



THE FUTURE IS HERE! THE FUTURE IS NOW!
SUMMER 2020 EDITION August 2020

From the President's Desk...



<http://www.whitehousemuseum.org/furnishings/resolute-desk.htm>



Here we are on the cusp of another AGM. This year will certainly be a departure from usual but I do hope that you can join us. Council took the decision early in the year to plan for a virtual AGM as none of us could predict what the position would be September. The organisation of a virtual AGM has certainly been a challenge, but I hope it will make it accessible to more members.

I would like to put a shout-out for more members to consider joining Council. We have now become used to holding our meetings remotely, so travelling to meetings is no longer strictly necessary. If you would like more information about what it means to be on Council, contact the Secretary, Mary Sorene.

That's all for now! Proofreading beckons ...

Georgina Ford

President

Don't stop at the top -go right on down for Stenograph's offer! Sec.





Saturday 19 September 2020 Virtual AGM (free) and workshops
Sunday 20 September 2020 Virtual Exams

Both via [zoom](#)

From the Secretary's desk...

We are looking for a volunteer to take notes of the AGM, please. Usual rates apply. Anyone?



New to [zoom](#) ?

If any member needs assistance regarding a Zoom meeting, please let us know beforehand and we'll do our best to help. While Zoom may encourage you to download their app, apparently you do not need to have Zoom downloaded on your computer to join. You just click on the link that I send and you, follow the screen instructions and you should be admitted. Sec.

If you are only attending the AGM, please let me know so that I may send you the Zoom link – sec.bivr@gmail.com

For the workshops listed, please follow the instructions in the programme and pay via the BIVR website utilising the links provided. Sec.

Notice of AGM follows:

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF VERBATIM REPORTERS
Notice is hereby given that the
138th Annual General Meeting of this Institute

will be held on
Saturday, 19 September 2020
at 9:30 a.m.

virtually via **zoom**

(Please note, the link for the meeting will be emailed on Thursday 17 September.)

for the purposes of considering and, if thought fit, passing resolutions as to the ordinary business of the Company relating to the Council Members and accounts.

To receive and adopt the Report and Accounts (appended at end of Notice).

To elect members to serve on the Council for the year 2020/2021

Under Article 23 of the Memorandum & Articles of Association Ian Roberts, Miriam Weisinger and Orla Pearson retire by rotation and are eligible for re-election without nomination. One nomination was received from Melanie Ball and, as there are more places than candidates Melanie Ball is hereby elected to Council without a vote being required and Ian Roberts, Miriam Weisinger and Orla Pearson are hereby re-elected to Council.

Special Resolutions:

1. To consider, and if thought fit, to pass a Special Resolution regarding changing the Memorandum & Articles of Association, Article 20, to change the term of office of President from one year to two years, with a minimum of one year as follows:

Current wording of Article 20:

20. The President shall hold office for one year and shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of three years after the termination of their year of office. Nevertheless the Institute may from time to time in General Meeting, by a resolution (of which due notice shall be given in the notice convening the meeting) passed by a majority of two-thirds of the Fellows and Members present and voting thereat, declare that any Fellows or Members who, but for the period of disqualification mentioned above would be eligible for election as President, shall be so eligible for the then ensuing year, and upon such resolution being passed any Fellow or Member affected thereby shall be qualified to hold the office of President.

Proposed new wording, with additions/changes shown in red:

20. The President shall hold office for **a minimum term of one year** and shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of **two** years after the termination of their **term** of office. Nevertheless the Institute may from time to time in General Meeting, by a

resolution (of which due notice shall be given in the notice convening the meeting) passed by a majority of two-thirds of the Fellows and Members present and voting thereat, declare that any Fellow or Member who, but for the period of disqualification mentioned above would be eligible for election as President, shall be so eligible for the then ensuing year, and upon such resolution being passed any Fellow or Member affected thereby shall be qualified to hold the office of President.

2. To consider, and if thought fit, to pass a Special Resolution regarding changing the Memorandum & Articles of Association, Article 25 to permit the President to be elected for a term of two years, as follows:

Current wording of Article 25:

- 25 At the Annual General Meeting of the Institute it shall elect its Council Members and the President for the ensuing year shall be elected. Such election shall be by simple majority of the votes cast at the meeting.

Proposed new wording, with additions/changes shown in red and blue:

- 25 At the Annual General Meeting of the Institute it shall elect its Council Members **for the following year** and the President for the ensuing **two years**. **If at the end of the first year, the President opts not to continue in post, a new President shall be elected at that AGM.** **Such election shall be by simple majority of the votes cast at the meeting.**

3. To consider, and if thought fit, to pass a Special Resolution regarding changing the Memorandum & Articles of Association, Article 18 by the addition of the words

Being on Council involves a willingness to stand for President (while noting that the position of Chief Examiner is exempt as they do not need to be a Council member).
so that Article 18 shall read:

18. The Institute shall be governed by a Council of up to twelve Fellows and Members, in any combination. **Being on Council involves a willingness to stand for President (while noting that the position of Chief Examiner is exempt as they do not need to be a Council member).**

To elect a President for the present years 2020/2022

Those eligible for President (to be voted on at the AGM) are (in alphabetical order):

Alan Bell and Ian Roberts

(plus Georgina Ford should the Special Resolution at the EGM on 12 September 2020 have been passed.)

(Orla Pearson and Miriam Weisinger, although eligible, have indicated that they do not wish to stand at this time).

To appoint the date of the next Annual General Meeting

Any other business.

MARY C SORENE
Secretary
(Registered address)
73 Alicia Gardens
Kenton Harrow
Middx HA3 8JD
28 August 2020.



The workshops will follow the AGM –
[VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING \(free\)](#)

See voting slip **VOTING SLIP**

VOTING SLIP

(to be returned via post or email no later than 9:30 am Thursday, 17 September 2020)

I _____ (being a full Member)

vote in respect of the resolutions mentioned above, namely,

To receive and adopt the Report and Accounts to 31 December 2019.

*For *Against * Abstain

Special Resolution 1:

to change the term of office of President from one year to two years, with a minimum of one year as follows

20. The President shall hold office for a minimum term of one year and shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of two years after the termination of their term of office. Nevertheless the Institute may from time to time in General Meeting, by a resolution (of which due notice shall be given in the notice convening the meeting) passed by a majority of two-thirds of the Fellows and Members present and voting thereat, declare that any Fellow or Member who, but for the period of disqualification mentioned above would be eligible for election as President, shall be so eligible for the then ensuing year, and upon such resolution being passed any Fellow or Member affected thereby shall be qualified to hold the office of President.

*For *Against * Abstain

Special Resolution 2:

to permit the President to be elected for two years, as follows:

25 At the Annual General Meeting of the Institute it shall elect its Council Members for the following year and the President for the ensuing two years. If at the end of the first year, the President opts not to continue, in post, a new President shall be elected at that AGM. Such election shall be by simple majority of the votes cast at the meeting.

*For *Against * Abstain

Special Resolution 3:

18. The Institute shall be governed by a Council of up to twelve Fellows and Members, in any combination. Being on Council involves a willingness to stand for President (while noting that the position of Chief Examiner is exempt as they do not need to be a Council member).

*For

*Against

* Abstain

To elect a President for the years 2020/2022 (assuming the EGM vote permitting Georgina Ford to be included in the candidacy pool was passed.)

Alan Bell
Georgina Ford and
Ian Roberts

*Strike out whichever is not desired.

Signed on 2020.



(Please copy and paste the above voting slip into a Word document, or your email, update it with your vote, striking out, as requested, whichever is not desired, and send it to the Secretary by mail to the Registered Address, or via email, to reach the Secretary by 9:30 a.m. (email) on Thursday, 17 September 2020.)

Have you voted regarding the Special Resolution sent for the EGM on 12 September 2020? Your view is important.

If you have not yet sent in your vote, please do so now so that it is received in good time (by 10 September) so that I only send a Zoom invitation to those members, eligible to, but who have NOT yet voted! Sec.



The directors present their report with the financial statements of the company for the period ended 31st December 2019. NB the accounts are in the Bugle in the Members' area of the website.



VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **SATURDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2020**

ZOOM ETIQUETTE



- Please sign in around 9.15 a.m. for a prompt 9.30 a.m. start.
- When you join, the Host (BIVR) will mute your video and microphone if you have not done so upon joining.
- There is a slot at the end of each presentation for questions, so please ask them then.
- Click on the raised hand icon on screen if you wish to speak and then BIVR will unmute you.

HOW THE ONLINE VOTING PROCESS WILL WORK FOR 2020 (for Special Resolutions, Resolutions & President)



- Having checked the functionality of various voting platforms and pricing (circa £1,000 for the day), Council have deemed it to be an inappropriate use of funds; therefore, we will be using the private and anonymous polling feature in Zoom for voting on the day.
- A test run will take place before the real voting process occurs. You will be told when the actual votes to be counted should be cast.
- Under the current circumstances, we are inviting members who are unable to attend the virtual AGM to send in a postal/email vote rather than nominating a proxy to cast their vote.

THE BETTY WILLETT AWARD:



May we hear from you as to nominations of who you think should receive the award at this year's AGM. You can nominate any member you like, though we hasten to add that Council Members are exempt from nomination. If somebody strikes you as deserving, send us an email with your nomination and a paragraph or two on why you believe your nominee should be awarded The Betty Willett Award 2020. If no nominations are received, Council will decide on the deserving recipient. With apologies for having left it so late, but we did expect to get out a Bugle sooner than this one. Sec.





VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (free)
Saturday/Sunday, 19/20 September 2020

Members	-	£45
Students	-	£20
Retired Members	-	Free
Non-Members	-	£55

THE THREE Rs – REMOTE! REMOTE! REMOTE!



AGENDA

SATURDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2020

9.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (free)
(Please log in at 9.15 a.m. for a 9.30 p.m.)

11.30 a.m. – 11.40 a.m. Break (a social/networking breakout room will be available) 

11.40 a.m. – 12.40 p.m. COPING DURING COVID CONFIDENTLY – Lucy Beresford - Lucy is a broadcaster, presenter, writer, psychotherapist, award-winning campaigner, and TEDx speaker. Lucy hosts #MindOverMatterMondays on Insta Live, 'Late Nights with Lucy' on TalkRADIO, and the Big Lunch podcast with comedian Elis James. She is a regular panellist on Jeremy Vine on Channel 5, and reviews #TomorrowsPapersToday every month on the BBC News Channel.
(<http://lucyberesford.co.uk/>)



12.40 p.m. – 1.00 p.m. Break (a social/networking breakout room will be available) 

1.00 p.m. – 2.00 p.m.

LUNCH BREAK



2.00 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.

MIGHTY MACRO METHODS



1. **Case CATalyst – Pam Szczecinski**

BIVR welcomes back Pam, who is an authorised Stenograph trainer with over 30 years' experience. Pam has trained captioners, CART providers, scopists, teachers and students throughout the world including England, Ireland, Australia, Canada, USA, the Bahamas and many parts of Africa. Her experience also includes courtroom setup and training of reporters for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal, War Crimes trials. She has leant her knowledge in aiding the setup of court reporting school programs in Cyprus, the Virgin Islands, and the US.



2. **Eclipse – Keith Vincent**

BIVR also welcomes Keith back to British shores, even if only virtually.



If you're an Eclipse user, you will have heard the voice of Keith, the creator of over 300 Visualizer movies since 2002. These movies are fundamental to the Eclipse Help system. Keith is a freelance court reporter from Houston, Texas, and has been a leader in the development of Eclipse (along with head programmer Jeremy Thorne, of course), since 1992. You may also know Keith from the free "e-Tips" that he and Wil Wilcox have written and shared since 2001.

3.30 p.m. – 3.40 p.m.

Break (a social/networking breakout room will be available)



3.40 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

ZEN ZOOM ZONE

zoom

1. Using Zoom (and extras) for STTR – Council Member, Orla Pearson
2. Using Zoom for Verbatim Reporting (and extras) – President, Georgina Ford

5.00 p.m. – 5:10 p.m.

Break (a social/networking breakout room will be available)



5.10 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.

INTERSTENO – INTERESTING, INTERNATIONAL & INVITING – Tori Pittman

A court reporter, scopist, mentor, software trainer, a self-confessed convention junkie, foodie, friend, and travel freak, Tori has her fingers in a lot of pies. A long-time advocate of Intersteno, Tori has competed in various categories of Intersteno competitions. Tori is going to give us a whistle-stop tour of what it's like to mix with like-minded individuals from all over the world, using all manner of keyboards, and compete in what's sometimes likened to the Olympics for keyboards.



Official agenda ends

But there's more....

THE THREE DS – DELIGHTFUL DRINKIES WITH DOUGIE

7.30 p.m. .

Douglas Zweizig –

Doug began his career in 1989 as a freelance court reporter, with a small amount of CART work added into the mix, something which he found most rewarding. In 2001, Doug began as an official court reporter in Philadelphia Common Pleas Court. After many rewarding



years there, he accepted a position in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, where he is currently working. Doug is instrumental in helping students and working reporters to progress in the profession regardless of where they are on their reporting path.

Doug has many an NCRA speed and/or realtime contests under his belt, holding five NCRA speed medals:

2005, 2011, 2012, 2017 NCRA RT contest, third place overall;

2018 NCRA RT contest, second place overall;

2006, 2015, 2019 NCRA RT contest, 1st place/champion;

NCRA speed contest - 2012, third place overall; 2015, fourth place overall.

Doug has joined a number of our BIVR Afternoon Teas whilst in lockdown and now we are delighted that he will be joining us for a few drinks to end our AGM, and share his experiences with us, so why not come along and virtually chink your glasses with a champion!

CPDs/CEUs will be available for those who request them. I will monitor, via Zoom, those who attend and their timings, to satisfy both BIVR and NCRA that the awards are accurate. Sec.

AGENDA

SUNDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2020

EXAMINATIONS: 11 am to 3 pm

Conducted remotely utilising our new syllabi

Accredited Verbatim Reporter

Accredited Speech-to-Text Reporter

Accredited Scopist

Accredited Audio Transcriber

Qualified Realtime Reporter (QRR)

QRR1 = 160/170/180 wpm

QRR2 = 180/190/200 wpm

QRR3 = 200/210/220 wpm

QRR4 = 220/230/240 wpm

For QRR Marking Guidelines, please see the Members Area of the website at

<https://bivr.org.uk/accreditation/>

IPS Speed exams with the Incorporated Phonographic Society (IPS).

Nominate your speed for Mary to read!

IPS Speed exams with the Incorporated Phonographic Society (IPS).

Nominate your speed for Mary to read!

See Booking procedure at the end.

See below for PRICING ROUNDUP

I just repeat here my request:



We are looking for a volunteer to take notes of the AGM, please. Usual rates apply. Anyone? Sec.

RANDOMISED REMOTE RAFFLE

- First prize - Annual membership subs paid for 2021
OR £120 Amazon voucher
- Second prize - £60 Amazon voucher
OR half-year memberships subs paid for 2021
- Third prize - £30 Amazon voucher

£5 PER NUMBER
(you can have as many numbers as you like)



HERE'S HOW IT WILL WORK:

- To buy your number(s), please log in to the BIVR website website:
<https://bivr.org.uk/product/randomised-remote-raffle/>
- Because not all members are on social media, this grid will be shown on the website and will be updated as and when numbers come in.
- If this grid is filled, we will do a second one.
- Numbers will be available until Thursday, 17 September at 5.00 p.m.
- The draw will take place on the day of the AGM, Saturday, 19 September (*time to be determined*).
- The draw will be held through the Zoom Share Screen feature where players will be able to view the draw take place using <http://numbergenerator.org/>
- Attendance at the AGM and/or workshops is not a prerequisite to buying a ticket.
- If you are not in attendance and you are a winner, you will be notified by the Secretary on Monday, 21 September.
- Please note that Council Members will also be taking part.

Booking: Please book your place on the virtual AGM (free) and/or the virtual workshops via the pay portal on the BIVR website <https://bivr.org.uk/product/workshops/>

Book your QRR exams on the BIVR website:

<https://bivr.org.uk/product/qrr-exam/>

Book your IPS speed exams on the BIVR website:

<https://bivr.org.uk/product/ips-speed-exam/>

using the dropdown box for 1, 2 or more exams!

As usual, I will read the higher speeds first, both for QRRs and the IPS speed tests. Sec.

This year, however, the tests will be by pre-recorded audio supplied to candidates on the day at the time of the test. Sec.

Candidates will be allocated separate breakout rooms and monitored to safeguard candidates and BIVR's integrity.

Or, pay via BACS as below and email sec.bivr@gmail.com with your preferences (workshop/QRR/IPS exams).

PRICING ROUNDUP

Workshops

Members	-	£45
Students	-	£20
Retired Members	-	Free
Non-Members	-	£55

Examinations

BIVR Membership	-	£50
QRR	-	£50 per exam
IPS speed exam -	£30	

<u>Raffle</u>	-	£5 per number
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Banking details

Apply to sec.bivr@gmail.com or details. Thanks Sec.

Or

As usual, there is no charge for attending the AGM, but please let the Secretary know that you wish to attend so that I may sent you the Zoom link sec.bivr@gmail.com .

Looking forward to seeing as many of you there as possible. Sec.

The President and some Council members will be attending the AGM weekend in person at

Best Western Valley Hotel
Buildwas Road
Ironbridge
Telford
TF87DW

Phone: 01952 432247

If you are in the area, you may care to join us, or even stay over Friday night. Check with Secretary for details. The meeting room we have booked, the Severn Suite, will hold 24 people socially distancing!



Have you received an accolade from someone on the job that you have done during lockdown?

If so, we would love to hear from you so that we may put it on the BIVR website under our shout it...

 From the Rooftops 

... section.



Éilis Murray



"Member of the Moment"

Question 1: *When/how did you realise you wanted to be a court reporter?*

I heard a court reporter being interviewed on the radio and I thought it sounded interesting. I applied for the course, was accepted and began my first acquaintance with that funny little machine in the picture, that was 30 years ago.



Question 2: *What training did you do?*

Two years at a Community College in Ireland, followed by six months as a trainee at the Old Bailey in London. Subsequently, in 1997, six months as a trainee at the BBC in London. I also acquired a HND in admin management, at night school, those skills help now with running a business.

Question 3: *Tell us your progression through being a trainee court reporter to where you are now.*

Initially, I worked as a court reporter covering Sheriff Courts throughout Scotland and subsequently the Court of Session, in Edinburgh. Then I worked as a subtitling Stenographer for the BBC for nine years. I put the dust cover over my steno machine in 2006 and came back to it five years ago.

Question 4: *What types of assignments do/did you cover now and which is/was your favourite?*

As a Court Reporter: Sheriff and jury trials, civil proofs, FAIs, Family Court, Boundary Commissions, Disciplinary Hearings and Commercial Court.

At the BBC I subtitled mostly news and parliamentary output.

Today, I provide a Speech-to-Text Reporting service for people who need real-time subtitles.

Favourite assignments: More memorable, really – In my early years as a court reporter I was sent to Doncaster to take the evidence of a man who would not make it to court – it was humbling and I still think about that assignment now.



Question 5: *What's the strangest thing you've ever reported?*

A Sheriff and Jury trial for a man who'd been allegedly poaching on the River Tweed – thankfully all the evidence was photographic!

Question 6: *Do you have any humorous stories you could share?*

Lately, it's been fun seeing people's pets "photobomb" serious meetings!

Question 7: *What is your favourite thing about this profession?*

The tech – I can work from home. In the 1990s I had to travel all over the UK to provide subtitling cover for the BBC's Nations and Regions because it couldn't be done remotely, hard to imagine now.

Question 8: *What is your least favourite thing about this profession?*

I find with remote reporting you have less control over the acoustic environment and that can be challenging sometimes.

Question 9: *What's the one piece of advice you would give to (a) a student member of BIVR and (b) seasoned reporters of BIVR?*

Students – put on your best smile and keep trying.

Fellow reporters – Sometimes you are the only person in the room really listening and who is impartial, that's our job, and that matters.

Question 10: *Do you have any unfulfilled reporting goals?*

Pass my 225 Testimony... and train up a 21st century STTR!

Thanks, Éilis. Sec.

Travelling for Work in the Era of the “New Normal” by Alan Bell



The past four months have been a difficult time for all of us reporters, Steno and Palan alike, court reporter or speech to text reporter alike. The sudden onset of lockdown brought an end to the vast majority of our work onsite and saw us facing an uncertain future financially.

Thankfully, the reality of lockdown did see an increase of home working via Zoom, Microsoft Teams and various other platforms, which was helpful to those of us who do captioning work. However, online deposition work for most of that time period, if it was happening at all, seems to have been performed entirely by US-based reporters.

We are now seeing the beginnings of a return to onsite work, and foreign travel is again becoming possible. In recent weeks, the requirement for self-quarantine on returning to the UK has been removed for travel from some countries (and then reimposed again for Spain this weekend). You still, however, have to fill in an online form, the Public Health Passenger Locator Form. It's tedious and long-winded and has to be filled in no more than 48 hours from the time of your return to the UK. Annoyingly, you have to fill it out in full every time, even though it creates a login at the start. Your device will probably, however, remember your choices, as long as you start with the first letter. You will need your booking reference and passport number for the form. Of course, you will know your passport number by heart, but the booking reference is worth copying before you start the form.

If you do need to self-quarantine, it is supposed to be for 14 days and you cannot go outside. Most people I've spoken to say they have been aware of no policing of it, but my friend who returned from Geneva the day after me did receive a phone call checking that he was aware of the requirements. Thankfully, there were only a few days left before Switzerland went on the no quarantine list.

I have been fairly busy over the past month or so, with depositions and arbitration hearings. Some of these have been Zoom depositions and a couple of arbitrations have been on a transcription basis, using recordings. The latter is far from ideal, as you are left entirely at the mercy of the technical expertise of the arbitration secretary. I did a two-day hearing transcription where the President was at times entirely incoherent due to the dreaded feedback due to microphone clash. As it was a recording, there was nothing to be done about it, and some “(unclear)” notations were unavoidable.

If you find yourself covering a hearing by Zoom (in my opinion the best platform), do try to advocate for people who are not speaking to have their microphones on mute. The purpose of this article is not so much about Zoom, but rather about travel, so I will say little more on the subject.

At the beginning of July, I travelled to Geneva for an onsite arbitration hearing. It was an eerie experience going through Heathrow Terminal 2, with all shops and cafes closed, with the exception of one Boots, one WH Smith and one Leon. The airport was like a ghost town, with plenty of seating available, despite the social distancing of alternate seats being closed. It is mandatory to wear a face mask from the moment you enter the airport, right the way through to boarding. Then you must wear a mask throughout the entirety of your journey on the plane, apart from eating or drinking.

When it comes to boarding, my experience so far is that this is being handled differently than normal. Certainly, BA are boarding by blocks of row numbers from the back, and no priority boarding AT ALL. Disembarking is done in reverse order, so the nearer the front you are, the faster you will be able to alight. They're also making you stay seated till it's your turn. It was my first time flying on Swiss so I'm not sure what their policy for boarding used to be, but they were doing it by groups. However, priority customers could board any time.

The planes which are flying are full. If you read anything about middle seats being unused to aid with distancing, forget it. So you really will want to keep that mask on, and wipe down surfaces you touch with wipes, which are being provided.

Catering is all affected by COVID. On my Swiss Air flight to Geneva outbound, in economy, there was nothing at all, not even water. On the return in business, it was normal service, including alcohol. On BA, in economy they are giving everyone a bag of crisps (nice ones), a bottle of water and either a hotel sized pack of biscuits or a tiny bag of pretzel snacks. In business, you get sandwiches, water and a mini dessert, but they are doing alcohol.

I also travelled to Paris by Eurostar. Normally, I travel from Ebbsfleet, which is much closer to me. However, all services are running to and from St Pancras only. The seat classes are the same as normal, but all your money is buying you in either of the Premier classes is more comfortable seats. There is no catering at all on Eurostar for the time being, not even bottles of water. You can of course bring on your own refreshments.

At both airports and Eurostar stations, there are currently no lounges open.

So what is life like abroad? I can say that Switzerland is pretty much as normal. Very few people are wearing masks. We did have one witness for whom plastic screens were put up around the witness table. Restaurants and bars, and I think shops, are working as normal. In Paris, I was not able to visit a restaurant, even on my arrival evening (Bastille Day), so I can't attest to the requirements, though the hotel receptionist told me you need to wear masks. You do need to wear masks in shops and public transport. In Germany, we found things slightly stricter. In public spaces inside buildings, you need to wear a mask. This also goes for restaurants. When you visit a restaurant, you will be asked for contact information, so you can be contact traced if there is an outbreak.

And that's it. I have no further travel plans for now. I suspect the measures I have mentioned above will continue in place for some time to come. If you find yourself booked for foreign assignments, safe travels! Alan

Ed's note: The information contained in Alan's article was correct at the time it was written in July. Sec.



Do you have an interesting story to tell of how you coped during lockdown?

We've already had one, but we'd like to hear more from you. Sec.

A member contribution



from the very talented Christine Lawton

TALES OF RATTY – BUT NOT THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS!!!

Did you have a good Easter? Well, it was certainly different, wasn't it? I can't say it was good for everyone but I hope you managed to stay sane and safe and find interesting things to do. We certainly found interesting things to do.

I have many art books, which were stored in different places and whenever I wanted one, I could never find it! Therefore, I took advantage of the lockdown time and catalogued and sorted out all

of them and put them in a sideboard in the conservatory, which I use as an art room. I also sorted out the other sideboard in the conservatory, feeling very pleased that now I knew where everything was, and life would be so much easier and I could enjoy my books over Easter. I cleaned and tidied the conservatory and it looked good. I was pleased with myself – but my pleasure was short-lived because what I didn't know was that a certain creature would have other ideas!

On the evening of Maundy Thursday, I thought the paper rattling I'd heard in my office was just papers toppling over – I knew I needed to tidy those too! But on Good Friday morning, I called my brother Christopher into the back room because I thought I heard similar and we investigated. We saw nothing but looked on the other side of the wall, which is the back of the fridge, and found that whatever it was had left its calling card – and it wasn't a mouse. After a whole lot of sanitising and cleaning and replacing the fridge, we were reassured that it had been dealt with. However, we failed to credit this creature with its incredible intelligence and military training. I once attended a court martial held in a sniper training centre in Lymington with the Royal Marines (I wasn't the accused, I hasten to add!) In order to pass the sniper training, the candidate has to hide in the *middle* of a gorse bush on Dartmoor and an officer has to pass only feet away and not detect the person. It is a remarkable achievement, which one would think impossible. Well, I think this creature had attended that course.

In the evening, we heard a scratching and scraping noise of several decibels, coming again from the cabinet in the corner of the back room. After shining a torch behind it, we could see the evidence but no sign of the perpetrator, so we decided to ease the cabinet out a little. This proved to be too much for our "sniper" and it shot out of its hiding place, between Christopher's legs. Christopher has never been interested in sport but I think he could have gone in for the Olympic high jump competition that night! In its panic, the creature – a rat – we think was making for a vent in the floor but when it was blocked up, shot back again towards the cabinet. We then spent the next hour securing the cabinet, with netting, wood, and board. We completely enclosed it. Not even a lion could have escaped from it. We went to bed and we would deal with it in the morning and that would be that!

Ha, ha – how naïve can one get! The next morning, we looked into the conservatory and Ratty had left a trail of calling cards and destruction, chewed the rubber tiling all over the floor and obviously, exhausted from all that, had taken a well-earned rest on our conservatory furniture. We then had to take up all the rubber floor tiles, which were easily removable, and bin them. When we moved the sideboard near the open back door, Ratty shot out from beneath that and quickly scampered up the garden, through the hedge and out of sight! He must have spent the night there and not beneath the cupboard which we had spent a good hour securing. The next three weeks were spent in moving all the furniture from the conservatory and the downstairs rooms, together with its contents (including my art books), cleaning the carpet, sanitising everything. We had to put some things upstairs. We could just about navigate through it all to find the two vacant seats!

After sanding and varnishing the conservatory floor, courtesy of Christopher, a qualified cabinet maker, we were able to put things back and rearrange and clean up Ratty's aftermath in my office, where my books are now on shelves for easy access.

On the Tuesday after Ratty's departure, I was sitting outside on a welcome tea break and looked up and noticed Ratty coming down the garden path towards the house. When it saw me look up, it quickly scampered back and went through the hedge again. We think we know why it was trying to return. When we were tidying and sorting out cupboards up the front bedroom – which a lot of the things from downstairs had been stored – to our horror, we discovered what looked like Ratty's deceased youngster very stiff, pulled out from under the bed. We can only assume it had a fright that Friday night and scampered up there and hid and its mother couldn't get back to it. Aaah! However, I cannot say I'm very sorry!

This, of course, then resulted in emptying the bedroom, sanitising that and cleaning the carpet, rewashing all the washing that was on the bed to put away, taking the bed to pieces and washing all the bedclothes, emptying cabinets so we could move them, and ultimately rearranging the whole room.

We have decided that we won't go into the removal business or the lifestyle design business, even though we think we now have the qualifications. Four weeks of it was enough for us. There is a sequel to this. My cousin lives in a beautiful bungalow in Co. Durham. She asked me the other day why I sent Ratty up to her! She is now awaiting the pest controller to deal with evidence in her loft, discovered by the man who came to service her gas appliances and boiler! Apparently, they are having a big problem in her village. They think it's because restaurants were closed and they were coming for food – or there could be another explanation (see below!). For clarity, I should add that because of pouch surgery I had at St Mark's Hospital, my brother nicknames me Kangaroo! That will explain the picture below! For completeness, because of his woodwork qualifications, he is known as the Woodlark – or even Woodlouse, as Steve amusingly called him!



Illustration by Christine Lawton

Another, shorter, story from Christine Lawton:

SLUGS IN THE TOILET

Another lockdown story.

A couple I know, who live in Northern England, paid a visit to their church during the lockdown period. The husband is a churchwarden and his wife accompanied him when he went to check that all was in order. Upon inspecting the toilet, he gave a cry to his wife, "Fetch some kitchen towel roll quickly." This was because, to his horror, slugs had thought this little damp place called Cistern Cottage was amazing because it had all they loved: damp, dark and undisturbed, so they covered it with their bedding – yuk – and were most disappointed when the landlord came to evict them! The lesson is checking the loo if you've not used it for weeks and evict any tenants that abuse the property and don't pay the rent!



Illustration by Christine Lawton

Welcome
New Members

We welcome the following new student members:

Euan Williams, Emma Bawdon and Rhiannon Squance.

Congratulations!

To members of BIVR who have passed NCRA examinations:

Claire Hill on your CRR and

Leah Willersdorf on your RPR.

From Jason Meadors (posted on our Facebook page)

Hello from Colorado USA. I have a request from a gentleman to decipher an old postcard, and a suggestion was made that I ask here. I don't know a single stroke of any pen theory, and I'm wondering if someone might be able to help.
Cheers!



Does anyone know which system of shorthand this is and, more to the point, can you read it for Jason? Answers on a postcard, please – Nah, just kidding! Send me an email if you know.
sec.bivr@gmail.com





Offer on until 31 August 2020 – so you have a few days left!

Email from Karen Peck:

"This NCRA special runs until August 31st. This is a fantastic offer for any customers who have an old, non-working writer lying around (even manual writers, student writers, or competitive writers). We'll give them \$1,000 U.S. cash for it, towards a Luminex II. Plus two free gifts valued over \$200."

NCRA Convention Specials Have Been Extended
for a Limited Time!!



Luminex II NCRA Promos:

\$1,000 CashBack FOR ANY WRITER

or

Upfront discounted price of \$4,995

Plus, your choice of **two free items*** with the purchase of a Luminex II. Choose from these items:

LMX Mini, Bluetooth Kit, or Peace of Mind Kit.

Ask about special pricing on CATalyst Pro and BCS.

Ask me about a special
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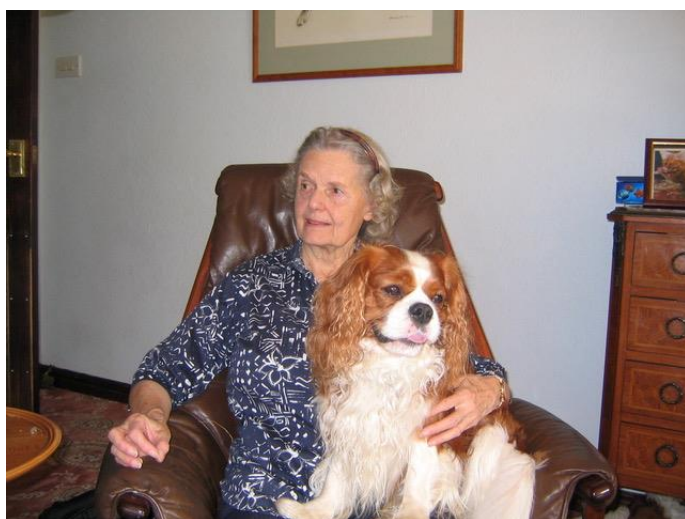


OBITUARY

(Miss) Isla Beard was for many years a director and then part-owner of Palantype Organisation, together with (Miss) Carole Doctor. Ms Doctor died some years ago and Isla died on 28 May this year, aged 93.

Many Palantypists will know of Isla's work on the Possum system. Indeed, she rewrote the old Palantype system to make it computer-compatible and was instrumental in the development of the first Possum machines. This work started as long ago as the 1970s. The Palantype CAT system made speech-to-text and captioning possible.

Isla was a very clever lady and an excellent reporter, although for many years she was fully occupied running the Palantype Reporting Service from offices in Croydon. She was the first reporter assisting the deaf MP Jack Ashley in the House of Commons.



The above photo of Isla taken at her home in Bridport on the occasion of Carole Doctor's 80th birthday. While not a member of BIVR Isla was for many years a member of the National Society of Stenotypists (NSS) which group the Institute merged with to form the BIVR. With grateful thanks to Lindsay Bickers for letting us know that Isla had passed. Sec

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