

# THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1979



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# THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS THE IMPRINT SOCIETY

**Our next meetings:** 29 March  
26 April

The second of our joint meetings is to be held on Thursday 29 March at 6.30 p.m. Three well-known bookmen have agreed to speak as members of a panel on 'Training for Creative Publishing'. The speakers have definite and divergent views on this subject, stemming perhaps from their own quite different training and experience in the book world. Nick Hudson is managing director of Heinemann Educational; Lloyd O'Neil has his own publishing house; John Pitson was assistant director (publishing standards and design) at AGPS, is now a publishing consultant, and has been very much involved in formal training courses at the Caulfield Institute of Technology.

The night's talks and discussion will open up consideration of the basic philosophy of publishing, which is seldom aired in Australia, least of all in busy publishing houses. All editors, designers and production people should take this opportunity to fire questions at the experts and agonize together over roles, skills and the future of the profession.

Our meetings are held upstairs at the John Curtin Hotel, 29 Lygon Street, Carlton. Dinner (about \$3.50, including drinks) is served from about 6.30 pm. The April meeting will be held on Thursday the 26th.

## **Two training excursions in April** **Typesetting**

The second excursion to be organized as part of our training program is a visit to Markby's typesetting operation in South Melbourne. Markby's has a wide range of machinery, and this will be an invaluable opportunity to examine these sometimes mysterious gadgets, and the people operating them, at close hand. A letter from the management contains the sentence: 'The Markby Group is delighted to assist in any venture which may create better understanding between suppliers and users of the printed word'. That sums up what these excursions are about.

*Details:* The Markby Group, 68 York Street, South Melbourne. Assemble in the first floor reception area, 3.30 pm, Wednesday, 4 April. The tour should take about 90 minutes.

## **Electronic Editing**

The central idea of electronic editing is the captured keystroke. Material is entered into a memory bank where it can be rewritten, edited and marked up via a keyboard that is surprisingly straightforward. The finished record is then coded onto tape or used directly to drive a phototypesetter. Thus the material is typed once only, so that there is a reduction in time, effort, error and labour. The process is basically simple, and it stopped publication of *The Times* in the United Kingdom.

The School of Journalism at RMIT has fifteen of these editing terminals, and a trip is being organized for a group of interested editors to see the process at work and even have the chance of operating on a keyboard. If there is enough interest it may even be possible to arrange some sort of program that will allow those concerned to become proficient in the operation of the terminals.

This is a valuable opportunity to gain an understanding of a system of publishing that will become common in future years. In addition, electronic editing is currently a controversial topic, and first-hand experience of one of the machines would seem mandatory to any informed comment.

Preliminary arrangements have been made for a visit on the second or third Thursday in April, for about an hour, starting about 6.00-6.30 pm. Those interested should give their names to Paul Stapleton at the next meeting, or phone him on 419 1333, ext. 203.

Membership of the Society of Editors costs \$10 (full) or \$7 (associate or outside Melbourne).

*Your Committee:* Ann Lahey (freelance, 819 1610), Chairman and Speakers Secretary; Chris Nicol (Longman Cheshire), Secretary; Matthew Kelly (Nelson), Treasurer; Rosalind Price (Oxford), Freelance Register; Paul Stapleton (CSIRO), Training; Mark Robertson (Nelson), AJA Liaison; John Bangsund (freelance, 862 1493), Newsletter Editor.

*Official Address:* PO Box 176, Carlton Sth 3053  
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## OUR FEBRUARY MEETING

Two factors made the first meeting of 1979 a historic occasion. It was the first meeting of the Society of Editors with the Imprint Society, and more alcohol was consumed per person than ever before.

It was a very successful evening.

About 40 people crowded the room on a hot and sultry night, and there was no apparent hesitation in the mixing of the two groups, which on reflection is hardly surprising. After the meal Ann Lahey took control to describe the reasons for the joint meeting. The histories of both societies show a list of the same small crowds listening to the same speakers. Together the members represent the whole of the publishing industry, and the blurring of traditional lines of distinction between editorial and production work calls into question the continued separation of the two groups. Ann expressed her personal hope of an eventual merger, while stressing that each society would retain its individual identity for the time being.

As an introduction to the two societies, Basil Walby (EdSoc) and Ian Green (Imprint) summarized the history of each. Basil attended his first meeting about seven years ago at Cheshire's in St Kilda Road, to find himself the only male among dedicated young ladies meeting to talk about editorial problems. Nowadays the balance of sexes is a little more equal. Basil stunned some members by revealing that the Society has a constitution, the major themes of which are to promote contact between editors, promote the exchange of ideas, assist in establishing and maintaining high standards of editing, and liaison with other organizations in all matters affecting editors as a group. Fine sentiments, and Basil was of the opinion that most had been addressed during the nine years of the Society's existence. Today there is an increase in professionalism among editors, and the Society has a role in making other people aware of this. The Society does not actively concern itself with terms and conditions of employment, but did help in the formation of the book editors' sub-committee of the Australian Journalists' Association. Training of editors has been actively promoted, and the Society has been making wider representations recently by appearing at government inquiries. Submissions have been made to the Franki Commission on copyright and reprography, and the IAC Inquiry into publishing in Australia.

Ian Green reported that the Imprint Society was now in its twelfth year, with a core of veteran members, and younger members who did not often attend meetings. An *ad hoc* group assembled in 1966 after a request from APPM for production personnel and book designers to meet and discuss printing papers. The result was a paper called University Text, which incidentally is no longer available, but more importantly this meeting initiated a contact between a group of individuals that eventually grew into the Imprint

Society of today. Its first meeting was held at Prince's Gate in 1967, with Les Padman from Queensland talking about computer setting. Ian admitted that he had been disappointed when the Society of Editors was formed, feeling that the Imprint Society was a suitable organization for all those associated with publishing. The constitution was loosely established at the first committee meeting and dealt mainly with mutual benefit of the members and the exchange of information. Interestingly, it does not allow discussion of salaries, and at this point an interjector put his foot in it by shouting 'We don't need to - we're the highest paid anyway!' After the scuffling had died down and the tables had been set to rights, Ann wondered about the expectations of the members of both societies. The opportunity existed for a mutual reinforcement of action, and the two groups could speak with a united public voice on matters of concern to all sections of publishing.

Mark Robertson, head of the AJA liaison committee then spoke unofficially on the Book Editors Award. The current award, the first of its kind, is now several years out of date. Recommendations for a new award have been submitted, with claims for higher rates of pay, shorter hours, and an undertaking from management to provide training for editorial staff.

The life of the societies revolves around the monthly meetings, and so this evening was a good opportunity to outline future plans. Further meetings will be on a joint basis, at least for the time being. In March three speakers will debate the importance of training in publishing. Subsequent guests will include a speaker on political books; an eminent journalist, and an expert on the Copyright Bill that is due to come before Parliament this session. Other topics under consideration are booksellers' relations with publishers and perhaps a first-hand account of the Frankfurt Book Fair. Further suggestions will be welcomed, as it is easy to strain the ingenuity of the present committee.

Paul Stapleton described the Society's efforts to establish a series of educational excursions for members, since few editors know everything about every facet of their work. The trip to APM (reported last issue) was the first, and subsequent visits will include a tour of Markby's typesetting operation and a demonstration of electronic editing at the RMIT School of Journalism (see this issue for details). Again, suggestions for visits of this kind will be useful. It is hoped that the publishers will come to regard these as useful on-the-job training for their staff.

The co-ordinator of the *Register of Freelance Editors*, Rosalind Price, suggested that a similar list be compiled for Imprint Society members, or more accurately, freelance designers and advisers. This was generally agreed upon and further details will be forthcoming.



Finally, Basil Walby described his experiences at the IAC hearings on publishing in Australia. After making an earlier submission on behalf of his employers, CSIRO, and then reading the draft recommendations, Basil had no interest in responding in his original capacity. However, the committee of the Society asked him to make a submission on behalf of editors. He expanded this to include creative personnel and employees as a whole throughout the industry, an area that he felt had been neglected up to that point. He was surprised that no-one else at the second hearing chose this tack. He had expected some response from printing and publishing employee groups or the unions, since implementation of the recommendations as they stood would inevitably increase inflation and unemployment. The operation of complete *laissez-faire* in Australian publishing would result only in pot-boilers, since local firms would not be able to compete with European or American publishers. Many independent Australian publishers would fold, there would be a general reduction in the level of employment in the industry, prices would rise, and multinational monopolies would be established.

Basil made his submission to the inquiry in Canberra, but was not questioned on any of the issues raised in his statement. It seems that once in the witness box you can only answer the questions that you are asked, and so must yield to the commissioner's line of thinking and interests. It was a disappointing trip, but at least our case is on record – especially important as it was the only one to speak from the point of view of employees. As to ultimate action, Basil hoped that the Government would ignore the Commission's final report, as it had the report on the Arts.

Winding up the meeting, Ann repeated that the traditional lines of separation in the industry were breaking down and hoped that the two Societies could face the electronic future together. And no-one could argue with that.

Paul Stapleton

## WHAT AUTHORS EXPECT OF EDITORS

A report on our November meeting, by Ann Lahey

There is a traditional and comforting view among editors that the editor is the author's friend, that we have a special relationship with authors, which leads to great books and certainly gives us a warm glow. It seemed salutary, at our November meeting, to ask two very experienced authors to give us a realistic view of what authors expect of editors.

Geoffrey Serle is reader in history at Monash University, joint general editor of the *Australian*

*Dictionary of Biography* and the author of several books, and has edited *Meanjin*, *Historical Studies* and *La Trobe Library Journal*, so he knows the game as author and editor. George Turner has published seven novels, has edited a collection of Australian science fiction, and regularly reviews fiction for the *Age*, the *Australian* and various literary journals here and overseas. Both authors felt that they did not know what they were entitled to expect of a publishing house in the way of editorial treatment, but had firm ideas of what they hoped to receive.

Some of George Turner's pet hates were: editors who do not answer questions, particularly those asked in letters; publishers who fail to provide a statement of house style that an author can follow (writers are prepared to adjust cherished forms to suit house style if only they know it—people writing children's books in particular have great difficulty in understanding what they can or cannot do in the way of spelling, style for quotations, peculiarities of punctuation and so on, and practically have to rewrite their books from one publisher to another).

A problem met particularly by novelists is to be told to cut the ms (often before the copy editor sees the book), and George made an impassioned plea for help at this point: the author should be told why cutting is necessary (is it too long because it will cost too much, or because the writer talks too much, or for technical reasons?) and by how much to cut (10 000 words? 20 000?). If explicit instructions are given, writers are prepared to act on them, but it is often hard to get a statement from the firm as to what they think is required in the way of cutting. Often a better novel results if the author can get some advice on the re-handling. The question of cutting is part of an editor's business. Writers' methods vary, but George Turner's is to leave his cuts visible for the editor to consider, so that the editor can see what the writer has done, and knowing what was in the writer's mind, can decide where to modify the cutting.

Similarly, the editor must help with advice on internal changes: changes affecting a scene, the mode of writing, dialogue—all sorts of changes that require rewriting. Any novelist knows that when even the worst of critics objects to something he must take a second look at it. It is up to the writer to act on these criticisms, if someone can tell him what it is that is wrong, or if they feel something does not work. But if you ask a writer to make a change, you must tell him what you think is wrong. This doesn't work, doesn't fit in with the general atmosphere of the rest of the chapter, does not feel of the same quality as the rest of the work tells him nothing. The writer may not agree; he may do something different from what you suggest; but it may be better than what was there originally. If we give that kind of help (not how to put it right, but what is wrong) we will get better novels and stories. Editors should also appreciate the difficulty an author finds in changing the title to his

book. He has chosen what he feels is the right one, and will need help in finding a more commercial title, if that is the request. The last resort is for a publisher to use the name of the central character as title, but this often happens, to the author's dismay.

Geoffrey Serle looks to an editor to improve the style of a book, to remove blemishes such as repetitions and solecisms, and to advise on structure. The editor should also advise on the relationship of the book to its intended audience, and its effectiveness in the market-place.

An academic author, Geoffrey indulged in some mild stirring: he firmly criticized publishers who shop around among academics for advice on who might write what, and he castigated scholars who are open to such outside influence in deciding what to write (but he excepted textbooks, which are an extension of the teaching function, as distinct from the research function). The publisher's business is producing books that will sell (sometimes regardless of quality); the academic's business is scholarship, uninfluenced by the market-place.

In analysing his experience in his writing career, Geoffrey spoke of the great help he received from Andrew Fabinyi of Cheshire and Gwyn James of MUP. They and he did not presume that a young scholar's thesis should automatically be published, but they encouraged his writing. His first books, *The Golden Age* and *The Rush to Be Rich*, required very little editing, and the later *From Deserts the Prophets Come* represented the first real relationship of author and editor (Hilary McPhee) he had had. His current project, a biography of Sir John Monash, he said, presents difficulties of construction, in that there is an embarrassing wealth of material, and he will be seeking all the critical advice he can get from his publisher (MUP). Geoffrey's belief is that an academic needs most help when he is inexperienced, perhaps faced with the daunting task of converting thesis to book, but he does not require so much from an editor in his later books. The editor's potential for help with a young writer is great: he needs advice as to what must be done to make a thesis publishable (in limited time, if he is teaching), how to reduce the scholarly apparatus, what the potential reader can tolerate. Geoffrey Serle also welcomed publishers' activity in another field: seeking out and encouraging those academics who, through diffidence or modest (or even realistic) appraisal of their capacities, do not give expression to their real intellectual strength by writing.

Dr Serle called upon all editors as allies in the fight to preserve the English language. He is reduced to impotent rage by the many spelling and grammatical errors in books, and deplores the fact that so many academics cannot write well; their inability to communicate and their use of esoteric jargon vitiate valuable scholarship. If he were chairman of the Australia Council he would insist on subsidies to publishers to double the number of editors, to intensify the battle against diseased English.

Both authors thought the damnable job of proof-reading needed to be rationalized. George Turner felt it was not an editor's business, because the editor, like the author, gets thoroughly fed up with a book he knows so well and at the proofreading stage both may perform as zombies. On the other hand, he did not agree with putting more responsibility on the typesetter, who concentrates on a word or phrase at a time and easily loses contextual relevance; it is unreasonable to expect a typesetter to correct errors that are in the ms given to him. Professional proof-readers, he suggested, may be the answer, but they should be paid as editors. [From various things that George said, it appeared that he had no clear concept of who exactly should be responsible for reading proofs for publishers. A member of the audience suggested that this should be the task of 'other editors' – a suggestion that was not received enthusiastically by the rest of the audience. In fact, there was a stony silence at this point. *Ed.*]

Discussion focused particularly on the themes of popularization, degeneration of the language, and the relationship (often the conflict) between author and editor.

Geoffrey Serle's somewhat uncompromising stand against the ethics of the market-place was tackled. He distinguished between the genuine attempt at serious publishing from the highest motives and the not-unknown attempt to write the academic bestseller. George Turner said that popularization is not always a matter of writing down or cheapening, but more a matter of writing entertainingly, a question of style, and he instanced Charles Dickens, who pandered to the mob but was one of the rare ones who could transcend his faults. It is not necessary for a writer to appeal at all levels, but the writer must have the quality of being able to enliven a subject.

Language is in a state of flux at all times; what is wrong today is right tomorrow. Novelists and playwrights must reflect all the varieties of language in their work, and have the right to insist on their words being retained, but it should probably be part of the editorial function to police some standard, particularly in scholarly work. The amount of change and criticism a creative writer can tolerate probably increases with his experience of the editing process. Both authors felt that it should be possible for editor and author to work together in a business relationship without conflict, despite differences in personality and knowledge.

It would seem that authors as experienced as these two speakers would send their mss to a publisher relying on the services that editors can provide. As an extension of this, one would hope that all authors would make a point of choosing those publishers who offer that sort of service. For inexperienced authors in particular, a proper appreciation of the editor's role may help to prevent conflict developing between author and publisher.

Ann Lahey

## Reporters wanted

It is generally agreed that the most useful thing the Newsletter has done lately is to provide reports on meetings of the Society. Ann Lahey has done a marvellous job of this, covering the meetings from July to November 1978. Tim Bass wrote the first report, on the AGM in June. Paul Stapleton covered the February meeting – delightfully, don't you think? We would hate to discontinue these reports, but there aren't many Ann Laheys around, and even Tim and Paul would find it irksome to report every meeting, so we are looking for volunteers. Once a year isn't too often to do the job, and we can help with tape-recording. Think of it as a challenge, a vital, vibrant experience in your all-round ability as a publishing person! Please form an orderly queue outside PO Box 230, Kew 3101, or ring John Bangsund: 862 1493.

## FREELANCE REGISTER

The Society's *Register of Freelance Editors* is being revised, and will probably appear with a slightly different title, since we have invited freelance members of the Imprint Society to be in it, which will make it a more general directory of freelance publishing services. Editors, designers, proofreaders, indexers—whatever you happen to be or do—if you would like to be in the *Register*, please get in touch instantly with Rosalind Price, c/- Oxford University Press, GPO Box 2784Y, Melbourne 3001. Please don't assume that because you were in the last edition you will be in the next: write to Ros.

The Society of Industrial Editors is compiling a register of freelancers. There seems some merit in the idea of combining our efforts in this line. We'll keep you posted. Meantime, if the SIE register interests you, write to the Secretary, GPO Box 4021, Melbourne 3001. DENISE DOMINGO, 1/17 Plumer Road, Rose Bay 2029 (phone 02 36 8133) seeks freelance work editing, writing, proofreading; also willing to type, organize, develop and/or research material for publication. BA (Hons) in English, presently studying part-time MA (Hons) in Australian Literature. Seven years experience, mostly in USA. Teacher, author of feature articles in bio-behavioural and social sciences, &c. HEDLEY FINGER, 96 Falconer Street, North Fitzroy 3068 (phone 03 489 5648) has resigned his position as Senior Educational Editor at Macmillan's, and from 14 April will become *Moving Finger Editorial Services*. A founding member of the Society of Editors, Hedley has had 14 years experience in magazine and book publishing, and offers a complete production and editorial service: typography, design, copy editing, rewriting, proofing, layout, paste-up, indexing.

ANGELA GUNDERT, 3/75 Allison Road, Elsternwick 3185 (phone 03 523 5883) offers to undertake manuscript evaluation, picture research, editing, proofreading &c. BA (major in English Lit), secretarial experience, educational and general editor with Nelson

Australia 1976-78, experienced in all aspects of book editing.

MARY B. HENNESSY, PO Box 120, Parkville 3052 seeks work in writing or publishing. Some experience in editing, interviewing, writing feature articles, layout. Arts graduate, age 21.

JENNIFER LORD, 39 Delbridge Street, North Fitzroy 3068 (phone 03 489 7659) BA (Hons), majors in French and Russian. Enjoys translation into English. 18 months experience in editing and designing academic, educational and research works at ACER. Experience in clerical tasks related to publishing. No objection to proofreading.

PUBLISHERS' AIDE (run by Lynne Swan), 128 Bank Street, South Melbourne 3205 (phone 03 699 9474) does typesetting on the latest IBM Mag Card Composer. Formerly of Cheshire Publishing and Primary Education Publishing and conversant with publishers' needs, Lynne offers an economical answer for short-run books and promotional material.

## Other people's meetings

The *Society of Industrial Editors* holds luncheon meetings on the first Friday of each month. No details are to hand about the April meeting, but we will make an announcement about it at our March meeting; you could get in touch with the SIE by writing to the Secretary, GPO Box 4021, Melbourne 3001, or ringing Beverley Knowles at RMIT Publications and Information Office.

At least seven *science fiction conventions* will be held in Australia during 1979, in four States. Three to note are Eastercon (Melbourne, 13-16 April; information PO Box 175, South Melbourne 3205), Quasarcon (Adelaide, 16-18 June; information 21 Mulga Road, Hawthorndene 5051) and Syncon 79, the 18th National Convention (Sydney, 10-13 August; information PO Box 146, Burwood 2134). The 37th World Convention will be held in Brighton, England, 23-27 August. The 4th Annual Conference on Teaching Science Fiction will be held in Florida, 27-29 April.

## BOOK NOTICES

*A Kiss Through Glass*, by Shirley Nolan; Gazelle Books, Melbourne; 246pp, \$3.50 (paper)

I invited members of the ABPA and AIPA to send us books 'likely to be of interest to editors' to review. So far only Gazelle Books have responded.

Is *A Kiss Through Glass* likely to be of interest to editors? I should hope so. Anthony Nolan is 7 years old and has bone marrow disease. When he was born, doctors said he had no hope of surviving. Shirley Nolan refused to accept this, and has devoted herself since to Anthony's survival and to the plight of other victims of the disease. Her story is awe-inspiring. Among



other things, Mrs Nolan has exploited the media, brilliantly and to excellent effect, in her single-minded fight to save Anthony. If you ever wonder whether true heroism still exists, read this book, because it does, right here, in a suburb of Adelaide.

John Bangsund

Scholarly Publishers Guide: New Methods and Techniques. 102pp, A4, loose-leaf, £6.72, ISBN 0 906083 00 1, Primary Communications Research Centre, University of Leeds, Leicester LE1 7RH, UK *New Methods and Techniques* is a book that describes time and money saving techniques, some actual, some theoretical, that are guaranteed to make your hair curl. The publishers claim that it 'may only be of immediate interest to large learned societies or commercial publishers of scholarly material', but the number of radical suggestions it contains makes it required reading for anyone with an eye to the future.

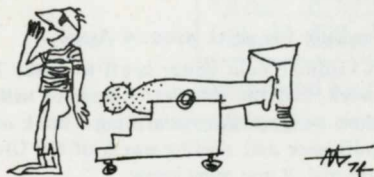
The book is in loose-leaf form, split into sections, and each section deals with a number of topics. The sections are: New ways of dealing with conventional journal material within print-on-paper; New kinds of journal material; Additional sources of revenue for journals; Cheaper book production: Editorial mechanisms; Technical processes; Alternatives to print-on-paper; Microform; and Distribution and post.

There isn't room to list each topic, but a selection of the most radical is enough anyway. Full texts are kept in a data bank while two independent abstracts of the paper are published, together with two critical comments; authors should be charged a fee for in-house handling of manuscripts, published or not; computer conferencing, where the delegates stay home and talk via video screens; accelerated ink drying to cut machine time; computerized page layout and graphics; produce books on video discs rather than paper; the original manuscript, including editorial comments and the author's subsequent alterations, is converted, as it stands, into microfiche and these are sold [gasp]; some larger publishers in the United States combine in their air freighting to take advantage of special rates, smaller publishers then ride piggy back in the spare room.

It's easy to feel secure behind a desk, scribbling away and ordering authors about. With books like this appearing perhaps it's time to start thinking, or at least perspiring slightly, otherwise you'll find yourself switched off.

Paul Stapleton

BARBER!



## WE GET LETTERS

Ann Lahey, 1/5A Creswick Street, Hawthorn 3122: I appreciate very much the messages of enthusiasm and encouragement so many old and new friends have showered upon me at news of my forthcoming marriage. I thank you all most warmly for your love and goodwill. I am to marry Robert Neale, of the Australian Archives in Canberra, and in the firm traditions of editing I did not commit myself to use of a new name without making sure of its meaning. I was reassured to find that our old family dictionary (Funk and Wagnall, USA) defines AN-NEAL: 'To reduce brittleness and increase softness and toughness. . . Figuratively to toughen, temper, render enduring. Ignite. Kindle.' It seems a fine basis for marriage.

☐ *That's lovely, Ann. We'll be thinking of you, especially in winter. I think it was Agatha Christie once said it was marvellous being married to an archaeologist, because the older you get the more interesting you become to him. It probably applies to archivists, too. This archivist, if I may speak out of turn, is better known to many as Professor Neale, editor of AGPS's Documents in Australian Foreign Policy.*

Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge 2776: I find it easy to sustain the belief that B. J. Walby finds impossible, namely that the user pays, particularly since the only alternative ever suggested is that others have their earnings removed (by tax if you agree, theft if you don't) so that the activities favoured by a governing elite can be subsidized. It seems to me very reasonable that the users should pay for schooling in government schools (and by the way, the users are the students, not the parents). As for farmers being encouraged to work their land only if it is profitable, can it have escaped Mr Walby's attention that profit is encouragement enough? While the concept of helping to sustain commercially unviable works of national importance is a nice one, just who is to decide which works qualify? Surely it would be better to find methods of reducing the costs of such works to the point at which they can be published and sold. My personal opinion is that if the readers do not care enough about such books to purchase them then it is unreasonable for such an elitist audience to expect a subsidy from others.

☐ *Your letter was dated 15 February 1879, Eric. Was that intentional?*

Phillip Adams, c/- The Age, 250 Spencer Street, Melbourne 3000:

I've been chuckling over your Italian epic. If I can get the right cast together (Peters Cook and Ustinov, Johns Gielgud and Kerr) I'll make a movie of it. Indeed, Keats and Chapman could take over from Lewis and Martin. Or am I thinking of Sodom and Gomorrah? You really are a talented swine.

☐ *So how come I'm not rich?*

David Grigg, 48 Lewisham Road, Prahran 3181:

Apart from your amusing logodaedaly, the article on computer technology in publishing was fascinating, if not a little terrifying. But I do feel that at times the collective legs of the publishing world are being pulled by the technologists. I've been doing my best to keep up with advances in computer technology, and we are still years, if not decades, away from having a computer that can take voice dictation. To the best of my knowledge, the best we've got so far is a computer program that can recognize about four hundred words as spoken by one speaker, or alternatively one word as spoken by four hundred different speakers. Not to mention the difficulty of distinguishing between homophonic words (it will be a long time before we can get a computer to do that by judging the context). Computer proof reading also sounds to me rather like pie-in-the-sky. You could, I suppose, have a computer check through an immense list of words to see if a particular word in the proof was a real word or not, but how would you get it to recognize that you've typed 'reed' instead of 'feed'? You have to realize that computers don't *understand* anything they read. And even if such picking up of literals was practical, as an editor you will realize that the worst errors in proofs are usually things like complete transposition of paragraphs or sentences, and checking whether John Kerr is G.C.M.G. or K.C.M.G. We'll need to develop the positronic brain before computers can do that kind of editing. Still, editing will change rapidly over the next few years, in some unpredictable ways. I remain optimistic that these changes will be positive ones that will make life easier, not harder.

☐ *Logodaedaly is what it's all about, David.*

Leanne Frahm, 272 Slade Point Road, Slade Point 4741:

[The 'Floppy Disc' article] was absolutely horrifying, especially the bit '... over a period the computer will build up from the books it has worked on a store of information, including facts as well as spelling'. Can you imagine the 'facts' a computer that works on science fiction will store? Or, more sinisterly, can you imagine a scientifically minded computer deleting every non-proven item from an sf novel? Without recourse to authorial correction? These may be the final days of fiction.

☐ *Not while we have political memoirs, Leanne.*

W. Mahoney, Jacaranda Wiley Ltd, 65 Park Road, Milton 4064:

Please convey congrats to John Bangsund on Feb. Newsletter and my wish for more of such meeting reports as 'The Editor and the Floppy Disc' (although the small type size was no help). Humbly suggest continued reportage of new technologies in the industry—the makers and distributors of the new machines would be only too glad to provide data, I'm sure.

☐ *Conveyed, thanks. I agree about the type size last time: I'd hoped for something larger than 5 point.*

We even get telegrams:

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS FOR THE NEWSLETTER AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS BEST WISHES GOUGH WHITLAM

We also heard from: Senator Susan Ryan; Beverley Knowles; Hedley Finger; Jim Hart; Mike Greenane; Peter Buckmaster; Ken Fargher; Jane Arms; Neil Conning; Dick Johnson; Anne O'Donovan; Bill Reed; Bill Hornadge; Hilary McPhee; Janet Mackenzie; and some others. We did not hear from the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, Hon. Wallace Clyde Fife, so be damned if he gets another free copy.

### Changes of Address

Neil Conning has moved from VCTA to Outback Press. Hedley Finger is leaving Macmillan to run his own business at 96 Falconer Street, North Fitzroy 3068. Rob West has moved from Adelaide to 26 King William Street, Greenwich 2065.

Keats and Chapman once got tired of standing-by for cheap air fares and stowed away on a tramp steamer, which, it turned out, wasn't going where they wanted to go anyway. Two days out they were discovered and offered the choice of working their passage or leaving the ship instantly. Some days later, while they were scrubbing the decks, Keats (who was in a foul mood) snarled at Chapman, 'Where's the bloody soap?' Chapman said, quite cheerfully, 'By jove, it does, doesn't it!' Keats said a rude nautical word and threw his bucket at him.

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### Deadline for next issue: 4 April

No kidding! Your editor is off to sunny Tasmania for a week, and the Newsletter must be with the printer before he goes. I'm researching a book on the origin, significance and abiding worth of the Ulverstone War Memorial, if you must know.