

## And now, the end is here

No, I'm not about to launch into a doomsday theory, but rather to take this opportunity to write a few words to mark the end of my reign (I've always wanted to reign over something!) as *Bookworm* editor.

Let me start by acknowledging the fact that I've had some fun with this final issue of 2012 by giving it a Christmas theme—humour me! It's hard to believe that it's almost that time of year again, and what a year it's been. Personally, I will be happy to welcome in the New Year and say goodbye to 2012—it has been a tough year for my family with my mum diagnosed with lung cancer in February, and then sadly passing away in August. Thank you to everyone who sent their condolences, especially to Jan Knight who sent me the most lovely William Wordsworth poem (*She dwelt among the untrodden ways*) via post, yes, POST! How lovely to have something tangible with such sympathy enclosed.

My company, The Cat's Whiskers, has really started to take off with new projects from Curtin and Edith Cowan Universities, as well as being the appointed designer/desktop publisher for the editors' conference in 2013. If you need something 'tizzied' up—prrrroduced, prrrroofed, and prrrrinted—don't hesitate to call me!

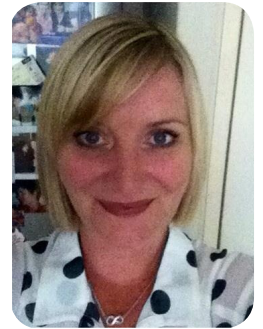
It's been an interesting two years to say the least. Regrets? I've had a few, but then again, too few to mention. Mostly, I've had fun designing and producing the newsletter, along with the help of some very key members of the society. For all their hard work, support and fabulous submissions, I would like to thank the following participants:

Robyn Barnes, Robin Bower, Kerry Coyle, Amanda Curtin, Michèle Drouart, Mary Elgar, James Hansen,

## Bec Hitchings, editor

Ed Highly, Jan Knight, Tanya Marwood, Carla Morris, Peta Robson, Ursula Shaw, Josephine Smith, Marisa Wikramanayake, and all the Spotlight cast. Sorry I couldn't mention you all, but thanks everyone!

So, as I face the final curtain, I'll state the case of which I'm certain: I've had a blast being *Bookworm* editor, but more, much more than this, I did it my way.



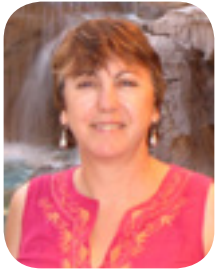
Bec x

### Inside

From the president .....	2
Members' roundup .....	3
Conference update .....	4
The clinic .....	5
A trivial bit of fun .....	6



- The next networking meeting will be held on Tuesday 20 November.



Those of you who attended last month's networking meeting will realise that it didn't go at all according to plan!

Our guest speaker for the October networking meeting was Jude Blereau, who planned to speak on writing and editing

a cookbook. Many people were looking forward to hearing Jude talk about wholefoods and cookbooks, but due to some confusion, Jude was unable to make it. Nevertheless, attendees stayed a while and chatted among themselves about editing and the challenges related to our line of work. The flurry of emails I received afterwards told me that, far from being annoyed, many were happy to have the opportunity to discuss issues and share anecdotes in an informal setting and to get to know each other a little better. Some members have requested that we schedule more meetings like this in future! So, we will certainly consider doing just that in the year ahead. Jude sent her sincere apologies and will be speaking at a networking meeting early in 2013.

I encourage you all to use the Yahoo group forum to ask questions, discuss issues and generally bolster a feeling of being supported within a community of local editors. Remember, we all start off with a little bit of knowledge and build up from there. No question is too 'dumb' to post to the group.

Incredible as it seems, Christmas is looming again and we will be having an informal event on the foreshore of our beautiful river to celebrate the end of the year. This should prove a good opportunity to network and relax—just as people did at the October networking meeting! Details of the location and time for the Christmas function will be sent to members soon.

Happy editing...

*Tanya Marwood*



## COMMITTEE CONTACTS

### President

Tanya Marwood  
tanya@writeonwriting.com.au

### Vice president

Cheryl Bettridge  
cheryl.bettridge@det.wa.edu.au

### Secretary

Amanda Ellis  
amanda@amandaellis.com

### Treasurer and membership officer

Peta Robson  
Peta.Robson@westnet.com.au

### IPEd councillor and accreditation board delegate

Josephine Smith  
josmith@wordsmithwa.com.au

### Committee representatives

Jan Knight  
jknight@flyingedits.com.au

Marisa Wikramanayake  
marisa.wikramanayake@gmail.com

### Bookworm editor

Bec Hitchings  
becsthecatswhiskers@gmail.com

### Bookworm proofreader

Mary Elgar  
elgar@westnet.com.au

# Members roundup

## November networking meeting

Date: Tuesday 20 November 2012

Venue: Tom Dadour Community Centre  
363 Bagot Road, Subiaco

Time: 7.30 – 9.15

Cost: Members \$5; non-members \$10

RSVP: 15 November 2012 to Jan Knight  
<[jknight@flyingedits.com.au](mailto:jknight@flyingedits.com.au)>

Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be provided.



Tom Dadour Community Centre

## Defamation in publications

At our final networking meeting for 2012, guest speaker John Hammond, Director of Hammond Legal, will take us into the tricky topic of defamation, something that every editor should know about.

*Everyone concerned with the writing and distribution, or republishing, of defamatory matter may be liable – the writer, editor, publisher, printer and, to some extent, distributor, although it is a defence if secondary distributors such as librarians and newsagents prove they did not know that the publication contained defamatory matter.*

Hughes, B (ed) 1993, *The Penguin Working Words: An Australian Guide to Modern English Usage*, Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, Victoria, p. 165.

*Editing therefore requires knowledge of the following matters: ... A3.1 Current definitions of libel, defamation, obscenity, discriminatory language, intellectual property, plagiarism, moral rights and copyright, and their implications for a publication.*

Council of Australian Societies of Editors 2001, *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*, South Australia, p. 2.

*Getting indemnity insurance for work doesn't necessarily indicate that something is dodgy.*

SoE(WA) member, 2012

*Pretty much every large corporation or government department I've worked for in the last ten years has required my company to carry professional indemnity insurance.*

SoE(WA) member, 2012

### New SoEWA member

The Society would like to welcome new member Fiona Foxall.

### Join now!

facebook

twitter

Linked in



# Conference update

## Register for the conference NOW!



Another milestone has been reached! Conference registration opened on 1 November.

Costs are as follows:

Society members, students and pensioners  
1 DAY – \$279      2 DAYS – \$444

Non-members  
1 DAY – \$356      2 DAYS – \$521

Earlybird Society members, students and pensioners  
1 DAY – \$246      2 DAYS – \$411

Earlybird non-members  
1 DAY – \$323      2 DAYS – \$488

The earlybird discount applies if you register before the end of January 2013. Members and non-members refer to any member or non-member of an Australian Society of Editors.

### New presenters



#### Dr Ffion Murphy

Ffion Murphy is Senior Lecturer and coordinator of writing and editing courses for the School of Communications and Arts at Edith Cowan University.

She received her PhD from the University of Queensland and her published works as author and/or editor include *The gate of dreams*, *Writing Australia*, *Story/telling* and *Devotion*.



#### Dr Anne Surma

Anne is a senior lecturer in the English and Creative Arts program at Murdoch University. She teaches at undergraduate level and also supervises several postgraduate students working on topics ranging from creative

writing to literary representations of cultural identity. Anne has also worked in private industry as an editor and writer and as a workshop facilitator and consultant, advising on communication strategy and practice.

She has written book chapters and refereed journal articles, as well as two monographs: *Public and professional writing: ethics, imagination and rhetoric* (Palgrave 2005) and *Imagining the cosmopolitan in public and professional writing* (Palgrave 2012). Anne holds the honorary title of Distinguished Editor, conferred by the Institute of Professional Editors, and between 2006 and 2011 she was the WA delegate on the IPEd Council. Here Anne led the process for revising and updating the 'Guidelines for editing research theses', which were nationally endorsed by the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies of Australian universities in November 2010.

### Program

We have just completed the process of choosing the abstracts for presentations and workshops—it was not an easy task as the submissions were fantastic. We are hoping to announce the confirmed program very soon. In the meantime, there is a draft program which will be updated as we confirm sessions—see [www.ipedperth2013.com.au/?post\\_type=session](http://www.ipedperth2013.com.au/?post_type=session) for more details. We can announce that there will be panels discussing the publishing industry from the publishers' perspective on academic editing, and on Indigenous editing.

### Contact us

To attend: [promaco@promaco.com.au](mailto:promaco@promaco.com.au)

To sponsor: [promaco@promaco.com.au](mailto:promaco@promaco.com.au)

Go to [6th IPEd national editors conference](#).

Download the conference app to your phone!



## The doctor is in ...

### Case 1

I can't figure out the correct form for the following sentence:

*Is that place any better for your having been there?*

Is that *your* OK? Or should it read:

*Is that place any better for you having been there?*

— Jan

The simple answer is that either form—*you* or *your*—is acceptable to most authorities these days. It's not so simple to explain why. In fact, people have been arguing about this, sometimes vehemently, for about two hundred years.

Firstly, what are we talking about here? It's really about whether a present participle or a gerund is the most suitable part of speech to be used in this situation. Both are forms that end in *ing*: the participle is a verb-adjective while the gerund is a verbal noun. Participles describe nouns and pronouns, just as adjectives do, and need to be placed close to the words they relate to. Gerunds, on the other hand, act as full-blooded nouns and do everything nouns do, like being the subjects of verbs or objects of verbs and prepositions. Here's a simple example. *Jogging* is a present participle in 'He was jogging when we last saw him' and a gerund in 'Jogging is a popular form of exercise'.

So what about *having been* in the original question? Well, think this time about the verb function common to both the gerund and participle. Verbs describe not only action, but the time when it occurs—the tense. In this case, we have an action that has been 'completed in the past' and so we use the term 'perfect tense', the marker for which is the auxiliary verb 'to have' followed by a verb in the past tense, *been* in this case.

Actually, the word to watch in this sentence is the preposition *for*. Prepositions take objects—nouns, pronouns and gerunds—that must be in the objective case. If we opt for a gerund as the object of *for*, then we write *for your having been*, with the possessive form *your* marking the approaching gerund. But if we choose the personal pronoun, objective case *you*

qualified by the attached participial phrase *having been there*, we will be equally correct. Are there any guidelines to help us choose? Yes, there are, but first some history.

In 1906, Latin scholars, the Fowler brothers, brought out *The King's English* in which they identified a then common but careless and ungrammatical use of the present participle as a threat to the language. It was named the 'fused participle' and, to put things very simply, HG Fowler advocated as a cure the possessive-with-gerund pattern over the participle. By 1926 and his famous *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, Fowler's views had strengthened. However, the great philologist Otto Jespersen opposed Fowler's position, pointing out that the form with the participle was long established in English, and many great writers such as Jonathan Swift had used it. Jespersen took the view that the grammar rules of a language should be derived from the usage of its writers. A long and at times personal battle ensued, the tremors from which persist to this day.

Fowler's influence has been strong. On one occasion, one of his supporters managed to delay a bill before Parliament while MPs rowed about the insertion of an apostrophe-s into the wording (those were the days!). It was the usage I had instilled in me in my own schooldays and has the great advantage of always being grammatically correct. However, to some people, the possessive with gerund sounds too formal, and there can be occasions with longer, more complex constructions where it can lead to awkwardness of expression, and the best remedy will be to recast the whole thing.

Subsequent revised editions of *MEU*, under different editors, took a more temperate line, with RW Burchfield's *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage* (1996) giving extensive practical advice on both usages.

Burchfield notes that the possessive with gerund is declining but its use with proper names and personal pronouns persists in good writing. Consider:

- Obama's* losing the first debate was a serious reverse.
- His* being so forthright was a blessing for us.
- '*My* being here must distress you,' he said.

## The clinic continued

In example a. *losing* is the gerund and *Obama's* is the possessive form of the proper noun *Obama*. In b. and c. we have possessive-with-gerund constructions that are working well. But if we changed *his* to *him* and *my* to *me*, we would have objective case forms in the initial part of the sentence, as part of the subject of the sentence in fact, and this is likely to make readers uneasy because they are used to seeing objective forms much further into the sentence as the objects of verbs or prepositions. The lesson to be taken from this is that even if you are a convinced 'participle person', you must make an exception for the subjects of sentences and use the possessive-with-gerund form. Elsewhere, while choice is still there, the tide is swinging your way.

In addition to Burchfield, you'll find a lucid and succinct discussion in *The Cambridge Australian English Style Guide* by Pam Peters, where an interesting comparison is posed: what is the difference, if any, between the two forms? For example, have a think about these:

Grumpy old grandpa doesn't like *me* singing.

Grumpy old grandpa doesn't like *my* singing.

Looking back eighty years from the vantage point of a chaotic early 21st century, it's tempting to see those slogging matches amongst the grammar heavyweights as 'generating more heat than light', but I can't bring myself to see things that way. Heat there certainly was, but enough light was produced to bring us, finally, to a sensible and manageable resolution. Indeed, whenever some smug ignoramus accuses me or a colleague of being 'a grammar Nazi', I like to recall those warriors of old and their all-too-human, ungentlemanly ripostes. Above all, I respect them, right or wrong, for their knowledge of and commitment to the English language.

*James Hansen*

## Repetitious redundancies

Oxymora have an antonym or opposite—they are pleonasms. Instead of a contradiction, there's a repetition of the first term. Here are some pleonastic quotes.

It's déjà vu all over again – *Yogi Berra*

Census says rich have most of the money – *news item*

Clichés are a dime a dozen—avoid them like the plague!

Is that a mirage, or am I seeing thing?

Half the lies our opponents tell about us are not true.

If we do not succeed, we run the risk of failure – *Dan Quayle*

I never make predictions, especially about the future – *Samuel Goldwyn*

## Sign of the times

**You see them here, you see them there, you see those weird signs everywhere!**

On a road sign: *Caution: water on road during rain.*

Circus poster: *Biffo Brothers' Circus, featuring Marvo, the Strongest Man in the World! In town all weak.*

Spotted in a safari park: *Elephants please stay in your car.*

Outside a disco: *Smarts is the most exclusive nightclub in town. Everyone welcome!*

### Editor's word of the month:

#### Verbification

The tendency to turn quite acceptable nouns into substandard verbs, i.e. remoting, tasking.



*Source: Book of Words, 2006*