

SfEP Annual Report

August 2016

Please note that while our accounts cover the financial year from 1 March 2015 to 29 February 2016, this report also covers the activities of the council and the Society from 1 March 2016 to 1 July 2016, the date of writing.

Report from the chair

Sabine Citron

This has been another busy year for the SfEP and its council. This year's highlights will show, we hope, that we are making strides in the right direction. Of course we do not just make decisions at our five council meetings each year: we also spend time every day discussing issues on the council forum and progressing things quietly. Nothing would get done without the energy, dedication, team spirit and much-needed resilience of my fellow directors.

After two initial large but slightly unwieldy strategy meetings (in June 2014 and June 2015), the council's dedicated strategy group started meeting regularly in December 2015, between each set of council meetings. The group's aim is to fine-tune the Society's general objectives and turn them into more specific ones. We meet in Scotland or Cumbria to save time and expenses, and we have made good progress, notably by agreeing on the core objective of chartership, by deciding to hire an outside financial consultant, by focusing our efforts on increasing our membership, and by redistributing directorial remits. We will publish the corresponding five-year plan in due course.

Chartership is about high standards and about raising the profile of editorial work and of the people who carry it out professionally. This is what the SfEP stands for. We were much encouraged by the many words of support we received when we shared the chartership objective with the membership.

We will be able to formally apply for chartership only once our membership figures have grown significantly. Increasing our numbers will require active and focused efforts on our part. This does not mean that our efforts and those of the Futures Group have been in vain: our membership mix is becoming a much healthier one, with a larger proportion of members upgrading. This too is a sign of improved standards.

Our core aim of increasing membership numbers was at the heart of our redistribution of directorial roles and our creation of new ones. We have widened the

scope of two heretofore relatively lighter roles. The publications role becomes a more general (internal) information one, including the maintenance of our statutory documents and the all-important FAQs on our website. The remit of the regional development director will now include member engagement more generally, under the name 'community', taking in social media. This in turn gives the marketing and public relations (MPR) director much-needed time for more active marketing of the Society and what it stands for. Meanwhile, the training director will now oversee mentoring. The financial role will become an external one. All this allows us to create two new directorial remits. The external relations director will seek out and engage with educational institutions, sister organisations, potential clients, governmental and professional bodies and publishers with a view to raising the profile of our profession. The standards director will set up and update our editorial standards, syllabus, tests and qualifications – all essential in preparing for chartership. Gerard Hill, our outgoing mentoring and tests director, is our first standards director and will become the SfEP's new chartership adviser when he stands down at this year's AGM after nearly nine years of exemplary service as a director. It is Gerard who initiated our drive toward chartership.

We have also taken the decision to appoint an outside expert to oversee our financial activities and ensure we spend our money wisely. Our finances remain healthy, but the effort we are engaged in has required and will require input in time and money. You will see below that the council has put in more collective hours in the past year than ever before; with new, fuller remits, this is unlikely to change. This year, the cost to the Society of director hours is £73.4K, or an average of £6.1K per year per director. I hope you will agree this is money well spent. Note that each director also did the equivalent of £5.3K p.a. of unpaid work, a collective yearly saving for the Society of £63.2K. This report will give you a glimpse of everything the council members have individually and collectively done with their time.

We have tried to keep membership fees, conference fees and the cost of training courses as low as possible for members and hope to continue in this direction, although we have to remain realistic in the management of our sources of income if we want to achieve our objectives.

We would be lost without our dedicated and ever-smiling office staff: the office manager, Helen Martin, the finance officer, Bridget Buckle, and our two office administrators, Josie Davies and Shannon Humberstone. Shannon took over in March when Hannah Moroney left, and she has proved a valuable, efficient member of the team. To take a little off the increased workload of our finance officer, we have

engaged the services of a professional company secretary, Jane Muir, of Derringtons Limited.

We also all owe a big debt of gratitude to our many other contributors: local group coordinators and other local helpers; web and social media teams; forum moderators; the conference team and sponsorship coordinator; the many people who contribute their time and words to *Editing Matters* and to our blog; the Directory manager; our trainers and mentors; the admissions panel; the Judith Butcher Award panel; the benefits coordinator; those who update the membership map, compile 'Rates for the Job', take on one-off tasks and promote the SfEP at external events or on social media and take the time to answer questions on our forums; and our many volunteer proofreaders. We are grateful to them all, and would like to encourage everyone to consider helping the Society. You are the SfEP.

Vice-chair

Lucy Metzger

As our chair has said, our energetic and endlessly helpful team in the SfEP office make it all work, and their vast combined experience and knowledge of the SfEP are an essential resource for the Society and for the council. We thank them.

When I became vice-chair, I had unfinished business from my previous role as regional development director (RDD). Ruth Durbridge, the new RDD, jumped straight in and managed beautifully, and I finished compiling copy for our new local and regional web pages. I was grateful for excellent contributions from the local group coordinators, and these pages are thriving thanks to them, Ruth and our internet team.

I joined the council's strategy group (see 'Report from the chair'). I have compiled the group's terms of reference, and I prepare its reports to the council.

In January I worked with the training director on a contract with a large organisation that wanted bespoke online training courses (see 'Training').

Our wonderful volunteers have played an enormous role in the Society's achievements. The council wants to encourage more members to volunteer as the SfEP grows in size and ambition, and we will need to ensure that we support our growing team of volunteers properly. I have approached the Professional Associations Research Network for help in designing a survey to ask their member organisations about how they provide support for volunteers. I will report on the results.

Sabine Citron started Council News as a vehicle for the council to report on its decisions, aims and proceedings. I have sent out some brief bulletins,

provisionally called Council News Plus, reporting council news and other SfEP activities. (Links in these have produced a slight increase in the number of members joining our forums, one of the main benefits the SfEP has to offer: see 'Internet'.) Taking up members' suggestions, we plan to move towards two separate publications: a regular digest of council plans and work, and a newsletter about SfEP activities more generally.

Apart from that, I provide agendas and minutes. I am always happy to discuss either.

Finance

Paul Churchouse

This is my second and final report as finance director and I have had much assistance from Bridget Buckle, our finance officer, who helps run the financial side of things and makes sure that the directors submit relevant paperwork at the correct time. Warrener Stewart Chartered Accountants have once again prepared these annual accounts.

I am pleased to report that the figures for the year ending 29 February 2016 continue to show a healthy balance sheet. The surplus for the year was £43,492 – a considerable decrease from last year's figure of £124K (see page 3 of the accounts). You will find more details on income and direct costs for the year, as well as administrative expenses, on page 9.

The popularity of our online courses is once again shown by a surplus of over £85K, while a further increase in membership numbers raised an additional £11K.

This overall increase in income was made possible only through investment in new courses and through the hard work of many people.

Wages and salaries have increased by £21K as there is now an additional member of staff working in the office. Directors' fees rose by 87 per cent to £73.4K, reflecting the fact that all the directors have been working many hours on your behalf. The first 15 hours that each director puts in each month are unpaid, as are 7 hours per council meeting; the hours of voluntary work contributed by directors in the course of the last financial year were worth over £60K. Administrative expenses rose by £84K due to training development, the admissions panel fees and the added expenditure referred to above.

We must also acknowledge the many hours given generously by our large team of volunteers.

Overall the Society is in a healthy financial position at present but as it continues to grow, more investment will be required to sustain this growth in order to

ensure that the Society continues to meet the needs of its membership and the industry.

This is the last report that the finance director will be responsible for. Due to a change in directorial remits, this post is becoming a non-directorial one so a new external financial consultant is being appointed to take over this role.

Membership

John Firth

During this first year of the Society's new membership structure our 'mix' of grades has changed substantially. Unprecedented numbers of existing members have applied to upgrade (see 'Professional development') and 63 new members successfully applied to join as Intermediate, Professional and Advanced Professional Members. However, many joiners who apply for one of these grades do not submit the evidence to support their application (so eventually enrol as Entry-Level Members). Moreover, existing members applying to upgrade were more successful than joiners submitting evidence, which suggests that the outside world is less aware of the standards we require than we would like. For the second year in a row, large numbers of Entry-Level Members did not renew their membership, but 'renewals' are still coming in.

Taking all this into account, our membership has returned to the level it was at renewal 2013, and recruitment continues to be encouraging:

Grade	At renewal 2015	At renewal 2016	At 1 July 2016
Retired	24	19	20
Advanced Professional	297	308	331
Professional	403	456	478
Intermediate	–	169	196
Entry-Level	809	754	876
Friend	14	7	11
Total	1547	1711	1912

This was the last year in which Accreditation in Proofreading was offered. Including successful Accreditations (see 'Professional development'), during 2015–16, 21 existing members upgraded to Advanced Professional Membership, 74 to Professional Membership and 151 to Intermediate Membership, more than three times as many as in the previous year. These figures do not include the 63 members who successfully joined at one of these grades. Although (of course) it is encouraging to see how many people continue to join the Society, it is particularly exciting to see how many are now coming in at grades above Entry-Level.

Proposals for career-break membership were accepted at the 2015 AGM and it was introduced informally from 1 March 2016. Details have proved problematic and a consultation with the membership is continuing; final proposals will be submitted to the 2016 AGM.

The Judith Butcher Award for 2015 was given to Rod Cuff, for his many contributions to the SfEP and its vision. He served on the committee (which later became the council), developed and maintained the Society's website and online Directory, and acted as moderator on SfEPLine. He also led the Futures Group, which developed the Society's new professional membership structure.

As usual, in November 2015 and May 2016 we carried out surveys of the whole membership, and of members who had decided not to renew. Both surveys provided a considerable amount of information to help the council's work: on what professional and academic qualifications members hold, on how many hours per week members devote to proofreading or copy-editing and on how well members think various parts of the Society are run. Another survey, in March 2016, asked to what extent members would like to combine with the Society of Indexers in holding future conferences. The council is grateful to everyone who took the time to respond.

Lydia Wanstall has agreed to act as the Society's benefits coordinator. This important area of our management has suffered from having to be 'squeezed in' among other director commitments (or, more often, 'squeezed out' by them), and we are delighted that Lydia has taken this on.

The Society's online forum is in many ways the 'jewel in the crown' and I should also like to thank the many members who have taken the time and trouble to join it and share their thoughts, opinions and experience with other members. This makes a major contribution to the Society, how it is run and what it is able to do.

Chartership

Gerard M-F Hill

Following an online poll that closed on 20 April 2016, the council unanimously decided to adopt the aim of achieving chartered status for the Society. Before that I had researched the question, spoken to officials at the Privy Council Office (which considers applications) and attended the Westminster Forum on the UK book industry. Since April I have begun making contacts in the relevant ministries and quangos. Christina Thomas and I have had meetings with representatives from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Creative Skillset; Sabine Citron and I are to meet officials from the Privy Council Office and the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. After I step down from the SfEP council, I will continue to work on chartership and on accrediting our courses and qualifications.

Marketing and public relations

Margaret Hunter

The MPR director is responsible for raising the profile of the SfEP among potential members and clients, and for looking after advertising, press releases, guest articles, publicity materials, media contacts and sponsorship. Since I took over at the 2015 AGM, I have continued many of the good initiatives put in place by my predecessors and made some headway in developing new ones.

Our **social media** presence on Facebook and Twitter continues to be a success, reaching well beyond our membership. We have a strong team of volunteer contributors who research and post interesting material and answer all sorts of enquiries and comments. Thanks to everyone who is and has been on the team – your contribution is greatly valued. This is also an excellent outlet for publicising courses, events, etc. We aim to develop our social media further with Twitter chats, for example, and more original content. A social media plan was drawn up to promote the 2015 conference and worked well (so this has been used and enhanced for the 2016 conference).

The SfEP **blog** was launched by the social media manager (SMM) in 2014, but after a good start there was a dip in activity, especially following the end of the SMM's contract in March 2015. The then MPR director Liz Jones (LJ) took over and greatly improved the regularity and quality of posts. (In the current financial year we have recruited a new blog coordinator, Tracey Roberts, and she is getting her teeth into planning posts and inviting contributors.)

LJ and our training director, Stephen Cashmore, consulted a marketing agency on ways to promote workshop-based **courses**, take-up for which has been falling over the past couple of years (see 'Training'). The agency made various useful suggestions (including rebranding to 'workshop' rather than 'classroom'). Most of these will be useful for promoting online courses too.

LJ produced some new **leaflets** publicising the SfEP – Directory, courses, membership, etc. I have updated these and added some new ones. I have also updated our banners. These are available for promoting the SfEP at outside events. (I hope to have the leaflets available to order soon via our website.) Several members have already taken our leaflets to events throughout the year. Particularly successful was the promotion by Sarah Patey and Denise Cowle at an event for ELT editors, and as a result we now have a new ELT forum and new members. We have plans for an **ambassador scheme**, with members promoting the SfEP at external events, and will develop support materials such as a boilerplate presentation and other resources presenting the SfEP and explaining copy-editing and proofreading.

Members have been able to take advantage during the year of **discounted deals** with sister organisations, such as events organised by BookMachine, Bloomsbury Book Club and the Society of Authors.

I placed an **advertisement** in the Frankfurt Book Fair dailies. We again **sponsored** the Inpress Festival of Publishing (independent publishers) and members of the SfEP who attended received a discount.

Press releases were issued to promote our revamped website and our new courses on 'References' and 'Editing with Word'.

In the current financial year it is worth noting some positive developments. We had a coordinated campaign to launch our 'Editing with Word' course, where our social media postings drummed up interest (and even excitement!) in tandem with our press release, and bookings quickly followed. We will have an advertisement in the forthcoming edition of the *Writers' & Artists' Yearbook (WAYB)*. We have long had a mention in *WAYB*, but I hope the new ad will produce even better results. Gerard Hill and I have also revised and updated the 'Editing your work' section in *WAYB*. Another very useful venture was our stand at the London Book Fair, where we had a good mix of publishers and authors looking for editorial help and people looking for support and training to work as editors or proofreaders. It was a great opportunity to show people our Directory and to promote our training.

Importantly for the year ahead, the council has reviewed the directors' remits and from September MPR will no longer have responsibility for social media. This means that the MPR director will have more time to concentrate on the core tasks of publicity, awareness-raising and media engagement. Raising our profile, within the publishing industry and beyond, will become increasingly important as we move towards our goal of chartership.

Conference

Christine Vaughan

The first SfEP/SI joint conference was held at the University of York on 5–7 September 2015. It was attended by 194 delegates (123 of whom booked via the SfEP) and was well received, with delegates rating it 'good' / 'very good' overall on feedback forms (average score of 4.5 out of 5). A number of delegates commented on the high quality of the programme; complaints largely related to the distance between locations and congestion in the refreshment area. Feedback on the joint nature of the conference was mixed: some felt it was a real success; others prefer separate conferences. All comments were noted and will be addressed as far as possible. A small surplus of £1415 will be put towards the 2016 conference.

The search for the 2017 conference venue began in March 2015 and resulted in the decision to hold it at Wyboston Lakes, Bedfordshire, on 16–18 September 2017.

At a council meeting in May 2015, we agreed to make the conference fees fairer to non-resident delegates. Fees for residents will tend to be slightly higher than they have been in the past; fees for non-resident member delegates will be 30 per cent of the resident member fee (previously usually 40 per cent); for corporate subscribers, sister organisations and non-members, the non-resident fee will be 40 per cent of the respective resident rate (previously 60 per cent).

Preparations for the 2016 conference began in earnest in October 2015, with a meeting attended by the office staff and conference team members Rachel Hamar and Sue Browning. As ever, we wanted to come up with a programme catering for a wide range of interests and levels of experience. But this year, in addition to workshops, seminars and lectures, we also wanted to try some new ideas – these developed into the speed and live sessions, which we hope will go down well.

The council also decided to take a slightly different tack regarding sponsorship this year, as in the last few years the exhibitors' fair has been somewhat disappointing. We decided to offer free exhibition stands and discounted sponsorship packages. This

might contribute to the conference's making a small loss, but an exhibitors' fair worthy of the name should enhance delegates' conference experience and help the SfEP build relationships with interested parties. Sherona Treen-Coward, the sponsorship coordinator, has put this new approach into practice and it seems to be bearing fruit.

In 2015 we negotiated reciprocal conference discounts with eight sister organisations – ACES (USA), MET (Europe), EASE (Europe), EAC (Canada), IPed (Australia), PEG (South Africa), NIEG (US), UNICO (Spain) – for the York conference. This year the council decided simply to give members of these organisations a 10 per cent discount on places at the 2016 conference; all responded with thanks and most have offered or will offer SfEP members a similar discount on their next conference and/or other future events.

Since the start of the new financial year (2016–17), plans for the Birmingham conference have continued. We took a record number of early-bird bookings, and at the time of writing it seems likely that we will have to close booking early as we can accommodate a maximum of 139 delegates per day. As well as continuing to liaise with speakers and with staff at the venue, we have been working on the information to be sent out to delegates in two mailings.

Following a request from the SI that we consider holding another joint conference, we surveyed the SfEP membership to canvass opinions. Although the results were in some ways quite positive, there was some opposition, particularly among APMs. The council was also concerned about organisational issues involved in another joint conference. We decided that the best option would be for the two societies to hold their conferences at the same location at the same time, and to plan some joint events. The SI Executive Board also voted in favour of this, so that is the plan for 2018, assuming we find a suitable venue: we are researching potential venues, focusing on Wales and north of Manchester.

Directory

Nancy Duin

This year (2015–16) has seen a great leap forward in the number of Directory entries. From last year's 484, a total of 583 PMs and APMs now take advantage of this great membership benefit – an increase just shy of 100 or just over 20 per cent. Of this total, 53.4 per cent are PMs and 46.6 per cent are APMs.

Potential clients made 32,820 searches of the Directory between 15 June 2015 and 14 June 2016 – an average of 90 a day. This is less than the 101 per day reported last year. This is due to the figures

coming from a combination of the old system and the new CMS logs. The latter is much better at removing extraneous duplicates, so its results are more accurate. Next year, the daily search figure should be even more precise.

Regardless of the exact number of searches, most of the entrants that I've heard from seem to be very happy with the amount of work they get from their entries. And anecdotally, the Directory's reach seems to be extending, with lots more self-publishers finding us.

As ever, until the member-managed update system is in place, please feel free to send me any changes that you want to make to your entry – we're here to help!

Regional development

Ruth Durbridge

It is most important to say a very big thank you to our local group coordinators (LGCs) for their stamina in keeping groups going, for organising interesting and developmental activities for members of varied experience, and for supporting newcomers as they begin their editorial careers. The work of LGCs can go unnoticed and this is my opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for all they do.

At June 2016 there were 33 local groups, with Skype Club and SfEPIInternational in addition. During the year 2015–16, eight LGCs stood down and six took their places (one group has as many as four coordinators, who share the work). The Pembrokeshire group changed its name to West Wales, a new group for Liverpool was created, and after five years, we now have a reconstructed Cumbria/Borders group.

Skype Club has some 17 regular virtual attendees and a new coordinator, and now aims to meet each month, working hard to involve members who live overseas or in far-flung places in the UK or for whom attendance at a local group meeting is impossible. Get-togethers are generally at a time that is convenient, with members in Toronto and New South Wales, for example, as well as in the UK.

SfEPIInternational is an SfEP discussion forum for editors interested in all things international. At June 2016 there were 192 international members out of a total membership of 1893 – over 10 per cent. Our international members live in 45 countries. The countries that have the greatest number of members are France (23), Ireland (19), the USA (17), Australia (14), South Africa (11) and New Zealand (10). There is no discernible pattern of growth or decline among countries represented over the last six-month period.

Since autumn 2015, members of the SfEP and the Society of Indexers (SI) have been able (and are encouraged) to attend each other's local group meetings. These meetings offer the chance to network, discuss common topics and gain an insight into the issues faced by the other society.

The new website was a dominant feature of regional development during the year. In addition to its own discussion forum, each local group now has its own web page. LGCs are continuing to update photos and text, using this tool to attract new members and promote meeting attendance. Special thanks are due to the local group web content editor, Gordon Hooper, for his help in this significant development.

Particularly interesting events during the year included the North-West England and Manchester groups' joint visit to the John Rylands Library and Christmas celebration in December, and the Northern Ireland group members' setting up stall and answering questions about editing and proofreading at the Publishing Resources Fair held in Belfast in March. Meeting Venues of the Year include the Bike Shed Café (York group), the Edwardian Tearooms at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (West Midlands group), Dundee University Incubator (North and East Scotland group) and Doubletree Hilton hotel (Cambridge group). And finally, netwalking just has to be the local group social activity of the year.

Publications

Steve Hammatt

Things have been busy on the publications front. *Editing Matters* continues to provide a very informative and interesting e-magazine every two months, thanks to the hard work of the team led by Hazel Reid. I would like to thank all those who have contributed articles recently. We are always in need of new articles though, so if you have an idea for something for *Editing Matters*, please do get in touch with Hazel. The fact that the magazine is now being published by our shiny new content management system, which we are using to underpin our website, means that I can do this task quickly and easily myself and don't have to bother our ever-busy internet director.

The PDF versions of the Guides are also continuing to prove very popular, though there must be plenty of people like me who still like to read hard-copy versions of the Guides, judging by the way that the stocks in the office rapidly diminish. I commissioned Sue Littleford to write a brand new up-to-date Guide aimed at newcomers called *Going Solo*, and this is currently at draft stage and is full of useful information. I aim to publish this in the second half of

2016. I am also planning a major revamp of the *Editing Theses and Dissertations Guide*.

Another part of the publications remit is to keep the new members' welcome pack up to date, and we do our best to make sure that our new members have the latest information. I helped to arrange the new membership logos that were released in July 2015 too. I have also been involved in making sure the backups are working correctly for the SfEP office PCs, something that has given us trouble in the past.

We tried using a new tool to carry out an online 'virtual EGM' earlier in the year, to elect our new honorary president and vice-president. This was very successful, which gives us confidence that we will be able to carry out further online polls in future.

I continue to be involved in our email communication efforts to members, via the Campaign Monitor tool that we set up last year. This continues to be successful, and during the year the office staff were trained in its use, along with several other directors using it to send out their own communications. For the first time we used this tool to send out customised membership renewal notices, and a lot of work is going on while I write this report to partially automate the highly customised emails that are sent out to conference delegates to confirm their various session and meal bookings.

We are aware that we need to continue to improve our communication with the membership; email is almost old-fashioned these days, but it is a useful tool to reach everyone at a low cost to the Society.

Finally, we have kicked off a long-needed review of our statutes, specifically the Memorandum and Articles of Association, along with the Society's By-laws. Their piecemeal revision over time has been necessary, but time and resources have not previously been found to take a wider view of the consistency of these documents and of whether we have any significant gaps or other issues.

As you will have read in the chair's report, the publications role will be called 'information' in the future, starting after the AGM. This is to reflect the fact that its remit is expanding slightly, but all the existing items such as the Guides and *Editing Matters* will remain within the information remit.

Internet

John Espirian

Website development

Following a lot of development work during summer and autumn, the new CMS-based SfEP website was released in November 2015. The site has a fresh new look and is now far easier to navigate and edit.

Using the content management system (CMS) directors can create and update their own pages.

Although the website runs on a new platform, many of its features remain reliant on long-standing links to our existing database supplier. The next major task at hand for the development of the website is to change this underlying structure. Doing so will give us more control over the way we handle training and conference bookings, online shop transactions and other tasks. Most importantly, the changes will allow us to make significant enhancements to the way the members' area works, most notably allowing members to update their own Directory entries. This requirement has been outstanding for some time. I am hopeful that it will be delivered before I write my next annual report.

Website statistics

At the time of writing, the website contains just over 1400 pages: approximately 800 general pages and a further 600 Directory entries.

In the year **5 June 2015 to 4 June 2016**, the SfEP website saw 165,057 unique visitors and 280,738 visits in total (see table). The total number of page views has broken the million mark for the first time.

Period	Unique visitors	Total visits	Page views Unique	Page views Total	Pages views per visit
2010-11	53,054	92,232	248,365	320,282	3.47
2011-12	108,881	188,921	501,040	641,166	3.39
2012-13	125,995	220,164	597,473	772,642	3.51
2013-14	169,087	287,927	756,514	964,704	3.35
2014-15	177,628	296,971	761,231	967,661	3.26
2015-16	165,057	280,738	798,946	1,020,608	3.64

Website visitor figures

Period	Desktop %	Mobile %	Tablet %
2010-11	97.6	2.4	0
2011-12	95.3	3.5	1.2
2012-13	88.8	5.7	5.5
2013-14	81.9	9.1	9.0
2014-15	76.3	13.2	10.5
2015-16	74.0	16.3	9.7

Website visitors by hardware platform

Period	Chrome %	Safari %	Firefox %	IE/Edge %	Opera %
2010-11	11.5	16.8	31.6	37.4	2.0
2011-12	17.4	20.2	27.9	31.6	1.2
2012-13	24.5	23.7	22.1	25.2	0.9
2013-14	32.3	22.9	18.9	19.8	0.9
2014-15	38.3	23.25	17.9	15.5	0.7
2015-16	43.6	23.4	15.3	13.5	0.7

Website visitors by browser

Position	Country	Total visits	Total visits %
1	United Kingdom	192,515	68.6
2	United States	26,315	9.4
3	India	7193	2.6
4	Australia	4632	1.7
5	Canada	3871	1.4
6	Ireland	3205	1.1
7	Germany	3031	1.1
8	Philippines	2997	1.1
9	France	2586	0.9
10	Spain	2042	0.7

Website visitors by country, 5 June 2015 to 4 June 2016

Web content team

Formerly known as the 'webspinners', the web content team welcomed a new member in 2015. The team has worked well on the development, release and maintenance of the new website.

The web content editors now support the Directory manager in updating members' Directory entries, meaning that most requests for updates are handled on the same day they arrive.

SfEP forums

Our online discussion groups continue to go from strength to strength. On 24 May 2016, the forum hosted its 100,000th post – quite an achievement for a members-only service that has been in place only since September 2012.

The number of active users – those who have viewed the forums at least once in the past 30 days – is now regularly above the 500 mark. This represents more than one-quarter of the current membership.

Although we would like the figure to be higher, this level of community engagement is relatively high, confirming the forum's status as a key membership benefit. Those members who have not yet registered for the forums are strongly encouraged to do so.

These forum figures were collected on 14 June 2016:

Total topics/threads	12,088
Total posts	101,883
Total users	1544
Active users*	514
No. users with at least 1 post	808
No. users with at least 50 posts	200

* Active users are defined as those who have logged into SfEP forums at least once in the last 30 days.

SfEP videos

An SfEP YouTube channel was created in late 2015 and will be used to share videos the Society has created to help its members. The channel can be found at www.youtube.com/c/sfeporguk.

Training

Stephen Cashmore

Take-up of training during 2015–16 continued the trends of the previous two years: there has been a continuing shift from classroom-based courses (now called workshops) to online courses. The table below shows the number of registrations for online courses ('Editing with Word' is included because it went live right at the financial year-end: the number of

registrations for this course approached 100 by August 2016; 'References' went live in January 2016).

Course	Registered 2015–16
Proofreading 1: introduction	593
Proofreading 2: progress	119
Copy-editing 1: introduction	142
Copy-editing 2: progress	55
Brush up your grammar	47
Introduction to fiction editing	38
References	15
Editing with Word	0

By contrast, only 28 workshops were run during 2015–16 (190 delegates). During the year a 'demand calendar' was introduced on the SfEP website to try to stem the decline in workshop training. People can input into the calendar what courses they would like to see run, where and when. The office staff keep an eye on this calendar and put a course on when it approaches or reaches the break-even number of delegates (usually 6 or 7). A course has already been run in Edinburgh as a direct result of this scheme and it is hoped that use of it will increase during 2016–17.

Training surpluses for 2015–16 were as follows, shown with figures for 2014–15 figures for comparison:

	Surplus (£) 2015–16	Surplus (£) 2014–15
In-house training courses	1900	5718
Workshops	4116	5022
Online courses	85,214	82,985

Only four in-house courses were run during 2015–16. As usual, this is because the office staff do not have time to proactively look for in-house clients. As part of the reshuffle of directorial roles and the appointment of volunteers during 2016–17 it is planned to look for someone to oversee this aspect of training provision.

For the first time, the SfEP was approached by a company wanting a bespoke online course. This was developed and went live during 2015–16, bringing in income of about £20K to the Society.

One existing workshop was purchased during the year (another will be during 2016–17). By the end of 2016–17, SfEP will own all the courses that it runs.

Current work on training is focused on creating the entry-level suites of courses for proofreading and copy-editing (more of that in next year's report), a new online course on medical editing, and a new workshop on marking up PDF documents.

Professional development

Jane Moody

In the year from March 2015 to February 2016 the Admissions Panel dealt with 389 upgrade applications: 183 applied for Intermediate Membership, 117 for Professional Membership and 35 for Advanced Professional Membership. This unprecedented demand meant that Panel members worked their socks off assessing, discussing and making decisions collectively.

Only 25 applicants were completely unsuccessful and so remained at the same grade; happily, 45 people were awarded a grade higher than that for which they applied, which suggests that members are generally shy about their achievements and may undervalue their training and experience.

The nine members of the Admissions Panel continue to work hard behind the scenes to ensure that all applications are dealt with fairly and efficiently. The composition of the Panel changed during the year, with several long-serving members deciding that enough was quite enough. About three years seems to be right for this demanding role, although a good number stay for longer than this, and the council greatly appreciates the work that every member of the Panel puts into making sure that every application is dealt with fairly and in a reasonable time frame. The thought and care that goes into each application is a testament to the high standards of the Panel.

Some applications do take longer than the norm. An applicant may submit a training course that we have not met before; unless the applicant has sent a good deal of detail about the course, the provider and the depth of study, the assessor needs to find this information before being able to fit the new course into the matrix of points totals. If we have not had this information from the applicant, we need to go directly to the course provider. This can all take time.

Continuing professional development is essential at all levels of membership. There is often a scarcity of learning opportunities suitable for the needs of more experienced editors. An event for fiction editors was planned for 2015–16 but it was not possible to finalise its organisation during the year. The event was successfully held in June 2016, with 69 delegates.

The final Accreditation tests were held in 2015–16. Eleven people sat the test but unfortunately none was

successful. This demanding test has a low pass rate – 23 per cent; in fact, no one has passed the test since 2013. The council would like to express sincere thanks to Judith Wardman for her dedication in administering and marking the Accreditation test since 1999.

Standards, tests, complaints and mentoring

Gerard M-F Hill

Standards

Following a decision of the council, I am delighted to be the first director of standards, a remit that also covers syllabus, qualifications, tests and complaints. Standards are at the heart of what the Society stands for and will be central to our quest for chartered status. An outline framework of editorial qualifications is being developed, and the syllabus will be revised and extended to align with the code of practice and the qualifications envisaged.

Tests

By 11 June 2016, of the 91 members who had taken the basic editorial test, 50 passed first time (55 per cent of candidates) and 16 on resit: an overall pass rate of 72.5 per cent. After negotiating a good price, we bought some more sophisticated software from TestReach to program the advanced test, which will include short pieces to be copy-edited.

Complaints

Two complaints were investigated in 2015–16, both by members who had been subcontracted by another member. The issues were payment terms, poor communication, misrepresentation of the job and commission. The complaint panel advised that informal agreements are fine, but they should be clear and confirmed by email. One member who supplied contact details for a potential client then laid claim to the client and expected to be paid commission; the complaint panel thought this was dubious and not legally enforceable unless explicitly agreed. Both complaints were withdrawn.

Mentoring

This year we added specialist mentoring in law, music and fiction (all with three assignments in copy-editing, one in proofreading) to the existing option of biomedical journal editing. Plans for mentoring in medical editing are well advanced. Between 1 June 2015 and 31 May 2016, forty members signed up as mentees, eight of them in copy-editing or a specialism. The post of mentoring director ceased to exist in July 2016, to make way for the new post of standards director. Mentoring is now overseen by the training director, aided by two senior mentors.