

# THE CANBERRA editor

Newsletter of the Canberra Society of Editors

Volume 25 • Number 3

July | August 2016

## From the President



I would like to thank all CSE members for supporting **your** Canberra Society of Editors. The Society welcomes your commitment to our continuation as an independent entity instead of winding up to become a branch of a 'head office' IPEd. Although we voted that way for good reasons, we now need to build a new relationship with IPEd and other relevant bodies to ensure that there is no diminution in the services available to our members. Indeed, we will be looking to enhance our members' experience.

At our 27 July general meeting, enthusiastic members took to the butcher's paper to give their ideas and opinions on the following questions bearing on the Society's immediate and long-term future.

- What services should the Society provide to its members (including communications—format, timing and content; access to resources; sponsorship to conferences; etc.)?
- What are the professional development, networking and support needs of members?
- How can the Society contribute, as a Canberra-based society, to our profession?
- How can we work with IPEd, its branches and other relevant bodies to make editors' lives easier?

The discussion was lively and productive, and will be of immense help to your committee in planning and delivering the types of services and outcomes you are seeking. The transcript of deliberations shows that few if any stones were left unturned. The sole burning issue might be the need for a new edition of the Australian Government *Style Manual*, though speedy settlement of the CSE–IPEd relationship is clearly an issue for some.

Moving to other matters, I would like to thank here three people who have taken on new roles:

- Geoff Dawson is now the ACT Mentoring Coordinator.
- Our former Secretary, Eris Harrison, who was IPEd Councillor until 30 June, has become CSE's Vice-President.
- Dr Lisa Lines has joined the Committee as our Professional Development Coordinator.

Also, I am happy to report that, since 1 July, some 82 editors had renewed their membership of the Society and we also have received new membership applications.

A reminder that the AGM is coming up on 31 August: please save the

## Contents

### News

From the President  
Membership  
Notice of Annual General Meeting  
(and dinner)  
IPEd membership application  
guidelines  
IPEd National Mentoring Program  
Mentoring in the ACT

### Features

April general meeting  
Oh no! Not another icon  
The Oxford comma  
Word from the Western Front  
Comical collections



Above, Dallas Stow, Ed Highley and Kerie Newell examine the bulleted notes on two of the butcher's papers that collected members' views during the July general meeting. (Photo by Johann Idriss)

date, come along and do stay on for the dinner afterwards, which is always most convivial.

I look forward to continuing to work with (and for) the Society to enhance and deliver a suite of services that fulfil members' needs in the coming year. I hope to see you at our AGM and at all our general meetings and networking events ... Long live CSE!

**Johann Idriss**  
President



Alan Cummine attentively listens to roundtable discussions, and is ready to jot down notes on another butcher's paper over his convivial glass of vin rouge. (Photo by Johann Idriss)

---

## Membership

Thus far, 82 members have renewed their memberships. Together with our six life members, our Society's current membership totals 88.

As you may know, because CSE's Constitution was amended at the June general meeting, all new members will now receive a calendar year's membership from the date they join. Membership fees of existing members will continue to fall due on July 1.

**Linda Weber AE**  
Membership Secretary and Public Officer

### New CSE members

A warm welcome to these new members!

#### Full Member

Ross Peake  
Ben Wilson

#### Student Member

Samuel Vancea-Harrison

# Notice of Annual General Meeting (and dinner)

## Date and time

Wednesday 31 August 2016  
6:00–7:30 pm

## Place

Seminar Rooms  
University House, ANU

## Attendance

All CSE members are welcome to attend the AGM, although the CSE constitution requires a quorum of 20 full (voting) members for the business of the meeting to be transacted.

Members may attend the AGM without attending the dinner.

The annual general meeting is the most important meeting of the CSE year, and the accompanying networking dinner immediately after makes the evening especially enjoyable. Here are the arrangements for the 2016 AGM. We hope to see you there—old and new members alike.

## Agenda

- 6:00 Pre-meeting drinks and signing the attendance book  
6:30
- President's opening of the AGM
  - Apologies
  - Confirmation of Minutes of the 2015 AGM
  - Business arising from the Minutes
  - Secretary's announcements
  - President's report
  - Treasurer's report and Appointment of auditors for 2016–17
  - Election of committee and office bearers
  - Other business
  - Date of next meeting
- 7:30 Meeting close, followed by dinner in the Drawing Room

## Election of committee

All committee positions become vacant at the AGM. These are the current committee positions, although the new committee may change them. All CSE members may nominate for any position except the first four (in bold), which can be filled by **full** members only.

### President

### Secretary

Membership Secretary  
General Meetings Coordinator  
Assistant Editor  
Assistant Treasurer  
Committee members (3 to 5)  
Immediate Past President\*

### Vice-President

### Treasurer

Professional Development Coordinator  
Newsletter Editor  
Web Manager  
ACT Mentoring Coordinator  
Public Officer  
Catering Coordinator\*\*

\*Not an elected position \*\*Need not be on the Committee

Separately, members will receive a broadcast email attaching a nomination form, a précis of the duties of committee positions, draft minutes of the 2015 AGM, and (if it's finished at the time) the 2015–16 audit report.

### Kate Potter

Secretary



The banner features the CSE logo (three circles with letters C, S, E) on the left. The main text reads: 'Wed. 31 AUGUST' in green, '7:30 post meridian' in orange, and 'The AGM DINNER' in large blue letters. On the right, vertical text says 'The Drawing Room University House, ANU'. At the bottom, it says 'Purchase your \$50.00 dinner ticket NOW <https://www.trybooking.com/MKVC>'. A small note at the bottom states: 'Menu details are given on the ticketing site (we are not able to make provision for any special dietary requirements) and, as for past AGM dinners, the Society will shout some beverages for the tables (further drinks at own expense). Partners/friends welcome!'

---

## IPEd membership application guidelines

CSE members wishing to join IPed may do so by using the online application form [here](#). Before applying, please read these guidelines for advice on providing supporting documentation for each IPed membership type. Also, please note that when completing your online application for IPed membership, you will need to select a branch from the list provided on the application form.

### Professional Membership of IPed

#### Accredited editors

Your eligibility for Professional Membership of IPed will have to be verified. But rather than having to provide all the documentation required from new members (as specified on the IPed website), you should simply prepare a document with the following statement:

My name is <insert name>; I am a Full/Professional member of CSE, and I am an accredited editor.

When completing the IPed online application form, upload this same document into each of the following required fields on the application form:

- Editorial Experience Statement
- CV
- Referee 1
- Referee 2

The IPed Membership Officer will verify your statement against the official list of accredited editors or with CSE's Membership Secretary.

#### Non-accredited editors

Your eligibility for Professional Membership will have to be verified. But rather than having to provide all the documentation required from new members (as specified on the IPed website), you should simply prepare a document with the following statement:

My name is <insert name>; I am a Full/Professional member of CSE.

When completing the IPed online application form, upload this same document into each of the following required fields on the application form:

- Editorial Experience Statement
- CV
- Referee 1
- Referee 2

The IPed Membership Officer will verify your statement with CSE's Membership Secretary.

#### Associate Membership of IPed

Simply complete the online application form. No further documentation is required.

#### Student Membership of IPed

Eligibility will need to be verified at the start of each annual subscription. Before completing an application form, please see details of the required criteria and supporting documentation [here](#).

**Concessional Subscription** (which may be attached to either the Professional or Associate Membership)

Eligibility will need to be verified. Before completing an application form, please see the details of criteria and supporting documentation requirements [here](#).

#### Honorary Life Members (HLMs)

All CSE Honorary Life Members are automatically considered to be Honorary Life Members of IPed. Those who are already members of an IPed branch will already have been contacted to register for the IPed Member Portal. For the remaining Canberra-based HLMs, arrangements are being made to have their details incorporated into the IPed member database. Once this is complete, they will be invited to register for the IPed Member Portal.

#### Karen Gillen

Membership Officer, IPed  
[members@iped-editors.org](mailto:members@iped-editors.org)

---

## IPEd National Mentoring Program

### Mentoring in the ACT

IPEd's mentoring program matches society members who would like to be mentored with those who have indicated their willingness to be mentors. Mentoring can focus on any aspect of professional editing. About eight hours of advice is suggested as the norm, but that can be adjusted by mutual agreement.

Members of any editing society can participate. We try to place mentees with mentors in the same city to facilitate face-to-face meetings, though that may not always be possible. If you would like some mentoring or you are interested in being a mentor, I encourage you to contact me to discuss it further.

**Geoff Dawson**  
ACT Mentoring Coordinator  
[geoffdawsonediting@gmail.com](mailto:geoffdawsonediting@gmail.com)

### Moving forward

Mission accomplished ... for now! IPEd and its Branches across Australia (except the ACT) became a fact on 1 July. The Canberra Society of Editors (CSE) is continuing in its present form, outside IPEd, but by no means isolated from it. In one important way, we are all still together—the IPEd National Mentoring Program remains 'national' in that the CSE is included, in the same way as any other editing organisation in Australia would be included if they wished to be. From the start, we have accepted mentors and mentees into the program, so long as they are members of 'an editing society'—we have never specified where that should be. So we have welcomed people into our program from all over Australia and from the UK, South Africa and Belgium, with interest also from editors in other parts of the world. We see no reason to back down from that stance, and, indeed, we look forward to furthering the collaboration across boundaries that the program has already fostered.

### A bit of admin

As we have only just handed over our finances to IPEd (CSE was handling that aspect of the program from the start), arrangements for mentees to pay their fees are right now being discussed between the program's national coordinators and the appropriate IPEd officers. If you have someone in your state who is itching to get their mentee fee paid, please ask them to be patient. Mentorships can proceed, of course, with the local state coordinator keeping an eye on things for a little while. As soon as the arrangements are revised and written up, they will go in a new Procedure document that all state coordinators can access. It won't be a long wait ... promise!

### A flurry of mentors?

Some days ago in Canberra we enjoyed a brief flurry of snow—pretty to look at if you were snug indoors! At the same time, we seem to have had a 'flurry' of prospective mentors. We are currently organising some mentors' workshops that will be offered by Skype on Mondays 15 and 22 August and 5 September, all at 7:30 pm (Canberra time). A workshop lasts for no more than 1.5 hours. Anyone thinking of being a mentor in our program is asked to attend a workshop so that we keep our program running on the same lines throughout the profession in Australia and so that you meet others and discuss interesting case studies. The workshops are hosted by one or other of the national coordinators. If you would like one of us to run a face-to-face workshop in your own Branch, let us know and we'll arrange that. We also ask new state coordinators to attend a workshop, whether or not they intend to be a mentor—we believe it makes the task a lot easier when you know how mentoring works in our program.

We currently have quite a few prospective mentors waiting to be fitted into workshops, but there is room for more, and we will run more workshops later to suit others. Just contact your local state coordinator for details. We need about ten days' notice so that we can send some reading material. The workshop is free.

Happy mentoring—our program is the envy of other editing organisations around the world because there are no limits on what you can ask to be mentored in (provided it has something to do with editing)—we want to keep it that way and we will, with your help.

**Ted Briggs AE**  
[tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au](mailto:tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au)  
Joint National Coordinators

**Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE**  
[emmurphy.words@gmail.com](mailto:emmurphy.words@gmail.com)

---

## April general meeting

### Trust, skill and structural editing

At CSE's well-attended April general meeting, publisher Louise Thurtell gave an entertaining and informative talk about the technical skill of structural editing and about the benefits to author, editor and manuscript of building a trusting, respectful and supportive relationship with the author during the editorial process.

While listening to Louise's warm, positive enthusiasm, it was easy for us to see why she has been so successful in bringing new authors and good books into our realm.

Louise's twenty years in publishing began with editing, and moved on to publishing with Harper Collins, Transworld, Random House and Allen & Unwin. Being awarded the prestigious Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship in 2004–05 took Louise to New York to study and experience US editorial practices and compare them with Australia's. Currently, Louise is publisher of *Arena*, which she established as a commercial fiction and non-fiction imprint at Allen & Unwin.

#### 'Friday pitch'

Louise proudly told us about her initiative at *Arena* called 'Friday Pitch'. As an integral part of a publisher's suite of methods for finding authors—such as receiving submissions, responding to agents' 'auctioning' of authors and manuscripts, commissioning manuscripts, and being approached by 'someone who knows someone'—Friday Pitch invites any Australian writer to email Louise a synopsis and first chapter of their manuscript on any Friday for her consideration.

Friday Pitch is finding many new authors, especially in rural and regional Australia. One such writer was an 87-year-old Northern Territory woman, who had written 137,000 words freehand. Her manuscript was published in

2015—now Jacqueline Hammar's autobiography, *Daughter of the Territory* has so far sold over 15,000 copies!

Strong women overcoming adversity, and 'rural romance' fiction with good plots comprise the biggest selling genres of the past five years. In fact, women are the dominant authors of rural fiction (nearly 80%), and are also the dominant buyers.

Other strong categories are creative and Australian non-fiction, and memoirs—of which Louise would be happy to receive 'more rural stuff'.

#### Trust and relationships

Louise set the scene here by first describing the procedure after a manuscript is accepted, then her first structural edit before briefing the designer on ideas for the cover, handing on to an in-house editor (for oversight) and a freelance editor (for work on the manuscript and liaison with the author). She also described the weekly meetings (involving Marketing, Sales, Publisher, Editor, CEO) to consider bookstand trends and cover designs. Discount department stores (such as Big W) are now the biggest buyers and have particular preferences for covers that sell. (Nevertheless, Louise avoids going with a cover that an author doesn't like.)

Louise then moved on to the 'vital' author–editor relationship, sprinkling her talk with funny anecdotes and war-stories. Mutual trust and respect and positive support for the author are core and paramount. And although some publishers discourage the editor and author being anything but 'professional', Louise does not, and is not uncomfortable if friendships develop.

Louise, being publisher and responsible for the initial overall structural edit of a manuscript, is the first line of communication with the author. In that role, she goes out of her way to be supportive and encouraging

in her editorial report and any marginal comments. Handing the project on to an in-house editor requires the same level of respect. (This doesn't preclude some unrepeatably 'in-camera' comments sometimes being made about an author's idiosyncrasies!)

Any further structural editing must open with how good the manuscript is, before any commentary about 'how to improve it'.

Regrettably, some editors aren't too good at this approach, and from time to time Louise has to amend the editor's blunt covering letter to inject some tact—and occasionally she must even edit every marginal comment!

Editors must take care not to be too intrusive into the author's style. Authors can be stubborn, and one or two in ten can be downright painful. This needs delicate handling if the relationship is to be strong and lasting. "You develop a nose for it."

### Structural editing

In a very wide-ranging discussion, Louise covered her personal approach to structural editing, including the particular features she looks for and encourages, and some of her pet dislikes, which she asks the author to change.

Louise first made the point that "there are very few mentors in this game", and one must learn more wherever one can. For her part, Louise learns much from the freelance editors she engages—no two of whom do a structural edit the same way.

In some sort of order, here are the main points Louise explained in her lively discussion.

In her overall general approach:

- Louise starts with a quick read to get a first impression, making a few notes. She then re-reads with an editor's eye, doing a bit of a copy edit to help "delve more deeply into the manuscript". She will make chapter summaries at this stage—especially if the plot is complex.
- Louise "puts herself in the author's shoes", and when she likes something, she makes sure the author knows it.
- As she reads on, she gets a feel for what might not be working and for how it might be fixed. This can be very hard.
- To help with this, Louise re-reads novels she really likes, to see how those authors have handled the problems she encounters. She finds this can help her frame her advice on the manuscript she's assessing at the time.

More specifically:

- Louise looks for a good balance between narrative and dialogue, and for the writer to be moving easily between them—"the writer needs both to show AND tell". *To kill a mockingbird* and Michael Robotham's crime novels are examples of excellent narrative.
- A strong 'narrative voice' is very important. In her experience, about one in a hundred are good; the others are too bland. "It really stands out." Louise advises writers to read more examples where the narrative voice is "assured and energetic".
- Louise often advises writers to expand or contract their 'scene descriptions'. She advises

against lengthy physical descriptions—of weather or body motions, for example.

- Such descriptions are among Louise's pet dislikes—along with flowery language, repetition, too many adjectives and adverbs, and characters being too similar.
- The last-mentioned often means dialogue must be edited to be 'less unnatural', and not to be "telling the reader" but to be telling 'the person being spoken to'. "John snarled angrily"—URK!

Louise also considers such structural questions as:

- Should some chapters be merged or divided?
- Is the main plot 'big enough'?
- Would more sub-plots be better?
- Is there too much happening?
- Is the story too predictable?

Many rural romance stories can be quite predictable, but the readers tend to want that. So she must be flexible and responsive to the market.

Louise identified 'characterisation' as especially important. In particular, she recommends trying to make the main characters more 'sympathetic', not just direct 'A to B' sort of people. "The writer needs to take the reader on a journey" and "readers need to identify with a character at least to some degree."

Personally, I found Louise's talk most enjoyable and insightful. Long may we be able to attract speakers of such calibre and value.

### Alan Cummine

Immediate Past President

---

## Oh no! Not another icon

Lucky or not, here in Canberra—at least in the city precinct—we're surrounded by 'icons'. There's Parliament House, Old Parliament House, the Carillion, the Captain Cook Jet (when it's working), Commonwealth Park and so on. Is Lonsdale Street yet an icon? Probably: our own 'Lygon Street', albeit foreshortened. New Acton almost certainly is, as would be the Kingston Foreshore and even the Canberra Centre which, in turn, is full of iconic shops. Even our water is iconic, at least I assume that's what was intended by those who came up with the new name for the water-supply utility—'Icon Water'. If it were 'Icon:Water', it would make more sense—though it's hard to see water as an icon. Maybe the creators, though very well paid apparently, were adjectivally challenged. Anyhow, when you put cup to lips—and flush—you might ponder that some consider the vital fluid, both arriving and departing, as 'iconic'.

Will Canberra itself ever be an 'icon'? Imagine: "Canberra—Australia's iconic capital city". I doubt it, unless they move out the House on the Hill and its inmates, and then it wouldn't be the capital anymore. Here in Oz, non-Canberrans tar us with the same brush as they do pollies who, for reasons valid or otherwise, are subject to almost universal antipathy and, in any case, most foreigners think that Sydney is the capital. Sydney has, of course, icons beyond number, their incidence decreasing at a geometric rate the further one moves from the harbour.

This word 'icon' appears to have undergone, over a relatively short period, hyper-accelerated etymological evolution (or devolution), to become almost a parody or caricature of itself. You probably need to think about that, but no correspondence will be entered into.

Here's most of what the *New Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (1993) had to say about 'icon' [also 'ikon']: 1. *Rhet.* A simile 2a. A portrait, a picture; *esp.* one of an animal or plant in a book of natural history. b. *Eccl.* An image in traditional Byzantine style of Jesus or a holy person that is used ceremonially and venerated in the Orthodox church. c. *Computing.* A small symbolic picture on a VDU screen ... 3. A statue. 4. A realistic description in writing. *rare.* 5. *Philos.* A sign with some factor in common with the object it represents.

The *Macquarie* is more up with the times. To the above, it adds that an icon can be "a person who is seen by a community as being closest to an admired stereotype", or 'an artefact, practice, etc., which is associated with a particular way of life so strongly that it comes to be seen as a symbol of it'.

Fine, but the problem is we've gone even further. Forget the admired stereotype or strong symbolism, it seems now that just about everything, given time and maybe enough online mentions, now has a chance to become 'iconic'; all that it needs to be is special, awesome, cool, or something along those lines. The possibilities become endless. Thus we have, for example:

- an Adelaide furniture store, Le Cornu, promoted as iconic—not sure if it's the store or stock that's so designated.
- the news that "Ryan Reynolds' sad resignation at being stuck with Hiddleswift is iconic"—I've no idea who these people are, but 'iconic resignation' I cannot comprehend.
- "We're glad you found Iconic Home Loans ..."—bet they are.
- iConic [sic]—"A 1970's classic [caravan] is back now designed with the latest technology adapted to it." Think about that!
- a "secular icon", a "community icon"—i.e. Medicare
- "... our beautiful Danish inspired Credenza 'The Iconic'."
- "Renewable jet fuel could be growing on Australia's iconic gum trees" ... hard to imagine literally.
- "The Iconic is a statement. Influenced by industrial and avionic instruments, it is raw, tough and precise." It's a wristwatch.



- "Hills Huge Iconic Rotary Hoist Clothesline ..." Maybe truly Australia's first ever 'icon', or was that Mawson's Hut?
- "Meet Iconic. The definitive icon set designed for the modern web. Enjoy endless creative control of your icons in SVG, webfont, and raster formats." A good one.
- "Global first neuro study identifies iconic triggers to optimise TVC for OOH." Beats me.
- "Iconic people who had shockingly horrifying childhoods." But happy endings, presumably, since they're now icons.
- "Set against an idyllic landscape, a new icon awaits." An upmarket block of flats.

And so it goes, on and on. It's enough to drive one to join the latter-day iconoclasts. One such might be the, dare I say iconic, Don Watson. Icon and iconic are among the targets in *Worst Words: a compendium of cant, gibberish and jargon* (Vintage Australia, 2015), his latest attack on the maimers of the language. Lots of biting wit and humour ... and enlightenment too. Could become iconic ... if it isn't already ... it's been around for well over a year.

**Ed Highley**  
Treasurer

---

## The Oxford comma

In my classes, I am quite often asked about the Oxford comma. When this question comes, others ask what on earth is that? The Oxford comma, because it was traditionally used at Oxford University Press, is also known as the serial comma, and is placed before the penultimate item in a list:

*The wombat eats shoots, roots, and leaves.*

I don't think you need this comma. It might even cause some confusion, suggesting that the word 'leaves' is a verb rather than another item the wombat eats.

In Australia, most of us were taught never to use a comma before 'and'; in other words, don't use the Oxford comma. But what if the wombat eats shoots and roots, and also eats a different category of foods like bananas and mangoes? Then a comma might help:

*In captivity, the wombat eats shoots and roots, and bananas and mangoes.*

In the United States, the Oxford comma is alive and well. Nearly every list I saw on a six-week trip across the continent contained a comma before the 'and' at the end of a list. This prevalence surprised me; for in so many other ways—take spelling and pronunciation—the Americans do not emulate Oxford English. A poll conducted in 2014 asked 1129 Americans which sentence they thought was grammatically correct:

It's important for a person to be honest, kind and loyal.

or

It's important for a person to be honest, kind, and loyal.

Fifty-seven per cent were for the Oxford comma. The authors of the poll reported the split in the result probably originates at school where grammar was taught as a set of incontrovertible rules: don't start a sentence with 'and' or 'but'; never use a comma before 'and', etc.

For me there's only one rule: use punctuation to aid clarity. So when the Oxford comma helps, go ahead and use it; when it doesn't, save yourself a keystroke.

**Francesca Beddie**  
Director, Make Your Point  
[www.makeyourpoint.com.au](http://www.makeyourpoint.com.au)  
[www.phansw.org.au/blog](http://www.phansw.org.au/blog)

---

## Word from the Western Front

**John Linnegar**

CSE member studying in Belgium

I write this first in a series of articles wearing two hats: as a member of SENSE in the Netherlands and also of Barcelona-based MET. I believe an introduction to the two societies and their respective *modi operandi* would be a good starting point.

'Who or what are the SENSE and MET?', you may well be asking. Well, much like CSE, they are societies of and for language practitioners, only they are broader groupings than mere editors. SENSE—recently dubbed the society for English-speaking language practitioners in the Netherlands—is a kind of English-language expat 'enclave': kindred spirits mainly of UK origin or of Dutch descent who have mastered English sufficiently to put themselves forward as editors, interpreters and translators; copywriters also form a group within SENSE. Many have found a niche as authors' editors and of would-be writers in academe. The country's universities are sought-after institutions of learning worldwide, and so they attract many students who are schooled in neither English nor Dutch, which raises serious challenges for editors in this niche. (This situation should have a familiar ring for Australian editors.)

Having just celebrated its silver jubilee, SENSE has a blend of centralisation and decentralisation in its operations: the several SIGs (special interest groups) either serve members in a particular locality or province or deal with a particular subject area (education, academic editing, translation, copywriting). SIG coordinators run their events several times a year with a fair amount of autonomy, reporting to the Annual General Meeting. Both events and workshops are organised by executive committee members mainly in the society's host city, Utrecht. SENSE held its first, enormously successful, annual conference in celebration of its 25th anniversary in the Poushuize (the 'house' of Holland's only Pope in Utrecht Province) in November 2015.



Poushuize—interior and exterior views

The reason SENSE is so accessible to so many practitioners around the Netherlands is largely due to the size of the country. Almost 17 million inhabitants are squeezed into an area of 41,543 km<sup>2</sup>. It's smaller by far than the smallest Australian territory, Tasmania, at 68,401 km<sup>2</sup> and with a population of only 515,000.

SENSE's counterpart in the south of Europe is the **Mediterranean Editors and Translators**, at 12-years-old a mere teenager in comparison. Again, this is a largely English-speaking group of expats who also have one of the Romance or other national languages as their speciality—Portuguese, French, Spanish, Italian, Greek, even Turkish and Hebrew. As could be expected, translation is the strong suit of this group of practitioners, especially in the medical and legal spheres and from one of the local languages into the lingua franca of Europe, English (although a Finnish 'offshoot' of MET has recently been formed). So translation tools and techniques are popular topics among this group (though we all know that translations cannot really pass muster without some form of editorial intervention, don't we!).

In contrast, and most likely because its members are so widespread, MET holds an annual conference, or 'meeting' (METM) in a different city in the last quarter of the year—this year it's the turn of **Tarragona**, on the Med coast not far from Barcelona, from 13 to 15 October.

In between conferences, several workshops are held in either Barcelona or Madrid, depending largely upon the topic or the organiser; they cover all aspects of continuing professional development of interest to editors and translators working into English, including translation and editing techniques, field-specific content, grammar, and translation and editing tools. They also usually comprise every new workshop to be presented on the first two days of the forthcoming conference: each has to be 'triallyed' beforehand in a series of 'summer workshops' held for members between June and September. Inspired quality control, that.

The joy of conferences in Western Europe—more so than Australia—is that they very often take place in quaint and ancient urbanscapes. Last year's MET conference, for instance, was held in Coimbra, whose university is one of the oldest in the world, redolent of courtly life, King John, Prince Henry the Navigator and the voyages of discovery to the New World. People travel from far and wide, and queue up, to view the stunning library on the campus, perched atop a precipitous, ankle-crunching hill!



Coimbra University: top left, the quadrangle and clocktower; top right, a view of the University from the river, and bottom, the Library.

As with Australian editors, language is the *raison d'être* of these two groups of practitioners and, also perhaps similarly, there is quite a strong tussle among clients between UK and US English. The expats, of course, generally gravitate towards UK English, but sometimes their house style choices are driven perforce by their clients' preferences. In the legal sphere, there are the challenges wrought by a variety of differing legal systems—some a residue of the Code Napoléon or Roman-Dutch law, but all of them at odds with the more familiar law of Great Britain. This makes for interesting translation and editing hijinks!

# COMICAL COLLECTIONS

I claim no originality for the following contribution to this edition's levity ... other than the occasional minor 'edit'! Like all our previous 'Comical Collections', this circulating email found its way to my inbox. So it probably came to yours too, and you may already have it filed in your own 'Funnies' folder.

There are many other similar compilations floating around!

## **Alan Cummine**

Immediate past president

### **An amusing take on English plurals ...**

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,  
But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes.  
One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese.  
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.  
You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,  
But the plural of house is houses, not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men,  
Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?  
If I speak of my foot and show you my feet,  
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?  
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,  
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?

Then one may be that, and three would be those,  
Yet hat in the plural would never be hose.  
And the plural of cat is cats, not cose.  
We speak of a brother and also of brethren,  
But though we say mother, we never say methren.  
Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him,  
But imagine the feminine she, shis and shim!

### **... and other 'bazaar' paradoxes**

Let's face it ... English is a bizarre language.

There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger;  
and neither apple nor pine in pineapple.

English muffins were not invented in England.

We take English for granted, but if we explore its paradoxes,  
we find that quicksand can work slowly,  
boxing rings are square,  
and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write, but fingers don't fing,  
grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend?  
If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them,  
what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?  
If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

In what other language do people recite at a play and play at a recital?

We ship by truck but send cargo by ship.  
We have noses that run and feet that smell.  
We park in a driveway and drive in a parkway.  
And how can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same,  
while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language  
in which your house can burn up as it burns down?  
In which you fill in a form by filling it out,  
and in which an alarm goes off by going on.

Time for a stiff drink, which is just liquid!

The end. Well, at least until next time.

# Advertise in

THE CANBERRA

# editor

*The Canberra editor* is distributed to over 80 members of the Canberra Society of Editors, and to state and territory editors societies, affiliated societies, and interested organisations.

The newsletter is available for viewing or downloading at [www.editorscanberra.org](http://www.editorscanberra.org).

Regular features include IPEd news, professional development, mentoring news, interesting and relevant articles and much more.

## Costs\* and specifications

\$40	1 col.	w 54 x h 273 mm
\$60	1/2 page	w 180 x h 140 mm
\$120	1 page	w 178 x h 273 mm

Artwork is to be supplied as jpg/png/tiff. RGB, 72 ppi.

Alternatively, you may forward your logo and text to the Assistant Editor, Gab Lhuede, who will provide a basic design for your ad and provide a pdf file for only one round of proofing.

\*These costs are subject to review.

## Your committee 2016

**President** Johann Idriss

**Vice-President** Eris Harrison

**Secretary** Kate Potter

**Treasurer** Ed Highley

**Membership Secretary and Public Officer** Linda Weber

**Professional Development Coordinator** Lisa Lines

**General Meetings Coordinator**  
vacant

**Newsletter Editor** Farid Rahimi

**Assistant Newsletter Editor**  
Gabrielle Lhuede

**Web Manager** Cathy Nicoll

**ACT Mentoring Coordinator**  
Geoff Dawson

### General Committee

Alan Cummine  
(Immediate Past President)

Elizabeth Manning Murphy

Mike Wilkins

**Catering Coordinator**  
Mary Webb

Please send all correspondence via the CSE [website](#).



## The Canberra editor

Published by the  
Canberra Society of Editors  
PO Box 3222, Manuka ACT 2603

Volume 25, Number 3

© Canberra Society of Editors 2016

ISSN 2200-6344 (online)

### Schedule for next newsletter

The next edition of *The Canberra editor* will appear in October 2016. The copy deadline for that issue is 20 September.

The editor welcomes contributions by email: [newsletter@editorscanberra.org](mailto:newsletter@editorscanberra.org).

All articles must be in .doc format.