upstairs had arranged seating around five tables, and so we chatted and ate away merrily without disturbing others at other tables. Tables had a warm mixture of new and not-so-new members, and friendships started, continued and flourished famously.

Meals and drinks were charged to each table, and this proved satisfactory. Happily, this time there was not just the one bill for the one long and frightfully noisy table. Sadly, we all left at about the same time to return to work. Contentedly, we remembered a pleasant luncheon enjoyed among friends. We may well meet here again in 2010.

Bridh Hancock

TOP

Permissions & clearances guide

The Australian Copyright Council has published a practical guide for anyone responsible for getting copyright clearances – useful for people whose main role is seeking permissions, as well as those working on or producing short films, plays, publications or similar projects. It covers issues such as: when you need to seek permission; the sorts of rights you'll need to clear (e.g. moral rights as well as copyright); who to contact; streamlining the permissions process; and dealing with common obstacles. Cost: \$40. Order [here](#).

TOP

RMIT's celebrated writing course turns 21

The following is a press release about RMIT's Professional Writing and Editing program's 21st anniversary celebrations.

While the course has produced many professional and celebrated writers, it has also produced many editors who work in book and magazine publishing in the government, non-government and corporate sectors, and as freelancers. A number are members of the Society.

RMIT's Professional Writing and Editing (PWE) program has marked its 21st anniversary by hosting a large party at Trades Hall and publishing a commemorative Visible Ink anthology. This industry-connected TAFE course began in 1988 and has contributed enormously to Australian publishing, producing a host of celebrated writers, editors, publishers, designers, illustrators, festival directors and more.



Over 300 people attended the Trades Hall event on 17 November, including well-known alumni Toni Jordan, Chris Womersley, Carrie Tiffany, Ann James and Sofie Laguna. Ms Laguna, who was shortlisted for the 2009 Prime Minister's Literary Awards for her novel *One Foot Wrong*, officially launched the anthology.

Local publishers were also well represented, including Penguin Publishing Director Bob Sessions, Penguin publishers Ben Ball and Jane Goodwin, Associate Publisher at Text Penny Hueston, Hardie Grant senior editor Emma Schwarcz and Jodie Webster from Allen & Unwin.

Also present were PWE alumni from the Society of Editors (Vic.): Liz Steele, Philip Bryan, Meredith Butler, Kate Hawkins, and Penny Johnson, among others.

PWE graduates Louise Swinn and Zoe Dattner of Sleepers Publishing hosted the evening. Sleepers' first published novel *Things We Didn't See Coming* by

Steven Amsterdam won the 2009 Age Book of the Year award.

Ms Dattner referred to the ongoing debate about whether creative writing can or cannot be taught. She said, however, 'that one can certainly inspire someone to write, and this is the key to the Professional Writing and Editing course at RMIT. The culture of the place, the energy and enthusiasm of a bunch of people sharing a passion for writing, that is what is so unique to the course, and it is invaluable.'

For a gold-coin donation, partygoers received a commemorative volume, *XXI Visible Inks*, a selection from the 21 annual anthologies produced by RMIT students. This special 120-page edition showcases contributors such as M.J. Hyland, Judy Horacek, Carole Wilkinson, Myfanwy Jones, Simmone Howell, Jeff Sparrow, Caroline Lee and Sian Prior. The 2009 Visible Ink, *Lost and found*, is represented by emerging author Allyson Hose.

Steve Grimwade, Director of the Melbourne Writers Festival, said in his foreword that the PWE program opened his eyes to writing and editing opportunities he was unaware of. 'It helped harness my desire by giving me both skills and networks; it gave me the connections to support my various endeavours and the ability to sustain these links beyond the life of the course.'

XXI Visible Inks was selected and edited by a group of PWE students and typeset and published by Prolog RMIT Union Arts Writing Chapter, a publishing collective formed by PWE students in 2008.

Antoni Jach, who taught in the program for more than 10 years, spoke about its early days, while current PWE Program Manager Clare Renner spoke about its future.

Further information:

Ms Clare Renner
Programs Manager, Professional Writing and Editing and Screenwriting
0425 787 921 or clare.renner@rmit.edu.au

TOP

The Wheeler Centre is launched

Melbourne's Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas has been renamed as The Wheeler Centre: Books, Writing, Ideas.

This recognises what the Government calls 'a substantial donation' to the new Centre by two of Australia's most successful publishers, Tony and Maureen Wheeler, founders of the Melbourne-based Lonely Planet travel guides.

The Wheelers now devote much of their time to philanthropy through their foundation, Planet Wheeler. The amount of their endowment is not being disclosed.

On behalf of the society, liaison officer Tony Berry congratulated the centre on securing the Wheeler deal and gaining such prominent publicity for this initiative.

He also expressed the wish that the expanded opportunities the Wheeler support offers will see ample involvement of editors and editing in the centre's programming.

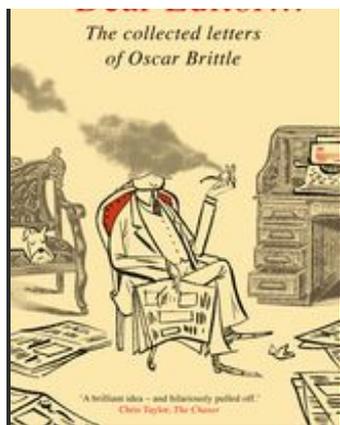
TOP

Book review: L2Es and Oscar Brittle

Dear Editor: The Collected Letters of Oscar Brittle
Glenn Fowler, Christopher Smyth, Gareth Malone
University of New South Wales Press 2009

Dear Editor...

Editorships, like editors, are many and varied. A few have an imposing title, such as Publication



Editor, or Receiver/Selector of Letters to the Editor. In this book we meet quite a few who are of the Receiver/Selector of Letters to the Editors variety, as they work for their journals and newspapers; and here we meet Oscar Brittle of Killara, NSW, a gentleman of advanced years and advancing energy as a public rouser via his Letters to the Editor (L2Es).

Do you recognise the name 'Oscar Brittle'? Brittle's letters have appeared in magazines, journals and newspapers all over Australia and the world, from all the major Australian and New Zealand broadsheets and tabloids to the big US dailies and small local news outlets. What a list of publications and usually anonymous Letters Editors! The book lists over

50 publications but there may well have been more, and some he played with several times.

Some Brittle missives were more provocative, and others outright comic; some were responses to life, and others were exploratory. Some letters I cheered, and others I regretted, and at all times I felt for the letters editors, wondering how they might do their jobs politely and effectively while giving as good as they got, and they sure got it! There are follow-up letters, letters in reply, and emails, which all kept them on their toes.

L2Es should be readable, interesting, relevant to the readership, and complement the paper. They should not be illegible, libellous, boring or about matters that are now out of date, though misspellings and poor punctuation seem to be 'eckseptible'. Editing in all its forms would seem acceptable, especially to get sharp pieces that read well.

Letters editors should check the details of letter writers to make sure they are legitimate. Some of Brittle's letters were accepted by some good newspapers, possibly because they were interesting or complimentary. Hmm, Killara, eh? A good letters editor should not have the wool pulled over their eyes. Were so many of Brittle's L2Es so good, funny or provocative that they deserved the editors' indulgences? And how many L2Es are written in-house, with or without the letters editor's knowledge?

'Brittle' is in fact Glenn Fowler, Christopher Smyth and Gareth Malone, and these are a selection of their L2Es from 2006 to 2007. 'Brittle' is a fiction, yes, and what a surname! To those of you who may be receiving and selecting contributions for the Letters pages of our publications, or reading them with compulsive curiosity: beware!

In conclusion, we need our Oscar Brittles to agitate the air of our political and social realm, but we must be aware of them.

Bridh Hancock

(Also published in *Reflecting on Melbourne*, released on 18 October 2009)

TOP

2009-10 Freelance Register

This year's *Register* is running late for a variety of reasons. I had actually built a hiatus into the schedule to allow real life to intervene, but real-life interventions laugh at appointments and turn up when they want to. I won't bore you with the details but I think that between Lan, Kath and myself we racked up a few too many points on the insurance company stress scales. (Slight interlude: I attempted googling some stress scales but there were so many interesting snippets I gave up in the hope of finishing this report, which at least saved me from tallying the points.) Oh, and then because we ran late, we had problems with the binders, who were pre-booked to bind diaries and calendars.

There were several members who upgraded to full member status in July but didn't actually put an entry

 Society of Editors
(Victoria) Inc.

*Freelance
Register
2009-10*

in for the *Freelance Register* ... even though they wanted to have an entry. They were disappointed they missed out; I was disappointed that I didn't know they wanted to have an entry. I contacted everyone who had an entry in the *2008–09 Register* who hadn't put an entry in for the *2009–10 Register* just in case it was an oversight but, psychic powers being what they are, it's harder to contact members who haven't been listed yet.

The mail-out of the *Freelance Register* is underway as I write, with copies being mailed out to a select list of 500 companies in a diverse range of work areas: arts, publishing, politics, banking, transport, education, etc. My thanks, as ever, to Lan Wang and Kath Harper.

Philip Bryan
Freelance Affairs Officer

TOP

Fancy organising a freelance lunch?

There were a few grumbles about the last freelance lunch. Why was it in Fitzroy? Didn't I realise that the northern suburbs weren't all that convenient for freelancers living in other parts of Melbourne? Of course I do. But having keyed freelancers' addresses into Excel charts for the *Freelance register* for the last two years, I know that a sizeable proportion of freelance editors live in the northern suburbs. Fitzroy is also convenient for those members coming out from the CBD.

Then I had an email from a regional member who said 'I'd love to come, but it's 250 kilometres each way. How about something closer?' In the past few years, the Society has held freelance lunches in Geelong, Warrnambool and Ballarat. But why shouldn't regional members have freelance lunches more frequently? If any regional members are interested in organising a freelance lunch, please let me know. All you'd have to do is select a venue where you can sit and chat over lunch, then let me know so that the Society can advertise it in the *Newsletter* and on the e-list and website. There are a few other organisational tricks, which I'll let you know as soon as I've worked them out. It would be great to have freelance lunches in other parts of the state, such as Swan Hill, Bendigo and Warrnambool. Any takers?

Philip Bryan
Freelance Affairs Officer

TOP

VWC news

The VWC's events are already up and running

at The Wheeler Centre: see www.vwc.org.au/what-s-on.

Our new contact details:
Victorian Writers' Centre
Level 3, The Wheeler Centre
176 Little Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
P: 03 9094 7855
E: info@vwc.org.au
W: www.vwc.org.au

The VWC fax number is not working. Please note that our new fax number is not working at present. For the moment, you can send faxes to an alternative fax number: 03 9650 6473. We hope to get this fixed soon.

Closing dates over the holiday period. The Victorian Writers' Centre will close at 2pm on Wednesday, 23 December and re-open at 10am on Tuesday, 5 January.

Events at the VWC

Book towns and writers' festivals seminar

Thursday, 10 December 2009, 5.45–7.15 pm

A joint seminar by Paul McShane (Convenor, BookTown Australia) and Simone Murray (Senior Lecturer, Monash University). Paul McShane will review the growth of the book town movement both internationally and in Australia, discussing the factors that seem key to success or failure and the prospects for the future of book towns in a digital age of e-books, print-on-demand and Google Book Search. Simone Murray will consider three key ways through which book content circulates: international book fairs, screen festivals and writers' weeks.

Venue: McArthur Gallery, State Library of Victoria, Swanston Street, Melbourne. All welcome.

Summer school: Editing & proofreading workshop

Tuesday, 19 January 2010, 10am–4pm

Presented by Penny Johnson

Rating: Introductory and Intermediate

Do you want to know more about the publishing process and what's involved in editing and proofreading? This introductory course for writers and aspiring editors offers a grammar and spelling refresher, an overview of style issues, editing tips and proofreading techniques. Class activities will include discussion and hands-on exercises. Penny Johnson is a writer, an IPED-accredited editor and an award-winning educator who lectures at RMIT University. She has worked on several literary magazines, including *Meanjin* and *Cultural Studies Review*.

VWC and SocEds members \$105, concession members \$95, non-members \$150

Venue: VWC, The Wheeler Centre: Books, Writing & Ideas, 176 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

TOP

Dear Ed ...

Dear Ed

I do like a good typo. Does that make me a bad person?

Helen

Dear Helen

You're not alone: I like a good typo too. I'm not sure whether this is because I look for typos to convince myself of my own superiority (which nicely balances out the constant nagging doubt that watches over my shoulders as I create my freelance existence one phrase at a time), or whether it's one of the occupational hazards of a job that involves reading most of the time.

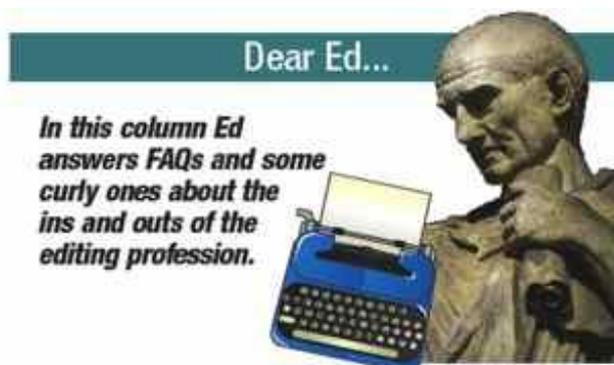
My favourite typos are those that introduce new concepts, inadvertently creating alternative versions of reality. Here are some samples from my scrapbook.

They may experience irregular patterns of sleep ranging from insomnia to deep comma-like sleep

What can I say? At least the hyphen is in the right place. Often when I wake up in the morning, I discover two things. The first is that I'm not and never will be Ernest Hemingway. The second is that I'm curled up under the doona in a comma-like position. It could be worse; if you find you're in bed on your own curled up like double quotes it's time to call the doctor.

Folling is a skill peer-checklist for touch football

OK, I'll 'fess up: this was my typo. I left out the 'ow' from *following*. Six mea culpas and press command z. But the author was impressed and immediately wanted to press *folling* into service in the glossary, with this heart-felt plea: 'Please add *folling* to Glossary. Never heard of it myself!' It's a curious bit of



thinking: I have no idea what this means and neither will anyone else, so let's bung it in the glossary. Perhaps that's what *folling* means: neologism created by editor's sloppy keyboard technique.

Handman \$45 per hour

I was walking to the Existential Fruit Shop when I saw this on an A-frame sign outside the cleaning shop. I went in and explained to a slightly baffled shop attendant why they needed a 'y' in 'handman', otherwise they were suggesting a service they probably hadn't intended to offer. I was met with incomprehension but at least they were polite with the introductions: 'Ed, this is Incomprehension; Incomprehension, this is Ed'.

Cuppacciosa and a glass of wine \$20

My local pizzeria has this tasty treat on offer, aimed squarely at people who like to ingest coffee, pizza and wine at the same time, preferably via a funnel. It's a drinkable pizza for people who've forgotten that a) the best part of a pizza is the aroma, and b) taste receptors are on the tongue. Be thankful it's not an Hawaiian pizza.

Site Lice Information

I was searching for site licence information for a CD-ROM and never thought I'd have to sneak into the chemist wearing a black beanie to get it. Now I can work on CD-ROMs and comb little beasties out of my hair at the same time. It's good to have, although I do wish the beasties would stop falling on the keyboard as the crunching noises distract me and I make errors of the *folling* variety.

Well, Helen, thanks for the chitty-chat. If you're in the neighbourhood you're always welcome to pop around with your scrapbook of typos for a collective gloating session. I always keep a chilled bottle of 1997 Schadenfreude on hand for such occasions.

Cheers,
Ed

TOP

News, comments, letters and other material for publication, review or mention in the *Newsletter* should be addressed to the [Newsletter Editor](#).

Disclaimer: The views expressed by individuals in this *Newsletter* are their own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc.