



TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION AGM

10 November 2020

Co-Chairs' Report

Introduction

TA membership is currently 750, an increase from 722 last year. There are 696 Full members, 44 Associates and 10 Student members. The total SoA membership is currently 11,434.

Administration

The TA Group Administrator is Catherine Fuller (cfuller@societyofauthors.org). Catherine is also a member of the SoA's Contract Advisory Team and manages special projects for the SoA.

Please note that during the current health crisis most SoA staff are continuing to work from home.

Committee

Eight nominations were received for four vacancies on the TA Committee. Our warm thanks to candidates Rebecca DeWald, Miranda France, Ian Giles, Rosalind Harvey, Sawad Hussain, Vineet Lal, Karen Leeder and Steph Morris. Following an online ballot of TA full members Rebecca DeWald, Rosalind Harvey, Sawad Hussain and Vineet Lal were elected to join the committee for three years from the AGM.

This is our last report as Co-Chairs and we are pleased to welcome Kari Dickson and Christina MacSweeney as new Co-Chairs. Kari and Christina were elected by the TA Committee and will take up office from the AGM.

The TA Committee for 2020-21 will be aKari Dickson (Co-Chair), Christina MacSweeney (Co-Chair), Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp, Marta Dziurosz, Rebecca DeWald, Rosalind Harvey, Sawad Hussain, William Gregory, Vineet Lal and Natasha Lehrer.

Roland Glasser represents CEATL *ex-officio* on the committee. The National Centre for Writing and BCLT share *ex-officio* representation at committee meetings reporting on other activities in the sector. Activity summaries from these organisations are included in this report.

The Committee is always keen to hear from potential new members. If you are interested in serving on the committee from November 2021, please contact Catherine Fuller, who will be happy to give you more information about what is involved. Committee meetings will remain either entirely virtual or hybrid for the foreseeable future, allowing members who cannot easily attend in person to participate.

Activities and Campaigning

The annual Translation Symposium took place on 9 March at Goodenough College – the last physical event we were able to hold before the coronavirus lockdown in late March. Despite the cancellation of the London Book Fair, most speakers and delegates were still able to attend. The theme of the day was “Translating Well”, and the programme took a holistic look at translation life, from improving your craft to improving your finances and mental wellbeing. Speakers included writer and critic Boyd Tonkin, and publisher Philip Gwyn Jones.

The TA held an online event as part of the SoA At Home festival in early summer, taking full advantage of the virtual format: Arunava Sinha, a translator of Bengali literature who has been on our speaker wish-list for some time, was able to join us from Delhi, and Katy Derbyshire participated from Berlin. The panel was chaired by Daniel Hahn, and over 300 people registered to watch.

Over the summer, the committee focused on diversity and inclusivity, looking at what concrete, meaningful steps we can take to make the TA a more inclusive organisation. In the UK, the literary translation community is overwhelmingly white, and that is something we would like to change. One of the most immediate steps we can take is to make sure we are giving existing Black and Asian translators a platform, and we now aim to secure Black and Asian speakers for every event we run. Natasha Lehrer is also planning a collaborative project in which the TA will work with [Shadow Heroes](#) to help extend their schools programme. This project’s aims are firstly to train more translators as workshop leaders, and secondly to provide mentors from within the TA membership to some of the secondary school students who participate in the Shadow Heroes workshops.

We ran a social media campaign leading up to International Translation Day on 30 September, encouraging authors to celebrate the work of their translators:

<https://www.societyofauthors.org/News/News/2020/September/TA-launches-Celebrate-Your-Translator> Joanne Harris and other prominent authors provided quotes.

Several TA members, including co-chair Ruth Martin, spoke at the all-day online International Translation Day event organised by English PEN.

On 21 October, the TA held its first online social, spurred on by the success of the SoA local group meetings. Members were able to chat and meet new people in small groups, in various themed and non-themed “Zoom rooms”. We have received some very positive feedback and are planning to hold another social in the next few months.

The AGM on 10 November will be followed by a panel discussion, which forms part of the SoA’s autumn/winter events programme. The discussion title is: “‘Is that my job?’ Negotiating professional boundaries with translators”.

Finally, we were delighted to learn that Daniel Hahn had been awarded an OBE for services to literature. As well as being a prolific and prize-winning translator, Danny is also a mainstay of the translation community. He has chaired both the TA and the SoA, was previously national programme director at the BCLT, and continues actively to seek out opportunities for promoting literature in translation. Danny is also, as many of us can attest, a tremendously supportive and helpful colleague, and a generous mentor to people starting out in the profession. Many congratulations to him.

In Other Words

Following an extensive consultation, including a survey of TA members, the National Centre for Writing (NCW) announced in September that continuing to publish IOW as a physical journal is, unfortunately, no longer viable in terms of production costs, resources and reach.

Instead NCW is planning how best to use its resources to support professional and artistic development for early-career translators. This will include developing a new translation section of the website, which launched this autumn. Work is also underway to help identify and reduce barriers to access to the literary translation profession for under-represented groups, and to broaden the range of languages represented across NCW's programmes.

The IOW board has set up an informal working group to look at possible digital alternatives to IOW. It includes representation from the TA committee.

The SoA will continue to support translators and translation through enhanced coverage in *The Author*, online events and digital resources. TA members are welcome to pitch ideas for articles to the editor of *The Author*, James McConnachie.

Translation Prizes

The annual Translation Prizes, administered by the SoA, were presented on 12 February at a ceremony at the British Library.

In 2021 the prizes will be announced online on Thursday 11 February, in a similar way to the Authors' Awards in Jun 2020. The SoA Prizes team is working with the TA to curate a programme of events based on the shortlists, running from 8 -12 February. As well as the announcements, we hope to include a "Meet the Judges" event, a professional development session, an "Afternoon Tea", and a wellbeing event.

Professional Advice

Don't forget that TA members are always entitled to unlimited advice and vetting of individual contracts from the SoA advisory team.

Remuneration is a matter for negotiation between the translator and publisher. In our experience, translators and publishers negotiate fees starting in the region of £95 per thousand words. This fee may be considerably higher, depending on various factors including the translator's experience, the timescale for the translation, the difficulty of the prose, the amount of research required and the availability of translation funding. The word count can apply to either the source or target language.

Read our [Negotiating Payment for Translations blog](#)

The agreed sum may come as a flat fee, an advance against royalties, or a fee plus royalties from the first copy sold. For poetry we have observed payment in the region of £1.10 per line with a minimum of £35 per poem.

When negotiating a contract, you and the publisher will want to consider a number of factors. How long will it take you to complete the translation? As well as the word count consider your experience, the complexity of the translation and if any additional research is required. Does the publisher need the translation by a very tight deadline? Is there grant funding available to support the costs of your translation? Will you get a royalty on sales?

The SoA has three specialist translation guides available free of charge to members.

- Translator-Publisher Contracts
- Author-Commissioned translations
- Relay translations

Communications

TA News: Regular e-newsletters are sent to TA members; if you have any news or events that you would like to share with TA members, please let Catherine Fuller know. A paper copy can be sent on request if you do not have email access. It is not always possible to send a dedicated email flyer to promote all TA events and activities but details are always included in the main SoA newsletters and events bulletins so do make sure you read those as well. Contact the SoA if you are not receiving newsletters and the Membership Services team can check your subscriber options for you.

TA Forum. This is a free discussion group run by TA members for TA members only, and provides a safe and friendly environment to exchange news, view and ideas. Please note that the Forum is independent and not managed by the SoA or the TA committee. Many thanks to the Forum administrators Trista Selous and Christine Shuttleworth. To sign up, please send an email with your name and confirmation that you are a TA member to: ta-members+subscribe@groups.io

TA Twitter list The SoA also maintains a TA Twitter list to which you can subscribe for a tailored, translation-focused Twitter feed. You can find the latest tweets from list members either on Twitter itself or on the TA home page on the SoA website. Contact Catherine Fuller with your twitter handle if you want to subscribe. Don't forget to follow [@soc_of_authors](https://twitter.com/soc_of_authors).

Grants and Funding

A reminder that translators can apply to the SoA for [grants for work in progress](#) and to the [Authors' Contingency Fund](#) for hardship grants. Since March the SoA has paid out almost £1 million to authors in financial need.

CEATL

In this strangest of years, CEATL has played an important role in keeping its member associations connected and informed. Representatives of the various associations have shared details not only of how their respective governments were managing things and of the support offered to freelancers, but, perhaps more importantly, their own initiatives and best practices to support and engage members online through newsletters, seminars, workshops and social events, not to mention original ways of promoting translation(s) and of campaigning.

Understandably, CEATL has not been able to carry on its usual vigorous level of lobbying, although we have of course taken part in European campaigns for increased support to the creative sector during these difficult times. And recently the chairs of all CEATL member associations were invited to participate in video readings in support of freedom of expression in Belarus, where several translators have been among the many artists arrested or harassed.

After a short hiatus, CEATL's own working groups are now meeting more frequently. The data on the eagerly-awaited survey on working conditions (thanks to everyone who took part!) are being processed as we speak. The Best Practices working group's Association Boosting Book (an online compilation of advice and best practices to give new associations ideas about how to set themselves up, campaign, be visible, train and fundraise) is being edited for a launch at next year's AGM (which it is hoped will be held in Sweden). And work is under way on the next issue of Counterpoint magazine (read the first two issues here: <https://www.ceatl.eu/ceatls-e-zine-counterpoint>).

Roland Glasser

British Centre for Literary Translation

To mark BCLT's 30th Anniversary year we published an expanded second edition of the booklet **My BCLT**, featuring seven new contributions and a new introduction by Duncan Large. The planned launch reception could not take place at this year's London Book Fair in March, but we have been publishing the new contributions on NewWriting.net

This year's [Sebald Lecture](#) was given online, free of charge, by David Bellos (Princeton), hosted by the British Library. Titled 'The Myths and Mysteries of Literary Translation', the lecture attracted 1,700 advance registrations from 85 different countries and has notched up well over 1,000 views on YouTube since the end of June

This year's **BCLT Summer School** also took place online in late July and, with more applications than ever (200 for 66 places). The event featured workshops for Danish, Dutch, French and Norwegian into English, plus Multilingual Prose, Multilingual Theatre and Training the Trainer. Videos from the Summer School are now available on the [BCLT YouTube channel](#).

We held book launches for the anthology *Poetry of the Holocaust*, ed. Jean Boase-Beier and Marian de Vooght (Arc Publications, 2019), and for Goran Vojnović's novel *The Fig Tree*, translated from the Slovene by Olivia Hellewell (Istros Books, 2020). [Publishing in Translation](#), a day of panel discussions, workshops and networking brought together 75 publishers, literary translators and researchers in November 2019. The event took place in collaboration with National Centre for Writing (NCW), Inpress Books and UEA Publishing Project.

BCLT Manager Anna Goode led a series of **Creative Translation Workshops** with local schoolchildren in Years 5 and 10 – in partnership with NCW and Queen's College Translation Exchange (Oxford).

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There were also more applications than ever for the online [European School of Literary Translation](#), which took place in September. In the new academic year we are currently hosting two inaugural (virtual) Translators in Residence, William Gregory and Olivia Hellewell, and a series of research seminars on a variety of topics. Details and booking links for all our events are available [on our website](#).

Duncan Large

National Centre for Writing

The National Centre for Writing partnered with Cove Park and Publishing Scotland in November 2019 to offer the second [Translation Week](#) and hosted a translator in residence and translation workshop as part of [Japan Now East](#) in February 2020. We took part in RECIT meetings in Paris and on Zoom. NCW CEO Chris Gribble will be taking part in LTI Korea's conference on translation education in November 2020.

We collaborated with Strangers Press and the Dutch Foundation for Literature on the new [Verzet](#) series of Dutch chapbooks, including a launch in September with four of the writers and translators and a virtual residency in October for one of the writers.

We partnered with English PEN on the [International Translation Day platform](#), promoting ITD events around the country, and took part in the day-long ITD event on 30th September 2020. Our Meet the World event [Who is this mythical English reader?](#) featured translators from around the world and attracted over 1,000 views. We have launched a new [translation section of the NCW website](#).

The [Emerging Translators Mentoring scheme](#) is celebrating its tenth anniversary. We have nine translators, working from Danish, Italian, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Swiss French, Japanese (Harvill Secker Young Translator's Prize) and Arabic (Visible Communities).

Through [Visible Communities](#), as well as the mentorship with Meena Kandasamy we offered four bursaries for Black and Brown translators at the 2020 BCLT summer school. We are partners in various projects exploring translation in schools, with the TA, BCLT, Shadow Heroes and the Stephen Spender Trust. We are currently open to applications for three week-long [residencies](#) at Dragon Hall for Black and Brown translators, and three virtual residencies. We are also calling for submissions to an anthology exploring what it means to decolonise translation, in collaboration with [Tilted Axis Press](#), with editors Jeremy Tiang and Kavita Bhanot.

Kate Griffin

The Society of Authors AGM will be held online on Thursday 19 November. [Book now](#) via the SoA website.

Charlotte Collins and Ruth Martin

November 2020