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ITI SCOTNET NEWSLETTER

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Brave new world

The recent ITI Conference – three reports of which you’ll find in this issue – used “New world, new work” as its overarching theme. Stepping into a new world inevitably brings uncertainty, and this was reflected in the tone of the conference: cheerful and carrying a (perhaps unexpected) dose of optimism, but still somewhat uncertain.

Now more than ever, the importance of human connections has been highlighted by events such as the conference, and regional networks like ours are a place where these are often fostered more effectively than in huge auditoriums. Evidence of human connections can be found throughout this newsletter, not only in the [conference coverage](#), but also in Jo’s write-up of the human/AI discussion during the [spring workshop](#), my report of the inaugural [walking weekend](#), Marion’s account of calling on a fellow ScotNetter to assist with [interpreting](#), and the news item about the ITI’s “[slow translation](#)” manifesto. (For balance, we’ve also included a little [AI glossary](#) in this issue to explain some of those terms you might have seen recently!)

I hope you enjoy this issue and the slice of human experience it brings.

Siobhan ♦

There is no pleasure to me without communication.

~ Michel de Montaigne



Image: Mike Meyers on Unsplash

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Dates for your diary

ITI ScotNet autumn workshop: Saturday, 5 October 2024, City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9BX. Save the date for our next workshop, “Tax Confidence for Translators and Interpreters”: run by entrepreneur and business adviser Mario Alonzi, it will cover topics such as operating as a sole trader versus registering as a limited company, support available from Business Gateway and the ins and outs of VAT registration. The workshop will have the usual format of a morning event followed by a social lunch at nearby restaurant Ciao Roma, and all the details will be released with the call notice in due course.

ITI ScotNet AGM and Christmas lunch: Once again our convivial annual get-together to share network news and festive cheer will be held at the Piper’s Tryst in Glasgow on Saturday, 7 December 2024. Although it’s some way off yet, make sure to save the date for this always enjoyable gathering.

ITI webinars: The conference might be over, but there’s still plenty of learning to be done online. Here are a few picks from the upcoming events calendar:

ITI Coffee House: Evolving translation technologies – a new ethical frontier: Thursday, 15 August 2024, online. This discussion, which is free for members to attend, follows on from the initiative the ITI launched last year, exploring the potential for creating an ethical framework for the work of ITI members. This session will open a discussion in which attendees are invited to contribute actively

rather than simply listen, and will explore topics such as data protection, generative AI and evolving traditional pricing models. For more details and to register, visit the [website](#).

Starting out in patent translation: Wednesday, 14 and Wednesday, 21 August 2024, online. This two-part workshop, run by technical translator David Smith, is for anyone who is interested in adding patent translation as another specialism or furthering their career in the subject. Containing a mixture of presentation and practical exercises, it will teach attendees how to gain a foothold in the area. For more details and to book, visit the [ITI website](#).

Subtitling – beyond the basics: Thursday, 5 and Thursday, 12 September 2024, online. Led by audiovisual translator and academic Lindsay Bywood, this is an excellent opportunity for anyone with a basic background in subtitling to advance and fine-tune their skills. It will teach participants how to improve their timing skills, gain an understanding of the template workflow and learn about challenges around cultural aspects such as humour and taboo subjects. For more details and to book, visit the [ITI website](#).

As always, the full ITI CPD offering can be found on the online [ITI Calendar](#).

If you would like to flag up a relevant upcoming event here, please get in touch: editor@itiscotland.org.uk

ITI ScotNet spring workshop: ethics, sustainability and new technologies

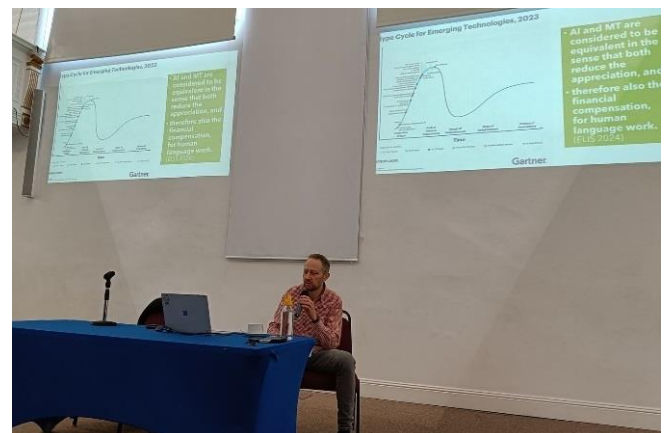
ScotNetters needed to have their brains switched on for this year's spring workshop, held in a venue that is now a regular ScotNet haunt: a detailed deep-dive into new technologies such as machine translation and AI gave attendees a lesson in history, ethics, philosophy and more. Here, **Jo Durning** looks at her key takeaways from a mind-expanding morning.

On 23 March, linguists from across Scotland gathered at the Central Methodist Church in Edinburgh for an informative and thought-provoking morning. Joss Moorkens from Dublin City University gave an overview of the history of machine translation (MT) and developments in machine learning (artificial intelligence, or AI), plus insights into the ethical and sustainability-related issues they raise for translators.

Joss began by defining terms - machine learning is an “automated process that extracts patterns from data” - before outlining the history of MT. The idea of non-numerical applications for computers goes back to 1947, with early proponents hoping to break down all language barriers to communication between peoples. There was a major setback for these utopian ambitions in the 1960s, when a study found that, compared to human translation, machines were slower, less accurate and twice as expensive.

In the 1980s, developments in demand from bilingual states and multilingual organisations coincided with the advent of personal computers to give new impetus. Rule-based systems were replaced from 1988 by statistical MT, based on numerical relationships between words. Artificial neural

networks began to appear around 2015–2017. They are multidimensional black boxes, turning words into numbers, “learning” by identifying patterns in collocations and contexts, and “trained” by millions of paired terms.



Joss discussing cycles in emerging technologies

Data sources for today's large language models (LLMs) include translation memories and harvesting web data - unless this comes from open-access repositories, copyright issues can be raised as a result. Use of synthetic data (including back translation of machine outputs) is increasing, though it has been found to lower quality. Performance problems, including “hallucinations”, have decreased but not disappeared. The models are power-hungry, creating issues around environmental sustainability. We may be reaching the point of maximum hype around AI, with a reaction due shortly.

To understand the use case for pure MT (without human intervention), it's helpful to consider purpose. The quantity of product, its value and shelf life, and the level of risk are also factors. For an ultra-high-volume, fast-turnover, low-risk product such as a tweet or a Tripadvisor review, a machine-produced gist translation is often the only viable option. At the other end of the scale, human involvement is essential, though the nature, extent and positioning of that involvement is a matter for debate. Owners of the models aim to save money and particularly time by replacing all or part of a translator's work, rather than generating additional options to enrich our experience.



Leading a discussion on ethics in the packed room

Case studies highlighted issues for translators, in particular lack of control. The Berne Convention does not assign copyright to translators, and our moral rights have not been tested. In practice, once we have delivered a translation and been paid for it, we have no influence over its use, including for training LLMs. Royalties are unknown except for literary and other book translations. Even if we work only with clients whose values we share, mergers and takeovers mean our output may be used by companies we would never willingly support.

The impact of MT on pay is a major issue. The productivity improvement widely assumed by clients, i.e. that post-editing a machine translation is at least 30% faster than producing a human translation, is contradicted by the experience of many, who find that MT slows them down, particularly for marketing or literary translation.

History is not on the side of the Luddites, but they can be seen as standing up for individual creation against the dehumanising impact of machines and mass production.

Lively discussion continued over the break. Is it Luddite to be against MT? And if so, is that bad? History is not on the side of the Luddites, but they can be seen as standing up for individual, artisanal creation and control against the dehumanising impact of machines and mass production. There are similarities with our situation.

The pace then became faster, and the material denser. My key takeaways are that none of us currently use AI other than MT directly for translation. But some use LLMs for other work, such as emails. And some agencies are using automated job allocation, and/or achieving rapid turnaround times through fragmentation, reducing both quality and job satisfaction, as translators become part of a production line. There is no escaping the asymmetry of power in the relationship between individual freelancers and the mega language service providers which provide so much of our work.

There were some brighter moments. Joss pointed to the agencies which aim to achieve high ethical standards – some are B Corps. These tend to be more transparent, providing translation briefs, for example.

Over lunch at Ciao Roma, with good Italian food and wine served among mementos of Robert Louis Stevenson (a regular customer in one of the building's former incarnations), networking and informal mentoring continued. As Ramon said at the start of the morning, we are stronger together.

Ideas for further reading/training:

[Machine translation for everyone: Empowering users in the age of artificial intelligence](#)

[Delivering excellence in the age of AI](#)



Jo translates from French to English, specialising in government, law, business and social science.

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A brief AI glossary

Here are a few of the most frequently used AI terms you might have seen or heard in presentations or reading materials – and what they actually mean.

Deep learning: A machine learning method that refers to teaching a machine in a way that simulates how the human brain works: “deep” refers to the idea of multilayered intelligence with complex networks, much like those in the human mind. This type of learning allows machines to solve tasks and make deductions from information, like images or sound, in a similar way to the brain.

Generative AI: A type of AI that can create new content, such as images or sound, using the information that has been fed into it. Examples include DALL-E, which links the meaning of words to visual elements, and the chatbot ChatGPT.

Hallucination: An instance in which an AI tool perceives patterns or objects that do not actually exist or cannot be perceived by humans, creating a result that is nonsensical or difficult for humans to understand.

Natural language processing: An area of AI that refers to machines being able to understand and break down the structures of human language. This includes understanding tone and whether texts are intended to be read as positive, negative or neutral.

ITI Conference 2024: new world, new work

The recent ITI Conference was something of a landmark event for ScotNet: for the first time since the ITI began holding its conferences in their current form – fully fledged professional conferences with several speaker tracks – the decision was made to venture north of the border, making ScotNet effectively the host network. Held at Edinburgh University premises on the edge of Holyrood Park, the event proved to be a sell-out and, if you've been anywhere near the social media side of translation recently, you'll no doubt have seen numerous reports of the conference itself and the fringe programme. Here, three ScotNetters – **Aleksandra Chlon**, **Sue Anderson** and **Isabel Hurtado de Mendoza** – share their personal experiences, and you can also look ahead for a few pictures of ScotNetters at the event.

Aleksandra Chlon: Emotions and connections

As I stood in the foyer on the first morning, barely able to hear myself think because of the noise and feeling so overwhelmed by the sea of strangers that my nerves were manifesting as a stomach ache and an eczema flare-up, I couldn't help but wonder: why did I spend half a grand to be here? Over the next two days, I got my answer. I witnessed translators much wiser than me share their knowledge, I listened to heartfelt and heartwarming talks, and I was reminded of the value of belonging to a professional community of kindred spirits.



Networking can be rewarding – but exhausting

We are all translators, but we are also all human. Three surefire ways to stand out are to interact with us, make us laugh, and bring tears to our eyes.

Lloyd Bingham's "Goodness gracious grammar" was the most interactive session of the ones I attended. It felt like a workshop, which is something I thought the conference lacked, so I was grateful to Lloyd for involving and engaging us in debates about dangling participles, flat adverbs and preposition stranding. Lloyd began by asking us who decides what is and isn't grammatical, and helped us reach the conclusion that no one decides – which also means that everyone does. What followed was a lively discussion about where to place adverbs, how to use participles in ways that don't confuse readers, and whether the Oxford comma avoids or introduces ambiguity, among other things. Showing us, for example, that less grammatical can mean more idiomatic (drive safe vs drive safely), Lloyd encouraged us to challenge authority and break taboos.



Lloyd Bingham exploring the finer points of grammar

Tim Gutteridge gave us an insight into his work and his mind by walking us through the process he goes through when translating instances of swearing from Spanish into English. Tim made us laugh with his unexpected lessons (“Things you can shit on in Spanish”) and even more unexpected insults (“potato-starch face”), but he made serious points in between the laughter. Tim too spoke of taboos, explaining that Spanish swearing often involves violating religious or family taboos whereas English swearing relies heavily on linguistic taboos (the f word, the c word).

Using examples from works he’s translated, Tim shared excerpts in Spanish followed by ChatGPT’s translation (which was always too bland, too literal, or nonsensical) and his own solution – always creative and always taking cultural, pragmatic and social considerations into account. Tim’s conclusion was that ChatGPT can only solve your problem if you give it detailed instructions and tell it exactly how you want to solve that problem. An observation that resonated with me in particular was when Tim explained how

helpful it was to be able to consult others and discuss obscure nuances with locals: “ChatGPT doesn’t have Bolivian mates on Twitter”.



Tim Gutteridge gave one of the conference's most enthusiastically received talks!

Last but not least, Suzie Withers delivered a beautiful, vulnerable, gripping and honest talk about the menopause, including how it affects translators and interpreters. Half the global population has a female body, and ours is a predominantly female profession, so the menopause is a topic that is relevant to translation. As Suzie pointed out, the menopause isn’t new – but talking about it is, and we’re grateful to her for opening up the conversation and lifting the menopause taboo. Suzie explained the biology and theories behind the menopause (it shouldn’t happen – we should be dead), explored its physical and mental symptoms (common ones such as hot flushes and less common ones such as electric shocks), and even helped us consider its potential positive effects, such as clarity about life’s mission or a sense of liberation as we stop caring what other people think.

Suzie talked about the possible remedies on the one hand, and the lack of training for healthcare professionals on the other.

She also shared her own story. There was an overwhelming feeling of gratitude in the room – for preparing us for the future, for giving us something deep and meaningful to relate to, and for making us more visible in a world where women have been invisible for too long.

I admit I'm still somewhat resentful of the eye-watering price tag, and I would have liked a few more hands-on sessions, but I can't deny that the ITI Conference brought me a lot of joy and a deeper sense of connection – and you can't put a price tag on that.



Aleksandra translates from French, Polish & Russian into English and specialises in the medical and marketing fields.

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Sue Anderson: How (not) to make £100k as a translator – a report of a standout talk

Freelance translator and copywriter Sarah Bowtell addressed her presentation to both early-career translators and more senior colleagues: how can the former get established in the sector and how can the latter offer a helping hand?

Social media has many eye-catching variations on the theme of “making a six-figure salary as a freelancer”. The advice generally boils down to a few suggestions: find voluntary experience, stick to your rates, foster strong relationships with good

agencies, adopt a specialism, and market yourself. But today's realities can be harsh (think of the rise of AI and the cost of living crisis) and disillusionment can set in when these approaches don't seem to pay off.



Sarah Bowtell giving sound advice to new translators

Sarah reviewed this long-standing advice in the current context. Working pro bono sounds great in principle, but in practice she found it hard to actually get any work from organisations such as Translators without Borders. By its nature it does not earn you a living, and it can also devalue translation to give too much away for free. Translators should limit the volume they do and ask if it is actually benefitting them.

New translators are often warned not to join the “bottom feeders” and to resist pressure to lower their rates. Sarah acknowledged that avoiding platforms and only working with the best agencies is easier said than done, especially when starting out. In practice, it can be hard to find information and transparency around translation rates. Lack of experience and knowledge of how the sector works puts newbies in a weak

position. Sarah offered her own example of jumping through an agency's hoops and signing a 20-page contract, with no work forthcoming as yet.

Her advice to new translators facing such challenges was to "work smart": set a minimum rate, even if it's lower than ideal. Gather industry intel and keep information on rates. Don't let lower-end agencies monopolise your time: keep searching for better agencies and direct clients, and keep marketing. Specialising is certainly a key way to add value, but while career switchers may have a ready specialism to draw on, younger translators might struggle to identify one immediately. And they take time to develop. Sarah suggested marketing yourself as a specialist while applying to agencies as a generalist.

On marketing and networking, Sarah described LinkedIn as the place to be for translators. But like all social media, it should be taken with a pinch of salt: things are not always as rosy as they are painted!

Sarah was keen to stress that the translation community has aided her own path and that we need to harness its strengths. Newer translators should join to learn from the more experienced, who can play their part by contributing, giving back through mentoring or revision clubs, and making friends with newbies. Crucially, they can offer industry insights by talking openly about rates and sharing agency best practices. They can also share specialist knowledge – for example, through text-based specific mentoring as offered by the ITI German Network, among others – and they can extend the referral network to include junior colleagues.

Both newer and more experienced translators came away from the talk with fresh ideas and renewed inspiration.



Sue translates from Dutch, German, Afrikaans & French into English. Her specialisms are animal health, veterinary medicine & psychology.

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Isabel Hurtado de Mendoza: A journey home and beyond

I was in two minds about attending the ITI Conference 2024 in Edinburgh. Firstly, the cost of plane tickets from Spain, accommodation, and the pricey conference fees were significant. Secondly, I'm not a fan of overcrowded events where I'm expected to step out of my comfort zone and network. Lastly, I was concerned that the programme's heavy focus on AI would be more about preaching to the converted than providing practical solutions for translators facing the challenges of this technology. Despite these reservations, I decided to give it a go, making a conscious effort to make the most of it.

For starters, I chose to turn this professional trip into a family holiday. Having lived in Edinburgh for 10 years, it was a wonderful chance to reconnect with my second home and introduce my family to it. This decision turned out to be a great success – my husband fell in love with the city and wants to return soon, and my seven-year-old daughter now believes in the "English superpower" I keep telling her she has and is inspired to pursue English, abandoning her

previous dream of becoming a vet. The money was well spent, don't you think?

To address my concerns about networking, I lowered my expectations. Instead of pressuring myself to meet many new translators and form future business ties, I allowed myself to skip some talks and social events without guilt. This approach helped me enjoy the conference more, leaning on the kindness of others and focusing on meaningful interactions rather than quantity.



Isabel found value in the spaces outside the talks themselves

Interestingly, this situation made me ponder a broader question: if translators often lament the solitary nature of our work, why do so many of us describe ourselves as introverts on social media and mention that we find large events like this anxiety-inducing? Could we ask the ITI to rethink the conference format, also bearing in mind the fact that, this year, we discussed at length the importance of our community, connections and the human touch? Perhaps moving away from massive venues and traditional keynotes to more intimate workshops, network presentations and interpersonal could foster better connections and knowledge sharing.

Regarding the programme, even though I enjoyed most of the presentations I attended, I still felt that much of it lacked new insights for me. While we all know there are aspects of translation we can do better than AI, the real challenge is making our clients understand our value. The conference might have benefitted from media coverage beyond our professional circle, using that platform to advocate for our profession to the public. The Scottish Network and the ITI main office have proven, yet again, that they can organise fantastic events, so why not take it a step further? We were encouraged to think of "a new us", and perhaps it's time for the ITI to think of "a new ITI" – one that opens its windows wider to the world, showcasing what translators can do.

My trip to Edinburgh was both personally and professionally enriching. I managed to meet old friends, attend some inspiring talks and witness the great work our network and the main organisation can do. This was an emotional return to a city that feels like home, and I look forward to visiting again soon – perhaps for a more relaxed and practical ScotNet event?

PS: Did you realise my title was written by ChatGPT and my English is better than ever?!



Isabel now lives in Spain and translates from English into Spanish. Her specialisms include international business and governmental organisations.

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ITI ScotNet walking weekend: Ben Vrackie and beyond

After seeing the success of other regional networks' walking weekends and recognising that Scotland provides a huge canvas for various kinds of walks, ScotNetters Lynda Hepburn and James Kelly recently planned and ran the network's inaugural walking weekend, choosing beautiful Highland Perthshire as the location. Here, **Siobhan Gorrie** reports back on a weekend of surprising sunshine and not-so-surprising camaraderie. (Oh, go on then – there were so many good pictures that we've provided another photo gallery after the article!)

With a keen awareness of the fact that ScotNet is, in fact, based in Scotland, the walking weekend was always planned with the caveat that the weather would be unpredictable, even if the chosen dates in mid-May would give us a fighting chance of some good weather. The kit list that attendees received in advance advised cagoules, waterproof trousers and plenty of layers to accommodate all kinds of temperatures. However, given that the weekend was something of a substitute for the annual summer workshop this year (which the committee decided not to hold in order to avoid competing with the ITI Conference in Edinburgh), it was very appropriate that our walking weather decided to keep up the summer workshop track record of glorious sunshine, and most of us found ourselves slapping on factor 50 rather than rain gear.

Base camp for the weekend was Logierait Lodges near Pitlochry, which offered a mixture of two-bedroom lodges and a larger bunkhouse, all set on the banks of the River Tay and with some excellent wildlife-spotting opportunities nearby (including many ducks that took up residence on the lawns outside the lodges). The bunkhouse and outside area also provided a venue for communal meals:

breakfast and packed lunches were organised there and, on the first evening, everyone contributed a dish to a pot-luck dinner while James skilfully managed the barbecue pit.

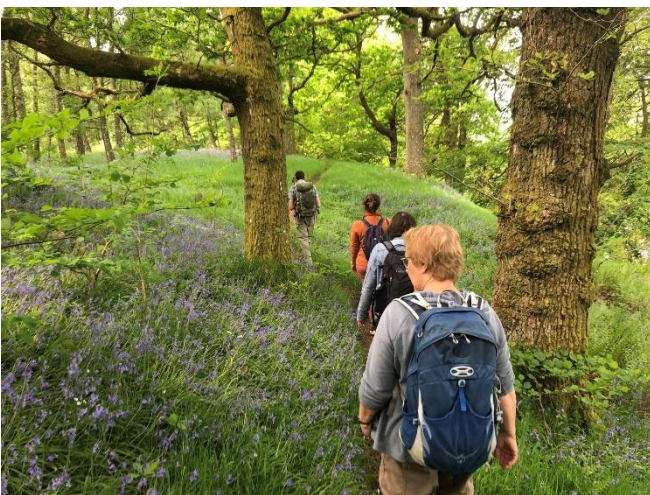
All this set us up well for two days of walking, the first of which – on Saturday – would take us up over 2500 feet to the summit of nearby Ben Vrackie. (There was some discussion of hill categories on the way up: Munros have to be more than 3000 feet in height, so Ben Vrackie falls into the category of Corbetts, which are between 2500 and 3000 feet.) The hot sun made for a sweat-inducing walk and climb, but at the top we were rewarded with a beautiful vista as we ate our hard-earned packed lunches. On the way down, some of us grabbed the opportunity for a dip in the reservoir at the base of the hill – the wild swimmers among us in ScotNet never come unprepared.



A cooling dip at the base of Ben Vrackie

After a little more walking, we finally reached our dinner destination: the Moulin Inn just outside Pitlochry, where we enjoyed a chatty meal and plenty of replenishing drinks, and those of us with tomato tendencies like me assessed whether we'd actually applied enough of that factor 50 during the day.

The next day brought a less arduous walk of about five miles from Grandtully to Aberfeldy, following a trail along the Tay. The naturalists among us, such as Lynda and Elisa, were able to identify various plant and flower species, and we even saw evidence of beavers building dams and stripping bark from trees. Despite our numbers, somehow we all managed to secure tables at a lovely bookshop and café in Aberfeldy when we reached our destination, and the delicious coffee and food prepared us for the journey back home.



Seeking out flora and fauna in the woods near Aberfeldy

It wasn't all physical exercise, however: as we had a combination of cars in Aberfeldy and back at the start point in Grandtully, there were mental leaps involved in working out who would go back to Grandtully, how many spaces the cars had, who was able to leave straight from Aberfeldy and who needed to

go back to Logierait. More than one person commented on the resemblance to the conundrum of getting a fox, chicken and some grain across a river – so a classic team-building exercise, really!

If the weekend had a theme, it was just about having a good time away from CAT tools, screens and glossaries (and the summit of a hill is something you definitely can't generate using AI). Shoptalk at an event where everyone shares a similar profession is never going to be zero, but I found it refreshing that the topics of conversation actually rarely touched on translation – instead, it was a great opportunity to get to know more about other ScotNetters' lives beyond what pays the bills. (I should add at this point that Alicja, Hannah, Ania, Aleks and I spent a good amount of the Ben Vrackie walk talking about running, because getting a group of runners together will, by law, result in chat about pacing and Lycra.)

I wouldn't hesitate to join another walking weekend in the future – and I'm sure it would be just as much fun in the rain!



Siobhan is an in-house translator from German into English, specialising in technical fields such as industrial automation, instrumentation & domestic appliances.

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Celebrating love in two languages

A spring wedding is always a lovely occasion, and one in particular this year was made even lovelier by the inclusion of not one but two ScotNetters! One was **Marion Greenway Allen**, part of the groom's family, who enjoyed observing the cross-cultural communication that the ceremony brought. **Aida Ferrer** facilitated that communication by acting as the event's interpreter. Marion reflects on the experience here – tune into our next issue for part two, Aida's account!

On 24 February this year, my brother-in-law, Ally, married his fiancée, Nyleen, at The Cruin, a venue on the banks of Loch Lomond. Nyleen comes from Lima, Peru, and most of her family do not speak much English, and most of Ally's family do not speak Spanish, so they needed an interpreter. Luckily, ScotNet's Aida Ferrer stepped in to help.

Aida was committed, friendly and professional from the start. She met up with Ally and Nyleen – who live in Manchester – in Glasgow one weekend before the wedding for an informal chat. They stayed for hours talking to her and arrived late back in Manchester that evening.



Aida in full swing

She was also in touch with my husband, Martin, about interpreting his best man's speech into Spanish, as well as with Nyleen's dad and sister about interpreting their speeches into English. Martin's speech

included a statistics quiz for Ally, which included his two favourite mental maths questions that he used to ask visitors as a child: how many seconds are there in a millennium and what does all the information on the internet weigh? He also included a lesser-known poem by Robert Burns, which she was unable to find in Spanish and had to translate herself. As a translator, this experience gave me a new perspective on how much prior research is involved in an interpreting job.



The happy couple with Aida standing by

On the day of the wedding, Aida arrived early and joined the family for lunch. She had to chase us when we were late getting ready. The wedding guests were particularly impressed with Aida's Glaswegian accent. Some of the English guests told my father-in-law that they were amazed that someone could learn to speak English with a Scottish accent and thought that everyone would

naturally have an English accent! They were also impressed with how fast Aida's pen flew across the page when Pastor Gordon Weir was giving his lengthy sermon.

After the ceremony, Aida stayed at the reception to talk to Nyleen's family until she was needed to interpret the speeches before dinner. It took almost an hour to get a taxi to take her back to Balloch station after the wedding. It was a long day for her and she must have been exhausted afterwards. She was amazing, so I thought she definitely deserved a write-up here!



Marion translates from German, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish into English, specialising in fields including ecology, medicines and pharmaceuticals.

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MemSec – what's in a name?

All of the ScotNet committee roles are important, but it's the Membership Secretary who probably has the most direct contact with every single member – from the point when someone joins the network to the point when they're handing back name badges at workshops (a valuable resource, as anyone who has been to a ScotNet event will know!). **Sue Anderson**, a ScotNet stalwart, is our current Membership Secretary: following a recent uptick in membership interest after the ITI Conference, she felt it was a good time to explain what exactly the role involves and how it manages our membership.

The Membership Secretary is the first point of contact for anyone interested in joining ScotNet. As a committee member, they attend committee meetings a few times a year, sometimes in person and sometimes online. Most of the MemSec's duties are administrative and behind the scenes, and include processing applications and keeping membership records.

But you might also notice them at the AGM, delivering a short report on membership matters over the past year, or at in-person workshops, handing out and collecting the name badges. The MemSec is assisted by a

Deputy, who helps out as necessary and shadows the role for a year or so before taking it on themselves. Thanks go out at this point to the current deputy, Alicja Tokarska!



The committee at ScotNet's 2023 AGM

Those interested in joining ScotNet are often referred to the MemSec via other committee colleagues or general members, but the direct email address is membership@itiscotland.org.uk. ScotNet membership is open to all translators/interpreters living in or having close ties to Scotland and holding ITI membership in any category. Non-ITI members can join as Friends for up to two years on a “try-before-you-buy” basis. We also accept students on relevant degree courses and practising translators or interpreters who are not yet ITI members but can demonstrate some initial professional experience.

After making contact, applicants are sent a folder of information about ScotNet and two application forms to complete and return. In addition to basic contact details, we request some particulars that we enter in the ScotNet Directory, which is accessible to all ScotNetters. These include translation and interpreting qualifications and experience, software/hardware, specialist fields and other services. It's up to you what information you want to give, but it's worth noting that the Directory is a useful resource for all ScotNetters, who can search the Directory for someone with a particular specialism or working in a given language pair, for instance. Accredited members (MITIs/FITIs) with a public profile on the ScotNet website can manage their own details there – and, just like your main ITI profile, do remember to update it from time to time!

The membership year runs from 1 November to 31 October. Fees are currently £20 per year for most membership categories (£35 for Corporate), with those joining after 1 May

receiving a 50% discount. Students pay a flat-rate fee of £5 with no discount. After supplying personal details and paying their annual subs, applicants are processed and admitted to ScotNet by the MemSec. They then gain all of the invaluable ScotNet benefits, such as access to our e-group, regular newsletters, the ScotNet website, spring and autumn workshops, summer weekend workshop and the new walking weekend.

The MemSec keeps members' information on file and maintains a tally of those joining and leaving over the past year. Please help to keep your details current by having a think about whether anything has changed since you joined: do you have a different email address, phone number or ITI status, perhaps? Or have you maybe added new languages, skills or services? Drop me a line at membership@itiscotland.org.uk and I'll make sure your details are updated.



Sue translates from Dutch, German, Afrikaans & French into English. Her specialisms are animal health, veterinary medicine & psychology.

Contact: suanderson.squarespace.com

Member news

Here's where we welcome new members to the network. As mentioned in Sue's useful article in this issue, please remember to notify the Membership Secretary (membership@itiscotland.org.uk) of any changes to your ITI membership category since you joined the network. In particular, let the MemSec know when you upgrade to MITI, as your details can then be made available to the general public online.

New members:

→ **Wei Du:** I recently completed my MSc in Translation and Interpreting at Heriot-Watt University and have started working as a freelance translator and interpreter between Mandarin Chinese and English. I have always been passionate about cross-cultural communication, which led me to shift my career path from tourism studies to translation and interpreting. My specialisations are not limited to the tourism sector, I am also eager to continue developing my transcreation skills in the beauty, fashion and luxury markets.

→ **Youling Sun:** I am a full-time translator and translation manager – and ITI member since 2009 – working for the Edinburgh Business School at Heriot-Watt University and specialising in academic translation; in particular, the full range of business subjects for their MBA programme. I have managed translations and translators for Chinese, Arabic, Spanish and Russian, but my own translations are between English and Chinese. I have a BA, MA, PgDip and MSc (in Politics, Accounting & Finance, and Translation & Conference Interpreting respectively), all of which benefit my translations in the wide range of subjects that I work with. In my spare time, I enjoy running, playing badminton and the beautiful outdoors of Scotland. I am excited to join

ScotNet and I look forward to meeting many of you at various workshops and other events.

→ **Julie Corcoran:** I've been working as a German to English translator for 25 years. After studying German and French at Glasgow University, I moved to Duisburg in Germany, where I lived for eight years in total. My career in translation began as an in-house technical translator at a multilingual agency in Wuppertal, before I moved to the bond research department of a bank in Düsseldorf, where I worked for five years. I specialise in financial translation (particularly bonds, equities, investment funds and economics) and have been freelancing in Glasgow since 2005 in collaboration with my partner, Andrew Hayes, who is also a MITI. In addition, I'm experienced in translating general IT, HR, marketing, sustainability and arts texts. Apart from that, my CPD in recent years has included attendance at the Bristol Translates summer school in literary translation and obtaining a C1 DELE diploma in Spanish. I really enjoyed the spring workshop in Edinburgh and I'm looking forward to attending more ScotNet events in future!

→ **Leigh Donovan:** I'm a late-in-life emerging translator with interests in literary fiction and visual art-related nonfiction. I'm based in Glasgow but grew up in Philadelphia, and

I like to think that navigating the linguistic and cultural landscapes of these two cities has set me up well for literary translation. I'm also a practising visual artist specialising in ceramics, and one of my deep interests is exploring how artistic and translation practices intersect – one way being that both are absorbing, exhilarating and absolutely addictive! My main language pair is French and English, with Dutch and English as a secondary language pair. Over the past few years, I've taken translation and writing courses offered by author/translator Jen Calleja and participated in a week-long online workshop by the Kenyon Review. In 2023, I was selected for the French strand of the BCLT Summer School, which was a transformative experience. I'm delighted to be part of ScotNet and am really looking forward to meeting more of the network over the coming years.

→ **Epperly Zhang:** Born and raised in China, growing up I was always fascinated with the English language. It went on to become one of my stronger subjects in school, which eventually led me to my undergraduate studies in translation and interpreting at a university in Xi'an (where the terracotta warriors are located). During an internship there, I started translating news – sports news in particular – and discovered my true passion for translation. I knew I had to stick with it despite limited work opportunities at the time. I then moved to Melbourne, Australia, to study for a master's in translation studies at the University of Melbourne. I have now been working as a professional translator for about five years. After living in Melbourne for almost eight years, I said goodbye to my second hometown at the start of the year and moved

to beautiful Edinburgh to explore this side of the world. I am loving it here, minus perhaps the weather! I look forward to meeting some of you at an event soon.

→ **Andrew Wood:** Originally from the exotic south (Gateshead), I came up to Scotland in 1998, when I started my undergraduate interpreting and translating degree at Heriot-Watt University. Although I started out studying French and German, I then swapped to Russian and German in my second year (I'm a glutton for punishment). After graduating, I ventured over to the west (Glasgow), where I worked as a project manager at what would euphemistically be described these days as a "boutique agency". After a little over three years of that, I returned to Edinburgh and started working as an in-house translator at Linguatext, which handled German to English work exclusively, mostly done in-house. Cut to several years later and my colleagues and I took over the agency as an employee-owned business, with me and another colleague being given the dubious honour of carrying the title "Director". German to English translation and proofing is still what I do most days (I won't bore you with a full list of subject matter), but we have branched out into other languages recently. Outside of work, I sing in a community choir and do my best at playing various folk instruments. I hesitate to use the word "foodie", but I rarely hesitate to try new (and usually overpriced) foods and drinks and spend most of my free time in the kitchen. I run (although it doesn't come naturally, so I try to keep that to a minimum) and I do a lot of walking (although that's mostly due to my pathological fear of driving rather than a passion for long walks in glorious

countryside). I have two daughters, who are in secondary school, and a (mostly) patient and (certainly) long-suffering wife. I look forward to meeting up with more of you in person in the future!

→ **Alessandra Cossu**: Hi everyone! My interest in languages started long ago, but it was only when I began my degree in language studies that I realised I was passionate about translation. I'm still trying to figure out my fields of expertise, but I am very interested in technical translation, social science and digital activism, and I also happen to be a relentless webinar consumer. My main language pair is English > Italian and I am also starting to take projects in my second pair, Spanish > Italian, for which I have developed a growing love. I hope to see you very soon at one of our in-person meetings.

Other news:

→ Congratulations to **Sabine Citron** on achieving FITI status. Testament to a long record of excellent work - well done!

→ In news from the ScotNet committee, **Mike Downey** - our Webmaster - is stepping down from his role, as he is leaving translation to pursue a new career as a Business Relationship Manager for Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks. His successor is **Lisa Barrett**, who translates from French to English in the culture and tourism sphere. Congratulations on your new role, Mike, and we wish you all the very best in your future career! We are very grateful to Lisa for stepping up to the position, especially as a relatively new ScotNetter.

→ News from **ITI central**: at the ITI Conference, new Chief Executive (and, as it turns out, Ayrshire lass) Sara Robertson announced the launch of the ITI's new "slow translation" manifesto, which is designed to encourage a more thoughtful approach to the translation process in a world where AI and machine translation tools are often the favoured solution. While digital tools have their place when a quick skim of the meaning is all that is needed, human translation is the more valuable approach when getting the message right matters, and it brings a level of understanding and skill that machines cannot match. You can read more about the manifesto on the [ITI website](#).

Social media

Twitter/X: [@ITIScotNet](#)

Facebook: [ITI Scottish Network](#)

E-group: itiscotnet.groups.io

Event photos:

www.yogile.com/scotnet2024

You can also stop by the ScotNet [website](#) for all the latest information and details of events.

ScotNet grants

The ITI Scottish Network offers 2 levels of grants to members as a contribution towards the costs of attending ITI events:

- 1) Grants of up to £30 are available for attending Scottish Network meetings.
- 2) ScotNetters may also apply for grants of up to £70 for attending national ITI events.

How to apply for a grant

Contact our Treasurer (currently Victoria Dalrymple) at treasurer@itiscotland.org.uk *before* registering for the meeting. Subject to availability and meeting the eligibility criteria, she will approve the grant and notify you. In due course, forward her a copy of the receipt for the event or transport expenses and provide her with your bank details. She will then pay the respective amount into your account.

General conditions: Maximum of one grant per person per subscription year. You must be a member of ITI, so Friends of the Network are not eligible. Also members living in the central belt are not eligible to receive

grants for network meetings in Edinburgh or Glasgow. All recipients must be willing to contribute a report on the event they attended to the ITI ScotNet Newsletter.

The level of grants is reviewed every year at ScotNet's AGM. Under the current budget, 10 grants of £30 and 10 of £70 are available each year. From time to time, the Committee may also decide to offer additional grants to enable ScotNetters to attend particular events such as the ITI Conference, for example.

ScotNet support fund

Grants to help pay ITI membership fees and interest-free loans to cover living expenses also continue to be available to ScotNetters, following the discussion at the 2022 AGM and decision to make a hardship fund a permanent part of ScotNet's operations. Anyone who is a member of both ITI and ScotNet is eligible to apply, so please contact Victoria at treasurer@itiscotland.org.uk if you could use a financial helping hand. (And once again many thanks to members who have so generously donated to this fund.)

Looking forward to the next issue...

Did the ITI Conference reinvigorate your career plans? Are you spending the summer working on your source languages, or maybe taking some time out? Have you booked any interesting CPD for the upcoming months? We always love hearing about whatever you've been up to and especially welcome contributions from new members – so if you've got something you'd like to share, feel free to drop me a line @ editor@itiscotland.org.uk or siobhangorrie@gmail.com. ◆

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