



BIPRA LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM 2016

Hosted by the Northern Ireland Assembly and held
from Tuesday 23 August to Friday 26 August in
Belfast.

BIPRA LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM 2016: DELEGATE LIST

British Columbia

Rob Sutherland

House of Commons

Paul Hadlow

Paul Kirby

Keith Brown

Owain Wilkins

Charlie Browne

Richard Purnell

House of Lords

John Vice

Will Humphreys-Jones

Hywel Evans

Gráinne McGinley

Sally Carter.

Houses of the Oireachtas

Anne Maxwell

Reine McDonnell

Des Moore

Denis Kelliher

National Assembly for Wales

Meinir Gooch

Leah Jenkins

Peter Hill

Geraint Criddle

Northern Ireland Assembly

Simon Burrowes

Patrick Marsh

Martha Davison

Rónan O'Reilly

Luke Gibbons

Bronagh Allison

Antony Loveless

Jonny Redpath

Parliament of Uganda

Esther Mwambu

Carol Amulen

Scottish Parliament

Polly Mackenzie

Claire Bennett

Simon Eilbeck

Kenny Reid

Kimberly Kerr

Claire Hall

Cameron Smith

Murdo MacLeod

Ian Lavery

States of Jersey

Peter Monamy

Tynwald

Deborah Pilkington

TUESDAY 23 AUGUST 2016 (Morrisons, Bedford Street, Belfast)

SESSION ONE: WELCOME, REGISTRATION, BRIEFING AND TEAM EVENT

In the evening, delegates attended the symposium welcome, registration and briefing event held in Morrisons, Bedford Street, Belfast. Delegates received their symposium credentials and were briefed on the symposium programme and the associated modalities. Refreshments were provided after which delegates held a team development exercise, which involved them being divided into pre-arranged teams and then contesting a highly informative and entertaining team quiz splendidly organised and run by Martha Davison, which, for the record, was won by Team 1.

The teams were as follows:

Team 1

Simon Burrowes, Anne Maxwell, Paul Hadlow, Martha Davison, Hywel Evans and Murdo MacLeod.

Team 2

Patrick Marsh, Peter Monamy, Esther Mwambu, Carol Amulen, John Vice and Cameron Smyth.

Team 3

Bronagh Allison, Kenny Reid, Will Humphreys-Jones, Reine McDonnell, Peter Hill and Deborah Pilkington.

Team 4

Rónan O'Reilly, Paul Kirby, Leah Jenkins, Polly Mackenzie, Des Moore and Kimberley Kerr.

Team 5

Luke Gibbons, Keith Brown, Gráinne McGinley, Geraint Criddle, Claire Bennett and Ian Lavery.

Team 6

Antony Loveless, Rob Sutherland, Richard Purnell, Sally Carter, Denis Kelliher and Meinir Gooch.

Team 7

Jonny Redpath, Charlie Browne, Simon Eilbeck, Owain Wilkins and Claire Hall.

WEDNESDAY 24 AUGUST (Parliament Buildings, Stormont)

SESSION TWO: SYMPOSIUM OPENING

Simon Burrowes (Secretary of BIPRA): It does not seem that long since last we were together. This is the start of the more formal bit of the 2016 BIPRA symposium. Some of this will be a little bit repetitive at the beginning, because I am going to welcome all of you again. I attempted to research the various greetings for “hello” and “welcome” in all the languages that delegates might be familiar with, but after last night I am not going to bother with any of that, except to say that you are all very welcome to the symposium and to Parliament Buildings.

When I arrived this morning before 8.30am — I hope that our chief executive will take note of that — you could not see the building: it was shrouded in mist, and we were wondering whether it would clear. However, it is absolutely stunning now and, I am pleased to say, follows in a long tradition of good weather for BIPRA summer learning and development events.

This is the second time that BIPRA has had its summer conference in Belfast. The last was back in 2007. I think that, as I mentioned last night, everyone has finally made it home from that conference. The apologies that had to be made were made; they were accepted; and nobody owes anything any longer from that. *[Laughter.]*

I was going to introduce myself, but there is no point because I introduced myself last evening. Just for the record, however, I am Simon Burrowes, the secretary of BIPRA. Indeed I have been secretary since BIPRA was set up in 2001. That is nearly 15 years, and I was thinking that I could have committed some very serious crime and been out without remission in less time. *[Laughter.]*

A couple of health and safety warnings. If the alarms go off, we, the staff from Hansard in the Assembly, will look after you. There are various evacuation points outside the building. Just follow us. There are cloakrooms at the end of the corridor, which are very well signposted.

As I said last night, you have a special conference pass, which will mean that the Ushers should allow you to wander unfettered. Try not to poke your nose into rooms that you should not poke your nose into, but essentially you are free to roam about.

At lunchtime, we will have a packed lunch, so you are very welcome to go out and enjoy the good weather and have your lunch outside or stay in the room — it is entirely up to you. There is Wi-Fi for those who need it, and we have put a couple of notices around the room as to how you get that. If anyone has any problems or needs anything done, please talk to the staff from Hansard here, who you should know by now. Those are the practicalities.

Now, this is the fourteenth time that BIPRA has come together for a learning and development event in the summer and the second time in Belfast. We have travelled the isles quite well by now. We have been nearly everywhere.

BIPRA has certainly grown since 2001 when it was set up in this building. This is the largest attendance that we have had at any of our conferences and, while everyone is very welcome, I want to give a special welcome to Carol and Esther from Uganda and Rob, who has managed to find his way across the north Atlantic. Over the years, we have had over 250 delegates at our summer conferences or symposiums — call them what you will. That is quite a number of people working in Hansard organisations throughout these islands, and I firmly believe that we have all learned an awful lot over those years.

The first item on our agenda is the official opening of the symposium. I am going to introduce you to Robin Newton, who is the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Robin has been Speaker since May 2016, after the last round of elections here. I do not know whether he knows it but, according to our research, Robin is only the fourteenth person to have held the office of Speaker across the Assemblies and Parliaments that there have been in this part of the world since 1921. It is a fairly select band, and I was delighted when we asked the Speaker's office whether he could come along and he was able to say yes.

Robin was elected to Belfast City Council way back in the mid-1980s and was a councillor for nearly 30 years. He was first elected to the Assembly in 2003 and has been returned in every subsequent election. He does not have very far to come because his constituency is East Belfast and Stormont is in the East Belfast constituency. It is a bit of a home from home, I suspect. He was formerly a junior Minister in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. More recently, in the last Assembly, he was the Principal Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, so his elevation was, perhaps, not a surprise. In May 2016 he was elected across the House as Speaker.

Robin received an MBE for his services to politics and the community in 2008. I am told that he was a bit of an athlete in his day and did the marathon in two hours and

30 minutes. I cannot believe that anybody can do 26 miles in two hours and 30 minutes, but fair play; that cannot be bad at all, Mr Speaker. He also holds another honour that very few people hold, in that he was unwittingly present when I foolishly got married three and a half years ago in the City Hall in front of an audience of about two people. Robin happened to be passing and offered his congratulations which, I may say, Robin, my wife and I still remember and are very grateful for, because very few people spoke to us in those days. *[Laughter.]*

Without further ado, I ask Mr Speaker to formally open the 2016 BIPRA symposium.

Robin Newton MBE MLA, (Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly): He is a unique man. *[Laughter.]*

Ladies and gentlemen of the British-Irish Parliamentary Reporting Association — that is a very grand title, so in future I am going to refer to you as BIPRA — and all your guests here today, it is undoubtedly a great pleasure for me to welcome you to Northern Ireland in general and to your fourteenth annual conference in the Building here at Stormont.

As Simon has already mentioned, we are very proud of the Building and the grounds. Internally and externally, the staff do a magnificent job in maintaining this grand Building. It is a marvellous setting. Simon has already said that you are having packed lunches today. I do not understand that, but I hope you take the opportunity to walk round on what looks as if it is going to be a very nice day.

I gather that this is a bit of a homecoming for BIPRA; Simon has already mentioned that the association was founded here back in 2001 at a meeting in this Building. I also gather that Simon was the only person who was present at that time who is still involved in BIPRA. I am not sure that you should read anything into that, but I thought I would mention it anyway. *[Laughter.]*

Of course, the BIPRA event was here before back in 2007 but much has happened in all our legislative set-ups since then. Indeed, BIPRA itself has grown in size and is now an 11-member body, which is a significant achievement.

It is also great to see that BIPRA's reach is becoming more international. I hope that you, Simon, do not mind me also extending a welcome to Esther, Carol and Rob, who have travelled a long way. I just had the very brief pleasure of meeting them as I came in.

One thing that has not changed since 2007 is the need for what you do and the work you carry out. Reporting on what goes on in Parliament is fundamental to the democracy that we live in. Those who elect people to represent them must be able to find out what their representatives have said, how they have voted and what they have done. The Official Report, the record of proceedings or Hansard — call it what you will — is the only full and complete report of proceedings that allows that to happen, and its importance is huge. I have to say that when I look back at some of the things that I have said, I think, "I didn't really say that, did I?", but it is on the record. The very fact that I can look at it and say, "I didn't really say that, did I?" but do not go to challenge it indicates the confidence that I as an elected representative have in the work that you do.

A lot of people think that the reports are mainly an archive for future generations to see how and why we made the decisions we did and perhaps even to learn from those decisions. However, we use the Official Report in the Speaker's Office every day, every week and every month. In my role as Speaker, which I took up after the May elections, as Simon mentioned, I have certainly found it to be an extremely useful tool in my work. There are all sorts of procedural niceties and points of order to respond to and get to grips with. The first port of call when we have any difficulties at all is to look at the Official Report to see what was said on the matter. As I said, rarely a day goes by that we do not make use of Hansard. That is something that people do not see or realise, so I have no doubt that you have the thanks and appreciation of fellow Speakers, Presiding Officers, Chairpersons etc for the hugely important work that you do.

Obviously, things are changing all the time, particularly as technology advances at what is sometimes breakneck speed, and people want information even more quickly. Here in the Assembly, we now publish the Hansard report of each day's complete business around two to two and a half hours after the House has risen. I know that that is similar in other institutions represented here today. That is a phenomenal and marvellous service, and, as I said earlier, it is one that is central to allowing the electorate to keep itself informed. There is no other service like it. I make no apologies for saying that I believe that it is one of the foundation stones of democracy and is perhaps even a cornerstone of democracy as we know it. I hope that you all understand that that is the case, and you should be very proud of what you do.

There are many inter-parliamentary associations, partnerships and working groups — call them what you will. I have to say that I am a big fan of people who do similar jobs in different places and different organisations getting together to share their knowledge and expertise and to learn from each other; I think that that is an invaluable exercise. I certainly know that the Northern Ireland Assembly could not have grown and matured as it has done without the help of others. For that, we owe

a debt of gratitude. I suspect that those of us from what I will call the devolved Assemblies and institutions would all agree with that. Whether you are here or in Scotland or in Wales, I think that we would all agree with that. We owe sincere thanks to those of you who have helped us, and I am pleased to say that BIPRA is one of the organisations to which those thanks are due.

I had a quick look at the report of the BIPRA conference that was held here in 2007, and I was struck by some of the words of one of my predecessors, Mr Willie Hay, now Lord Hay. At that meeting, what he said builds into what I have just said:

"No one has a monopoly on experience. The biggest and the oldest can always teach and influence the smallest and the youngest, but they can also learn something from them."

There is no doubt that we in the Assembly have learned from others, but, equally, I believe that we are proud that the Northern Ireland Assembly has in its own way helped others to grow and to develop. I hope that that will remain the case in the years ahead.

I know that it will be a very busy time for you over the next three days so, without further ado, let me wish you well for the work that you are going to do. I hope that it will be an invaluable learning and development experience. I formally declare the 2016 BIPRA Learning and Development Symposium open. *[Applause.]*

SESSION THREE: CAFE-STYLE EXERCISE

Simon Burrowes introduced what he described as a session that would be along the lines of “organised disorganisation”. He explained that delegates would be in the seven teams that had been selected for the previous evening’s quiz.

The idea of the session was for each team to choose a topic which they would then discuss over the next hour and indeed at any time up to Friday morning when they would be due to report back to the symposium with their thoughts, observations, findings etc. The session on Friday would allow each team only five minutes to report back and that the timescale would be pretty rigid. As such, each team was asked to nominate a rapporteur for that session and to provide essentially a bullet-point report, although further detail could be circulated in the symposium report.

Simon explained that the rationale behind the session was twofold. First, it would bring together people who might not normally sit together and help them to get to know others. Secondly, it would be about finding out what issues concern some or all of the delegates, getting their thoughts on those issues and then sharing and learning.

Each team was asked to either pick a topic from a list of six provided **OR** to agree a topic of their own. They were allowed 15 minutes to do that after which each group was asked for their choice of topic and the name of their rapporteur. Thereafter, they were free to meet and discuss the topic wherever they wished. Given the good weather, some groups immediately departed for the great outdoors, where they held their deliberations.

Simon reminded the groups that while it was up to them to get the best value from this exercise, the findings would be shared, so everyone was not just working for their group but all the delegates.

The suggested topics that were put forward for discussion were:

- A. What might be different in Official Reports in five years' time?
- B. Who are our main audiences and can we better meet their needs?

- C. Does more audio-visual broadcasting mean that we have or should change the way we report?
- D. How can we get people, inside and outside our parliaments and assemblies, to better understand what we do?
- E. Does the Official Report need a presence in the Chamber and/or the meetings it covers?
- F. Are a decent work/life balance and family-friendly hours simply a pipe dream for Official Report staff?
- G. None of the above, but a topic of the group's choosing.

The seven teams chose topics as follows:

Team 1: Topic F

Team 2: Topic C

Team 3: Topic A

Team 4: Topic C

Team 5: Topic E

Team 6: Topic D

Team 7: Topic E

As noted later in this report (see page 119), there was not time for a formal feedback session on the groups' findings, but the following reports were provided by four of the groups.

Team 1: Are a decent work/life balance and family-friendly hours simply a pipe dream for Official Report staff? (Report by Hywel Evans)

The following were the main points to arise in our discussion of the topic:

- The term “work/life balance” was preferred to “family-friendly hours”—staff without family commitments are still entitled to a life outside work.
- Advertisements for jobs with the Official Report make it clear that anti-social hours are a possibility and, indeed, likely. Staff should understand and accept this (within reason) when they take up such positions.
- Being able to take TOIL over the summer recess does not necessarily make up for having no free evenings at other times of the year.

- Where they have been introduced, time recording and recess working, although initially controversial and unpopular, offer scope for staff to develop talents and interests outside their core job, which in turn can lead to development opportunities.
- While the management look sympathetically on reasonable requests for flexible working, accommodating all family and personal obligations would not be practical given the volume of work and publication deadlines of the Official Report. It would also entail a significant administrative burden.
- Where special arrangements are made to accommodate the personal circumstances of staff members, monitoring the quality of their work becomes important to ensure it is not adversely affected by any new routine.
- As remote and flexible working become more widespread in the economy generally, employees, particularly new recruits, may be more likely to expect these to be on offer. Remote working is not necessarily good for a healthy work/life balance, however; if staff are permanently connected to their workplace when at home, there is arguably a greater chance of work “bleeding into” their home lives.
- Balance within the job, as well as work/life balance, was seen as important. Secondment opportunities—to other departments and other Parliaments and Assemblies—could be valuable in this respect.
- The Official Reports of the Scottish Parliament and the House of Lords have successfully trialled limited home-working for some staff. In the case of the House of Lords, this is in part a contingency exercise—i.e. to test whether the Official Report could still be published in the event of some staff not being able to make it into work.

Team 2: Does audio-visual broadcasting mean that we have changed or should change the way we report? (Report by Cameron Smith)

The group had representatives from the House of Lords, the Scottish Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the States of Jersey and the Ugandan Parliament.

We talked about whether and the extent to which our legislatures broadcast debates at the moment and whether there are plans to integrate the presentation of text and AV.

House of Lords Hansard has a project under way to integrate text and AV.

The Scottish Parliament broadcasts all plenary and committee meetings online and puts all meetings on YouTube. For some items, such as First Minister's Question Time, the OR is used for closed captioning. There is a link to the OR from the YouTube broadcast. A recent project proposal to integrate AV and text did not make the final cut for priority projects.

Jersey was about to install cameras in the chamber the following week.

Following a UN-funded feasibility study, Ugandan Hansard intends to launch an FM radio channel carrying parliamentary debates. This reflects the challenges that face other means of reaching people in the country, such as lack of access to television and the internet, as well as the high interest in parliamentary politics, as evidenced in the 85 per cent turnout at elections.

The group thought that the greater use of audio-visual broadcasting did not undermine the value of substantially verbatim official reports, as the video and the text are two different products. As long as we make clear what our terms of reference are, there is no need for us to be apologetic about the fact that our reports are not fully verbatim. Nevertheless, the easy availability of the video was a useful reminder to some reporters and sub-editors that they shouldn't needlessly change what was said.

Team 4: Does more audio-visual broadcasting mean that we have or should change the way we report? (Report by Paul Kirby)

The issue of AV has been kicking around for a while and it offers a further opportunity to compare words spoken by Members against the Official Report, but we need not be afraid of AV as it serves a different purpose from the Official Report. People study the two for different purposes and they have different utility. For example, the Official Report can be consulted by Members and others as an authoritative document and quoted in debates about how and why decisions were made, thereby holding Members to account, while AV provides sound and images, but cannot easily be adduced in the Chamber and does not mark the way of a debate or the legislative process. Such boundaries are clear in the Official Report.

It's fair to say that this new technology provides impetus towards being more verb when reporting, but there is still a strong argument for producing a substantially verbatim but edited report. For example, while AV provides an untouched version of what was said, it does not necessarily inform the reader what was meant, which is what the Official Report aims to do.

AV can convey, for example, a rowdy atmosphere in the Chamber, but it cannot necessarily provide an accurate report of a debate, or of the legislative process and all its stages, which the Official Report does, no matter how rowdy the atmosphere.

The remarks made on Friday morning by Rob Sutherland, BC Hansard, struck a chord: the Official Report is an authoritative publication of record. We can take heart from that and have confidence in what we do. While the trend may be towards more verbatim reporting, we do not have to change the way we report, nor should we. We agreed with Rob's remarks on the importance of having the backing and confidence of the Clerks.

Team 7: Does the Official Report need a presence in the Chamber and/or the meetings it covers? (Report by Claire Hall and Charlie Brown)

Possible motivation for the question:

1. In the Welsh Assembly, reporters no longer have access to the Chamber for logging.
2. In Stormont, not all committees are reported, but some ask for a report after a sitting has taken place, which means it is reported without a reporter or editor having been in attendance.

However, our group took the approach of considering homeworking, especially as colleagues in the Scottish Parliament have been exploring homeworking options recently. They are doing so initially with a view to improving work-life balance; further work will be done to consider homeworking from the point of view of business continuity, for example in the case of illnesses/injuries whereby a staff member wants to work but cannot get into the office; emergency situations such as terrorist attacks or extreme weather conditions; childcare emergencies.

There are a couple of important points to bear in mind before briefly setting out the drawbacks and positives of homeworking.

- We already do a lot of homeworking in the House of Commons (and other legislatures). In recesses and on non-sitting Fridays, quality control and projects outside of producing copy can be done from home.
- We are not suggesting that everybody does this all of the time
 - Not everyone would want to because staff like coming into work.
 - Someone needs to be in to log and read copy.
 - Would probably work best on Mondays and/or Fridays when there tends to be more “dead” work.

Possible cons of homeworking:

1. Technology
 - a. Using a VPN may be tricky to set up and have security implications.
 - b. Alternative of emailing individual word documents and being allocated work via email makes process more laborious and prone to error/miscommunication.
 - c. It would not be possible to access live sound, so homeworking would probably be on dead committee sitting only.
2. Practical difficulties

- a. Communication could be slow as staff could accidentally be missed out of group emails.
 - b. The process would be very difficult for new staff without an understanding and experience of working for the Official Report, who might not understand the importance of keeping up with the office communication.
3. Effect on team ethic
- a. Teamwork is essential for the job and something that we all take great pride in. If some staff are working at home, there may be less of a team atmosphere.
 - b. New staff might feel particularly isolated if they had no experience of working within the team.
4. Office politics
- a. External to the Official Report, if the powers that be see that staff could work at home, they might suggest that even more staff do so in order to claim sought after office space for other departments.
 - b. Internally, some staff might feel jealous of others who work from home occasionally, which could create a negative atmosphere.

Possible pros of homeworking:

- 1. Better work-life balance/stress reduction/health benefits
 - a. Working from home—and therefore not commuting—can leave more time for leisure or other activities
 - b. Commuting in itself can be stressful
 - c. For those suffering from long-term health issues, who feel able to work but find travelling tiring
- 2. Family friendly
 - a. Work can be scheduled to fit around school/nursery times or other family commitments; parent able to meet children from school or be there when children come home
 - b. Save money by not commuting
- 3. Environment
 - a. Carbon emissions reduction due to less car use
- 4. Benefits to workplace
 - a. Staff are less stressed
 - b. Potential for getting more work done because of addition of commuting time to working day
 - c. Increased resilience/flexibility of staff—setting up homeworking means that at least some staff will be available for business continuity purposes

SESSION FOUR: HUMAN LANGUAGE: IS WHAT IS WRITTEN WHAT IS SAID?

Bronagh Allison (Northern Ireland Assembly): The next presentation is a bit of a departure for Hansard and BIPRA; it is not something that we would normally do. Gary McKeown is from the school of psychology in Queen's. I know him from a previous life, having just finished a psychology degree with the Open University. Gary was one of my tutors, and we kept in contact. I thought that bringing psychology, Hansard and the use of language together — how language is considered and used by the Members and how we then treat language — is an interesting way to look at what we do and what we are thinking when we are doing it.

Gary's interests are in human communication, language, emotion, laughter and various things that go on with that, the evolution of human communication and evolutionary psychology. The way in which the Official Report is normally used, through history and politics, is quite straight, so I thought that this would be an interesting angle of how psychology — another area — looks at what we do, the value of what we do, how it uses it and how we interact with the words and language.

Gary McKeown (Queen's University, Belfast): Hello. Thanks to Simon and Bronagh for inviting me. Normally, I am quite animated and I walk around the place, but I am losing my voice, so I am going to try to stay still and speak into this so that I do not have to get too loud. I might wander away, so, if you see me scooting back, that is me remembering. My title is 'Human Communication'. It says 'Human Language' in the programme, but I will look at communication more generally. When I saw that it was 'Human Language' in the programme, I left it there because it allows me to correct it here and now.

One of the things that we mistake a lot is the idea that human language is human communication. A lot of people might think, "Aw, he is going to talk about body language." I am going to talk about body language a bit, but disparagingly. We will get on to that. The argument that I will make is much more complex than the thing that you quite often see on television about body language.

The title is "What is written, what is said". You could take that a bit further and ask if what is said is what is meant. I will spend the first part of the talk going through whether what is said is what is meant, how we get meaning from what is said and what assumptions we make when we communicate with one another. I will do that at the start and will begin to look at more practical matters that may relate more to your needs and the things that you do on a daily basis towards the end.

We will start with one of the men of the moment, who is very good at saying lots of things and we all wonder exactly what he meant. He certainly says things about which it is very apparent what he means, but he then tries to step way from what he means. I will play something that is probably the best example to make the points that I need to make. Tell me if you can hear it OK at the back. He said:

"Hillary wants to shut down energy production. I want to expand it. Lower electric bills, Folks.

Hilary wants to abolish, essentially abolish, the second amendment. By the way, if she gets to pick her judges: nothing you can do, folks. Although the second amendment, people, maybe there is. I don't know."

So, something was very clearly said there. What was said was "the second amendment, people, maybe there is, folks" or something along those lines. We will come back to that. What he meant to say and what was implied was not there and was not evident. That is a very important part of what I will talk about. We will come back to Donald later, because I know that everybody loves him so much.

First, I will talk about an idea that is very pervasive when we talk about human communication and human language in particular. That was described as the conduit metaphor back in 1977 by a guy called Michael Reddy. He wrote a famous paper called 'The conduit metaphor' that explained the way that we think about language, the assumptions that we make and how we have to be really careful when we make those assumptions because we are probably erroneously doing an awful lot of harm by accepting them. Later, some linguistic pragmatists known as Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson came up with a theory called relevance theory that I will talk a bit more about as we move on. That took Reddy's ideas to a different level. The took the same metaphor but called it "the code model".

The idea behind the conduit metaphor is that we have a message that we want to convey. It is pervasive in all the ways that we talk about our language. It is so pervasive that it is hard to get away from it, and I will not try to get away from it. We convey messages and try to get information across. We talk about encoding messages and deciphering what people are talking about. All those kinds of things are ways of talking about that conduit metaphor or code model.

Essentially, you take a message; you pack it into a container; you ship it through a medium and then the person who receives it takes it out and decodes it at the far end. That is an intuitive model and has been around for a long time. It was formalised in communication science by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver and is known as the Shannon-Weaver model of communication. This was really an

electrical engineering kind of setup. People were thinking about Morse code and telegraphs and that kind of communication. There was a source of information. It had a message. That then was encoded according to some sort of encoding model. It got sent as a signal across a channel. There may be noise in the channel that degrades the signal. The job of the receiver, hearer or telegraph operator is to receive the signal, decode it, remove as much noise as possible and understand the message. We see that in the diagram from Sperber and Wilson's take on this.

We see this in human language and communication. This is what people typically think about human communication. A speaker has a thought. They then want to convey that to other people, and so, in their brain, they put the thought into a linguistic encoder. In psychology we have labelled these encoders and encoding mechanisms in various ways. That then goes to your tongue, which is essentially a muscle that does this wonderful dance creating air and sound waves. The sound waves go across, there is a noise in the air and you adjust your speaking to that noise to ensure that the signal gets across. It goes into somebody's ear at the far end, then into their brain, and they decode the message and understand the thought that was in somebody else's head. That is the conduit metaphor and how we classically think about communication.

Here is another example from animal communication literature. This was actually criticising this paper. They talk about representational ideation. That is a fancy way of describing having thoughts, generating a message, encoding it, transmitting it and sending it through some sort of information channel, when it is decoded by a receiver at the far end. That is our classic model and is pervasive in the way we understand communication. I will argue that it is not a good way to understand communication. We should think about communication on the basis of an inferential model; we infer the meaning of what somebody is trying to say when they communicate to us. If anyone has done any linguistic pragmatics, you will probably be aware of some of this already.

So, what is wrong with the conduit model? It uses the ideas of encoding and decoding. The message contains everything, and all we need is the message to understand what is going on in any human communication. However, we all know that there is more going on. A famous or commonly used line can be quoted out of context. Context is really important. Another line that you commonly hear is that we have body language and there are other kinds of communication going on than body language. When people turn to the idea of body language, they often rely on this myth; you often hear this quote. In one of the biggest travesties in the academic world these figures are often attributed to Albert Mehrabian, the great communication researcher, but that is nonsense. People say that 7% of our communication is verbal and 93% nonverbal. Sometimes that is broken down as 30% vocal and 55% body language. It is obviously nonsense. You communicate a lot to people on the phone

and you get a lot of information. If you turn the TV down and just watch people, you do not get 93%, or 55%, of the information that they are trying to convey. If we go back to a code model description, it does not take much thinking to realise that this is nonsense. One of the really insidious ways in which it is nonsense is this idea that you can break things up into percentages of the level of communication. That is really one dimension and the information is 7%, 38% and 55%. If you hear people talking about that, it is people that probably do not know what they are talking about or they have a book to sell, or something along those lines. It is originally a misquote, he was actually talking specifically about people talking about feelings — the specific kind of communication about feelings. He was saying, for example, that whenever I am saying about how I might feel about Donald Trump, 7% of that might be in the word that I am saying, there might be a lot in my tone of voice saying "Donald Trump" or something that would be conveying another aspect.

In his research, there was a lot on facial expressions. When you are talking about Donald Trump I am sure there are many other more expressive ways of talking about Donald Trump, I will not try to imitate. It was back in 1967 that the research was done and we have moved on an awful lot since then in our understanding, as has Mehrabian. That idea of body language is pervasive in the popular culture but it really is nonsense. One of the big issues, from my point of view, is that it tries to make this kind of distinction that body language is a separate channel of communication and that is the wrong way of doing it. I am using a lot of gestures here when I am talking but my gestures are nearly always aligned with what I am saying verbally and my facial expressions and tone of voice are nearly always in alignment. It is very rare to have people come on the TV and say that they are portraying themselves whenever they are using tells, folding their arms and these kind of things, letting you know that they are feeling one way and telling another.

Sometimes that kind of thing can happen in situations of high emotional intensity. You have people blushing and honest signals coming out so it is not entirely untrue but it very rarely the case that all of your communicative signals are not working in tandem with each other. That is a little digression to make sure that you do not fall into that trap of thinking that body language experts have anything decent to say. Very rarely is that the case.

To step away from the code model and the conduit metaphor and towards this inferential model and way of thinking of human communication. In the linguistic world, which most of what you do tends to exist in this linguistic case, you have to realise that lots of what is in a message, or the understanding of a message, is not contained within the message. Packed into the idea of the code model and the conduit metaphor is the idea that messages are almost self-contained and that is not the case. We have linguistic utterances that take a bit of decoding, you need to know a language so there is an element of coding and decoding that goes on but

you do not have the entirety of a message that is in the linguistic utterance that is said.

I have three examples. First "So I will be here tomorrow." That requires you understanding something of where you are today, where "here" is. That requires bringing in stuff from the here and now, the context that simply cannot be in that phrase, "I will be here tomorrow". There is no information. You have to combine it with other information that you know, you know that the speaker knows and both of you know that each other knows. You have to put that context in together.

Five is the best. There is clearly something about five being the best number of things. To carry five is the best on this list. There is lots of stuff that is not in the phrase, "John is a soldier". If you overhear two people talking and you heard the words "Afghanistan" or "Iraq", beforehand, you would be making a good assumption if you thought they were talking about John being an actual soldier. If you were to hear it in the context of a playground, you might be thinking John is a boy playing a game or John may have been someone who has fallen over and grazed his knee and he is getting tended to. In that phrase, "John is a soldier", where it seems obvious at the start, it does not actually contain an awful lot of the meaning that people will be taking out of it.

The fancy word to describe that is to say that the linguistic utterances are underdetermined. There is not enough information, almost always, in the bit of language you get to correctly understand the meaning. As a human you very naturally absorb the context and the other sets of information that are going on, you work out what is going on in someone's mind, you work out what their understanding is, what your understanding is, maybe what a broader shared understanding is and you do all these things unconsciously and very, very fast to work out what the correct meaning is.

The real way we should be looking at it is not as codes that are put into containers, not as signals or bits of information. We should be thinking of every little bit of a signal being a piece of evidence that combines with other pieces of evidence to create a larger understanding of the meaning. That is what is going on. Whenever we are communicating with one another that is a much cleverer and more nuanced way of understanding what is going on.

There are many sources of information. We bring in context, depending on what you describe as context, but we bring in a lot of information from context — my understanding of context, and my understanding of what your understanding of context is and then we add lots of stuff that might come under body language. We

add paralinguistic stuff — which is the vocal queues. If I was to use the word "ok", the word "ok" is underdetermined, but if I go "ok" or "ok" or "ok" [changes tone] they are all different ways of saying the same word with different vocal tones that mean you are going to take a very different meaning from that bit of information combined with the way that I have said it, and the non-verbal stuff — the facial expressions that are going on when I say something — hand gestures that I am making, the body movements that I make as well.

There is a signal here. It is a very underdetermined signal. I am hoping nobody can read that, or understand it, or get any meaning out of it — but a computer could. This is a container with information in it, but I am going to step up the levels of context so that the signal becomes more apparent. This is a signal that a computer could read and understand, and I am going to move it to a more nuanced human understanding. Step one is moving it from binary into hexadecimal. I hope that nobody can read or understand this. I used to know people who claimed to be able to understand this and they were never great at parties. [laughter]

You can see there is a bit more structure going on now. Each of these actually refers to a letter. The 44, 6F and the 20 are codes in a letter, so you are beginning to get a little bit more context. Here it is now in an English intelligible form. It says, "Do you want to come up for a coffee? I do not drink any coffee. I have not got any".

Here, it is now in an intelligible form of English. It now says, "Do you want to come up for a coffee?", "I do not drink any coffee", and, "I have not got any". It is a bit more intelligible. Now you have all the English words. I can do something to it that makes it a little bit easier to understand. I can split it into three like that. That parses it a bit more and makes it a little bit more like human understanding. Maybe people are beginning to twig on to the meaning but it still seems a strange set of things to say. I will put it in the full context now where you see what is going on and then the meaning should become apparent. I do not know if you can see that OK. It is from the film 'Brassed Off'.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Being human, you understand the language that is going on there. The context means that very little is being said in the language that is used but an awful lot is being implied there. You need to be a human who has grown up with a lifetime of understanding culture and of understanding the relationships between people to understand the full set of relationships and the richness of what is being said there. The point is that none of that is coming from the signal. We do that an awful lot. An awful lot of the time, our most skilled orators are really good at doing this kind of thing. They are really good at leading people up a garden path and then playing with their expectations at the end and delivering some sort of emotional pay-off that gets people to sit up and listen and has people paying attention in many ways. The

meaning is often disguised. People use indirect speech. In this case, they are using indirect speech through the idea of coming in for a coffee, which is classically an innocuous way of saying, "Do you want to come in and see where the evening goes?" There are euphemisms and ways of talking around things because people do not want to talk around things.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

This is a great cartoon, and people rarely say something like this. It is almost the same context and, rather than coffee, it is etchings. Classically, "Do you want to come up and see my etchings?" does not mean that you are interested in somebody's etchings. Therefore, the situation where somebody brings their etchings down to you simply does not work, but it has exposed that innocuous indirect speech that gets you through an embarrassing situation.

One of the theories behind this is relevance theory. If you are into pragmatics and linguistics and want to look this up, relevance theory is the place to go. I will get a little bit technical. This is as technical as I will kind of get. Sperber and Wilson moved the inferential model on a little bit to create a thing that they call the "ostensive inferential model". Essentially, they say that you create these ostension communications, which are likes of going

Don't know what to put here

or "Oi, or

and again

You might say something through those kinds of signals. If I were to stand up and go

and again

at a podium perhaps, everybody would take that as, "Oh, there is going to be some communication". You might all stop talking to each other and start paying attention up here.

That is an ostensive communication, and it signals that I am about to communicate and that you are to move into a listening mode. Once you are in that listening mode, you realise that some linguistic evidence is going to come out here. You are in the mode to listen to that evidence, and you are being told by the ostensive communication that you should be looking to piece together that evidence with the other things that are in the context to try to understand what it is that I am conveying to you. Language is one bit of the evidence, but you will be naturally and unconsciously taking in the context and understanding it, and trying to read a lot of

what is going on in my mind. The idea is that ostension creates this communicative mode, and then you have these bits of evidence which raise the expectation of relevance, which is why it is called "relevance theory".

I will not go into too much detail here but, essentially, once you have that expectation of relevance, what you expect to hear from me is something that is likely to be relevant. There is an unsaid agreement between you and me that the things that I am going to say will not be about the underside of that chair over there. They will be about something that is relevant to both our minds. I will be trying to deliver something relevant, and you have a right to expect that I will be delivering something relevant. I take it a step further in saying that it will be optimally relevant as well. When I am talking, I will be trying to say the most optimally relevant thing and you will see going for the lowest hanging fruit, essentially, in terms of relevance. So you put in the least amount of effort to understand what is going on. That is the essence of communication. That is about as technical as I will get, from the point of view of relevance theory.

An awful lot of this is about mind reading. That does not mean the Derren Brown, stage mind-reading, sense, or telepathy. There is a very strict sense in which we use the term "mind reading" in the scientific setting. It is basically about trying to understand what is going on in somebody else's mind. We do this all the time. A lot of what I do in my work is about this kind of working out what is going on in someone else's mind. I have a theory of evolution that sets up the idea that we are actually trying to show ourselves to be good mind-readers. We do that because we want to show ourselves to be socially and politically astute. "I know what Bronagh is thinking about"; "I am interested in knowing what Bronagh might be thinking about"; what Simon might be thinking about Bronagh; or what various people might be thinking about each other. And so, I can show political connections within the status hierarchy in which I am trying to rise up through the ranks. It is something that is really very important in evolution. And so, we are mind readers. Chimpanzees are mind readers too, to an extent; and all primates have some degree of mind reading. It goes by other names as well, such as: "perspective taking", "theory of mind", or "mentalising". However, the consensus term is "mind reading". It comes with the caveat that it is nothing to do with Derren Brown. I would say that that is the reason why we like stage mind-readers, but that is just confusing the issue.

We mostly do this unconsciously. We are making assessments of what is known in other people's minds. That is what we are doing when we are communicating. We are constantly trying to make assessments of what is going on in somebody's mind, and trying to find out what information is available to that person. If you are communicating with somebody whom you know well, and with whom you have a shared history, you will make jokes and say things that you know they will get; whereas, if you are talking to someone who speaks French as their first language

and you know that they are struggling with their English, you will tone down your communications in a massive way to adjust. What you are reading is the state of their mind and their linguistic ability. You adjust to what is going on in the mind of the interlocutor. "Interlocutor" is a fancy big word for the person you are talking to.

Non-verbal signals are also part of the picture. We make adjustments to our facial expressions, our tone of voice and the gestures that we make. All these things feed into a communicative whole so that we are conveying information in a way that people understand. You may balance things in certain ways. If you are in a situation in which people cannot hear you so well, you might start to gesture or use your facial expressions a little bit more to compensate for that. If you are in a library you might lower your voice and compensate in other ways to take account of the different situation. You adjust the sets of evidence as required, depending on how you have assessed and read the other person's mind.

The important thing to realise there is that there is no one-to-one decodable mapping going on there. Often, you will see a classic facial expression associated with disgust, which is to raise the nose and the eyebrows. In pictures of that expression you will see contempt as a raising and curling of the lip — "Look at you" — you have to be careful when you do this. *[Laughter.]* You have contempt or you have happiness. I will look at you and give a smile to balance things out. I am doing my own bit of mind reading there; it might have been misinterpreted badly.

We call these social signals. The important thing to realise is that contempt can be a different thing depending on the context. It is not a one-to-one; it is not an alphabet where one thing means a given thing in a situation. It is not like buying a book off the shelf so that you can read about these signals, work out how to become a body language expert and determine that something means a certain kind of thing. It means a certain kind of thing, combined with the context and the other aspects that are going on in any given situation. You cannot get a look-up code or table that will tell you how to do this.

I have talked a wee bit about my theory, which is known as the analogical peacock hypothesis. The idea is that I take this mind reading thing one step further and I say that what we are actually doing in human communication is not about conveying useful information to one another. We often make the assumption that what we are trying to do is to give each other useful information to help each other solve problems. My idea is that men and women are much more like peacocks, and that displaying our mind reading abilities is our goal. That shows us to be socially and politically astute animals and our social status is raised accordingly.

The analogical peacock hypothesis is about the height of linguistic display which comes out in creativity in art and verbal proficiency in story-telling and in humour. In essence, my argument is that when we make these kinds of communications, I am saying to you that I can read your mind so well that I can take two concepts that are in your mind and bash them together in creative ways by revealing a punchline or creating an emotional frisson as I tell a story that comes to a denouement. That allows you to realise that I really know your mind well and in fact, to a large degree, you knew my mind better than I knew my mind because I had not made that creative realisation. It is about putting things together in a creative and novel way that shows that I am an expert mind reader, because I can generate analogies that you have not thought of yet.

To do that, in my theoretical view, we have to display communications — being funny, creative or verbally proficient — but that is only half of the story. We also have to spend a lifetime listening and learning about what is in other people's minds. So, we have to do what I call alignment communications as well, which is spending the whole of a lifetime learning our cultures, learning what is likely to be in other people's minds and learning our social norms and the like so that we can then produce these displays whenever it is appropriate.

That is the theory. We will go back to more practical aspects now. This is more about the what is written and said aspect of things now. So, we will go back to Donald and listen to him again:

"Hilary wants to shut down energy production; I want to expand it. Lower electric bills folks. Hilary wants to essentially abolish the second amendment. By the way, if she gets to pick her judges, nothing you can do folks, although the second amendment people, maybe there is, I don't know, but I tell you what, that will be a horrible day if Hilary gets to put her judges, right now we are tied. You see what's going on."

There is a lot there, apart from the second amendment bit where he says, "Right now we are tied. You see what's going on". There is underdetermined speech going on there. There is a lot that he is expecting people to just know. He is saying, "I don't have to say this. You know what I am talking about". You hear people saying, "You know" a lot. That ensures that people are keeping up with you and people will give a backchannel nod, which people do when they are listening, and that keeps the communication flowing.

The key line is, "Although the second amendment people, maybe there is, I don't know". He has not actually said anything there. He has not actually said anything in

that phrase that incriminates him in many ways. What he is implying and what he is inferring is a huge thing. It was news for days afterwards. Essentially, he is making an assessment that everybody in the audience and everybody who hears it will know what the second amendment is. Over here, we might have had to go and check out what the second amendment is, but he is making a call when he says that, which is that everybody will know what the second amendment is. The second amendment is the right to bear arms. People will make the link and make the connections that if you have the right to bear arms, that means that you have got the right to use arms. If you are resisting against people or you are looking to have some sort of level of resistance and you want to do something about it, what do you do with arms and guns? Guns are for shooting people. So, he is inciting violence or he is calling for an assassination of Hilary Clinton, if you take it in the starkest terms.

We infer and understand all that, and he knows that we are going to understand that from the line, "Although the second amendment people maybe there is, I don't know". That little underdetermined linguistic phrase brings all that flooding into most of western civilisation who may be interested and pay attention to Donald Trump. That is all there and readily apparent and readily understandable by most people.

If we step through it, he basically says that Hilary wants to abolish the second amendment and if she gets to pick her judges, there is nothing you can do. Then we have the line that people have to know about the second amendment and an implication of assassination. It also contains this thing that you have probably heard of before, which is plausible deniability, which is a really important part of our communications. So, he can come out and say, "I didn't mean that. You may have taken that, you may have understood that, you may have interpreted it that way, but I never actually said it. It is not there. If you look at the transcription, what did I say? You took it a different way. I didn't mean it that way". So, it contains the ability for him to roll back.

A lot of that — "Would you like to come up and see my etchings?" — is a kind of plausible deniability as well. Lots of our euphemisms and indirect speech are based around the idea of plausible deniability; I did not say it directly, so I can roll back and say, "Oh, I was only joking. I wasn't being serious about that". If you were to bribe somebody, perhaps you might use that kind of speech. Steven Pinker does a lot of this work. He uses the analogy of giving a wallet with some money hanging out of it. It can be inferred by somebody would be open to taking bribe, but, at the same time, you can just say, "Oh, I'll tuck my money back in here", and, "Sorry, that wasn't supposed to be hanging out that way". You have plausible deniability; you can step back from actually saying that something happened. A lot of indirect speech works and builds on that, and politicians do it all the time. Donald Trump and the people who work for him use plausible deniability. Nobody credible believed that he was not implying that, but whenever the politics machine and the spin doctors roll into place,

that plausible deniability becomes a big part of the game. Trump, when he was on Fox News, said that he was trying to gear the political movement up to voting for him; he said, "Give me a break", and that he was not inciting violence, and he said, "Don't be stupid".

Corey Lewandowski, who was his campaign manager, said that it was a joke. Classically, people say; "I was only joking", and that he was not inciting violence; he was joking. Rudy Giuliani said that it was a simple message that gun-owners should vote for him; he did not think that people would take that interpretation. You have plausible deniability, and there is wriggle room for interpretation that comes from that. Lots of our human interaction is built on that element.

I have painted a picture of communication being nuanced and complicated. Linguistic utterances — things that people say — are often not what they mean; they should be taken in with evidence. What does that mean for Hansard? Do I have a message for you in what you are doing in your work? Probably not. I will get to that towards the end. I do not think that you need to change much. I will come to the reason for that towards the end. This is not me saying, "You have to change everything. You don't understand what you're doing". You have probably got it about right. I will explain why at the end. I will go through the alternative options and some of the things that might be on the horizon. Has anybody ever seen Jeffersonian transcription before?

It is a version of transcription. For me, as a psychologist who is interested in human communication and understanding what is going on in people's social interactions, we have many different ways of trying to capture everything that we can so that we can study it in exquisite detail afterwards. This is one of the original versions of trying to do that; it is called Jeffersonian transcription after Gail Jefferson, who did her seminal work in the 1970s and probably the 1980s, and in the 1960s as well. Essentially, it is a style of transcription that tries to get an awful lot of what is said in tone of voice, in the pauses and in things that are not said. The absence of a signal is, importantly, often a signal as well, such as if there is a pause for a long time and nothing is said, where there is an expectation of something being said. That can be a signal and quite meaningful in itself. We try to get laughter and coughs and all sorts of components into transcripts. You can see arrows for a voice going up and down. There are brackets there and, when people talk over each other, that is included. There are other symbols there that try to get at more of the bits that we typically gloss over when we are doing classic transcription.

That is one approach that can be used to try to capture everything but, importantly, it does not get facial expressions and you cannot hear the tone of voice. This was done before technology happened. Technology made things recordable in cheap

and easy ways. We are coming into a golden age of this in psychology research. We now have computers that have huge amounts of memory that can store this information, and we have very cheap sensors and very cheap recording equipment. This is a diagram of a set-up that we have in my lab in Queen's where we get people around a table, a bit like here. We have Microsoft Connect recorders that record hand movements and depth as people move towards each other. We have cameras that record and process people's facial expressions. We get people to wear head-mounted mics. We record all that and put it on terabytes and then we get people to go through it and code it. We can understand language and communication in much more detailed ways. That is another way of doing it.

The cost of this is dropping all the time, and we can gather the information much more efficiently all the time. However, as you know, gathering the information is only half the battle. It is also about what you do with the information afterwards. Coding this is often very time consuming. I am preaching to the converted about how time-consuming and labour-intensive coding and transcribing can be. However, computers are beginning to get very good at picking out the relevant parts of our facial expressions and facial movements, so a lot of this is becoming automated.

We have biometric sensors as well. I think that it will be a long time before you can convince politicians to do any of this kind of stuff, but we can put cameras on people's faces. I am actually involved with a local global company looking at the communication and facial expressions that people do in extreme sports, when they jump out of planes and do parachute and wingsuit stuff. We put lots of sensors on people. We look at their galvanic skin response and have cameras staring into their faces so that we can get their facial expressions. These can be taken into crazy situations where people jump off buildings and cliffs and the like. All of that is being enabled by this change in censorship — not in censorship but in sensor technology; that was a political Freudian slip.

You can see the Shimmer galvanic skin response there. Shimmer is a Dublin-based company. The galvanic skin response is the lie-detector response that picks up stress levels. I think that it will be a long time before you convince your politicians to wear that kind of thing. This is also a galvanic skin response that comes from a company called Empatica, which came out of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). It has these bracelets that takes the galvanic skin response — that is the lie-detector response — on a bracelet. It is very useful on levels of stress. Actually, it is much better on levels of stress. Lie detectors are classically not very reliable at all. What may happen is that these sensors work their way onto Apple watches and things that people wear just as a matter of course. It may be that, some time in the not-so-distant future, you have politicians up there who have lie-detector technology on them just because the technology is moving in that direction.

I will finish up on why I think that you do not have to change and why you have probably arrived at a good and healthy state of affairs in your practices. I have talked to Simon and Bronagh about this. You have a triple problem in your situation. You have the actual communicative episode that is happening when the politician makes a statement or a linguistic utterance on the Floor of wherever it is that they are delivering in full flow their oratory magnificence. That has the full set of evidence. You have these other options that I have talked about. You have near complete transcription. You could do the recordings. You could do the Jeffersonian transcription. You could select sensors that you put onto these people. That is the line that I would take as a psychologist who is interested in these things.

However, you have a really important constraint in the Hansard game and the reporting-of-what-politicians-say game, which is that you have to make this available for general publication. People have to be able to understand it. You cannot have an expectation that people will get special training. You have to write and communicate to a general level of literacy. That is a really strong constraint. The practices that you have at the minute mean that you have to transcribe to a useable form. That useable form has to have a mind-reading assessment of a communicative receiver that has a general level of literacy so that it becomes available in a timely fashion to be used by those people.

You do a semi-intuitive selection of what can be in there. You may record a laugh or something if you think that it is particularly important or salient and is going to change the meaning. You are all trained in making those judgement calls about what you think should be noted down or when you will try to do a verbatim transcription, whatever verbatim means. There are differences amongst you, and I guess that that is in the fine-tuning. Everybody is fine-tuned to a different level of mind-reading and of what is an acceptable interpretation and what you should lay off. That is the skill set in this room: knowing when you should lay off and when you are overstepping the mark in conveying what is being said.

You have done that. You, as a profession, have been at this game for a long time. You have developed this set of methodologies historically. Those constraints probably mean that there is very little that you can change. However, I also think that you need to be aware of the broader technologies that are just around the corner. Things would have slowly changed over the years as recordings, videos and those kinds of things were made available. They probably changed the game quite considerably. Transcriptions may have changed. It would be an interesting study to see if transcriptions changed as people had these other sources of evidence available to them.

Here are some take-home thoughts that I would like you to be aware of. Be aware of the idea of making too many assumptions about what the functions of human communication are. These things are still open questions. We do not entirely know. I am arguing one thing, and other people are arguing other things. Be aware that the conduit metaphor in the code model is not a good way to think about human communication. It is better to take a pieces-of-evidence approach. The pieces of evidence are not independent of one another. They adjust and flow, and people are making these kind of adjustments on the fly depending on what they think are in other people's minds. Some people glazed over a long time ago, but some people are still with me.

Here are some take-home thoughts that I would like you to be aware of. Be aware of the idea of making too many assumptions about what the functions of human communication are. These things are still open questions. We do not entirely know. I am arguing one thing, and other people are arguing other things. Be aware that the conduit metaphor in the code model is not a good way to think about human communication. It is better to take a pieces-of-evidence approach. The pieces of evidence are not independent of one another. They adjust and flow, and people are making these kind of adjustments on the fly depending on what they think are in other people's minds.

Some people glazed over a long time ago, but some people are still with me. I would be happy to answer any questions you have during the break or indeed at tomorrow night's dinner. Thank you.

SESSION FIVE: 'CH-CH-CH-CH-CHANGES! TURN AND FACE THE NEW PARLIAMENTARY SESSION

Claire Hall (Scottish Parliament): The next session is the Scottish Parliament's very own star man, Simon Eilbeck with 'Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes! Turn and face the new parliamentary session.' Simon will take any questions at the end, but he says that it is fine if you do not want to ask them then; he will just answer them privately. I cannot give everything away, but you are in for a treat.

Simon Eilbeck (Scottish Parliament): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you, Claire, for the introduction. This presentation is a way for me to tell you about our session 5 project programme. It is also my own personal tribute to the life and work of the much missed David Bowie. I know that we might all be needing a mid-afternoon nap, but please try to wake up your sleepy heads, put on some clothes and shake up your bed. Without further ado, let us put on our red shoes and dance the blues.

At our 2015 away day, we ran a workshop on what the office would need to do to manage the transition from session 4 of the Scottish Parliament to session 5. Sessions are what we call your Parliaments basically. Does anyone know how long a session of the Scottish Parliament lasts?

A Delegate: Four years?

Mr Eilbeck: No, sorry. Anyone else?

A Delegate: Five years?

Mr Eilbeck: Correct, yes. My brain hurts a lot. Five years. That is all we have got. *[Laughter.]*

The end result of the workshop was basically a list of tasks that we needed to do. Some were necessary and some were just desirable. Following on from that, the office head decided that the best way to organise the task would be through a project management approach, as that would provide a clear governance structure, and a volunteer was sought to lead the project. I deduced that the best way to avoid having to do any of the necessary tasks was to put myself forward and that is what I did. I was delighted to be selected for the post.

Given that the office head was keen on the project management approach, the project also needed a senior reporting officer, who would have ultimate responsibility for the success of the programme, and my colleague Elizabeth was chosen for that role. Elizabeth and I were absolute beginners when it came to project management. Our first step was to review the list of tasks and decide which ones we should proceed with. Once we had done that, we divided the tasks into five groups. Those were editorial support team tasks, marketing tasks, process tasks, training tasks and IT and information tasks. I gave each task a priority of high, medium, low or essential and estimated how long they would take. I also tried to identify any dependencies, i.e. which tasks could not be done without other tasks being completed first.

I had to present the draft programme to the management team. I had never presented anything to the management team before, but I fought the urge to freak out in a moonage daydream — oh yeah. [Laughter.] I convinced the management team to agree to the proposed plan. The next step was to appoint project managers and senior reporting officers to each project within the programme and then agree deadlines and resources, i.e. people with those.

I will spend a few minutes covering the sorts of tasks and projects that were completed. Editorial support team (EST) tasks were carried out by Kimberly Kerr and her team. Most of the editorial support team tasks were high priority as the office would be unable to function without their successful completion. They had to be completed quickly after the election, which meant that the EST was considerably under pressure, but the team did a great job, which made me want to dance magic dance. No 'Labyrinth' fans in the house then? OK. [Laughter.]

Our marketing projects were the bulk of the work that took place. The main project was to decide on key messages that we wanted to convey to Members. Polly MacKenzie was in charge of that project, and she made it clear from the outset that she did not want no hazy cosmic jive. The number one key message that she settled on was show your constituents and stakeholders how you represent their interests in the Parliament by sharing your speeches and parliamentary questions easily on Twitter, Facebook and other social media. The top three key messages, similar to what we have just heard, were: first, share your speeches and parliamentary questions easily on Twitter, Facebook and other social media by clicking on the symbol on the online Official Report to link directly to specific debates and individual speeches or interventions; secondly, use the Official Report search to help with research and speech-writing; and thirdly, ensure that we report you quickly and accurately by emailing your speaking notes to the Official Report and by responding promptly to requests from notes and/or queries. Another key message was that the OR can help Members excel in their parliamentary role.

Polly sought suggestions from OR staff on a snappy slogan to represent the office. Thankfully, she did not go with Ian Lavery's suggestion, which was "The Official Report: Making pies out of mince" *[Laughter.]* Instead, she chose the far more pragmatic and practical "Say it, send it, share it".

Claire will hand out some cards. We got some cards printed up to hand to Members and other stakeholders. The "say it" part highlighted the fact that Members can use the OR to make informed and insightful contributions by researching what has been said on a topic before. "Send it" was basically an encouragement for Members to send us their notes. "Share it" highlighted the ways in which Members can use the OR to keep constituents and other stakeholders informed of what they are up to in Parliament. Primarily, we wanted to draw Members' attention to the OR's social media sharing facility through which they can easily share their speeches from our website.

You will be pleased to hear that we are over halfway through the presentation. You might be flagging a bit but:

"Come on, come on, we've really got a good thing going ... Come on, come on, if you think we're gonna make it, you'd better hang on to yourself."

[Laughter.]

Other marketing projects included running a stall at our Members' fair, which stood for something but I cannot remember what it was. The fair was a way for Parliament staff to meet all the young dudes; I mean new Members. Another project involved planning how to communicate our marketing messages to Members through things such as social media, personal visits and orientation guides for new Members. Another was reviewing and refreshing our web pages and redesigning our PDF covers. The covers had remained pretty much unchanged since the Parliament's inception, so it was about time that we "glammed them up" a bit.

Here, you can see Clare Maddox and I at the Members' fair. We were clearly thrilled at the prospect of encountering Members in the flesh. Kimberley led that project and once she got the stall ready, it was just a case of saying:

"Check ignition and may God's love be with you."

The fair took place in the garden lobby, which is a central atrium that connects all the Parliament's different areas. It was an ideal spot to grab Members as they passed by. Clare had the genius idea of luring Members with home-baked fairy cakes, which she labelled with our "Say it, send it, share it" logo. We used laptops to give demonstrations of our online sharing tool, which the more social media-savvy Members were very keen on. Here, you can just about make out the fairy cakes that Clare baked. I should point out that Claire Hall baked some cakes too, and they were delicious. *[Laughter.]* The "Say it, send it, share it" logo and the Official Report logo were printed on rice paper so that you could eat them as well. We also had a vegan option at the back — a bunch of grapes — for the Green MSPs.

Here is our new "glammed-up" PDF cover design, which is quite exciting. Talking of glamming things up, we decided that we needed some new photographs on the website. We wanted to update the web pages after old Members left but before new Members arrived so we had to do it during dissolution. We sneakily staged them so that it looked like we were doing work but there was no one in the Chamber at the time when this photograph was taken. That might explain why we do not look completely bored for a change.

Ian Lavery (Scottish Parliament): Who were you thinking of?

Mr Eilbeck: David Bowie. *[Laughter.]* Another project was to give Members a copy of the Official Report that contained their first speech. They were attractively presented; here is the folder that we used. I will pass it round so that you can have a wee look. They allowed us to make a good first impression with new Members.

Other areas included procedure tasks, which were to do with refreshing office processes. That is refreshing as a verb, not an adjective. We carried out training tasks, including ways to help us familiarise ourselves with new Members and the new powers that the Scotland Act 2012 had conferred on the Parliament. There were IT and information tasks, which included reviewing statistics and our document management system and testing our new common data model.

What worked well? The programme structure was beneficial as it allowed oversight of all the disparate activities, identification of dependencies and easy monitoring of progress.

Advance planning in the shape of discussing project ideas at the awayday was very useful. Having a project manager for each project provided a single contact for liaising with and for monitoring progress; it also allowed staff to take responsibility for

their own activities. Confirming the office's key messages at the start of the programme brought coherence to activities and helped the project managers to make strategic decisions. We had an excellent level of contact with new Members, or the 'Young Americans' as I like to call them, through the Members' fair and first speech projects.

How was the programme received? Very well. We received good feedback on the structure and management of the programme from staff and colleagues outside the office, including the chief executive, who was very happy to see us raising our profile at the Members' fair. OR staff commented that they felt that the programme structure reassured them that everything was under control, which made me laugh, like a laughing gnome — "Ha ha ha, hee hee hee." One or two of my colleagues did not like the formality of the project management terms "project manager" and "senior reporting officer", but most were happy with them and were certainly happy with the clear lines with responsibility.

What should we do next time? We decided that the project programme model should be used again, that planning should start much earlier — it should begin during the summer recess prior to dissolution, if not before — and that some activities should become "business as usual", which we have done with web page management and stakeholder development.

What else should we do? Any budgets should be specified at the outset of the programme or as early into it as possible. Design projects should be coordinated by one person, and the time required for liaising with designers on jobs should not be underestimated. The individual strengths of our staff members should be matched with projects, where possible. The project manager and senior reporting officer roles that we used should be clearly set out at the beginning of the programme to ensure clear direction and encourage more people to volunteer. Communication between project managers should be encouraged to minimise duplication of effort and share useful knowledge. Project managers should keep the office head informed of any significant changes to projects, especially those involving interaction with members in other offices. The implications of staff taking leaving during dissolution need to be identified and planned for well in advance.

That brings me to the end of my brief presentation. I am pleased to say that we got through all the 'Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes' just fine, and everything ended up 'Hunky Dory' for the start of session five. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

SESSION SIX: A YEAR IN THE LIFE.....

Anne Maxwell (Houses of the Oireachtas) chaired the session, during which delegates from each of the bodies represented reported on developments in their organisations over the preceding 12 months.

Leah Jenkins (National Assembly for Wales): I would just like to outline the main changes made in Wales since last year's conference. First, we have stopped logging in plenary, other than for legislative proceedings. A trial of not logging was held in autumn 2015, following the recommendation of an internal review. Meirir, as managing editor, analysed the results of the trial. When we were logging, she found that there were four interruptions and 0.5 inaudible per plenary session. During the trial, without a log, there were seven interruptions and one inaudible per plenary session. The errors had therefore doubled, but it was decided by the Assembly Commission that that was an acceptable error rate. Indeed, we have already had to rely on Members' Twitter accounts to learn what was said off-mike in the Chamber and to whom.

Reporters previously reported the Floor language only, and the subs would transcribe the English simultaneous interpretation of any Welsh spoken the following morning. The time that would have been spent walking to the Chamber and back is now being used to increase the amount of simultaneous interpretation that reporters can transcribe so that it is available sooner. We are also now publishing a draft version of the record on a rolling basis within one hour. That has been delivered since May 2016. Not logging in plenary and the change to staff working patterns have meant that we are able to include a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation feed so the rolling draft version includes all the Welsh and English and Welsh spoken, as well as the simultaneous interpretation of those Welsh sections. As both languages are available, we can publish it externally as well. The availability of the text in draft form within an hour of it being spoken is a tremendous improvement on the 24-hour target and the usual delivery time of 20 hours after the conclusion of the meeting.

In addition, the publication of the fully bilingual record now happens within three working days, as opposed to five working days previously, as a result of the Commission's request that it be available sooner. Following negotiations with the external contractors who provide the translation of all the English spoken in the Chamber into Welsh, that improvement has been achieved with a marginal increase in costs.

We have enabled external users to easily copy sections of the record to use in their own documents, briefings and so on. The text of the record includes many hyperlinks to the video and to Members' biographies, for example. Members and their support staff requested that a plainer version be made available. That was implemented in January 2016 and it benefits users in enabling the easier re-use of our product. In addition, we have made the record available as open data on a website for others to use. That complies with EU legislation on open Government and data. That XML open data enables users to re-purpose our data and produce new products and apps, encouraging and supporting further digital engagement.

There is now also the ability to search the record by Member, to view their speeches and voting records. That is being progressed as part of the Assembly's web improvements project. Currently, it is only working for plenary meetings, which we publish in XML format, but we will extend it to Committees when we have a new transcription system in place. Committee transcripts are now also sent to Members directly following each Committee meeting. That is to improve scrutiny, as Members have been telling us that they do not know when the transcripts are made available.

Another significant change within our service has been the departure of two subeditors, Siân Richards and Iolo Roberts, whom some of you will know. Their posts have been filled by none other than Peter and me, following an internal recruitment process. On that note, I will pass on quickly to Peter, who will give an overview of wider Assembly developments.

Peter Hill (National Assembly for Wales): OK. I do not know how much time I have left, but I have some pictures to show you. I hope to show you all of them.

The first is about something that happened just before the end of the last Assembly, during the passage of the Welsh Government's Public Health Bill. The main point of that legislation was that the Government wanted to ban the use of e-cigarettes in public places. The picture shows the Health Minister's office, which is right next door to an e-cigarette shop, which is quite interesting. The Bill went through the whole process, two years of scrutiny, and got right to the end, Stage Four, which is usually just a formality. However, Plaid Cymru decided to vote against the Bill, whereas earlier Members had a free vote. So, after two years, the Bill was not agreed and it fell right at the last hurdle. So, people are allowed to continue vaping in public in Wales. I think that some people are quite happy about that.

I don't know what is said here in this picture.

The next picture is about a recall, which we do not have that often. We had one right after the end of the fourth Assembly, and it was about the steel crisis in Port Talbot. It was in the old Chamber, and it was quite fun going back to our old Chamber, which has not been used since before 2006.

The next picture is about an election. On this lovely colour picture that we have, you can see that we elected seven UKIP Members for the first time. Already, one of those purple dots has turned to grey, because one of those UKIP Members has left the group. That has changed things in the Assembly. There is a different atmosphere with these new Members. We get a lot more interventions from Members and the Presiding Officer, which can be difficult to report when we have not got a log, of course. However, we get by, as Leah pointed out. Also, we have one little yellow dot, which represents Kirsty Williams, the leader of the Liberal Democrats. She is leading a party of one, and she is now an Education Minister in the Welsh Government, which is quite interesting.

We have a new Presiding Officer. I quite like that picture of her because it looks as though she is doing some kind of beatboxing or something. So, yes, we have a female Presiding Officer and deputy Presiding Officer. She had quite a difficult task in chairing her first plenary meeting. In this picture, we have our head of Assembly business rifling through the Standing Orders because, in that first meeting, we had a vote for the First Minister which was tied: 29 votes for Carwyn Jones, who is the leader of the Labour Party, and 29 for Leanne Wood, who is the leader of Plaid Cymru. That was even though Labour had the most votes. We did not expect that to happen. The big story in Wales was that, as in this picture, Carwyn Jones was crying in the Chamber because he did not get voted First Minister straightaway; but, apparently, he is not crying; it is because he had laser eye-surgery, and he is just wiping his brow.

I have a couple more pictures.

This is the royal opening. I like this picture because we had a choir in the Chamber. We are not allowed in the Chamber, but we do allow choirs. We have Mark Reckless there, enjoying being in the middle of all those lovely choirs. Finally, I did not want to let the chance slip to point out that Wales got through to the semis of the Euros. This is all our Members in the Chamber wishing good luck to Wales. I thought that was a nice little picture to end on. Thank you very much.

Will Humphries-Jones (House of Lords): I will follow my Welsh colleagues by going over some internal stuff and then some broader politics. For staff in the House of Lords, the biggest event this year was our pay and grading review, which always

makes people in the Official Report very nervous. We were all successful. One member of our team, who is here, was upgraded, quite justly in our view. My view, after going through this exercise for the nth time, is that we need to retain faith in our value and skill. If we communicate them well, we are fine; but it always makes people nervous.

Another thing making people nervous, including me, is a joint working project between the House of Commons Hansard and the House of Lords Hansard, whose genesis was rather accidental; it just seems that we stumbled into it. It came from the Straw review on the appointment of the chief executive/ clerk to the Commons. That had all kinds of implications. One clerk in Parliament said that we should have more joint services. People are running with this, so I have spent quite a lot of time with my counterpart in the Commons, Jack Homer, thinking about how we might do that. We were asked to present a series of options or different models, going from the status quo to a totally joint office. We presented a paper to the board recommending a kind of midway point, where we are still two separate organisations but share more functions, such as recruitment and training.

It clarified in our mind just how much joint working we already do. The Commons Hansard is obviously a much bigger organisation, and we rely on it very much. We share an IT platform. We also share a website, which is another new development, leading on to two new developments. I do not know if anyone noticed the new website, developed by our digital services; we worked together on that. Then there is the Hansard reporting suite. That has been going on for a couple of years, but it was reliant on Microsoft 2003, which became unsupported. We had to migrate to a new system, which we hope made improvements. That included disaggregating Member contributions; we input whether things are interventions or speeches and stuff. That should feed through to the website at some point.

I do not know where the joint working will end. None of us does. There is some very high politics involving senior management in the Commons, the new chief executive and a probably rather resistant Lords, but we will see what happens. We do not know whether we can buy them off with some warm words, as I hope we can — don't write that down.

We enjoyed a couple of exchanges. Cormac from the Oireachtas came over and we sent Ed there. That was very successful. Gráinne went to the Commons for a couple of weeks, and we had Stephen from the Commons. We are always very happy to do exchanges, so if anyone wants to, please let John or me know, and we will do our best to facilitate that.

I will move on to the broader politics. It has been the first year since the general election, which is usually a very busy year in both Houses legislatively, but it was suspiciously and relatively light. I think that it was to do with the EU referendum. Apart from a few late nights, we have not had many Grand Committees, which is our equivalent of Westminster's second chamber. In the Lords, famously, the Government were defeated quite badly on tax credits, which was kind of the revenge of the Liberal Democrats. The Government do not have a majority in the Lords. That has caused ructions about the status of subordinate legislation and what rights the Lords has to reject subordinate legislation. There are two factors. Obviously, we are waiting to see what Brexit will mean for the UK Parliament. We have no idea what that will mean in practice. The other thing that is quite interesting about the Lords is that the Labour peers are almost the last read-out of the parliamentary Labour Party. The shadow Chief Whip and the shadow Leader of the House, Lord Bassam and Baroness Smith, do not attend the shadow Cabinet. What is interesting is that the Opposition in the Lords is very effective, partly because they seem to have nothing to do with the Labour leadership. Brexit and what happens to the official Opposition are things that we will look out for.

Denis Kelliher (Houses of the Oireachtas): First of all, the most important thing that happened in the last year is that I passed my probationary period. I joined the Oireachtas just less than two years ago, so my second anniversary will be coming up in September. There are about 60 people working in the debates office, including editors, parliamentary reporters and admin staff, and the last recruitment campaign, which I came in on, kicked off in December 2013. Three people were initially brought in and then, in the last year, four new permanent staff joined the team, two of whom had worked on the banking inquiry on fixed-term contracts for a short while before that. We now have seven new people from that recruitment campaign. Of those seven, three of us report Irish contributions that are made in the Houses. I am one of those reporters. That brought the complement of Irish reporters up to five. One of those Irish reporters has now retired and one is also going out on a career break, so we will be back down to three. That poses a certain amount of challenges for us given that the three remaining have to deal with all the contributions in Irish. We do not know when they will happen and it can be quite intensive when the contributions in Irish are long.

During the last year, we had a few promotions. We have a new deputy editor, Reine McDonnell, who is here today. She oversees the Committee Debates. We had two promotions to assistant editor: Muireann Crowley and Eddie Mooney. It was nice to see that. We also had three reporters deputising as assistant editors during the banking inquiry. A lot of our staff have moved from the main Leinster House complex and are now working in Agriculture House, which is about 100 metres up the road. I am not one of them, so I do not get involved in the conversations about having to bring umbrellas up and down the street when it is raining as we make our

way to the Chamber. Given what we have heard from the Welsh delegates, I suppose that we should be glad that we at least get to go into the Chamber.

The last year has been busy. An election was called in early February and held at the end of February. Twenty of our Deputies decided not to contest the election and 48 lost their seats. Also, the number of Deputies in the Dáil was reduced from 166 to 158. We have approximately 90 new Members, between the Dáil and the Seanad, although not all are new faces. Some of the new Senators were Deputies who had lost their seats in the previous election, so they are familiar to us.

We also had a new procedure for electing a Ceann Comhairle. That was by secret ballot for the first time this year. The Standing Orders were changed, and we had to have a few mock runs on how that would work in practice. When the Deputies were elected, they were not assigned seats in the Dáil immediately, so we had to have a walk through vote for the election of the Ceann Comhairle. As I said, we had a few mock runs, and some of the parliamentary reporters got to pretend to be politicians for short periods of time.

Then the Deputies tried to form a Government. Unfortunately, it took them 70 days to do that. We thought that we would get to put our feet up but we did not; we tackled a lot of projects. We looked at the editor's book, and updated and carried out some revisions to it. We worked on the knowledge-base index and examined a new system for dealing with written answers to parliamentary questions. During that period, we also completed work on 65 bound volumes. That came in at a saving to the Oireachtas of some €400,000. Because we were able to do that work in-house rather than outsourcing it, we were able to save approximately €6,000 per bound volume. So, there were significant savings made by staff who some people thought were doing nothing during that period.

Following the election, a minority Government was brought in. That gave the other parties and groups in the Parliament a lot of power, and they insisted that we would have a new Dáil and our business would be conducted in a new way. A business committee has been set up, and all groups have a part in setting the business of the Houses for the upcoming week. It aims to do that by consensus and meets weekly. It will publish a report on the Thursday, setting out what the likely business for the following week will be and then it will hopefully agree that on the Tuesday. That then is subject to amendment during the week.

A couple of new initiatives have been brought into the Oireachtas. It is looking at introducing an independent parliamentary budget office to assess and cost budget changes. The parliamentary legal adviser's office is being beefed up somewhat because it expects more private Members' Bills to be initiated given the make-up of the Dáil. The rules on technical groups in the Dáil have also changed. A small party can now form part of a technical group. Before, there was only one technical group permitted in the Dáil. Now, there can be more than one technical group, and the minimum number of Members has been reduced from seven to five.

One of the big changes that affects the Debates Office is the changes to sitting times. It was decided to make the sitting hours more family friendly. The Dáil is to

start at 12.00 noon on Wednesday and Thursday and finish at 9.00 pm and 8.00 pm., respectively. If on the Dáil roster, the working week will start at 2.00 pm on a Tuesday. A reporter could get a take at 8.50 pm or later on a Tuesday, but will not start until 12.00 noon on the Wednesday, and, on the Thursday, will not start until 12.00 noon again. Our first round of takes are five minutes long, and then we have 10-minute takes after that. The Dáil has also blocked voting at a certain time during the week. That also is to encourage family-friendly hours apparently. The main potential challenges of Dáil reform will be our staff resources and how we roster them.

A new Irish language committee has been set up. It is likely that we will have more Irish language contributions because of that.

I will finish by saying that we also hoped to have an offsite training day. I think it was being termed a learning at work day. Unfortunately, due to the Brexit vote, there was an emergency sitting of the Dáil, and the one day of the year that we picked to have a training day, we all had to turn up and report what happened in the Chamber. Thank you very much.

Luke Gibbons (Northern Ireland Assembly): The 12 months since the last conference in London have been quite eventful for Hansard and Northern Ireland politics as a whole. On the political front, we kicked off in September with our now annual crisis, with devolution on the brink. This time, it was over the murder of a man in Belfast, which the police had attributed to current or former members of the IRA. That led to much debate around whether the IRA still existed and, if so, for what purpose. The police said that the IRA retained its army council but purely for political purposes, while Sinn Féin insisted that the IRA had left the stage and become a butterfly.

The Ulster Unionists pulled out of the Executive, which piled pressure on the DUP to do likewise, however, not wanting to collapse the institutions or, as some people thought, have an early election, the DUP opted for a tactic whereby its Ministers resigned and were reinstated every six days so as to not collapse the institutions. This led to a situation where DUP-run Departments only had a Minister for one day a week. The only DUP Department to retain its Minister full time during this period was the Finance Department, where Arlene Foster was in post. Obviously, during this period, business was severely affected, with DUP Ministers not present in the Chamber and only a few Members ever in the Chamber, affecting our business. This went on for a couple of months until, after fresh negotiations, the new Fresh Start Agreement was reached. That was heralded as a new dawn for Northern Ireland politics. The other parties did not agree, saying they had not been consulted, but they were largely ignored. As we approached the end of the mandate and purdah in March, business increased slightly, although it was nowhere near the levels that we witnessed during the same period in 2011.

The Assembly election in May largely maintained the status quo, with the DUP and Sinn Féin remaining as the largest two parties. The main thing to come out of the election was the emergence of an official Opposition, the first in Stormont's history, made up of the Ulster Unionists and the SDLP. The outworking of that arrangement is still unknown as it is very early days, but it is certainly a sign of the institutions maturing. Although the result of the election largely maintained the status quo, it led to new faces coming to Stormont, notably Eamonn McCann of People Before Profit, who some of you might know. The election also heralded the end of several political careers.

Since the election, things have been quiet, with the run-up to and fall out from the Brexit referendum dominating Northern Ireland politics. However, the summer lull was harshly interrupted last week with the revelation that the Sinn Féin Finance Committee Chairperson had coached a witness, a prominent loyalist blogger no less, before he had given evidence to that Committee as part of the NAMA inquiry. That has led to that Sinn Féin MLA resigning and calls for the Sinn Féin Finance Minister to resign.

On the people front, it has been a busy, eventful and tragic year. As part of the reform of the public sector, two reporters, Barbara and Lee, who some of you might know, left through the voluntary exit scheme. Gráinne officially left us for the House of Lords, and we also lost Marty and Stephen Todd, who is also working for the House of Lords. In March, we were saddened to learn that our colleague Colin Duncan, who some of you may have known, had passed away; his presence in the office is certainly missed. We have welcomed Antony to our ranks, and there will be an open reporter competition in the new year, so we look forward to welcoming some new faces. A new director general in the Assembly was appointed, and she started at the end of June.

Alex Newton (House of Commons): Good afternoon, and, for those who do not know me, I am the new Editor of the House of Commons Hansard.

UK political developments are probably far too well known to you all for me to elaborate at length, but I can honestly say that it has been very disconcerting to have the Brexit vote and simultaneous leadership elections in both of the main political parties, with the Opposition falling apart as they go and a whole team of hitherto obscure Back-Benchers suddenly turning up as ministerial spokespeople with no experience of their roles or even of Front-Bench politics. For several weeks, I felt quite unsettled by the uncertainty of it all. It is an interesting demonstration of the importance of leadership in society. I also very strongly sympathise with what Will said about the ubiquity of reviews. They can be very destabilising as well.

The new head of IT came to visit us and said to me, "What can I do to help?". I will bank that one. We had a very successful year working with our IT colleagues to upgrade the Hansard reporting suite and, concomitantly with that, to massively improve our web output. That has led to a fivefold increase in the number of readers of Hansard, which is quite extraordinary.

There are two main drivers for that. One is the development of the Petitions Committee, whereby, if 100,000 people sign a petition on the parliamentary petitions website, it stands a chance of being debated. Because people have to enter a valid email address for that, the Petitions Committee will send out links to the debate when it is on and then to the transcript when it is published. That is one of the things that is driving it. However, that does not apply to the Lords. Its figures increase is very similar to the Commons percentage increase, so it is not entirely or even principally driven by the Petitions Committee. In fact, as our Scottish colleague mentioned a little earlier, it is about making things much easier to share. It is very striking that, when the Petitions Committee or other organisations or lobby groups in society more generally send out links to debates in which the people whom they are associated with are interested, you get a massive increase in the number of people looking at those debates. They are also spending very respectable reading times — four or five minutes — on those debates. I am told that the average for a broadsheet newspaper article on the web is one and a half minutes, so people who come to the site read it a lot. It is very striking. There is a famous Pathé newsreel of 1950 that shows how Hansard was produced at that time, with dictation typing, hot-metal printing, typesetting and what have you. At that time, the readership would have been in the low thousands or perhaps low tens of thousands, if you see what I mean. That was very much the case when I joined Hansard, when there were no computers; you would be looking at a readership of the low thousands. Now, it is in to millions. More people read Hansard than ever before by an enormous margin. I am not quite sure that we have all grasped that. It is a growth industry. It is not a declining skill; it is absolutely something that is very useful, and it is being used a lot more. Those of you who will be working on the group doing video and text possibly ought to bear that in mind. The video and the Hansard report are two different things. They have different purposes, and they are used by different people in different ways. That is not very well understood outside Hansard. It is something that one of the other groups that is dealing with getting our story better understood by administrators and others might like to incorporate into their thinking as well.

When people engage with what we do and when people use our material, as Members, journalists, civil servants and, indeed, clerks do, you will find that there are some things for which the Hansard transcript is essential. It is so much quicker and easier to use. Many people outside find that, too. For instance, would you put the subtitles on if you understood the language of the film you were watching? No, you probably would not. So, if you wanted to watch political proceedings, why would you put the subtitles on? Why would you want text? Also, verbatim text is not actually a

very helpful thing for subtitling; it is more confusing and more difficult. God alone knows what this speech would like if it were being accurately subtitled, with every single word and stumble that I am coming out with included. The message I have is that we in Hansard, as Will rightly said earlier, should be clearly proud of our skills and aware that what we are doing is valued and is useful in society more widely.

The only other major item that I would like to reference by way of progress in the last year is that we had the successful revalidation of our postgraduate diploma in parliamentary reporting, which has been a very successful training initiative that we have had, and it has massively increased the rigour of our training. I have to say that by the time you have completed the course, you will be a pretty good parliamentary reporter. Not everyone passes it, though: we had to part company with at least two people during the course of the training. I thoroughly commend looking at doing something like that if you have the chance to do so, though it is an awful lot of work to get there. Those are two most exciting things that happened last year: a massive increase in readership; and revalidation of our training programme. There was lots of boring internal stuff, but I will bin that.

Kimberly Kerr (Scottish Parliament): Hello, I am Kimberly from the Scottish Parliament. In the Scottish Parliament, 2015-16 was one of our busiest years ever, with 718 hours of Committee meetings and 420 hours of plenary meetings. As usual, when we get nearer to the end of a session, we have a lot of legislation to deal with. The Parliament passed 30 Bills on a wide range of issues, including apologies, burial and cremation, human trafficking, land reform, lobbying, taxation and the voting age. The additional flexibility that we now have through our agency staff and reporters being able to subedit helped us to cope with the workload. We have added two new agency staff to our agency pool, bringing the total to eight, and around half of the 19 permanent reporters have been trained to subedit. This is a lovely photo of our team three months ago, which is now out of date. We are involved in the Parliament's modern apprenticeship programme. Over the last year, we have had two apprentices successfully assisting our editorial support team, which has been a great help. We would just like to note that both apprentices have gone on to secure permanent posts in the Parliament, and that was down to the excellent training and experience that they had in the Official Report.

Last October, our editor Susan came back from maternity leave. Bronwyn, who had been covering for Susan, returned to being a subeditor, and Elizabeth, who was covering for Bronwyn, returned to being a reporter. Annie is currently on maternity leave, and we congratulate her on the birth of Thomas. She is being covered by Claire Bennett, who is here on her first BIPRA. Claire Maddox and Robert Arnott got engaged to each other, just to give you an update on the real juicy stuff that you are actually bothered about.

At the end of session four, we said farewell to several long-standing Members. Our editor's picks blog had several posts on retiring Members, and there is a screenshot from that. The reporters had great fun putting all those together over dissolution. As you just heard from Simon, we were really busy during dissolution preparing for session five, mainly ensuring that everything that we did fitted into a David Bowie theme so that Simon could deliver that presentation today.

It is quite hard to say how busy the new session will be. We have a return to a minority Government, which previously resulted in less business, but we have more powers now over tax and social security, which could result in more work. One of the first things that happened in the new session was the extension of First Minister's Question Time from 30 minutes to 45 minutes, which I am sure is really good for the Members, but it creates some difficulty for us in putting together our Thursday plenary list, so we will see how that works out going forward. The Committees have mainly stayed the same in numbers, but a lot of them have larger memberships as well. Our new Presiding Officer, Ken Macintosh, began his role by relaxing the rules on using electronic devices in the Chamber.

So, it is now quite common for one Member to be speaking while rest of them to be looking down at their phones. We are fine about that, because if they are not listening to each other, they can obviously read it in the Official Report. I am showing a picture of Ken having a selfie moment with Christine Grahame and Linda Fabiani, who are our new Deputy Presiding Officers.

We had some interesting issues around the EU referendum. There was a question on whether we would be able to publish ORs during purdah if they contained any reference to the referendum. Fortunately, that pretty much came to nothing as there were no debates on the EU. Although there was a slight issue at FMQs one time, the PO was quite sensible about it and glossed over it.

In the aftermath of the referendum, we face the prospect of a second independence referendum, or IndyRef2, as it is known. We just like have referendums up in Scotland apparently. The European Committee met in the middle of recess. That was a first for us, but it allowed us to test our recall procedure and we managed to get through that.

We recently had an office redesign, and we now all have electronic sit/stand desks. That is a fairly new thing, having only happened over the past couple of weeks. Here is a picture of Simon Eilbeck standing at his desk. It will take a bit of getting used to, but hopefully it will bring some benefits for us.

On the subject of moving, in November, the Parliament got new neighbours when campers moved into the grounds with the aim of staying until Scotland becomes independent. They particularly endeared themselves to the OR with their fine attention to detail. Here is a picture of one of their signs: even they do not know what they are campaigning for anymore. *[Laughter.]* The Parliament has taken the campers to the Court of Session to try and have them removed, and the case has become more and more bizarre. One of the campers claimed to be the son of God and tried to call the Queen as a witness, arguing that she was not the monarch because she had not been crowned on the true stone of destiny. He later claimed that all judges should be executed along with the Queen. The case continues, the camp goes on and we are still very, very freaked out by them. *[Laughter.]*

As the year drew to an end in BIPRA terms, at the beginning of July, we had the real Queen visiting the Parliament for the opening of session 5. Quite a lot of our team were involved in helping out on the day, doing things like driving golf buggies up and down the Royal Mile to take guests to and from the opening ceremony, decorating a steampunk float and shepherding the state trumpeters. It was all good fun. It is not something that we get to do every day, so we quite enjoyed it.

We are approaching the end of recess and will soon be back to business as usual. We look forward to welcoming Charlie Browne from the Commons, who is coming up in September for a couple of weeks, and getting stuck back into the world of official reporting. That is it from us.

Peter Monamy (States of Jersey): Hi folks. If this goes according to plan, it should be about four and half minutes.

Since last year's BIPRA symposium, it has been very much a case of business as usual for the States for the remainder of 2015 and into this year. January to December 2015 saw a decrease in the number of meetings days for ordinary business to 31 from 47 in the previous year, which was an election year. That was far below the record of 61 in 2011, which was also an election year. 2015 was the first of the States' three-and-a-half-year period of office, which runs from November 2014 to May 2018, and saw the Assembly sitting for a total of just under 160 hours. It sat for almost 256 hours in 2014. There was only one special States meeting held during 2015, which was the annual Liberation Day meeting on 9 May.

The Official Report faithfully reported the proceedings of all the Assembly's meetings throughout 2015. The aim continues to be to produce the Official Report within three days of the first day's proceedings, so that the transcript of proceedings on Tuesdays are uploaded to the States Assembly website by the end of the Friday of the same

week. We continue to outsource the transcription of the digital audio recording of the States Assembly and scrutiny panel hearing proceedings, and a retendering exercise is due to be undertaken next year. The current provider continues to represent extremely good value for money in comparison to previously considered alternative transcription options. As you probably know, our transcription is carried out by folk in New Zealand. The editing of the States Assembly transcripts continues to be carried out by a team of two full-time and two part-time clerks. The scrutiny hearings are undertaken by the offices attached to each panel. For public business items, of the 151 propositions during 2015, 80, or (53%), related to items of legislation and compares to 183 in 2014. Councilors, Ministers and Minister's policy matters took up well over half of the Assembly's time in 2015 while private members propositions only accounted for 22% of the Assembly's time. Significant debates during 2015, and some of these may be familiar to you in other jurisdictions, included; a draft Strategic Plan, a draft Air and Seaport Incorporation Law, a draft Discrimination (Sex and Related Characteristics) Regulations, Same-Sex Marriage, Divorce and Dissolution, additional funding for the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry, a Medium Term Financial Plan, the inevitable draft Budget statement and the draft States of Jersey Transfer of Functions Regulations. This saw the creation of the Department for Community and Constitutional Affairs from what previously comprised the Home Affairs Department, the Strategic Housing Unit and parts of the Chief Ministers Department.

Additionally, responsibilities for sport and culture were merged with economic development to form the Department for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture. Digital innovation and competition responsibilities moved to the Chief Ministers Department. Jersey Property Holdings moved to join the former Transport and Technical Services Department to create the Department for Infrastructure.

In the last few weeks, cameras have been installed in the States Chamber and a trial run will be heard at the first sitting of the second session on 13 September. Digital count-down and count-up clocks will follow shortly, hopefully in time for the start of the new session. Just for good measure, there will be a by-election for one senatorial seat on 7 September, which is a fortnight from today. That is all that I have to tell you.

Deborah Pilkington (Tynwald): I am Deborah from the Isle of Man. Like Peter, it has been pretty much business as usual for us but I have got one or two interesting things to tell you about.

For those of you who were in the Isle of Man two years ago, you might remember Catherine. She has left now and been replaced by Louise, who was a home transcriber so she has settled in very quickly. That coincided with our job titles

changing. There were six of us and we had four different job titles yet, essentially, five of us were doing the same job. So, now we have Ellen, who is Head of Hansard, and five Hansard Executives.

We have a general election on 22 September, which takes place every five years. There will be lots of changes this time because they have changed the constituencies. We used to have 15 one, two or three seat constituencies and now we have 12 two seat constituencies. We have seven Members who will not be standing again, including the Chief Minister and three other Ministers. Another Member who is not standing again has been there for over 30 years, and Hansard staff for years have said, "If Mr Karran was not here, it would all be over in half the time." He will not be there — *[Laughter.]* — so we will see if that actually happens.

The final interesting thing to say about the general election is that our Head of Hansard, Ellen's husband is standing, so that will be very interesting. If he gets elected, it will be very interesting.

We continue to do Hansard for Gibraltar, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark. Nothing has changed there. It is quite good at this time of year, because it gives us something to do; but when we are busy, we are very busy now, because we have those other Hansards to do. We are not expecting to become properly busy until November, and on that basis our services have been offered to the Parliament of Sierra Leone. It has a two-year backlog, and we will help it catch up. Two staff from Sierra Leone are visiting for two weeks from 5 September, and then two of us will go there in October. Three of us want to go, and two are going; we are not quite sure which two are going yet.

The final thing that I want to tell you about is the review of Tynwald. Some of you will probably know Lord Lisvane, formerly Sir Robert Rogers, clerk of the House of Commons from 2011 to 2014. He was engaged to:

"examine the functions of the branches of Tynwald; assess their efficacy; consider the scrutiny structure required by the parliament; and recommend any options for reform."

He took evidence over two weeks in May. We provided Hansard transcripts of all the oral evidence. His report was received and noted by Tynwald in July, and it was resolved that it would be debated and a decision made in April 2017. The recommendations cover areas such as diversity — in the last session there was one female member; Members' pay and allowances; a code of conduct for Members; the process of drafting primary and secondary legislation; scrutiny; a programme for government; the election of the Chief Minister; the appointment of members of the

Legislative Council; the role and size of the Legislative Council; and the role of the Lord Bishop. They are all quite controversial areas, so that is going to be a very interesting debate in April.

Esther Mwambu (Parliament of Uganda): I will cover the past 12 months of the Official Report department in Uganda. There are about four areas that I will look at, and the first is in respect of receiving our new parliament. We had elections in February 2016, and so we began about a year ago to prepare for the new parliament. This is our tenth parliament. We do not call them sessions; we call them parliaments, unlike the Scottish. Each parliament is what we referred to here as a session.

As a way of preparing for the new parliament, first we had to review our Hansard style and usage guide, which had been compiled in 2002, and was largely borrowed from the Westminster Erskine May publication. We sought to localise this, especially in the area of geographical names and other names that were borrowed from Erskine May. We were able to achieve this early in the year, around January/February just before we went into the election period, because we had a bit of time. We localised our Hansard style and usage guide to make it more user friendly. We had new staff coming in. Carol is one of them. We recruited about nine new staff in 2014 as part of the preparation for the new Parliament. We had new staff coming in and Carol is one of those. In 2014 we recruited about nine new staff as part of the preparation for the new Parliament. To help them get better integrated into the Official Report department part of this was the localisation of our Hansard Style and Usage Guide. They were able to participate in making it better and more localised.

Secondly, in receiving the new Parliament, the tenth Parliament since independence, we were given a slot in the general induction of the new members in June. We got a slot, as the Hansard department, and were able to educate the new members about the role of Hansard in Parliament and how they can engage Hansard to help them. The new Parliament began on 1 June.

It is a bigger Parliament — from 387 members in the ninth Parliament to 427. We try to guide them on the timing of their speeches on the floor because Hansard controls the timing. Once the Speaker says three minutes then it is Hansard that controls the timing.

To make our work a little easier we requested to try and guide them on names. This was because we have had situations where a member has about four names and the order of the names gets mixed up. We handed them forms and requested that

for the sake of the Hansard they use only two names. This was in respect to receiving the new Members of the tenth Parliament.

The second development we have had in the past 12 months has been in the area of supporting the entire Parliament's planned project of taking Parliament to the people. The Hansard department, in particular, was charged with the responsibility of spearheading the setting up of the Parliament television and radio. Before now, we have been having the national broadcaster and some of the private televisions and radios stations airing the live plenary sessions. Hansard just gives them a feed as we have the recording and broadcasting unit.

Over the years it has proved to be quite expensive so Parliament, with support from the United Nations Development Programme, has decided to try and see if they can have their own television and radio. One of the reasons was that the national broadcaster could not dedicate enough time or a separate channel for airing the sessions. The Parliament television and radio project is one of those projects that is meant to take Parliament to the people.

The technical committee is headed by staff from the Hansard department. In October 2015 we managed to, with support from the United Nations Development Programme, to come up with a technical feasibility study and a report which is going to guide the costing of the project and how we set up the infrastructure. The communications department is going to do the programming once we have the television and radio up and running. We have achieved this in the last 12 months. We are here to receive the funding to actually now set up the television and radio.

Related to that, our technical staff in the broadcasting and recording unit eventually explored the use of YouTube for some kind of web casting and this is something we have been planning for some years. This is something that we have been planning for some years. Our technical staff in the broadcasting and recording unit eventually explored the use of Youtube. We managed to acquire some of the software but we have yet to get the go-ahead from the top management — the board of management and the commission — to allow us to have some of the plenary sessions aired on Youtube.

The third area of development over the past 12 years is to do with the work environment in the Hansard department. We have had an increase in the number of stress-related complaints from staff. We have three units in our Hansard department; the recording and broadcasting unit, transcribing and editing, and the printing and publishing unit. Altogether, we currently have 43 staff. The full establishment is 51 staff but we have 43. There have been issues of occupational

safety and health. We invited a team from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to make an assessment and they briefed us on some of the areas that we needed to improve to make our Hansard department more work environment-friendly. That is an area that we are exploring. One of the things that we are working on is acquiring good quality headphones because some people are losing their ears. We have shifted from screen editing to hard copy editing because many people were complaining about their eyesight.

Lastly, the Parliament of Uganda Official Report department has been very instrumental in supporting the CHEA Africa region to become more interactive and more grounded. We participated, for instance, in drafting the constitution and the strategic plan for the CHEA Africa region for the next five years and on getting some values for the CHEA Africa region. Thank you.

Anne Maxwell: Thank you very much to all our contributors for their illuminating insights into what went on in the organisations over the past 12 months. Before we close for today, I just want to say that, in case you think that we forgot about Rob, he will be giving us a Canadian update on Hansard later in the symposium. With that, thank you all again for a very good day's work.

THURSDAY 25 AUGUST (Public Record Office for Northern Ireland)

SESSION SEVEN: REPORTING LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

Keith Brown (House of Commons): Good morning everyone. This morning's presentation is on reporting languages other than English in Hansard and Official Reports. A few months ago, Alex Newton, the new editor at House of Commons Hansard, whom you met yesterday, put together a small group, including me, to review how we report languages other than English. The idea was to produce some clearer editorial guidance for staff, updated to reflect recent developments at Westminster, and to review our practices. The aim is not necessarily to change the way we have been reporting, but to help us make what can sometimes be quite difficult editorial judgements with greater confidence and speed. We have since been working on that guidance and putting together some training packages.

I thought that it would be quite dull to go through the guidance, so in the short time available I have picked out some key themes and ideas to explore a little bit more. It is quite a suitable topic for BIPRA, because, as I am acutely aware, many of you routinely report in languages other than English. We have a good opportunity to open up a discussion, look at the challenges and share some ideas. As you see, there is a PowerPoint presentation. As Simon said, I will speak first and then Owain will talk a little about Welsh in the House of Commons, before Rob gives a Canadian perspective.

We can all face challenges occasionally when Members decide to speak in other languages. I have put together a few recent examples from the past year, since our last symposium. Here is the first.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

That was reasonably simple. I hope no one can detect where we have corrected the French—I will quickly click away. [Laughter.] Apparently we changed the Bound Volume for one thing. Ordinarily that is something we would not struggle with too much. I am not quite sure whether Sir Edward provided a note, but hopefully among the staff we were able to get together something pretty accurate for that.

Nigel Evans, formerly Deputy Speaker of the House, provided something slightly more challenging.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Possibly. *[Laughter.]* He could not provide the Russian in Cyrillic, and he was not entirely sure, as far as I understand, of the transliteration. This was a bit more difficult than the French, but I would be reasonably confident that our contacts in the Russian mafia could get us something pretty accurate for that. *[Laughter.]* If we were looking at an inquiry by the Foreign Affairs Committee, where Russian was likely to be spoken an awful lot, particularly in translation, we would want to explore conventions on transliteration. In that connection, we are quite keen that we should be able to print in Cyrillic if we need to, but we could end up with something that looks like the Rosetta Stone — with Cyrillic, the transliteration and then the translation.

This is Rory Stewart, then a DEFRA Minister, followed in quick succession by Tom Tugendhat. There is a clustering effect, I think, with languages.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

This is how we reported that — *[Laughter.]* Tom Tugendhat was not to be outshone by Rory Stewart. This was from a very popular debate on hedgehog conservation.

Personally, I would not have sent for the Latin; I would have googled it first, because it is likely to be an expression. Did anyone here get it, given the context of hedgehog conservation? Any guesses? It is Erasmus, I think, originally from a Greek poet, but it is best known from an essay by Isaiah Berlin, which you may have heard of. It means:

"A fox knows many things, but a hedgehog knows one important thing."

As for the Pashtun, Tom Tugendhat could not provide anything for that at all and, as far as the internet is concerned, it is not an expression in any language, or one that has been recorded in English anyway, which is why we decided to record it as we did. Thankfully, no other reference was made to it, so we did not have to refer in the report to the fact that he had spoken, or attempted to speak, in Pashtun. My understanding is that he was pretty pleasant about it whenever he came up, having received a note.

To bring it back to home turf. This is something that, in a way, is equally problematic, although it probably should not be.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

It is just so Mark Durkan not to say, "It is someone's birthday today", but, "This is a day on which a birthday has occurred." *[Laughter.]* It is almost poetic and just avoids sounding pompous. This is where things should not really be much of a challenge because it is very clear that he is wishing someone a happy birthday. I am looking to our Irish colleagues for confirmation. Am I right that the second part of it is, "I hope you survive the day"?

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

When I googled it, I found that there were many versions; similarly in Scottish Gaelic. Although it is a standard expression, when a reporter looks, they think, "It depends on the grammar", and they are not quite sure. It is fine with somebody like Angus Brendan MacNeil because Scottish Gaelic is his first, or possibly second, language. From my experience anyway, Mark Durkan's Irish is pretty accurate when it comes up — not that I would be in a position to judge. However, it is more problematic when Members are learning a language — Owain will speak a little more about this afterwards — and cannot provide an accurate report.

For example, this is Harriett Baldwin remembering something she was told in Scottish Gaelic as a girl. She is a bit giggly: it was a Friday. *[Laughter.]*

[Delegates watched a video clip.] [Laughter.]

That is all right, Harriett. *[Laughter.]* I remember reporting that. It was a few years ago now. That was easy enough to find because it is a lyric from a poem. When the first note went down, she did not know how on earth to put it.

This next video has been included for reasons of parity of esteem, but mostly because our Stormont colleagues miss him — *[Laughter.]*

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Something in the PowerPoint has not quite worked. Anyway, you have got the gist of it. What was the term we learnt yesterday? "Linguistic utterances are underdetermined." I wrote it down.

That brings me on to what we could term "native" or "indigenous" languages of Britain and Ireland, principally Welsh, Irish, Scottish Gaelic or Scots, Ulster Scots, and Cornish — I do not think that I have left anything out there. In the UK today, about 500,000 people speak Polish as a first language and about 250,000 each speak Urdu and Gujarati, but in the House of Commons we just do not report those languages very often, and they do not have the same political meaning. When we do encounter them, it tends to be a stock greeting, for example on a cultural or religious festival, where a Member wants to reach out to a particular community in his or her constituency, and it is not particularly problematic. It does not really have the same potentially loaded political meaning as when someone is speaking what I will term a native or indigenous language.

My focus for the next few minutes will be on Scots and Scottish dialect. We do not really have a problem with reporting this, but we do have a problem with how our reporting of it is perceived, because it is being incrementally politicised. In a way, there really is nothing we can do about that. We could argue that it is not politicians who are going to make a political point of it, but the media. We cannot avoid that, and if we are confident in what we do and what we produce, we should not let it alter how we report. However, if BIPRA is not an opportunity for a bit of introspection and self-indulgence, I do not know when is. [Laughter.] We get an awful lot of this in the House of Commons. Members often say that they have spoken Scots, but in reality we very rarely hear "Scots proper", which is its own language, spoken in the House. Far more frequently we get English peppered with Scots vocabulary. Now, we do not want to put ourselves in the position of having to draw that distinction, because drawing a distinction between what is a dialect and what is a language is very subjective. But for the most part we get Scots vocabulary, rather than Scots.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

One of the problems with those sort of utterances is that reporters are increasingly reluctant to send notes to Members about Scots and Scots expression. "Mibbes aye, mibbes naw": everyone knows what it means, but how are we going to spell it? For example, we could not find "mibbes" in the Chambers Scots Dictionary — we have authoritative and recognised resources, of course. One of the reasons is the concern that Members might share our notes on social media in order to make a political point. Here is an example:

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

This is an example where you really do not want to take a risk, in case it is completely the wrong word. The reporter did exactly what we have always been

trained to do and what is the sensible thing, which is to send down a note. They did not specify the word; they were very careful to leave it blank in case it was the wrong word and could be mocked, as had happened in the past. The Member concerned decided to tweet it, and it was a slow news day. Do you all remember the 'What the Papers Say' programme? A format of it survives on Radio Four. These are some of the headlines that this generated that evening and the next day.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Some of you might have noticed that I snuck in a headline from a previous occasion when a Member tweeted one of our notes. On that occasion, Lorraine Sutherland, our previous Editor, got about seven minutes on the 'Today' programme the next day to discuss it. It worked out OK, but it was quite embarrassing. It is now just an apocryphal tale that "big fairies" was in Hansard, even though it was not. Similarly, "mince" went into Hansard, but the apocryphal tale that will be told is that we made up some totally different word or thought that it was ancient Greek or something.

Something that it might be worth exploring a little and unpicking — again, this is slightly self-indulgent — is why mocking what we do seems so irresistible to the press, and why there is such comedic potential behind the idea that what is ordinarily seen as an unflappable, reliable organisation can be totally stumped. I mean, we have never heard accents from outside the home counties and they are completely baffling to most of us, obviously. *[Laughter.]* I have produced a little video of what I think are the images of Hansard reporters being propagated when the press talk about "Hansard clerks baffled by Scottish term."

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

It is all very funny, but it's worth bearing in mind that many people were really upset about this. It was horrible. When you send a note like that, it is sent in confidence. It is supposed to be private.

Quite apart from the comedic aspect, which is quite an easy cheap shot, perhaps there is something broader going on. Perhaps there is a narrative being articulated that Scottish Members are not understood in Westminster, and the risk is that we end up being brought into that narrative, falsely. It threatens not only our reputation for accuracy, but perhaps also our record of strict impartiality.

I mentioned at the start that we were updating our editorial guidance. I do not think that how we have reported these things needs much improvement, but reporters' confidence has been shaken up a little, and it is never a bad thing to review how we report. For me, the first port of call was Bronwyn Brady at the Scottish Parliament, who has been extraordinarily generous with her time and guidance, because these challenges are not unique to Westminster. She shared some embarrassing tweets as well that were not deserved, although she admitted that they do not have the same slightly toxic quality. We discussed breaking it down to typology, for example this is a quote in Scots, this is a quote in dialect, this is reported speech or this is how you do this, just to improve people's confidence, because they are all difficult editorial judgements to make. For example, how do we reflect a sudden, deliberate intention to speak with a heavy accent, which Bronwyn refers to as a shift in register, because there is nothing more patronising than reporting someone in a really heavy accent whenever they do not want to be reported like that. Also, are we privileging Scots and Scottish dialect above other dialects across the UK if we are going to report all the "cannaes" and "dinnaes" and put in contractions where we would not ordinarily put them? Is it easy then to defend not doing the same for Lancashire dialect or if someone wants to reply in Cumbric? It is very difficult because it can look very patronising. Is there a risk that the report will read like DH Laurence?

I think it is worth unpicking why we can sometimes get upset when these examples are reported in the media. We have this unique relationship with Members, and it can be surprisingly intense. There are Members of Parliament whose names and biographical details were familiar to me long before they were returned to Westminster, because we were researching them beforehand. I remember reporting their maiden speech, so I know all of these details, and I remember when they almost cried on the Floor of the House while talking about a constituency case. You get to know someone, but it is completely one-sided, in so far as, if they think anything about what we do — and it is generally positive, — it is a vague sense that this just happens efficiently, but they rarely think that there are individuals behind it, with something very personal invested in their craft. Except, of course, there is that one moment when, simply for cheap, comedic effect, they turn round and slap you publicly. I do not think we can do very much about it, or that we should get too worried about it. It is just something to be aware of because — at the risk of sounding like the counsellor at BIPRA camp — sometimes you are going to feel strong emotions, and that is ok. *[Laughter.]* A lot of people were really surprised by this, so I think it is worth exploring and discussing.

Incidentally, Alex Salmond recently mentioned Hansard and how we report Scots in a documentary on BBC Northern Ireland — anyone can pick it up; I saw it on iPlayer. He is always very pleasant and he certainly knows what we do and what our procedures are. I was quite disappointed by this interview. This is Tim McGarry, who did a series in Ulster Scots last year.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

I will finish, because we do not have very much time, and I need to hand over to Owain to talk about Welsh. I focused a little bit too much on the Scots dialect. I was thinking about asking for informal offers of assistance or contacts across all our organisations for all languages. Richard, you speak Spanish — I have just volunteered you for this. We have, across all our organisations, people who have a specialist language or even just specialist knowledge of particular things, which can be useful.

In my more fanciful and romantic thinking about this, I was imagining the Society of the Crossed Keys from Wes Anderson's 'The Grand Budapest Hotel' — the secret society of unflappable concierge across early 20th century Europe who could secure absolutely anything. I was going to play you a clip of that, but we can just think, "I know someone who can do that. They work here, and I am going to send them an email". There would be no obligations, but it might be useful to explore a little bit how we could pool our resources for these things. I am not suggesting that I am going to start lobbing 20 emails a week in the direction of the Scottish Parliament for verification.

Here are our contact details. Please have a word with us later on; it would be useful. Hopefully, we will have a few moments at the end for some questions. I will quickly pass over to Owain, who will talk about Welsh in the House of Commons.

Owain Wilkins (House of Commons): Thanks, Keith. Bore da, bawb. Good morning, everyone. I am Owain Wilkins, a senior reporter for Hansard in the House of Commons. I will talk about how the use of the Welsh language in the House of Commons has developed and grown over the latter part of the 20th century and in recent years, how we at Hansard approach reporting the language and, finally, the challenges ahead for us as an organisation, as its usage seems likely to grow even more in the months and years ahead, especially in the Welsh Grand Committee.

I should say at the outset that, as Keith alluded to, we are fully aware that there are delegates present who are experts in reporting and translating languages other than English. So please feel free to give us any suggestions or kind criticism that you might have later on today.

Welsh is one of the oldest living languages in Europe, and it is certainly the oldest living language in the UK. According to the 2011 census, there are 562,000 people, which is about a fifth of the population of Wales, who speak Welsh. Despite that

rich, historical lineage and its relative health as a minority language, the language is not, I think it is fair to say, well known beyond those who use it or who come into contact with it.

Many Welsh speakers will tell you of the innumerable times they have been asked, "Is it really a language?". Well, it is a language, and I think a lot of my Hansard colleagues in London will be able to attest to that. It has its own alphabet, vocabulary and grammatical rules. I would like to start with a short clip that I think exemplifies the difficulties that people have to grapple with when it comes to the Welsh language. We are having a bit of technical difficulty — the video is a bit jumpy — but I hope that you will get the gist of what is going on.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

That is John Redwood, former Secretary of State for Wales attempting to sing the Welsh national anthem at the 1993 Welsh Conservative Party conference.

In the House of Commons, several Welsh MPs enjoy displaying their knowledge of the language and its associated culture. One of the main culprits is this gentleman, Paul Flynn, who is the Member for Newport West. This clip is from a debate on Welsh affairs from March 2015.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Mr Flynn said two things at the end of that clip that I think are particularly interesting. The first is that there are now Hansard reporters who are proficient in Welsh, and that is perfectly true. We have two full-time members of staff who are proficient in the Welsh language — Bran Jones, who some of you may have met and who is in Belfast but not attending the conference — and me. Whenever Welsh is used by a Member in the main Chamber, Westminster Hall or in Committee, we are called upon by colleagues to decipher what has been said and to transcribe it.

In this case, it was actually pretty straightforward. Mr Flynn was reciting lines from a couple of poems, "Nant y Mynydd", literally translated as "Mountain Stream" by the 19th century poet Ceiriog, and "Argoed", which is an area in north Wales and is also the title of a poem by the 20th century poet T Gwynn Jones. Both of those are easily searchable on Google and they were duly reported.

Bran and I also contribute towards Hansard's "Handy Hints" document, which is a recent innovation. It has all sorts of useful information for staff on various points of grammar and other languages, including Welsh. We have contributed information on common stock phrases used by Members and their phonetic pronunciation.

These are just some basic stock phrases that Members will use, and we put the phonetics in, which makes them look like Icelandic or something:

Diolch, Mr Llefarydd
[Dee-ol'ch, Mr Hlev-ar-ith]
Thank you, Mr Speaker

Penblwydd hapus
[Pen-blue-ith-hap-iss]
Happy birthday

Blwyddyn newydd dda
[Bloo-thin-neh-widh thah]
Happy new year

We also have a section on Welsh letters and their pronunciation. As I said earlier, the language has its own alphabet so there are separate letters. That proves to be very tricky. Incidentally, the technical term for the letter "ll" is "voiceless alveolar lateral fricative". Those are contained in the "Handy Hints" document. We try to alleviate a lot of those for our colleagues, but as ever with all things Hansard, the practicalities of reporting are rarely straightforward.

That brings me to the second noteworthy thing that Mr Flynn said, which was that we do not have problems now. That is contradicted somewhat by this next clip. I would like our colleagues in the Welsh Assembly to pay particular attention to this, because I am hoping that their reaction will persuade you all of the sheer horror on show.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

That is a debate on energy network charges. What do you think he is saying? He is talking about the football. He had a translation to hand, which was useful but it bore very little relation to what he actually said. I will just play that for you.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

“It says: ‘Thank you very much, Mrs Main. In a week when Wales has done the whole UK proud, no debate should fail to celebrate the genius of the Welsh people, especially if they go on to beat the French or the Germans in the final.’”

He did not say that, did he? *[Laughter.]* Wales had beaten Belgium in the quarter-finals of the European Championships, a few days earlier. They also beat some other team, but we will not talk about that. *[Laughter.]*

This is how it appeared in the book:

“Diolch yn fawr, Mrs Main. Yn yr wythnos lle mae Cymru wedi gwneud Prydain mor falch, ni ddyllir y ddadl atal dathlu athrylith y bobol Gymraeg, yn enwedig os fyddent yn mynd ymlaen i guro’r Ffrancwyr neu’r Almaenwyr yn y ffeinal.”

“Thank you very much, Mrs Main. In a week when Wales has done the whole UK proud, no debate should fail to celebrate the genius of the Welsh people, especially if they go on to beat the French or the Germans in the final.”—[Official Report, 5 July 2016; Vol. 612, cc.269-70WH.]

Substantial editing work had to be done on the Welsh that Mr Gardiner had spoken. This example from Barry Gardiner shows that, first, just because House of Commons Hansard now has reporters who are proficient in Welsh, it does not necessarily mean that we are going to understand what Members are saying. Secondly, it is not just Welsh MPs that we can expect to speak Welsh. Thirdly, as with English, the standard of Welsh spoken is in no way guaranteed to be of high quality. The Member could be a first-language Welsh speaker and we calculate that 10 of Wales’s 40 MPs are first-language Welsh speakers. They could be Welsh learners, like Paul Flynn, who is actually quite competent, and he is one of five that we calculate; or they could be someone like Barry Gardiner — *[Laughter.]* — and that means a little extra work for the Welsh-speaking reporter.

I move on to the rules that govern the use of the Welsh language in the House of Commons. This is what Erskine May has to say about it:

“Speeches must be made in English, but quotation in another language has been allowed on occasion, though a translation should be provided. The House resolved on 5 June 1996 that, ‘whilst English is and should remain the language of this House, the use of Welsh be permitted in parliamentary proceedings held in Wales, subject to the conditions set out in the Third Report from the Select Committee on Procedure’. In 2001 the House agreed to that Committee’s further recommendation that witnesses before select committees at

Westminster should be able to give evidence in Welsh. The Welsh Affairs Committee took evidence in Welsh at Westminster for the first time on 9 April 2003.” (pp.429-30.)

So, on that first point, thankfully, Barry Gardiner provided a translation. English is the language of the House of Commons so, if Members speak in another language, they have to follow it up with a translation, and that was made available. Erskine May also notes the use of Welsh in parliamentary proceedings held in Wales and in evidence to Select Committees, including the Welsh Affairs Committee at Westminster. I am going to concentrate on the Welsh Grand Committee, primarily because recent developments suggest there will be challenges ahead for us in reporting Welsh language contributions.

Before that, I will just quickly take you through some significant events with regard to the use of the Welsh language in the House of Commons. The first is in 1966. This is Gwynfor Evans. He was the newly elected, first-ever Plaid Cymru Welsh nationalist MP. Having just taken the oath, after winning the Carmarthen by-election he raised a point of order, asking whether he could take the oath in Welsh. That request was declined and, in declining it, the then Speaker, Horace King, prayed in aid St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

"Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?"

He also had some more practical concerns, and those related to Hansard. Again, we can see the way in which Hansard is dragged into these arguments about language. Obviously, that was back in the day, when there were no Welsh speakers at Hansard.

We jump to 1974, when eight years had passed after that point of order. MPs were allowed to take the oath of allegiance in Welsh for the first time. By that time, there were three Plaid Cymru Members of Parliament, so obviously more pressure was being brought to bear.

In 1988, our friend Paul Flynn tabled an early day motion, asking for permission for the proceedings of the Welsh Grand Committee to be held in Welsh, using simultaneous translation.

In 1996 there was probably the most significant development when it came to the Welsh Grand Committee. It agreed this motion without a division after the debate. Interestingly, the then editor of Hansard, Ian Church, and our previous editor Lorraine Sutherland, gave evidence to the Procedure Committee's inquiry on this. The conditions mentioned in the penultimate line include: facilities for simultaneous translation must be made available. Members must give notice to the Chairman that they want to speak in Welsh. Members should not switch from one language to another during a speech, although that is no longer adhered to. Direct communications between Members and the Chair should be in English.

Finally, in 1997, there occurred the first sitting of the Welsh Grand Committee where simultaneous translation facilities were used. That was in Mold.

Interestingly, I was told by Bran last night that the sitting was actually delayed by a bomb scare. I have no idea whether that had anything to do with the Welsh Grand Committee sitting in Mold. I suspect not.

I will just briefly go over the current practice for reporting the Welsh language in the Welsh Grand Committee. In case you do not know, the Welsh Grand Committee consists of the 40 Welsh MPs and currently up to 5 others. It debates issues relevant to Wales, such as the effects on Wales of the Government's programme announced in the Queen's speech. The current practice is that a simultaneous English-language translation is made available to the non-Welsh speaking Members of the Committee. So there are headphones available and there is a person in the corner translating simultaneously. That is also used by Hansard reporters to compile the official report. So reporters transcribe the simultaneous English translation and then Bran and I read the copy while listening to the original Welsh speech, correcting any obvious errors made by the translator. As I said, the language of the House and, therefore, the report is English, so there is no report made available in the language of delivery. That approach is manageable with two of us, because parliamentary reporters have transcribed the bulk of the English-language report before Brian and I look over it. We do not, however, have a systemic approach to producing the report. It very much depends on the availability of all two of our Welsh-speaking staff.

The next slide shows recent developments, and I think that the challenges will become evident as I go through them. They suggest that our resources will be stretched in the months and years ahead. In the past few years, there have been calls from across the political spectrum for the use of the Welsh language to be permitted at sittings of the Welsh Grand Committee in Westminster and not just outside. In 2014, Glyn Davies, Tory MP for Montgomeryshire asked the then deputy leader of the House Tom Brake what steps were being taken to promote the use of the Welsh language in the House's business. Plaid Cymru MP Jonathan Edwards

has called for Welsh to be recognised as an official language of Parliament, so not just the Welsh Grand Committee but Parliament. The Labour MP Susan Elan Jones started off her winding-up speech at the most recent meeting of the Welsh Grand Committee with:

“Wrth orffen, hoffwn fynegi fy siom mai Saesneg yw’r unig iaith a ganiatawyd yn y Pwyllgor yma heddiw. In finishing, I would like to express my disappointment that English is still the only language permissible in this Committee.”—[Official Report, Welsh Grand Committee, 3 February 2016; c.68.]

In June this year, Chris Grayling, the then Leader of the House resisted calls for Welsh to be used in sittings of the Welsh Grand Committee at Westminster. However, given the pressure that has been brought to bear and how historically the House has eventually relented to calls for the greater use of Welsh, we think that it is pretty safe to say that it is heading our way.

The more significant increase in the workload of our Welsh-speaking staff, however, comes from the increasing number of calls for a Welsh language Official Report. Those calls were made in that debate on the 1996 motion that I showed you from Plaid Cymru. The next slide shows a contribution by Hywel Williams when the Welsh Grand Committee sat in Wrexham in October 2011:

“On a point of order, Mr Havard. If I am fortunate enough to catch your eye in this meeting, I wish to speak in Welsh. I want to ask about the official record, which I understand will be a record of the translation, rather than of the original Welsh. Is there any facility for my speech to appear in its original Welsh, as is done in the Welsh Assembly? Readers could then compare texts. That takes care of any worries that people may have about mistranslation or inaccuracies, which naturally creep in when translation is simultaneous. No offence to the translator, of course, who is a wonderful man.”—[Official Report, Welsh Grand Committee, 20 October 2011; c.14.]

That was the last time that the Welsh Grand Committee sat outside Westminster. That is one of the challenges with simultaneous translation. English is the language of the report, but can it really be said that it is an accurate report of what was said? I do not think so, because it was not the language in which it was delivered. Can we say that we are accurately reporting what speakers say? I do not think that we can. I think that, in the past, Paul Hadlow has had experience of Members saying that that is not what they said when they were speaking Welsh and the report was in English. So, there are issues there.

The next slide shows another development that I think will eventually come our way, and we do not want Hansard to be seen as an obstacle to its introduction. We are considering how we would be able to deliver a report of speeches that are made in Welsh by members of the Grand Committee.

To give you a sense of the added workload for Welsh-speaking staff, a 30-minute speech in Welsh, such as that made by Hywel Williams during the 2011 sitting, would involve six additional five-minute turns. So, in other words, that is an extra six hours work for the two Welsh-speaking reporters. I think that we can also expect an increase in the number of Welsh-language contributions from other members with varying quality. That means us having to spend more time, not only checking the translation against delivery but transcribing the original Welsh-language speech.

I will finish with three basic challenges in addition to that of simultaneous translation. The first of those is Welsh language guidelines. We have plenty of editorial and style guidelines when it comes to reporting in English but nothing in Welsh. I know that the Official Report of the Welsh Assembly has guidelines on recommended Welsh usage. I have printed some of those off, but I think that they are more up to date now. We would be grateful for a chat with you about that.

Meinir Gooch (National Assembly for Wales): I will send them to you.

Owain Wilkins: OK. Thanks. That would be a very useful foundation.

The second challenge is staff capacity, which is probably the most obvious one. We have two full-time members of staff who are proficient in Welsh, and we have also recently recruited a Welsh-speaking minimum hours reporter, Helen Jones, who happens to be a professional translator, so that is very handy. She actually helped to transcribe the Barry Gardiner quote that I showed you earlier. The problem is that minimum hours reporters are contracted to work only on Tuesdays and there is no guarantee when the Welsh Grand Committee will sit. Another option would be to outsource the transcription of Welsh-language speeches.

The final challenge is production deadlines. Given the added workload, we might consider extending our publication deadline by at least one day. Another option might be to produce the English language report as per the usual deadline, which is the following day, and produce a full report, complete with Welsh language transcription one or two days later.

That is it from me. I will hand over to Rob, but I thought that I would finish where we started and just enjoy.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Rob Sutherland (British Columbia): First of all, I thank Owain and Keith for allowing me to tag these comments on to their excellent presentation. I would like to talk a bit about how issues around reporting languages have arisen in British Columbia. I will review with you a ruling by our Speaker that dates from 1997 and has been updated on a couple of occasions.

I will start by saying that many of you are probably familiar with the fact that Canada is officially a bilingual country. Canadian citizens can expect services in French or English from their federal government or national Parliament. That does not apply across the board though to provincial jurisdictions. Each provincial jurisdiction has different ways of approaching language issues. New Brunswick and Manitoba, for example, have constitutional requirements to provide transcriptions and services in English and French. Ontario has chosen to provide services in English and French. They accommodate both official languages in their transcript. Quebec has famously legislated French language as the language of business and government services in the province of Quebec.

As you move further to the west, it tends to be a very solidly English language jurisdiction. British Columbia is an English language only jurisdiction. English is the language of the BC Legislative Assembly, although information on government services is provided in any number of languages to assist individuals to navigate government programmes and legal services. So, French, in that respect, is given no greater status than Punjabi, Cantonese, Mandarin, Italian or Portuguese. If there is a need to provide documentation for people applying for social services in a multitude of languages, those services are provided, but there is no special treatment given to the French language in British Columbia. In fact, the French speaking community in British Columbia is relatively small. It is certainly smaller than the community of people whose first language is Punjabi, for example, or Cantonese.

So, as I said, the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia established that English is the language for debate. Having said that, BC MLAs like to dust off their high school French every once in a while and toss out a few lines of rudimentary French in the midst of debate. It is not often that they will contribute to

debate in a language other than English, but they like to show their vast knowledge of other languages.

I will just go through the first couple of paragraphs of the Standing Orders. I am not sure whether you can read it on the screen, but the second and third are the very important parts. Standing Order 120 charges the Speaker with supervising the reporting and transcribing of the debates of the House, but honourable Members will appreciate that we do not have simultaneous interpretation facilities. That is a nice little reminder to our Members of the limitations of Hansard services. The House, therefore, requires some rules to guide those Members who wish to acknowledge their ethnic backgrounds and to celebrate the multicultural diversity of our province. That really is the context in which Members of the BC Legislative Assembly are making their contributions in a foreign language. They are either celebrating their own ethnic backgrounds or are reaching out to the multicultural communities in their constituencies.

All of that seems to be fairly common sense. Why would this be problematic? If they say something in another language, we can google as well as anyone and find the stock phrases that they are likely to be using to put into the transcript. We have been doing that for a very long time. In the early 1990s, when we seemed to have an increase in that type of use of foreign languages, we put Dutch, German, Italian and Punjabi into the transcript, and it did not seem to be very problematic. They were fairly short phrases and were things that we could find. I remember reaching out to the publisher of the Vancouver 'Indo-Canadian Times' newspaper to get the Punjabi for a couple of lines that were recorded in the House. That took about a week, so it was not a very effective way to get text transcribed.

Why do we need an elaborate set of rules for this type of intervention? The Speaker's ruling, which I will go onto, arose from a specific incident in the House in March 1997 involving Jenny Kwan, a Back-Bench Government member, was moving a Throne Speech debate. She was the first person of Chinese/Canadian origin to be elected to the BC legislative Assembly, and she wanted to conclude her speech with a little bit of Cantonese. She gave notice to the Speaker that she was going to do that and spoke for just over four minutes in Cantonese, summarising the main themes of her contribution in the Throne Speech debate. We reported that with the simple editorial line, "Cantonese was spoken."

As she transferred from Cantonese back to English to wrap-up, an opposition Back-Bencher called something across the aisle. It was some sort of heckle, which is standard practice in the BC legislative Assembly. The MLA was Ted Nebbeling, and, as one journalist commented, given his reputation, it was safe to assume that what he said was rude. Ms Kwan was oblivious to the remark and sat down. However, in

the corridors outside, a member of the Cabinet who had heard the remark and wondered what was going on talked to Jenny Kwan about it and told her that his feeling was that Mr Nebbeling was mocking or mimicking her Cantonese accent. That erupted into a political issue outside the House. There were allegations of racist behaviour on the part of Mr Nebbeling, and Ms Kwan held a tearful press conference and managed, even though she had not heard the comment, retroactive indignation. She accused Mr Nebbeling of attacking the entire Chinese community.

Jenny Kwan is a political animal: she was elected at a very young age to the BC legislative Assembly in 1996. She has moved on from BC politics and is now an MP for East Vancouver in the federal Parliament. She is a hardened political veteran, and there was a sense, which was reported in the media, that she was putting on a bit of a show and was trying to get as much mileage out of the incident as she possibly could. That is not to say that there were not some very deep feelings on the part of Ms Kwan, but she was taking advantage of the situation.

For his part, Mr Nebbeling made the mistake of denying at first that he had said anything at all. Apparently, he was unaware of the recording equipment in the Chamber, even though there are microphones throughout the Chamber. He then protested that he knew nothing of Cantonese. As they say in sport, "Upon video review", he acknowledged that he had said a phrase in Cantonese that he memorised from some time in his past. The following Thursday, he rose in the House to apologise. The press were reporting that, and there was much interest in the Speaker's office as to what had taken place. Mr Nebbeling rose and said:

"It was reported in the morning paper that during the moving of the throne speech by the member for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant I mimicked the member's accent. Mr. Speaker, this is not accurate. During the course of the member's speech I called out the Cantonese phrase gong dai wa, which is clearly audible on the videotapes. In Cantonese, the phrase gong dai wa, literally translated, means "speak a big statement." It is, however, usually spoken in the sense of "tell a big lie." That phrase in any language is unparliamentary, and I hereby withdraw the remark."

He then went on to apologise to Ms Kwan. The Speaker's ruling that you see here came out of that controversy. It speaks to some of the things we have already heard from Keith and Owain. How do you know what a member is saying when they are speaking a language? Are members breaching parliamentary procedure or practice or Parliamentary language when they speak in a language that no one else can understand?

The guidelines that members have is that no presentation or introduction shall be made in a language other than English unless the script, and English translation thereof, has been supplied to the speaker at least one hour in advance. So whoever wants to speak in a foreign language for five minutes they are required to give notice, to give the translation. It is given to Rhea in Hansard, and then we can put into the transcript: what the member says they have said and their translation of that. We put an editorial line in that absolves us of responsibility.

This is a two-minute spacing on the **[inaudible]** Mr Bolton makes a statement, and he switches into French at this part of the speech. He has provided us with this translation of this French text. We have simply said, "French text and translation supplied by M Bolton". In that way we are saying we do not take responsibility for how this has been presented.

I will show you a couple of final examples that occurred this year that are a little more interesting. This is the first nation's language, and it is a prayer, which is spoken at the beginning of the opening of the House. We receive the text, and we receive the translation, and I have no idea how that has any bearing on this. One of the few things that we do is determine what language is actually being spoken. We actually do a fair amount of work to make sure that we have got the name of the language correct. Lets say Congress is saying it is someone from the Gitxsan, well what language do the Gitxsan speak? So we have to do a bit of work in determining this.

A similar one happened again this year. This is the Inuktitut language. I feel pretty good that we are able to ring the piece at all in the transcribing. When we are unable to present the text in the language in which it was spoken we feel that we failed in some way. It gets you a feeling that you really did not achieve something. In this case, what was going on this day was that the number of parks in British Colombia were being reassigned aboriginal names. So Okanagan Falls Park was being renamed — I am not even going to try to pronounce it — and it is now a name unpronounceable in the English language. Imagine if that been replaced with first nation's language spoken. It is like the denial of the very thing the legislation is trying to bring across. We are trying to recover some of these languages, we are trying to recover some of this native culture and for Hansard to then say, "well it was not English", that would have been quite disrespectful. I think this is the direction that we are going to. To what extent can we provide the type of respect that particularly these first nations deserve, and reproduce that in the transcript. We do put a fair amount of effort into trying to reproduce first nation languages when we come across it.

Like my colleagues in the House of Commons, we have research and reference with all these standard phrases, and stock greetings and that sort of thing. When we

hear and recognise them, we get them into the transcript as best we can. We try to avoid those generic, "this language was spoken", as much as possible.

SESSION EIGHT: PUBLIC RECORDS: THEIR PRODUCTION, STORAGE AND USAGE

Meinir Gooch: Hello, everyone. I hope that you enjoyed your scones and coffee. We are now back in session. For those of you who do not know me, I am Meinir from the National Assembly for Wales and I am chairing this session. We will hear from the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) this morning. We will start with Jayne Hutchinson, who will do the first part of the presentation on records and record-keeping. Carla Shields, who is sitting next to her, will do the second part. She is from the digital preservation team. She tells me that it is about digital preservation of all the new stuff and all the good stuff. It is not the ancient stuff but all the things that are around that we are all producing in digital format only. They are preserving that for the future, although she says that we are not supposed to blame her if it goes wrong in the future. Last but not least is Janet Hancock, who will be demonstrating what is available on the website now for all sorts of folks to use, including us. It is over to them.

Jayne Hutchinson (PRONI): Morning, everybody. My name is Jayne Hutchinson and I work in records management, cataloguing and access. I will give you a very brief overview of PRONI, including who we are and why we are here, and give you an overview of the work of records management, cataloguing and access. I cannot promise that you will leave this session much the wiser but you might be better informed. We will see how that goes. I have to fess up: I am using new presentation software this morning, so I warn you that it may well fail, but here we go.

This is our fantastic building that we are sitting in at the moment. We are very proud of it. I want to talk briefly about how we came to be here. We have an amazing piece of legislation called the Public Records Act, and the history of that and why we have it really comes from separate forms of government administration and legislative provision that apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland. This is reflected in the history of our *[inaudible]* in these areas, where responsibility for public records developed along different lines to that in England and Wales, where the role and functions of the Public Record Office and the deputy keeper were developed by a series of legislative Acts commencing in the mid-19th century.

In 1867, the Public Record Office of Ireland was opened in a building to the rear of the Four Courts in Dublin. Many precious, unique and irreplaceable manuscripts were placed there for safekeeping, but, sadly, in June 1922, during the period of civil disturbance that followed the establishment of the Irish Free State, the Four Courts was destroyed by a fire that took all the records with it. This had repercussions for the new Northern Ireland Government, and one of the first Acts to be ratified was the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923, which established the role of deputy

keeper. He was answerable to the Minister of Finance as the keeper of the records. This role is now discharged by the Department for Communities. The Northern Ireland Government's first legal adviser, Sir Arthur Quekett, and the first deputy keeper of the records, Dr David Chart, produced this legislation, which has, by and large, stood the test of time in most important respects. Some of the terminology, like the use of the term "imperial records", may seem a bit odd to modern ears, but the fact of the matter is that what was a piece of robust and practical archive legislation in 1923 has, by and large, served us well ever since.

I will talk about PRONI itself. There are no local authority archive services in Northern Ireland, so PRONI functions as a national and regional archive depository. Among archival institutions in the UK, PRONI is unique because it has the remit to hold not only public records but records from private sources. This power derives directly from the 1923 Act. It is for this reason that PRONI holds such a wide variety of collections, notably from commerce, industry, churches and estates. PRONI works closely with public and private depositors to promote the best practice in records management; to determine what records are important; to ensure that records are created, retained and preserved; and to make it as easy as possible for users to access these records. I just threw that up because we get asked a lot, "What is your oldest document?" It is a papal bull that dates from 1219, which is sitting somewhere in our stores. If you prove your academic credentials, you can see it. *[Laughter.]*

This is a little bit about the section that I work in, which deals with these official and private sources. PRONI works in partnership with public-sector bodies, notably the Northern Ireland Departments, to produce retention and disposal schedules. Its work requires an understanding of the functions right down to the branch and division level, including how these functions are reflected in the records and how these records will be of interest or otherwise to future researchers. Retention and disposal schedules will define the minimum length of time that specific types of record have to be retained for before being reviewed, destroyed or transferred to PRONI. One of the major challenges identified in recent years has been the move towards digital ways of working and the challenges of preserving records that are digital. PRONI is engaging with the government Departments to lay down guidelines for the transfer of digital records and is working to address the changes needed to our catalogue of software systems. My colleague Carla will be telling you about that shortly.

One of the highlights of our year is coordinating the annual release of records. This is a thing that the press likes to make a nice big song and dance about: the release of sacred files that have been lying under a pile of dust for years and years until some hard-working journalist uncovers the truth of all these things that happened many years ago. The truth of it is that an awful lot of work goes on behind the

scenes to release documents that have come up under the 20-year rule. The annual release of selected official files continues against the background of greater public access through the Freedom of Information Act, and it is balanced against the need to protect personal information. Annually since 1976, official records held by PRONI that were 30 years old have been reviewed with a view to make them publicly available. In September 2011 that rule changed and files can now be made available after 20 years, and we now have two releases of files each year. Today, we have released files dating back to 1989; you can see from this slide the sort of things that those files cover. In December, we will be releasing files from 1990.

The process behind these releases involves referring the files back to the responsible authority, or their successors, that created them, and sometimes that can cause a little difficulty. However, the relevant authority conducts a sensitivity review, which involves a page-by page examination of the relevant records to make sure that nothing sensitive is released. Today, we have released 503 files that are completely open and available for examination by the public, 151 files in which there has been some blanking out and a further 78 files, the majority of which are individual prisoner files, will remain fully closed.

Blanking out and partial closure involves the removal of papers that have been deemed as exempt from the right to know under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI). Redaction is actually used to facilitate the release of as much information as possible, because without such redaction a file could contain sensitive information that would in fact prevent its release. Where a file has been fully closed, the reason is normally because of the application of section 40 of the FOI, which covers personal information.

I will now talk about two of our official collections, of which there are many, that provide a very rich source of information. The first is the collection of the files of the Cabinet Secretariat. Those files contain the papers relating to the Northern Ireland Cabinet's consideration of various things, including security and economic issues, political matters and relations with the British Government and the Irish Free State. Administrative support to the Cabinet was provided by the Secretariat, which was an integral part of the Department of Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. It is a vast collection, and covers so many subjects. Journalists love the collection. There are also records relating to individuals within the NI Government, particularly during its formative years. For example, we have the private papers of Sir Wilfred Spender, who was the first head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service during the period 1926 to 1944. Notably, we have Sir Wilfred's diaries, 24 volumes covering 1934 to 1944; they are available in hard copy and on microfilm.

PRONI's collections of private material, and our right to gather it make us very special. Earlier, I mentioned the role of the first Deputy Keeper of the Records, Dr David Chart, who had worked previously for the Public Record Office of Ireland. He had a very extensive knowledge of what that office held, including a familiarity with the records that were, sadly, destroyed in the big fire of 1922, and he was involved in the drafting of the 1923 Act. Dr Chart made sure that that Act included provision for PRONI to bring in documents other than those created by or for the Government. So, by approaching businesspeople, solicitors, politicians etc and particularly the aristocracy, he was able to compile a significant substitute record to replace some of the destroyed manuscripts. PRONI has since been able to continue to build on those fascinating and diverse collections that researchers now enjoy. The attached slide shows very broadly the sorts of things that we have, including collections on education, church registers, architecture, business registers and the big landed estates. Janet will talk more about some of those later on. This next slide shows some of new details of our collections relating to politicians and political parties.

I will now talk briefly about the Londonderry papers, which are very extensive and which include the family, estate and political papers of several generations and branches of the Stewart family as the Marquesses of Londonderry, whose family seat was at Mount Stewart in County Down. Highlights in this include the papers of the second Marquess, better known as Lord Castlereagh, who served as Foreign Secretary between 1812 and 1822 and who played such a prominent role at the Congress of Vienna. The next slide shows a picture of the seventh Marquess of Londonderry, whose papers are part of the collection. He was a Conservative MP from 1906 and, after the First World War, he was appointed as a Finance Minister to the Air Council in 1919. A year later he became the Under Secretary of State for Air, a post he relinquished on the setting up of the Northern Ireland Government in 1921. As leader of the Senate and Minister of Education between 1921 and 1926, he prepared and took through Parliament the controversial 1923 Education Act, which became known as the Londonderry Act. He was later appointed as Secretary of State for Air in Ramsey MacDonald's national Government in 1931 and he served briefly as Lord Privy Seal in Baldwin's Government in 1935. All of his political correspondence is in this building.

A slightly older character to tell you about is the second Earl of Caledon. We have the estate collection of the Alexander family who held the earldom, which was created in the 1780s. The second earl served as an MP in the Irish Parliament and he was then appointed as the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope after the reconquest by the British in 1806. He was also the owner of the notorious rotten borough of Old Sarum, which he purchased from Lord Camelford in 1803 for the exorbitant sum of £43,000 and which the enormous borough electorate of 11 people returned two Members of Parliament. The archive reflects Caledon's manoeuvrings to get himself more centrally onto the political stage. I think he thought that by owning the borough it would enable him to have Lord Liverpool in his pocket, but

things did not quite work out like that. It is an interesting archive reflecting the scheming of a landed Irish peer to climb the greasy pole of the Irish and British peerage. Caledon also operated in local politics. He was the First Lord Lieutenant of County Tyrone when the Lord Lieutenant system was extended here in 1831. His career is richly documented in the archives, and it is another example of the kind of treasures that we hold here.

Another major part of our work in the reference management cataloguing and access team (RMCAT) is enabling access to closed records. This can be across a number of archives and for a number of reasons. Mainly, it will be to serve the researcher of family history. If a person wants to find out about relatives who may have been in the workhouse, we hold the board of guardians collection for most of Northern Ireland, and for bits and pieces of the Republic now as well.

It is a rich archive and a fantastic resource but, again because of data protection, closure periods are enforced. You can be absolutely sure that the poor researcher will be looking for the one year that is just sitting closed, and we then have to help them to get access to that.

Also, because the board of guardians administered what was the precursor to the adoption system, we have people coming to us who are now in their seventies and eighties who would have been adopted in the 1920s and 1930s before formal adoption was set up. This is, perhaps, their only way to find out their own history.

We also have the service records of the Ulster Special Constabulary. From mainly a family history point of view, people wanting to prove the service of relatives in the Ulster Special Constabulary can apply to us to get a copy of their record. We also hold records of hospitals, the Courts Service and coroners' records. These are an important resource for people, especially for people researching the history of the Troubles and many of the deaths that occurred during that period. We hold the courts' and coroners' records for the time, and we are enabling access to those records, which are normally closed to the public.

We also handle requests from official bodies, so we are working to retrieve files for the Courts Service, the Police Ombudsman and the Youth Justice Agency. Those files were transferred here of cases that have, perhaps, been reactivated. We will work with those bodies to get them access to those files.

I apologise for that absolute gallop through the highlights of PRONI. It was a gallop but PRONI is justifiably proud of the vast range and depth of the archival assets that

we hold. They represent a major and unique contribution to the community in Northern Ireland, and beyond. If PRONI holds treasures, they are certainly not to be locked away from the public gaze or from public use. The focus now is very much on enabling access and meeting the challenges of the future.

Now might be a good point at which to pass over to my colleague Carla, who can tell you all about the challenges presented by digital.

Carla Shields (PRONI): I am going to talk about things digital and technological.

Jayne has given you an introduction to PRONI, who we are, what we do and why we do it. The work of the digital preservation team is focused towards looking at the future of records management in an increasingly digital world, so the background of my slide may seem a little odd. However, when putting together the presentation on Jayne's newfound lovely software, I came across this template called "Uncharted territory", which seemed a fitting way to start to describe the work of digital preservation. If any of my colleagues were here, I am sure they would agree with me.

A few years ago, the digital preservation project team was established. This is a multi-disciplinary team consisting of curatorial and IT staff, headed up by a project manager, which you can see there leading the way with his little flag. We started out with a mission to design and build a system to enable PRONI to access the store and, where possible, to find access to digital records. Surely a simple task, you would have thought, but no, it was far from it. We had a starting point of sorts on the journey. It is always good when you can align your work with that of NASA; our starting point was the open archival information system (OAIS) model, which originally derived from NASA and looking at space data systems. That is a very loose connection, but I will go with it anyway. The OAIS model was our starting point. It is a high-level reference model that describes the functions of a digital archive. It is a conceptual model that aims to set out the standard for the activities involved in preserving a digital archive. Unfortunately, it did not really tell us how to go about doing it, but it was a starting point.

We faced quite a lot of challenges, and some key ones, along the way. The first step was to look at existing solutions, or, as we found, the lack of them. Although there were several off-the-shelf products on the market, we did not find one to precisely fit the needs of PRONI as an archive and to meet the functions that we needed it to. PRONI was entering into that uncharted territory, and so, too, were other archival institutions and organisations. There are very little working examples of digital preservation systems or solutions in action for us to look at. It seemed as if we were

climbing an invisible mountain in a blizzard of snow, slightly blindly. Our starting point was to look at what was already there.

The other issue was technical obsolescence. You will have heard about the infamous digital black hole. It largely remains the primary fear with all things digital that records that we create now will become obsolete and unusable in the future. You know about the difficulty that you might face in accessing older documents that you created even just a few years back or migrating a presentation, for example, from one version of PowerPoint to a new version; you are going to lose certain elements of it along the way. That takes us on to accessibility. How do we ensure that our records remain accessible in future? Through processes such as bit-level preservation, we may be able to technically preserve a record, but unless it is accessible and you can use it, is it of any real value to you? Another aspect of our work is looking at preservation strategies, such as migration, where we are migrating one file format to a newer version of that file format, and emulation, which is the recreation of hardware in order to access certain programmes.

Volume and scale were and remain major challenges in records management. The sheer quantity of the material that all of us produce on a day-to-day basis is enormous. In the NICS, for example, the volume of our material in our own EDRM system is in excess of 20 million at the minute. Volume presents many challenges to us. It is also about the speed of change. Access and long-term preservation depend on the constant configuration of hardware, software and data. All are subject to continual change. As technology changes, it creates conditions for obsolescence. Not only will the documents you create be subject to obsolescence through that change; the system that we create now is also subject to that same change. That is why it is so important with digital records to take action now but that we are prepared to change along the way and be geared up for the process of continual change.

Enough of the challenges. We climbed to the top of that mountain, in a way, and came up with a solution. I will not go into the nitty-gritty of the system architecture because that might be extremely boring for you all; I will just do a quick high-level view of what our system entails. The preservation system is made up of four component parts. It is a mixture of bespoke systems that we have designed and built, and integration with our current systems. The first one is our quarantine system, which is the staging area for records that transfer to PRONI from non-trusted sources, by which we mean anything outside our government network. Once records move through our quarantine system, we move them towards our data preparation system. This involves a mixture of manual and automatic processes, all of which are geared towards preparing digital records for a permanent deposit in the archive itself.

We also have a repository, which is where our records and their associated metadata will be permanently stored. We will continue to monitor records in this environment through a process of integrity checking, continually monitoring checksums and various things like that to ensure that records remain authentic and that no change happens and that they are not subject to corruption or anything like that.

We also carried out work on our access system. In PRONI, we have CAM, which is our onsite catalogue, and, online, we have the eCatalogue, which is on our website. There are currently upgrades going on to our access systems so, unfortunately, you will not be able to view this in a live environment. This is a screenshot of our development system. Once it is operated, if you are in our reading rooms upstairs and use our CAM onsite system, this would be how you would view one of the official reports. Equally, if you are at home and online in our eCatalogue, you would be able access it too. It is as simple as that.

We acknowledge that this is PRONI's current solution. As I mentioned before, one of the key challenges is change and the speed at which things change. We hold our hands up and say that this is PRONI's current solution in place. There are no perfect solutions, and I think that that is just the very nature of digital preservation. It will be an active process that we are prepared to adapt and change along the way. As technology evolves, so will our systems. If you are back for another conference, we might be talking about system version 10 or something like that. It will evolve.

That brings us to another aspect of the work that we do in digital preservation. We thought that solving the problems with accessing digital records was not enough, so we wanted to start archiving the web too. Therefore, we have a web archive. We work in partnership with a supplier called the Internet Memory Foundation, which is based in Paris. Alongside Internet Memory, we aim to capture and preserve a selection of websites that are of historic and cultural importance relating to Northern Ireland. Largely, our remit is to capture government sites and public sector websites.

I will give you a brief overview of what this process involves. We have a process whereby we select various websites. We have devised a scoring matrix that looks at websites based on their informational or evidential value, and that is how we decide what we capture and when and the frequency at which we capture it. We then go through a process of seeding the URLs on a platform that we have called Archive the Net. Once we have selected what we are going to capture and where we are going to capture it, we then launch a web crawler, which crawls the seeded URLs and produces a snapshot of that website at that point in time. That process can take up to eight weeks. It is quite a lengthy process. Once that is finished, it then passes back to PRONI and we conduct a quality assurance exercise on it. As part of this

process, we will go through the websites, check links and various things like that. We will try to identify any issues and solve them through a process called patching, where we will rerun the crawler against various URLs.

We should point out that it is a snapshot of a website at a point in time and not a direct copy. They are bound by technical limitations such as the configuration of websites themselves. There are various things that technology is not equipped to capture at this point in time, but, as with digital preservation, as that technology evolves, we will be in a better position to capture more fully websites. Once it passes through that, we publish them on the web archive application, which you can get to on our PRONI website. You will see there the A to Z list. If you know directly what website you want to view, you can use the A to Z or use the keyword search functionality. I will use the example of the Northern Ireland Assembly website. In 2015, we have eight snapshots of it. If you are looking for the Hansard Official Report, you can go to the website, and you will be able to access the key versions. To round up our work on web archiving, we have some key statistics. I will not even hazard an attempt at what the first figure is, but it is an awful lot. That is how many bytes we have archived in the web archive at the minute. Currently, we capture around 140 different websites. Through our selection process, that will continue to evolve. We had over 1 million page views in 2015 and quite a lot more since.

That is us in digital preservation. Please check out our web archive or come back when all our records are online, or you can access them from home. I will pass you on to Janet.

Ms Janet Hancock (PRONI): Thank you. Thank you, Carla. I am acutely aware that I am the one person standing between the crowd and their lunch, so I will keep this brief.

I suppose that, sitting on the other side, I work in the public services of PRONI. On the flip side of preservation, collecting and acquisition, the real purpose is to archive and make that archival memory accessible to the public, stakeholders and business users within wider government.

PRONI is made up of three key elements. Jayne and Carla have covered a lot of our records management, cataloguing and access sections. That is basically about identifying material bringing it in, cataloguing it and working with access conditions to both open and closed material. The other element of our work is preservation. One of our key remits is protecting and preserving that material for future generations. We do not have time for a tour — I am aware that you are on a very tight time scale — but this is a picture of our stores. They are very brightly coloured. PRONI is built

on a portcullis idea, in that our storage runs right up the central column of the building and the rest of the building is built around that. Safety and security are part of the building's very design.

We also have a conservation section, which largely works along the lines of preventative conservation rather than it being invasive. As you can see, when archival material is preserved, it is visible conservation. You can clearly see what is the modern add on so we do not detract from or obscure the value of the original document, or, as in the case of the slide, a seal.

The uninitiated have a view of archives that is about dusty old repositories with older people shuffling around and opening dusty books. To a degree, our old premises were like that. The next slide shows our main search room, and, as you can see, it looks nothing like that old-fashioned library view.

We have heard about cataloguing and digital cataloguing. We put a large proportion of our catalogue on to an electronic catalogue a number of years ago. When you come into PRONI and register as a visitor, you get your unique visitor number and visitor card and that connects into our electronic ordering system. We have banks of Internet machines and banks of electronic ordering machines in our search room. Our original material is presented in our reading room.

We in the public services side do a lot of work with groups. The next slide shows a group who were here for a creative writing workshop. They were working with a couple of local poets and were using some material related to 1916 to do some creative writing and poetry. That gives an example of the breadth of the uses of that sort of archival material. It is not just for historians; it is for the public. We are the Public Record Office and a big part of public services remit is to get people using the record, not only for history but for any interest that they might have and to spark that creativity as well.

We moved to the Titanic Quarter in March 2011. It has been quite a significant relocation process for us, not only because this is a bespoke archive, but also because we are in the heart of Titanic Quarter; and, as you will see when you do the tour, this would really be classed as an up-and-coming area of Belfast. The Titanic Belfast building is next door. When we moved in, there were Citibank, the Arc apartments and basically a building site. In the years since, being in this community beside Titanic Belfast has been really significant for us.

If anybody is a 'Game of Thrones' fan, the filming studios are just down the road. I see some people looking excited. You can see the studios, although you will not have time to go in, unfortunately. But come back. You can do sightseeing tours of 'Game of Thrones' locations around here and more widely across Northern Ireland.

We have welcomed about 20,000 visitors over the door. However, I will focus mainly on how people can get access. One of the big elements to that is what people can do and access online. We have had approximately 13.5 million page views of our web content, largely reflective of the interest in the material and of the wider Irish diaspora. Just under 50% — about 45% — of page views come from overseas visitors.

The large majority of visitors to PRONI are interested in family and local history; however, I will give a few examples to show that what we have has much more international interest also. We do a lot of work with partners to deliver this public service. We work a lot in the wider departmental family with libraries, national museums, as well as with the creative industries to make things available online and in other ways.

I thought it was worth flagging up the media exposure that we have had. A big chunk of that has come with the new building. This is a nice place; people want to come in. It is bright and airy. It is the antithesis of our previous premises in Balmoral Avenue. They were dark and dingy and uninviting. This building is bright, open and airy, and we want to encourage people to come in. As a result, we have had quite a lot of media interest in the archives. We have appeared in two episodes of 'Who Do You Think You Are?' to date. We have also had film crews in to do specific documentaries on a wide range of things, including Viscount Castlereagh.

We also try to get involved in the local community. We participate in the local EastSide festival and in festivals in west Belfast. We are really moving towards widening out access to archives in the local community, particularly amongst communities that would not traditionally see themselves as archive users. We are trying to get rid of that barrier. Traditionally, it was thought you had to be a historian or have a university degree. You do not. You just come in and view, and it is public access — free to use.

Jayne mentioned our oldest document. This is a little picture of our papal bull from 1219 from the Abercorn collection. This was not intentional, but the very few things that I picked come mostly from our landed estates records. I hope that they give you a flavour of the significance of the landed estates records through their political and international touches. The Abercorn family had strong connections with Scotland,

and this relates to Scotland rather than to Northern Ireland. There is a little letter there; some of you might have seen the clip.

Another archive that Jayne mentioned is the Londonderry papers. That archive was purchased by PRONI recently largely due to its local and international significance. One letter reads:

"Please accept my warmest thanks for sending the pictures and the charming collections of songs... You and your husband sympathise with my efforts to bring about genuine peace...",

from none other than Mr Hitler. There are things that you might not expect to find in a local archive in Northern Ireland, which speak to the international flavour of some of our material.

We also have a lot of missionary collections. Amy Carmichael was a local woman born in Millisle, not far from here. She founded an orphanage and dedicated her entire life to missionary work in India. We have a huge collection of her papers and memoirs. She wrote monthly journals aimed at her supporters back home, talking about the work that she did, largely bringing young girls out of what was in essence prostitution.

This is a recent acquisition, so this is a previously unreleased photograph of The Beatles playing in Belfast in the 1960s. These are random things that you may not necessarily expect to find in an archive. If you have time over lunch, I would urge you to have a look at our exhibition in the main atrium, which largely covers the last 100 years. Not only will you get a flavour of local history, but 99% of what is in next door's exhibition is sourced from PRONI's archives. It is really visual and you will get much more of a flavour of the diverse range of archives that we have here.

All I want to do — this is a bit of an elevator pitch — is to get you to come back and have a look when you go home and see where you can find things and you can access it and how you can get involved with what PRONI has.

This is our web content. We recently migrated to NI Direct, which is the equivalent of gov.uk, bringing official material together. As part of government, we — *[Inaudible.]* It is a two-edged sword; we were a bit apprehensive but it is working out reasonably well for us. The main thing I wanted to draw your attention to is what is online.

Speaking of The Beatles, we have quite a lot of visual material. This is the searchable content. Carla and Jayne have talked about our catalogue and you can

access our electronic catalogue online. It is fully searchable; the majority of our core archival records are on here. You can go in and have a look. I am not going to dwell on that one too much. Our Ulster Covenant archive is probably one of our earliest digitised archives. Again, it allows you to search and connect to original records. I can search for my surname and go right through to original signatures.

I will now turn to the decade of centenaries. I do not know whether you are familiar with that as being a big fish for us here. The archive has everything from Home Rule and the start of the Ulster Covenant right through to the outbreak of the First World War, the Easter Rising, the conclusion of war and partition. We have lots of things going on that are very specifically related to Northern Ireland. We have collected lots of material on that topic as well.

We start off with the Covenant. If anyone has an interest in the First World War, we have published a guide to First World War records, which collates a lot of the material that we have. It is all pulled together in one centralised package. I am not going to dwell on this, because you can all use the Internet and you can go away and have a look at this. On the topic of The Beatles, one of the pieces of work that we have done is to digitise material and make it available via our Flickr photostream.

This is one of the most recently digitised collections. We have images of a polar expedition in the 1890s. Again, this is something that turned up in the Lissadell papers, which is one of our largest estate records. That highlights some of the diversity of material that we have here. The Beatles photographs are available here.

If you scroll down, on the inverse of that you can see plantation maps that have been digitised. We have school groups and all manner of weird and wonderful things.

Finally, I want to flag up our YouTube channel. As you can see, the camera is rolling. We video lots and lots of the talks, lectures and conferences that we do here. If you really want to get a flavour of what we hold and how our archives relate to a wide variety of topics, or just want to watch interesting academic presentations on a wide variety of things, you can do so there. We have filmed presentations on a wide range of topics including corporation and council records, the Easter Rising, plantation families, the Sunningdale Agreement, and poverty and health in early Belfast. They are not the most professional films in the world, but they are a really good way of getting a handle on the material that we have. On that happy note, I am going to conclude and let you get to your lunch. Thank you all very much.

FRIDAY 26 AUGUST (Parliament Buildings, Stormont)

SESSION NINE: SWEARING IN PARLIAMENT

John Vice (House of Lords): I need to do what Gary, during his presentation on Wednesday, called ostensive signalling: "I am about to start talking again. Get ready to receive". I want to talk about swearing and what it is, which I think is slightly indulgent and not strictly to do with our work but, in a roomful of linguists, I think that it is fascinating to talk about what swearing is, and I have really enjoyed reading about it. Then I want to talk about what would motivate politicians in particular to swear and why people swear in parliament. Keep an eye on the third question, which is, "What can Hansard do about it?". There are various strategies, and I will show you how they work.

I really want to start with an apology, which I have written up here. I think that some things in this talk will offend all of you in some way or other, and some people may find the whole thing offensive. If you do, I apologise. I am genuinely really sorry. I think that we all draw the boundary between what is acceptable and what is taboo in very personal ways and slightly different ways. It is very difficult to read when you hit someone's boundary of taboo. If you find this offensive, I apologise. My excuse for ploughing on anyway — not regardless — is that I think that it is worthwhile thinking through what you do if and when swearing happens in your parliament if it has not already and how you are going to react to it. It will help to think it through in this room in the cool light of day and to know about the practices in other parliaments. That is my excuse. I am sorry if it is offensive. I gave this talk last week in Canada, and I will refer to various bits that came up from that. One person said to me afterwards that she found the whole talk very offensive. Genuinely, I do not want to offend people, but one person did say that. In many ways, I think that that is really interesting because it shows the fact that acceptable and taboo are drawn in different ways. That is kind of my mitigation. There is an apology hanging over all of this. I think that that one reaction is really interesting. A good friend of mine said that everything comes down to boundaries, and I think that swearing absolutely proves that. This boundary between what is acceptable and what is taboo is fascinating.

I want to look at three questions. What is swearing? Why do people swear and why do they swear in parliament? What can Hansard do about swearing? What I have on the screen looks nice and organised, but I will slightly jumble it up. I will start with the question of what is swearing, but I will answer the question on why people swear with loads of parliamentary examples. The latter two questions will be slightly convoluted, and it will not be as clear as those three nice, neat questions suggest. Bear with me, and hopefully it will all make sense.

I also want to show you where I am going to end up, which is answering the third question: what does Hansard do about examples of swearing? Basically, I want to

suggest that we have four strategies. The first one is suggested by the quote on the screen from George Washington. Basically, swearing is completely unacceptable, and we should have nothing to do with it. When it happens, you just silently miss it out. If that is what we are doing, that suggests that we have an interesting relationship with the language. We are guardians of the language and have some sort of prescriptive role. It is our right to intervene when there is swearing and leave it out. That is one end of the spectrum, and I will give you the other three that make up the rest of the spectrum. To carry on with that George Washington approach, something that Thomas Bowdler said illustrates the Washington approach really well:

"Words which give an impression of obscenity should not be spoken, written or printed".

Those are the marching orders for this first approach: "Don't go there".

The second approach also comes from Thomas Bowdler. By the way, there are loads of words up on the screen, and you will not have time to read them all. If you want the talk, I am really happy to email it. It is a PDF because the videos make it a huge file. If you want to read it at your leisure, I will make it available or put it on the BIPRA website, if that is not going to be too offensive to people. The second approach is Thomas Bowdler's one. If someone swears, you work out what their intention is — that is the first model of communication that Gary was talking about on Tuesday and Wednesday — take out the offensive word and put in something that serves the same linguistic and grammatical function. It is a kind of prescriptive, guardian role over language.

The third approach is — I love these quotations — suggested by Laurence Sterne and Alexander Pope. There is an example of swearing, but you do not try to substitute the word; you take it out, asterisk it, or use a dash instead. Can you read these? They are wonderful. From Pope's edition of Shakespeare we have:

"Their blank are plucked about their ears"

Have a think to see whether you can work out what was so offensive.

Laurence Sterne played around with asterisks; he used them beautifully in 'Tristram Shandy'. You can see some lovely examples of the use of dashes and asterisks. For example:

*"cannot you manage, my dear, for a single time to * * * * *?"*

We will come back to the point that underlies what he is saying in the example from the Commons Hansard, where they used asterisks, as there is something interesting going on there. I would like to read the Dickens one, as I think that it is lovely.

"I won't... have no adjective police and no adjective strangers in my adjective premises!"

[Laughter.]

There is a kind of censoring going on, which I think is beautiful. By the way, talking of adjective police, I will try to give this talk without swearing myself. I feel that I do not swear very much, although I do religious swearing: "Oh God!" However, I will give this talk without swearing, except when I am quoting swear words. That is also interesting, because quotations are often the way by which swear words make it into Hansard.

So we have three approaches so far. One end of the spectrum is the one suggested by a Foo Fighters' song, "They're just effing words": when they happen, you report them straight. That is us: we have lost our guardian relationship over language, and you just report it straight; when swear words happen, you report them. We do not have a role in relation to swearing; we report it as we do anything else.

We have lost our prescriptive, guardian role over language, and we just report straight. That has an interesting tie-in with how you see your role as an Official Report: who are we doing this for? If it is a transparency thing and involves accountability to the voters and we are showing voters what happens in Parliament, if a Member swears, we should tell them about it; they have a right to know. That is the underlying justification for the fourth approach.

In the end, where you sit on that spectrum depends on how you interpret your terms of reference. Who is your audience? If you can think who your audience is, it will be clearer how you deal with swearing. If your audience is Members, and if Members do not want their swearing to appear in public, that will be different from regarding your main audience as the public and regarding your terms of reference as including a democratic accountability role in which it is important that the public knows what

happens in Parliament. If you are clear about who your audience is, it should be fairly clear how you deal with swearing.

That is where we end with our four examples. There is not necessarily a right or a wrong approach. You will find that my clear preference is for this one: report their words straight. That is because I am interpreting our terms of reference in a particular way.

That is where we are going to end up, hopefully. To summarise the four approaches: George Washington, omit them; Thomas Bowdler, replace them; Alexander Pope, asterisk them; and Foo Fighters and Freud, report them straight.

We will step back from that for a moment to look at what swearing is. It is surprisingly difficult to define. We usually know when it happens, although there are strange examples. I will kick off the first video, which is an odd one; it is sort of swearing and sort of not. Here are a couple of definitions. The first are from Steven Pinker, the American academic, and I think that you quoted him on Wednesday. He defines swearing as:

"words that shock, that offend, that express strong emotion, positive or negative"

Pinker also defines swearing as:

"Using language as a weapon to force a listener to think an unpleasant or at least an emotionally charged thought"

They are two nice working definitions. I am not going to come up with my own definition, but I want to point to a few characteristics of swearing before getting on to the parliamentary side of things. I will run through them quickly and talk about each of them, as we have slides on them all. Swearing is common. Twitter publishes the top seven swear words — I will get back to what they are in a minute — 22 times a second. That is a stunning number of swear words, and that is only the top seven. A recent survey found that between 0.3% and 0.7% of the language of an average speaker — whatever that means — is swear words. To give you a sense of how that fits in with ordinary language, personal pronouns — we, our and us — are on 1%. So, the average speaker uses a swear word as much as we, our and us. There is obvious a huge difference between speakers and some people never swear and all of us use we, our and us, but it is extremely common.

If you are wondering what the top seven words are, here they are according to a BBC/ITV poll from 2004. I will not read them out. Interestingly, you can see how they have changed since 1997. I was surprised by the second one. I never hear it and I only use it ironically as a mock-American thing. Those were the top seven according to a recent poll in the UK.

I mentioned the boundary between the acceptable and the taboo. Swear words are all about that boundary and sometimes deliberately knowing where your boundary is and going over it — I am not going to respect your boundary, I am going to offend it. Here are two concepts — sex and defecation — and various words of referring to them, with politer at the top and ruder at the bottom. We would probably all draw the line between acceptable and taboo in fairly similar places but differently and that is really important. Again, it is about the importance of the relativity of it all. Also, where you draw that line will vary from context to context. What you would use late last night in the pub would be different to when you are having tea with the Queen. There is a huge relativity about it.

Gary, I thought it was really interesting what you said on Wednesday about laughing when things are emotionally charged. I have an example — kind of swearing, kind of not swearing — of someone going up to that boundary. I think that the interesting thing about this clip is the reaction of the Members. Most of them find it hysterically funny — too funny to justify what she said — but there are a couple of people who are absolutely stone-faced and, again, that shows the relativity that we are dealing with. She said:

"I have benefited from some excellent training by the Royal Navy, but on one occasion I felt that it was not as bespoke as it might have been. Fascinating though it was, I felt that the lecture and practical demonstration on how to care for your penis and testicles in the field failed to appreciate that some of us attending had been issued with the incorrect kit. Give us the opportunity and the training and women will embrace the challenge — that has certainly been Portsmouth's experience."

They all found it hysterical and you are looking rather stone-faced. It is not that funny is it? It is the kind of laughter that you get when comedians swear. They swear a lot and you are all laughing because you are shocked or are emotionally charged rather than because it is funny. There are a couple in there who have that view that it is just not funny.

It is kind of swearing, kind of not. I think that it is interesting, and I have including it because I want to suggest that there is a specific parliamentary swearing, and it comes out because of the institution that you are in, which is a place of power. I will go on to say more about that later.

Swearing is profoundly contextual. Here is a chart that starts to catch the contextuality of it. There are different kinds of swearing obviously. The main ones I think are racial abuse, sexual swearing and religious swearing. Those are the three main kinds of swearing that go on. There is a profound contextuality about it. Obviously, it varies from country to country and from place to place.

Going back to the survey, we can see that feelings about the F-word varies depending on whether you are male or female. Some 65% of males and 76% of women think that it is very severe. It obviously also varies depending on your age, and the older you are the more likely you are to be offended by it. I have not got a slide to show this, but it also varies according to the north or south of England or, obviously, different countries, where swearing is fascinatingly different. I said that I gave this talk in Canada. Swearing in Quebec is just beautiful and so profoundly different from our kind of swearing. It is all around the Catholic liturgy, and they do not do sexual swearing at all. I wonder if I should say this, but there are no Quebecois among us. Their horrible swear words are "baptism", "Calvary", "chalice", "host", "sacrament" and "tabernacle". Those are their really cutting swear words. It is just fantastic.

Something that I think is wonderful about swearing is the loose grammatical nature that swear words have. They are kind of the dark side of grammar; they do not obey ordinary rules of grammar. The F-word is a very old word and has all sorts of grammatical uses. On the screen are the grammatical uses that it can have. It is profoundly useable. Oddly, it is not to do with the age of a swear word. You can see that the word in second or third place is also very malleable and plastic. Swear words suffer something that linguists call "verbicide", where they have a profoundly strong meaning and they lose that over time. They pick it up over time. Swear words from Chaucer's time sound quite amusing to us. Words that will have been shocking to Chaucer's audience include "foul", "lousy", "old", "shrew", "swine" and "idiot". There is no hurt there, no pain and no hit or emotional power. "Christ's passion", "Benedictine" and "God's arms" were used. They had profound meaning in Chaucer's time, and, for us, they are odd and quaint.

Rob, you mentioned a really interesting example last week. In the TV series 'Deadwood', which I have not seen, set in the 1930s, they are trying to do swearing. They could not use contemporary swearing because it would sound so quaint to our ears, so they put our modern words in their mouths. Quentin Tarantino did the same

in 'Django Unchained', where these 1850s cowboys were swearing in contemporary ways. When I first watched it, I thought, "That's wrong. That can't be right. That is not when the MF-word was first used". It is wrong because, as I said, it was first used in 1959 and his film was set in the 1850s. He is trying to catch the power and force of swearing.

Swearing has an odd relationship with grammar. It is different from normal, run-of-the-mill grammar. Of course, swearing need not be verbal. This video clip also illustrates the contextuality point. I will play it and talk about it in a minute. You are watching Lady Trumpington on the lower left, and Tom King is talking about people who worked during the First World War and Second World War and what has become of them.

[Delegates watched a video]

[Laughter.]

To me, there are two really interesting things about that. The first contextuality point is that that gesture is not used in Canada. They did not what it meant. To me, it is so deeply ingrained that I thought that everyone would know what it meant, but they did not know. The interesting Hansard point about that is that it went unreported. We are not trying to convey everything that happens in the Chamber. Our terms of reference constrain us really tightly to parliamentary order. Lord King was speaking, and we report that. If someone interrupts him and he reacts, we report that, but we do not try to catch everything that happens, so we did not report that gesture. For right or wrong, that is to be discussed.

Swearing is a subset of parliamentary language. I hope that you can read these. It is worth going through these in detail, and I can ping them round to people who are interested. This is a list of unparliamentary terms, which is a broader theme to swearing. Swearing is like a subset of unparliamentary language. This is a list of unparliamentary terms in the Commonwealth in 2012, and it is divided up by country. You can start off with Australian swearing. There is some great stuff in here. They are really quite robust and straightforward in their swearing. Again, this will illustrate the contextuality point. Let your eye wander over those and pick out some lovely ones. My favourite one is the one on the top left. Even though you may many times get knocked in the guts, that is OK. I think that is really funny. It says:

"Mr Right Said Ted 'I'm Too Sexy for My Shirt' Baillieu".

I think that is really rude.

Moving on to Canada, I mentioned Quebec earlier. Here are the Quebec unparliamentary terms. Suddenly you have a really big change in tone. These are the unparliamentary terms that are used in Quebec. You can feel the tightness, the Catholicism and the really different way of swearing. Saskatchewan just has "fraudulent behaviour". That is nowhere near swearing.

We then move on to Indian swearing, which is fascinating. It is kind of "rats", "donkeys" and rather ungrammatical phrases. There are very different things going on there.

I love that one from South Africa that says that the Member would look better with a condom over his head.

We only have one for the UK. Do not get the impression that there is not much swearing in the UK. I hope that, by the end of this talk, you will not have that impression. That is an interesting insight into the variation around the Commonwealth.

I will very quickly go over the rules about swearing before we get into the nitty-gritty of it. Erskine May says:

"Expressions which are unparliamentary and ... call for prompt intervention ... include:

(4) abusive and insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder.

11. The Speaker has said in this connection that whether a word should be regarded as unparliamentary depends on the context in which it is used."

That is a huge change. There used to be a list of words that were banned and could not be used in Parliament. Now, it does not matter what word you use. It is the context and your intent that is key. There are a couple of examples of that. "Fascist" was not OK in 1984. The use of the word "fascist" was intended to give offence to a Member and so was unparliamentary, but, a short time later, the Speaker interpreted "crypto-communist" to be used as humour when he said:

"it appeared to me that the Leader of the Opposition was amused rather than offended by what the Prime Minister said".

Contextuality is really important. That kind of goes with the role of postmodernism in our society.

The House of Lords is very different. We have got a really beautiful Standing Order that regulates swearing. It is Standing Order 32. Read that if you have time. I love it. It is so beautiful. It states:

"That all personal, sharp, or taxing speeches be forborn, and whosoever answereth another man's speech shall apply his answer to the matter without wrong to the person".

It is gorgeous. I love it. It was created in 1626 — that is why the wording is so weird — because an accident happened at a Committee when there was some sharpness of speech between two Lords. You can hear the accent of the people saying that. It is wonderful. It has only been used five times since 1626 and, to me, not for anything that is rude at all. In 1833, someone got his facts wrong and also someone used the word "impertinent" and people said that the Opposition were accustomed to getting their way. The really shocking one was in 1998, when Lord Whitty said of Earl Russell that the:

"noble Lords opposite [are] posing to be the students' friends".

This has not regulated swearing in the House of Lords at all, but those are our sort of marching orders and terms of reference.

This is back to the second question. Why do people swear? There are, according to Steven Pinker, five kinds of swearing. I will tack on a sixth, which is political parliamentary swearing. Emphatic swearing is the first one. I think that, of all of them, is the most self-explanatory. If you want to emphasise something, you just put a swear word or a borderline word in front of what you are saying. The earliest example of something rude appearing in Hansard is an example of emphatic swearing. It is back to 1807 when someone said, "He is a damned liar". It is not just a liar but a "damned liar". That is really interesting. It is pre-Victorian, religious swearing. It became much worse to do religious swearing during the Victorian era,

but that is an example of emphatic swearing. Here is another one at the end of the 19th century. It is lovely. A chap is being suspended, and here he is:

"Oh, leave me alone; I do not care a damn."

That was the first emphatic swearing in Hansard. Here is a shocking one. It is almost the first use of the F-word in the Lords Hansard. It is emphatic swearing to show the nature of the then leader in Ghana, Mr Rawlings. It is not, "On your knees", but what you see there. Here is a fantastic example from South Africa. The guy who is speaking is from the Economic Freedom Fighters. They moved in recently and are a disruptive, maverick and interesting bunch. I will play it for you:

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Did you see the woman behind him asking what he said? That shows the power of heckling. They are riling him. They got to him, and he swore. That is what the ANC members wanted. They wanted a reaction. They wanted to get that kind of political capital out of his response. This has not been reported yet. I do not know what they are going to do with it in South Africa. They have to publish their report in 11 languages, and they have not translated it into all of them yet. I do not know what they are going to do with it. What would you do if that happened in your jurisdiction? I would report it straight but obviously what this talk is about is that there are different approaches. I hope that it would be reported straight.

Emphatic swearing is rare in Parliament because the culture and ethos is very much that you depersonalise. You refer to Honourable Members and noble Lords rather than particular individual people. There is strong deference to the institution and to the history of the place that you are working in, so emphatic swearing is rare. If most of your colleagues are not doing it, you are unlikely to do it, but it does happen.

The second type of swearing is what is called idiomatic swearing. This is a fascinating one. When you are in a group, you will adopt a kind of in language to show that you are in the group and you respect it. It shows your power relation in the group, and you will swear to show acceptance, acknowledgment and your power. There is a lot of interesting stuff going on. It shows your assertiveness and your status. It is like you are saying, "I am swearing because I am OK in your company." Again, this one is rare in Parliament because, if most members are not swearing, you are unlikely to swear, but it does happen. Here is an example from the Lords. This is Lord Bird, who set up 'The Big Issue' magazine, doing his maiden speech. You will see from his body language, hand gestures and the way that he is speaking that he is giving out big signals of, "I am OK; I am all right":

"I met a very large-nosed Scotsman called Gordon Roddick, who had no money. We became friends. Then he met a young lady called Anita. They got married and they started the Body Shop. I did not see them for 20 years, but 20 years later I saw them on the telly. My son Paddy was with me and I said to him, 'I know that big-nosed bugger' — excuse my French. I got hold of him and we became friends again and he said to me, 'Are you one of those persons who crawls out of the woodwork when someone becomes incredibly successful?' And I said, 'Yes'. He said, 'Well I know where you're coming from.'"

There are two interesting things about that idiomatic swearing. First, did you get that there were two swears rather than one there? One is "that big-nosed bugger" and the other is "excuse my French", which is a sort of a racial, nationalist thing. Secondly, I did this talk in Canada, and I had assumed that they would not use that phrase because they are bilingual and French Canadians would be really offended by it. However, English Canadians do use it. I said to the woman from Quebec, "Is that offensive to you?" "I will not do a French accent because that would be rude. She said:

"No, that's fine, we just say pardon my English."

[Laughter.]

I thought that was lovely. There were two swearings going on there. I was going to say something else about that; no, I have lost that one.

Anyway, onwards to abusive swearing. This is obvious; you want to offend someone and you are throwing a ball of emotion at them. You want to offend them and hurt them, you know their boundary and you are going beyond it and you want to insult them. This is the main kind of swearing that there is, certainly in Westminster. I love this one; it goes back to 1819 and it is the first example of abusive swearing that I could find. It involved a chap called Peter Finnerty, who was a parliamentary reporter for 'The Times'. He had been accused by William Gifford, who was a doorkeeper, of saying, "Go to Hell" when Mr Gifford asked him to put down his notebook. It was then illegal to take notes in the Chamber. Mr Finnerty said, "Go to Hell" or, according to another witness:

" I don't care a damn for you."

What would happen to him? He was brought before the Chamber of the House and the Speaker was in the Chair. His defence was fantastic; I love it. This could go in any appraisal that you write for being a good parliamentary reporter. Mr Finnerty's defence was:

"At the time the circumstance occurred, my mind was engaged in the most intense application to the individual who was then addressing the House, and whose sentiments I was most anxious to take down correctly."

That is great; that is what every good reporter should try to do. He continued:

"At this juncture I was interrupted, and God knows what might have escaped me!"

He has got another swear in there. Lord Castlereagh decided that he should be reprimanded by the Speaker and discharged, paying his fees. So, the first abusive swearing in Parliament was by a parliamentary reporter and there was this whole trial on the Floor of the House. I am not sure what the lesson for you is there, but it is fascinating.

This next example is horrific; it is really horrible. This is the first printed use of the "f" word in Commons Hansard. It is from 1999 and it is an example of hate crime. Interestingly, the "f" word came into Commons Hansard through quotations. This is fairly common. Quotations are the way to blaze the trail to get in. This is horrific; it is really horrible stuff. I am glad it was quoted and I am glad it is being dealt with. It is illegal and really shocking.

The same goes for the Oireachtas. We will see more of David Norris later but again, he is quoting some horrible stuff from one of his constituents. Again, it is illegal; it is hate crime. It is really shocking.

Here is an example from Canada. You have to be quick and alert and — this might not mean anything — watch the two parliamentary reporters who are sitting there when I start playing the video. When their heads swivel and you hear the swear, great; if you do not hear it, you have just missed it when their heads both bob round.

That was the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, saying, "Oh you piece of shit." Again, interestingly, it was not reported for the same reason that we did not report Lady

Trumpington. We were following parliamentary order; it was a heckle and it was regarded as outwith our report. An interestingly different approach is taken in Ireland, where there is more reporting of heckling. I am not sure whether you would have reported that.

Anne Maxwell: If it was audible we would have reported it.

John Vice: It was kind of audible there — and you would have reported it.

This is a fantastic example from New Zealand. It is nice having a tour of Chambers of the world to see how things work in different countries. I will just play it.

So, get your reporting brains and engage. How do you report that? Do you do it straight? You might write: "[Interruption.]" Then what? This is what the New Zealand Hansard — that is what they are called — did with it. I am not charging at all, but they wrote: "[Interruption.]", which I agree with, and then nothing. To me, they really ducked it there, because the "[Interruption]" does not really make sense unless there is something following it. There was noise going on; but there is always noise. I think that they started to react to it, but have not really done anything. Maybe, he was talking to himself. It was a kind of comment that he was making to himself, so you do not report it for that reason. The problem in this example is that they were doing national sign-language trial week in Parliament. I will play the clip again and you should watch the sign-language person, who appears in the picture. This is how the press got hold of it.

"Mr Speaker: This is a point of order. I hope. [Laughter.] Order. But it will be heard in silence. It will be heard in silence.

Ron Mark: Mr Speaker, I am not challenging you at all but the question —

Mr Speaker: Order. Would the Member simply —

Ron Mark: Trying. Trying. [Laughter.]"

And that is how the press got hold of it. That raises the really big question. The press are going to be all over these examples when they happen. As well as being ready to decide how you are going to report it, you have to be ready for a phone call

at any second from the press. What you say at that second is going to go out there in the media. So you need to decide. Are you going to say: "No comment; I am not discussing it at all." Or what? What is your angle going to be? So, be ready for the press to come at you at any second, because they will. This stuff is great political ammunition.

Here is a great example that I was talking to Charlie about earlier this week. There is a phrase in there. Pay attention, and see what you think.

"Mr Pyne: If 'The Number One Whinger in Australia' was a reality TV show, Madame Speaker, there would be no point in any other contestant entering it, because if Bill Shorten entered it, he would win it, But it is time, On Thursday night, the Leader of the Opposition has an opportunity, Madam Speaker, —

Madam Speaker: Minister, the Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat.

Mr Pyne: You are such a cunt.

Madam Speaker: The Minister will refer to people by their correct name.

Mr Pyne: I will Madam Speaker. I will withdraw."

I cannot see the Australian Hansard of this.

Was that clear to all of you? And this raises the whole really fascinating question of clarity or unclarity. What you do if you are not 100% sure of what they said? Obviously, do you send a note? *[Laughter.]* There is an interesting thing about what your relationship with the Member is. Who thought that that was clear? I wonder if you heard the same word.

This is what their official report did with it. No, sorry. He was accused of using the "c" word in Parliament, and he denied it. This is where it gets really interesting about certainty. If you are sure, and the Member denies that he used something, that is great because you know what to do because you are sure. If there is any doubt at all, and the Member is denying it, what you do? I think that, there, you have to play on the side of caution.

This is what their official report did with it: "You are such a grub."

Does that seem like accurate reporting? Are you happy with it? That is what he said he said; and there was huge Internet traffic on this with voice graphs showing that it is a lip sound, rather than a tongue sound, whatever that is called. A fricative sound. That is what they did with it, mainly because he was saying it, and they could not 100% say otherwise.

Certainty is a really difficult thing in examples of swearing. This is political ammunition and we are dealing with a political animals. They are going to use these examples. The Opposition will want a Member to swear because it is powerful and it matters. If they deny swearing, and they did not do so, that is great. If they deny swearing and they have done, what do you do? They probably will deny that they swore if they are regretting it. It is just a really difficult, tricky area. I have not really got an answer for you.

However, I have a lesson in this next clip. This is Lord Phillips of Sudbury from a while ago. I will play it; it is quite interesting. However, the interesting lesson for Hansard comes with how we reported it:

"Perhaps in relation to the discretionary law, I may instance what happened to me yesterday. As I was walking out of Charing Cross Underground into the little linear path nearby, which noble Lords will know, there was a young adult urinating quite openly against the gates leading into the park. I made the remark, "That's going to leave a nasty smell.", and he said, "Fuck you.". I am sorry to use the word in this House, but it happens to be the commonest single word in the vocabulary of that age group, I fear. That was his response. I believe that he said it, first, out of shock that anyone should even take note of the act and, secondly, out of a kind of indignation that anyone should interfere with what he undoubtedly considered to be a perfectly reasonable and proper act. "

That is quite straightforward. We reported it straight. The lesson for Hansard reporters here is in the Bound Volume.

"That is going to leave a nasty smell."

Full stop, unquote, comma, lower case. When someone swears, don't let that blind you to the rest of the sentence. Really pay attention to the nuts and bolts. They were so blinded by the swear word — it was being proofread for the Bound Volume

— that they were not paying attention to the grammar. There is another example later where we got the swear word. I will refer to it again later. There is the lesson for you: when someone swears, be aware of the rest of the sentence. Just carry on doing your job, however shocked you may be.

Sometimes Members want to swear but do not want the political repercussions of swearing. Have a think as this plays out how you might report it:

"I have already said that our Clerk is one of the most popular Clerks that we have had in this House—that is certainly the case in the 23 years that I have been here. His cheerful disposition, often under difficult circumstances, has been an illumination to many of us. As people have already said, his detailed knowledge of procedure is important. So this Clerk will be sorely missed by the House and by me personally. I wish him and his family well in retirement. Now, we do not know why he has chosen to retire early, though his working environment, behind closed doors, has not always been easy, as those in the know have already alluded to. In that respect, despite Sir Robert having studied Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, being told at least once in front of others to f-u-c-k off by you, Mr Speaker, would not have encouraged him to stay.

Mr Speaker: I will ignore the last observation, which suffered from the disadvantage of being wrong."

Who do you believe? Who is telling the truth there? You do not need to answer that. That is a really interesting interaction. It is a wig by the way, if you are wondering. How do you report that? What is the sensible way to do it?

I do not want to stress that swearing is a recent thing. It has been going on for some time. One of the main pushers was this chap, Andrew Faulds MP, who had a previous career in film. Anyone know what the film is? He became an MP in 1964 and set the tone in 1967 in a debate on the termination of pregnancy. He had a horrible go at St John-Stevas, saying that he had not:

"the capacity to put a bun in anybody's oven".

This was two or three weeks before the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act, so what he is alleging was illegal activity. His sentence trails off here, but I think I have got everything important. Members were shocked. It is not swearing; it is horrifically rude. It was allegedly illegal behaviour.

He got his swearing boots on fairly quickly. Here we have him in 1978. Is that swearing? It is rude. I am not sure. He apologised. Interestingly, there is that line in the Commons Hansard, which you do not often see. If you follow that, you get to his apology. I think he is paraphrasing here. He said that in his earlier profession he used that kind of language and he was very sorry. Here he is in 1979:

"In my 14 years in this House I have never heard such absolute crap from anybody on any Bench in the House."

He then apologised very quickly, promising that:

"next time I shall choose my word with much more care."

And he did — the following year, when he said:

"I cannot call him an honourable liar, but—we are surrounded by honourable Members this afternoon—I can call him an honourable shit."

Poor Speaker. You can really feel his offence here. It offends in every possible way. Really awful. He vaguely withdraws the word. It is not even plausible deniability; it is just a vague gesture towards plausible deniability.

That phrase got George Foulkes going who said:

"This little arrogant shit has not answered a single question."

On what I was saying about being aware of the rest of the sentence, I would put a comma between the words "little" and "arrogant", because otherwise it suggests that he is little arrogant or almost seldom arrogant. Just a thought.

Did George Foulkes regret using that phrase? Here is a video clip of him in the Lords 25 years later reminiscing about that episode. Again, watch the reaction of the Members around him. With Penny Mourdant at the beginning, they thought it was

fantastic and funny, but the body language here screams that it was not OK. Just watch the body language. Just watch.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Lord Foulkes had not learned much. He obviously loved the story and the challenge. I will get on to political swearing and why politicians swear deliberately in this institution.

The fourth kind of swearing is cathartic swearing. That is physiologically really interesting. Swearing comes from the part of the brain that is separate from the rest of the linguistic bit of your brain, which is the prefrontal cortex. Swearing comes from the limbic system, which is also the source of common proverbs such as "Have a nice day", "How are you?" and "I hope you're OK". When songs and tunes drift into your mind, it is your limbic system releasing them. Prayers and proverbs all come from this really deep part of the brain. It is evolutionarily much older than the prefrontal cortex.

That is why when some people suffer a stroke they can lose all their language but still swear. Here is a picture of Baudelaire, who, at the end of his life, could only say, "cré nom", which was coming from his limbic system as an abbreviation of "sacré nom de dieu". He was just swearing in the way they swore in those days. He was being cared for after his stroke in a nunnery, so it was profoundly offensive to the nuns who looked after him.

This picture is here to illustrate the phenomenon that psychologists call "lalochezia", where you can put up with pain much more if you are swearing.

They have done a study in Warwick that showed that you can put your hand in cold water — like the chap in the picture is doing — for up to 40% longer if you are swearing than if you are not using swear words. There is a huge cathartic relief that comes from swearing. We express emotions in very different ways: some people bottle them up and keep them inside whereas other people, particularly the type of personalities who go into politics, are really happy to unburden themselves and put them on the rest of the audience. Here is the earliest F-word that I can find in the Commonwealth, with the guy saying, "For f***s sake". It bursts out. He is angry, and out it comes.

Here is a lovely example from Ireland, which, again, is an extrovert letting go of his anger and feeling better for what he says. Think about how you would report this.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

I think Senator Norris felt better after that. I love the Chairman saying that Senator Norris should not have said that because he had spoken already. [Laughter.] Impeccable reporting from Anne's team; there it is. This is another contextual point: that word is not used in the same sense in Canada; it has the American sense, meaning your behind, which is interesting. As he said, you can feel the cathartic release he got. He said that he was incandescent with rage, and that was pretty obvious. He obviously better felt better for that outburst.

Here is a really interesting example from the Commons Hansard that sits in the Bound Volume rather uninspiringly. It is this bit down here where John Baron says:

"roadside bombs— [Interruption.] I shall move on."

That is odd, because, in the daily part, the exchange was reported as Bob Ainsworth saying what he said, then Tony Baldry asking, "Is that a parliamentary phrase?", and John Baron saying, "I shall move on." The Speaker got involved because Bob Ainsworth denied that he had used the phrase. Again, what do you do? The Speaker got involved, and the press picked it up. They loved it — "Hansard wipes Commons swearword". The Speaker checked the AV record, and because it was not possible to establish what was said from a sedentary position during the honourable Member's speech, it came out of the daily part and the Bound Volume was as you saw it, showing an interruption. I think that that is an example of cathartic swearing — he is just saying it because he is angry, and out it comes.

The next example of Commons' swearing is really interesting, and it happened in Westminster Hall so there is no video. Again, it is cathartic swearing. It is this bit here, and Hansard reported it in the Laurence Sterne way as he is an "a*****". I think that the Commons Hansard were being really cautious, because they had a go at good, faithful, out there reporting with Bob Ainsworth and had their wrists slapped by the Speaker, and were playing safe here. I find this a really odd way of reporting, if you do not mind me saying. If you know what the word is, put the word. If you do not know what the word is — it could be "antelope" or any other eight-lettered word beginning with A — why do it? I can understand why you were playing safe. It is fascinating and great, but I would not report it that way.

The last kind of swearing is what is called dysphemistic swearing. You all know what euphemisms are. You say that someone passed away after a long illness rather than saying that they died from cancer. You know someone's boundaries, and you respect them through your language and behaviour. Dysphemistic swearing is the opposite. You use strong words deliberately to go over that boundary and to overemphasise things — "This is bloody awful"; "This is complete shit"; "Clear up your dog shit".

That happens in Parliament. I love this example. This was in 1982, and it was the first use of the F-word in the House of Commons, again, through a quote. This is how quotations blazed the trail, but Hansard ducked it.

Reg Race was talking about cards that are handed out advertising prostitution. This is the phrase that was used: "Phone them and ... them". Hansard put "..." where Mr Race used the F-word. That is not wrong because it is a quote and there is a word missing from it, but he did use that word and that is how it was reported.

I do not know for sure, but I feel the Speaker's involvement there as well. I think that is a really interesting example and there is horrible dysphemistic use at the top there. I am not sure what the quote is from. It is not the people themselves who are speaking; I think that it just might be a "watch out" kind of quotation. Here is an example starring someone. Our reporters' table is up here. Where is Grainne? There is Grainne. This is a nice example of dysphemistic swearing and another reporting challenge:

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

"Mr Cameron stated that, for too many people, even a good education isn't enough. There are other barriers that stand in their way. I wish that he had just said racism. He said, "Do you know that in our country today, even if they have exactly the same qualifications, people with white-sounding names are nearly twice as likely to get call backs for jobs than people with ethnic-sounding names." There was just a silence because, where I come from, the response to that speech was, "No XXXX Sherlock".

How do you report that? That is what we did with it, which works for me. I think that if we had put asterisks, it would have looked like we were doing a Commons asterisking thing. I was interested to hear that that phrase is used in Canada, which is nice. Sometimes, we do the second approach of Thomas [Inaudible.] , which is to

take the rude word — I do not have evidence of this; I cannot find it and it is driving me nuts, but I am told by one of our reporters that it happened in 1988 — apparently she heckled a Member who was speaking with that, and Hansard reported that, which brought the first Member up to Hansard offices saying, "You have made me look like I am really overreacting. How could you possibly change it?" I am sorry that I cannot find that, but I will keep trying to track it down. Here is an example that happened in Canada recently that illustrates the same point. Pay attention to it. It is interesting:

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Did you get that? It was hidden in there. They reported it as, "She is all over the map" but that was not what he said, was it? They reported it that way because they thought that the phrase that he used was not a phrase. They thought that he stumbled and it was too much to go there. There are various take-home lessons. The first one is to repeat the point about the press. They had the press on them very quickly and they did not have their press angle ready. The other one is that the Speaker got involved in a really interesting way and this is why at the beginning I was talking about thinking through your audience and how you interpret your terms of reference, like what you think your vision and mission statement is. So, it got picked up eventually once it was reported though the person that he was addressing it to did not react at the time.

The interesting thing is the comment from the Speaker who got involved. Hansard provided a statement that, in its opinion, it would have been mentally corrected by the listener. So, that is how it is interpreting its audience. It is some kind of objective-informed audience which is reinterpreting what is happening. That is who they are working for. It is also interesting because the editor's comment to the press was:

"in the opinion of the editor, it seemed unlikely that Mr. Chiarelli did not say, or mean to say, or the listener expect to hear, 'she's all over the map.'"

That is a beautifully cryptic sentence. If you are going to put something out to the press, challenge them with construction and grammar. Are you baffled? Did you get the phrase? It was "She pees all over the map". That, in the end, was the main point; Hansard declined requests to comment.

I have about three or four minutes. I will go quickly through intentional political swearing. To follow up that final point about your audience and the average listener,

if you think that you are writing for an average audience, you can interpret it that way. If you are writing for the public, I think that you interpret it in a different way. If you are writing for Members, again, you will go much more with what they say. Be clear about who you are working for.

On political swearing, we work for/with Members who are very strange political beasts. They are motivated by power in a way that I think that a lot of us just cannot conceive of; they really will use anything to get what they want and their political ends. They are working in a huge political arena full of broadcasts. They are in the spotlight, and they will use that; they will use anything. The Opposition will use a Member's swearing for their political ammunition. This is really politically-charged stuff. Members will deliberately swear in Parliament. It is a separate category of swearing. I will quickly give you some examples of it. The first kind of use of the F-word in Lords Hansard was in 1964, just after the Lawrence trial, where the High Court found that it was OK to publish swear words. Read the madness at the top before you go down. The Hansard report states:

"if you go to a Paris night club and watch Frenchmen —I would not say the same for the tourist — you find that when the girls come on with their bare bosoms the Frenchmen get on with their snails."

Dear God — if I may religiously swear. It is racial swearing as well. That is the first use of the F-word in Lords Hansard, which is really interesting.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

I think that he did that on purpose. I think that it was absolutely premeditated; he was using it. I have two points. First, it is fantastic to see how the Oireachtas reports interruptions. I could not hear any of the interjections going on. It is fantastic to see the way you report. It is really interesting, and, again, it is a really straight, good report. Paul Gogarty's explanation is that he used that word because it was not included in the list of banned words. He knew what he was doing, and he was using it. He later denied it on chat shows, but I do not believe that for a second.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

Again, he uses that completely. He used that phrase three times: in 2004, 2010 and 2012. This is fascinating. He said that we reported it in the daily part and then took it out of the Bound Volume. That is completely untrue, but he will use that kind of allegation to get his political ends.

Another warning for you: when we reported that in Grand Committee, we put "the A400" not "the A400M", because we were so startled by the use of the phrase. I wrote to him to tell him that we had put it in the Bound Volume. Keith, you were

impeccably not quoting private documents, but I will quote a private document. Here is his reply. He wrote:

"I should have known better at my time of life, and I promise that I will not sin so egregiously again"

— oh God, the sarcasm is dripping off him. *[Laughter.]*

I sent him the Bound Volume and said that it was in there. I also asked him how we should report Euro-wanking and said that we thought it should have a capital e. He said that he was happy with that. He was using anything to get his political ends.

I am sorry; I have gone over my time a bit. I will finish up with an example. What I like about it is that he swears and then loses himself completely. He is sort of hugging himself in congratulation for having sworn in the Chamber because it is the Chamber, because there is a boundary and he has gone over it. He was so pleased with himself. He said:

"I worry about what is happening to this society in a number of respects. I worry about what has happened over the last generation or so. I was told just a few days ago by someone no less than a bishop — I apologise for putting it in this way, but it is the only way I can do it — that the French now refer routinely to the English as “les fuck-offs”. They do that because our culture has changed and because the presentation of our culture has changed in our media."

Do you agree? Do you think that he is really loving the fact that he has done that? There was sort of a reporting challenge there, which I think that the Commons Hansard did beautifully.

I will round up pretty quickly with the four reporting strategies that I mentioned at the beginning. I hope that you can see the strengths and weaknesses of each of them and that you have a sense of those. It is nice to know that there are options for you. Some of the things to think about are how you interpret your terms of reference, what is your relationship to language and to be very aware of your relationship with the Speaker and his or her view of reporting. I mentioned the issue of certainty. If you are sure that the Member swore, great, you know what to. If you are unsure, you need to take a completely different strategy. Do not let the swear blind you to the rest of the sentence.

I have a couple of other points. With audio-visual technology, our relationship to swearing has very much changed and a lot of those examples are going out on the Internet because there is so much broadcasting. Be aware that what you do on the page will also be on the Internet and available. The press will be all over it so be ready, not necessarily with a press statement but with a response for the press. Finally, be aware that there is huge political capital tied up with swearing. It will not happen neutrally.

I hope that you have enjoyed that. I hope that it has woken you up and got you ready for the Friday. That is all from me. Thank you for listening. *[Applause.]*

SESSION TEN: A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

Rob Sutherland (Legislative Assembly of British Columbia): I have called this presentation 'Observations from the forty-third annual Hansard Association of Canada conference'. We held our forty-third annual conference in St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, last week. I have been on the road for two weeks now doing Hansard conference stuff, and I think my head is pretty close to exploding. I have been wondering what exactly to talk about over the next little while, but I have picked out four items, some you may have already dealt with and some might be new to you. Item 3 could lead us down a rabbit hole; I am not sure.

I thought I would start with gender identity, because it came up in Alberta and British Columbia (BC) in the last period of time. To set this, the province of Alberta had a general election in May 2015. There was a change in government, which, if you know anything about Canada, you will find absolutely shocking: the Conservatives had governed Alberta for the previous 40 or 50 years. A government of the Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP) was elected in Alberta — they are a social democratic government — so it really was like hell freezing over in Canada, because growing up, you would never imagine that the NDP would be elected in Alberta. If that were to happen, it would be shocking. In fact, we opened the newspapers the next day and were shocked to see that this had happened.

Part of that was that a whole different type of community had moved into power in Alberta, and part of that was the three newly elected Members who openly identified themselves as members of the LGBT community — the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual community. I am not outing anyone by saying they are Michael Connolly, Estefania Cortes-Vargas and Ricardo Miranda. Member Cortes-Vargas raised gender-specific honorifics in the Hansard transcript, and in fact, as standard practice in Alberta they send a letter to all the MLAs asking them how they would like to be identified — "Ms", "Mrs" or "Mr". There was nothing there that was gender-neutral, and she publicly raised how Hansard was insensitive to these gender issues. She spoke of their personal challenges in the face of gender-specific labels and again referenced the letter. She objected to the gender assumptions inherent in the choices of "Ms", "Mrs" or "Mr". The director of Hansard services in Alberta sent a message on our listserv — we have a listserv that all directors and managers participate in — asking, "Have you ever encountered this? Do you know any gender-neutral honorifics?" We were all at a loss, and Alberta did some research on it.

I want to let you know how they resolved it. The choices in Alberta now are a title like that, nothing at all or what the Members have chosen. I do not have anything on a slide, so I will read these to you. Sarah Hoffman, for example, who is the Minister

of Health, is identified as "Ms Hoffman", so when she begins to speak, in the transcript she is identified as "Ms Hoffman". Angela Pitt's choice of identifier is "Mrs Pitt", Michael Connolly is identified as "Mr Connolly". Ricardo Miranda, one of the Members who identified himself as a member of the LGBT community, is identified simply as "Miranda", which is a bit odd, and Cortes-Vargas is identified just as "Cortes-Vargas". It looks odd when you see that some Members are identified with titles and some with just a name. I find "Miranda" quite odd. Our practice in British Columbia is to use first initial, period and last name, or Honourable, first initial and last name. So we have kind of dealt with the gender specificity that is there.

Just to give you another side to this, an introduction was made in the BC legislative assembly in April. A relatively new Member of our House introduced a constituent. I will read this to you, and you will find it somewhat odd:

"It is my pleasure to introduce one of my constituents in this House. Adrienne Smith is a tenacious human rights activist and lawyer. They graduated from UBC law school and were called to the bar in British Columbia in 2014. Adrienne Smith lives and works in the Downtown Eastside where they're advocating with passion and tenacity and dedication to reduce the harm which law causes on marginalized communities. Adrienne is in the gallery today in support of transgender rights. Would the House please join me in making them feel welcome."

That is a single individual, and we have the very awkward use, to our ears, of the plural pronouns "their" and "them". The first thing that an editor would say is, "Holy cow! What's this? Do I correct this? Should I correct the grammar here?". We did a bit of research and found ample examples in newspapers that allowed us the confidence to say that that is the preference for transgender individuals, to be referred to in that way. So, although that might, at first, appear to be odd grammatical usage, we were able to reconcile it with the preference of the individual, and that is how it stands in our transcript. You may have already come across these types of issues.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

I will take it one step further. Our House was called back at the end of July, and two items of business were brought before the House. The main reason for the House coming back was to deal with legislation trying to address a serious problem with housing in Vancouver. Housing values in Vancouver have increased by about 25% or 30% over the last year and a half, and it is unaffordable to live in the city. That was not enough to fill an entire week of debates, so they brought forward an amendment to the BC Human Rights Code to add the term "gender identity or expression" as prohibited grounds for discrimination in British Columbia. If you are interested, the full list of prohibited grounds for discrimination in British Columbia is:

"race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age".

Those are now what we refer to as "prohibited grounds".

In the course of the debate on the Bill, which took place on a Monday afternoon, we heard both "transgender" and "transgendered", with an -ed ending, used adjectivally. Some of our editors chose to change "transgender" to "transgendered". There were over 90 references — obviously the Bill was all about the transgender community. I received an email from the Opposition director of communications informing me that the word "transgendered", with an -ed ending, was ungrammatical and incorrect usage and, further, that many members of the transgender community find it hurtful. She asked that all instances of "transgendered" be replaced with "transgender". It was one of those editorial decisions that we were pressed upon to make. I talked it over with our Deputy Clerk, and we decided that we could not make the change across the board because it would be inappropriate. but if Members requested a correction to the transcript, we would take it at face value that their intention was to use the word "transgender". As it turned out, all the Members of the Opposition caucus chose to have the change made. I do not know whether the word ever really got to the Government caucus, but we were told that they were informed about it. I do not know; you may have covered this ground already, but if not, it is something that could be out there on the horizon for you, and you might want to be prepared. I would be careful about sending out the types of letters used to solicit information from Members that say, "Do you want to be identified as Miss, Ms, Mr or Mrs?" — you might be stepping into a hornets' nest.

The next thing I will talk about will be a shorter piece. The Hansard Association of Canada has decided this year to establish a working group to examine and propose a standard set of XML-style tags for parliamentary publications.

Are there any technically interested people here? I do not know whether this group has that level of technical interest. We have a trendy name for the group; it is called "HAC tag". The Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, together with the Canadian House of Commons and the Senate of Canada, have signed on as participants. The hope here is that XML tags will make transcripts of parliamentary documents more machine readable and, if you have structured data in your transcripts, it allows applications to be developed that can extract that data, manipulate and use it in various ways. If we have a common structure across all of Canada, the same application that is used to process documents in British Columbia could be used in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia or wherever. The idea is to make the whole range of parliamentary documents more accessible to people who

want to develop those types of application. The plan is to present the results of the working group at next year's Hansard Association of Canada conference in Ottawa. If you are interested in this sort of thing, that would be a good conference for you to attend, so I would like to put that invitation out there. If you get a chance to travel to the HAC conference next year, that will certainly be one of the issues that will be on our agenda.

The third topic is something that I have been struggling with. At our conference last week, there was a panel discussion on the role of Hansard within legislatures and beyond. On the panel were five guests who, to a certain extent, represented our client base. They were our key clients. On the panel were: Trina Sholden, who is a Hansard indexer at Newfoundland and Labrador, so she is a bit of an insider; Andrea Hyde, the reference librarian at the host Assembly; and James Sheppard, who I think would be best described as a type of critical-issues manager and research analyst, now working as a legislative assistant for the Opposition caucus in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Government changed in the last year and previously he worked with the governing party in the same capacity, so this is someone who is like a caucus researcher, or communications officer, within either the Government or Opposition caucus. Those three people are very traditional types of client, or at least in the last year, people we would consider as very traditional types of client. We also had: James McLeod who is a political reporter for 'The Telegram' which is a St John's daily newspaper; and Alex Marland, Professor of Political Science at Memorial University, who is an authority on electoral politics in Canada and the author of a number of books on the idea of political marketing and branding in the political process. Delegates were asked to formulate a number of questions for the panel. We all put our heads together and came up with standard questions, such as: "How do you use Hansard?"; "How important is it to you?"; and "Where do you see Hansard 10 years from now?"; that type of thing. These are the sorts of things that we want to find out from our clients. Some of the questions were a bit more specific, but I am trying to be as general as I can.

As expected, we received glowing reviews from the reference librarian and the caucus researcher. There was a wonderful outpouring of warmth, friendship and love for the work that we do. Actually, I thought that James Sheppard might pull out his résumé and say "I want to be with you"; but it was not quite like that. Definitely, we were hitting our mark when it comes to those clients who are within that parliamentary process. They also had very nice things to say about the indexing in Newfoundland and Labrador, and they made great use of the index to find the exact information that they were looking for. When it came to James McLeod, the political columnist, and Professor Marland, the comments were more disconcerting. I have been mulling this over for over a week now, and I am not really sure where I stand on it. They both praised the work we do and they both insisted that Hansard was an important public record, but it was pretty clear that they did not have much use for it. In a gentle but firm way, they made it clear that they do not make great use of the

transcript that we prepare. I found that surprising, coming from a newspaper journalist. I know for a fact that journalists in British Columbia use Hansard. They tell me they do; they tell me how much they appreciate not having to take notes in the Chamber. They can go back and read the transcript, and they can use that for the basis of the reporting. Like some of you — Antony, I think that you mentioned this when we were on the lawn the other day — there are times when, as a reporter, you read something in the paper the next day and you know that that was your editorial work that went into the preparation of that article because you see the things that were changed that you know the reporter probably did not change but which you put in there. We know that we are used by the press.

I also know from web stats that our Blues documents are accessed quite regularly. Our Blues are produced in about an hour and half after the session; we actually do them continuously through the day. If the Blues are ever delayed, we get a call asking, "Where are they? How long are they going to be?". We know that they are being used. The other thing that I am aware of is that newspaper journalism is dying. Daily newspapers are being shut down, closed down and bought up. In Canada, there is one what they call national newspaper. Most of the news comes from a central desk in Toronto, and there is a little bit of regional news. In a country the size of Canada, to think that there is not enough regional or local news for a newspaper is pretty sad. There is one major daily in the city of Victoria. There are two dailies in the city of Vancouver. They are suffering and struggling. They are not going to be here forever. They are going to be reporting in a different way. I think that we already know how they are reporting. All of those journalists and newspaper columnists are also tweeting and blogging. In BC's case, the journalists are getting a bit long in the tooth; they are reporters who are probably nearing their retirement. They have been doing the job for a long time, but they are a generation on their way out.

James McLeod is a young edgy journalist. He is maybe in his late 20s, or he could be in his mid-20s. He told us that his editor expects him to be in the house tweeting live, and he has a deadline to get something written and published in the next morning's paper by the end of the night. He attends the Chamber, sits there in the Gallery and tweets live from the Chamber. He is not checking his tweets or column against Hansard for accuracy. He said that he would love, if he had the time or if it was produced fast enough, to be able to check what he was writing against the Official Report transcript, but the news cycle is too quick; it is immediate. He cannot wait for us to finish editing, polishing, printing and publishing. He related a story that was a bit of an embarrassing incident for him: as he was live-tweeting a debate — it was a filibuster-type debate that was going on for a very long time in the House — he made an error in one of his tweets. Later that evening, a Member on the other side referenced that tweet, and the substance of the tweet became part of the debate, so you have the irony of the person who is supposed to be reporting the news, sitting in the Gallery, tweeting and insinuating himself in the debate. It is not a

journalist stepping back and commenting; it is the immediacy of the news cycle that I found really shocking. It was a mistake that he had reported, but it could just as easily have been an insightful comment. You could have someone sitting in the Gallery analysing and tweeting and being drawn into the debate as Members on the Floor reiterate those tweets in the Chamber. How do you produce anything that could possibly meet that person's need in the type of work that we do? I find that absolutely bizarre. News is happening at the speed at which digital media can report it. How can we feed that type of a monster? I have no idea. I cannot imagine how I can possibly produce our transcript any faster than we do if we want it to be well presented, accurate and readable. We could put something up that is very rough a little bit faster — but not much faster. If you want something that is a quality report, it cannot be done in that span of time.

Within seconds someone sitting in a gallery, in some jurisdictions, can embed video in a tweet or can embed video in a blog and if the whole news media is increasingly moving from a print format into an online format, and we see this increasingly in the blogs that all of these journalists are writing, they link to video. There it is — it is out there — video. It is going to push text to the sideline. It worries me and I am concerned about it — but I think we need to face that fact. Video is not going to go away. The printed word is really suffering. People will be following what is going on in our legislative chambers through digital media and we need to be prepared for that.

Things got a little more depressing when Professor Marland spoke and he said he never looks at Hansard. He is a Canadian political science professor who is into political behaviour. It was not really a surprise to me as I did teach political science before I moved on to Hansard. As much as 40 years ago the study of institutional politics, parliamentary institutions — that was so passé. No one did it. No one wanted to do degrees or Phds on how a bill becomes a law. No one does that sort of stuff — it is tragic.

Everyone is doing political economy, or interest group politics or development politics — that sort of stuff. As far as academia is concerned we are just this interesting sideline: but they are not fundamentally interested in what is going on in the house. He said that at the same time as he was saying, "You are a really valuable public record: I respect what you do, it is important what you do — it is just not important to me as an academic".

I am not really sure where I have landed on all of these things. I think in a very stable and secure democracy, like British Columbia or Canada, what goes on in our chambers is relatively mundane. It is not the heart beat of politics. Now that could be

different in a jurisdiction where parliament is serving a more dynamic role — where there is trouble in society or conflict and parliament is resolving those conflicts.

That is not the case in a place like British Columbia where opposition and government MLAs get up and talk to the eight or nine points that have been put in their message box by their researchers and every speech is almost exactly the same. They go through these motions of governing and opposing. It is not exciting debate, it is not dramatic and it is not what people are interested in. People are not going to go home from work after late days and say, "I think I'll just rip open Hansard and have myself a great read". *[Laughter.]* They are not going to do that, there are so many other distractions. What they might do is go online and whoever they are following on twitter, or whose blogs they are reading they might dip into those.

I am painting this picture rather bleakly because maybe I am just feeling overwhelmed by hearing people say, "You are lovely people: but I do not really pay much attention to what you do". We have to be very careful, and if we think we are going to get our satisfaction and value from the fact that the public is going to embrace our reports and carry us on their shoulders through the streets because we are the guardians of democracy — we are going to be disappointed. They are not going to see us in that way.

What is it that we are going to do? There is something different about Hansard than a newspaper article. Members want things on the record. When I search Hansard for Hansard what I tend to come across is members saying, "this is on the Hansard record", "I want this on the record", "I want this on Hansard" or "I am putting this on Hansard". Therefore, our transcript is this place where MLAs and MPs put their thoughts on the record. Where we are different from a newspaper is that our records are enduring. I was really fascinated by what I saw at PRONI the other day, where there is a digital archive that is creating an enduring space for these types of public records. Newspapers archive their things relatively quickly. If you want to find a newspaper article from a year ago, good luck. You could be searching forever. One thing that we do need to do is to make sure that our digital products have excellent accessibility, so, going back to this XML tagging thing, we need to invest in the infrastructure that will allow people to recall those records very easily. Our websites have to be excellent, and we have to put the effort, money, time and resources into building very powerful websites. They are very expensive and can be very scary for administrators. If you have not already been working in XML, it is really difficult to sell a great big expensive search engine that searches by using XML tags when you only have two or three years of data that it can search and there is 30 or 40 or 100 years of data that is inaccessible through it. It is very difficult to get approval for these types of projects, but they really are absolutely critical.

To finish, this could turn into a rant, so I will not go there. I want to finish with something that happened in BC, and I will try to get this done in the next few minutes. It brings together some of the issues about the edited report versus the video. In British Columbia, we pass Ministry Estimates in the House. The House convenes as a Committee of Supply, a specialised Committee of the Committee of the Hall. Ministers are questioned by the Opposition critic. The Estimates debate for a Ministry could go on for a couple of days, with 18, 19 or 20 hours of debate as an Opposition Member has nearly an unlimited amount of time to ask questions of a Minister. One of the most-watched or most-reported debates is typically on the Premier's Estimates. You have the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. It is the opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to question just about anything in the Government's mandate, and the expectation is that the Premier will respond.

This year in British Columbia, after about three and a half hours of debate one afternoon on the Premier's Estimates, the time for adjournment came and the Premier presented a standard motion that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again. The Chair took a voice vote, and that motion passed. While the vote being conducted, there was some sort of disturbance. The Leader of the Opposition was talking to the Clerk of the House, and there was much confusion and milling about around the Table. The Leader of the Opposition was proposing to pass the Estimates that day, which is pretty rare because this is his one opportunity to really hammer away at the Premier. We were all caught off guard and surprised that he would choose to adjourn this debate so early. There was more confusion about how to proceed. The Law Clerk passed the Premier a note, and there was some confusion about what was on that note. There was a little more confusion, and another piece of paper was handed to the Premier, and she made the following motion:

"By agreement with the opposition, I move that the committee rise and report completion of the resolution and ask leave to sit again."

Afterwards, she commented to the Clerk, jokingly, in my opinion:

"Are you sure that was legally done?"

There was some chuckling or sniggering. Sniggering is not eel fishing in British Columbia; it is sort of laughing under your breath. There was sort of nervous laughter around the Table but no answer from the Clerk. The Committee began to go through the motions arising when the Deputy Clerk realised that they needed to pass the resolution itself. The Chair called the Committee back to order, and they passed vote 10, which effectively passed the Ministry Estimates for the Premier's

office. That is the type of procedural confusion about which most of us would find a way to paper over what had gone on and make it look as though that we had gone through the motions fairly correctly. That was our sense. We edited a lot of what we would consider to be sidebar discussions between the opposition leader and the Clerk and between the Premier and the Clerk; that sort of stuff was tidied up. We did not report that the first motion was passed. We had the revised motion and reported that that was passed and them coming back and passing —. They passed the motion to rise and the vote in the wrong order, but we were OK with that; that did not seem too bad.

A couple of days later, the leader of the Green Party, who is an independent Member in British Columbia, raised a point of order. His point was that the committee was not properly constituted when the resolution was passed. The background to that was that there was an agreement that he would get time to question the Premier that afternoon. So, when the opposition agreed to end the Estimates, it was a way of freezing out the independent Member from the estimates process; he was not in Victoria that day, but he had an agreement with the opposition house leader that he would have time the next morning. So, there was a little bit of sticking the knife in the back. What the independent Member, the leader of the Green party, was trying to do was reopen the Estimates so that he would have his time. His point of order was about the difference between what he observed on the webcast or video clip that he was provided with and what was in the transcript. His insinuation was that we had not accurately reported what had been done.

[Delegates watched a video clip.]

With my reporting manager, I had been watching that evening when they went through that procedural issue, and we knew in our minds exactly how we would treat that part of the debate. We had already put that final off. When the point of order was raised, it disturbed me because I realised that there could be a problem. I wrote a fairly lengthy email to the deputy clerk to say why we had reported the proceedings in that way and what we considered to be on the record and off the record — what we considered to be a sidebar discussion and what we considered to be reportable.

That is, I think, a happy place to conclude. The chair of the committee came back and ruled on the point of order and dismissed it. I will highlight two passages from that ruling, which is golden in my mind. Part of the Speaker's ruling read:

"While the video recording captured the informal discussions of Members, pursuant to the longstanding Hansard transcript practice they were clearly not part of the formal proceedings."

To that I just said, "Thank you".

Later it read:

"It is immaterial that the informal discussion among Members to complete the Estimates occurred off the record and were recorded on video as interjections."

I wish that the Clerk had asked me to help her write that, because it is not at all well written, but what it says is that the edited transcript has priority over what you see on the video. It was such a relief to know that our Clerk would support us in that. I say support us, but I am also head of broadcasting and really like what we are doing with video, but it is important to know that the decision that we make as editors will be backed up by our Clerk. I say that, but I think that we have to be careful of the fact that not everything will be backed up. If we made a series of editorial decisions that clearly looked wrong, I think that we would be thrown under the bus. Part of it is to say that we have support to continue to produce an edited transcript and we know that it will be respected as the correct and authoritative statement of what happened in the House, but we should be very careful that the differences between the transcript and the video are not too extreme and that we can defend every editorial choice we made on those types of controversial issues.

That is pretty much where I wanted to end. I could tell you a little bit more about what we are going to do about video and texting in British Columbia, but it might be a bit premature. However, we are starting a project right now to index video, as we have had video since about 2003. We will be finding a way to work with an outside contractor to make that video index searchable, first by Member and business item. Ultimately, however, we believe that we will be able to do text searches, which will put an even greater emphasis on the use of video in our jurisdiction.

What I see Members and the media doing is increasingly going to digital sources. I do not have a conclusion on what the relationship between transcript and video will be, but I take some comfort from the fact that I think that I still have the support of our Administration that the edited transcript will remain the primary source. Thank you for listening.

SESSION ELEVEN: REVIEW AND CLOSE

Simon Burrowes presented a brief review of the symposium, but he started by noting that time had worn on and had defeated the reporting back of the café-style session. He said that delegates could provide him with a written report of their group's deliberations if they wished and that any such reports would be included in the overall symposium report, but he added that the important thing about the session had been the opportunity that it had presented for delegates to step out of their comfort zone, discuss issues with others and hopefully learn from one another. He thanked all the groups and those who had been appointed, or perhaps press ganged, as rapporteurs.

Simon then briefly reviewed the individual sessions that had been held and also made mention of the non-formal learning opportunities that had been provided through tours of Belfast, the Titanic Quarter and Titanic Belfast, and indeed the conference dinner, which had been held the previous evening.

The success or otherwise of the symposium was, said Simon, a matter for those present to judge, and he explained that a feedback form had been prepared to allow delegates the chance to provide their thoughts. That would not only help in the team's review of the symposium, but would hopefully provide ideas for future events. Simon said that the feedback forms could be completed anonymously or on a named basis, and he encouraged delegates to complete the sheet and place it in the election-style ballot box that had been provided. The results are shown on page 121.

Simon extended the thanks of BIPRA to a variety of people and organisations. In no particular order, they were the Northern Ireland Assembly and its staff, for hosting a large part of the symposium in Parliament Buildings; the Public Record Office and its staff, for hosting the Thursday morning sessions; and all the suppliers and staff who provided services to the symposium.

Simon extended his personal thanks, and those of BIPRA, to his staff in Hansard in the Assembly, whether through their direct contribution to the symposium or simply picking up work to allow others to do what needed to be done. In that regard he thanked the symposium organising team and said that, while normally thanks to individuals might be inappropriate, he wanted to record special thanks to Bronagh, Martha, Luke and Rónan. He added that he was sure that delegates would join with him in a special thank you being recorded to Rónan and Luke, who, in addition to doing a huge amount behind the scenes, had made themselves available each and every morning to ensure that delegates got from their hotel to the relevant locations,

oversaw the tour of Belfast and indeed were available to answer queries and provide help at all times.

In concluding, Simon said that, in his opinion, the symposium had been a great success and that the primary reason for that had been the way in which delegates had mixed with one another and worked hard whether together or on their own. The upshot had been four extremely informative and enjoyable days that had well and truly allowed people to learn from each other and hopefully develop professionally and as individuals. As such, he said that his final thanks were to each and every delegate for their efforts.

Finally, Simon announced that the 2017 symposium would be held in the States of Jersey. He then wished all delegates bon voyage before formally drawing the 2016 symposium to a close.

SYMPOSIUM FEEDBACK

The number of feedback forms received was 39, which, out of 41 delegates, represented a response rate of 95%.

Symposium content

Excellent	Good	Average	Not Good	Poor
79%	21%	0%	0%	0%

Comments:

“There was a good mix of content meaning everyone could get something from it. Those involved in the information archiving element of our work will have found the presentation by PRONI very interesting. Others will have had enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the various challenges faced by our offices during the café-style sessions.”

“Great balance between substance and fun!”

“I’m a first timer so found the whole symposium pretty fascinating, in one way or another!”

“Really enjoyed the variety of subjects we dealt with. Thank you for putting so much thought into it.”

“Interesting mix of presentations and tasks, and enjoyable events.”

“Special recognition to Keith and Owain for their presentation on language.”

“Perhaps some more time for discussion of the issues raised in the various presentations would have been useful.”

“An enjoyable selection of useful, informative and amusing presentations.”

“Really enjoyed the presentations. Tours were excellent.”

“All presentations were of a very high standard. Everyone had clearly put a huge amount of work into them.”

“The content was extremely engaging, particularly all the linguistics focused presentations. I would have liked to have had more time to discuss some because they were so interesting.”

“Excellent content, especially all discussion on AV and the status of our written reports.”

“Most of the content was very good indeed. I think that some of the “discussion” sessions, although valuable, could have been a bit shorter, leaving more time for presentations.”

“Gary McKeown’s talk was interesting. I like the use of well chosen external speaker.”

“Very relevant to assessing the relevance of Hansard publication/units today.”

“Many interesting topics raised but could have done with more time to discuss and reflect on the issues in the formal programme rather than at the margins.”

“Good range of topics covered. I would have liked more time for the ‘Year in the Life’ session – I feel this is always the most valuable sessions at BIPRA.”

“Sessions were well planned and fascinating. One of the best symposiums we’ve had.”

“Some excellent presentations, especially on issues that we hadn’t considered as a body before (such as reporting languages other than English) where there is a good deal of expertise within our combined staff.”

“The speaker from Queen’s University was particularly interesting.”

“The symposium content was highly relevant and informative, with a good mix of speakers, café-style discussions and presentations.”

Catering

Excellent	Good	Average	Not Good	Poor
76%	24%	0%	0%	0%

Comments:

“Top notch. The regular provision of coffee/tea was particularly valuable. Coppi was a great choice. It was also incredibly generous, so thank you BIPRA.”

“Superb plus lovely service (as always in NI).”

“I’ve probably put on the famous ‘Stormont Stone’ already.”

“All food was great. Restaurant for meal was awesome.”

“Some cheese scones would be nice.”

“Lovely scones!”

“Nothing but positive.”

“Wonderful food and very generous!”

“There was no shortage of food and drink and we were all well watered and fed. In particular, the dinner in Coppi was excellent.”

“Coppi – excellent! Elsewhere – all fine and dandy.”

“Healthy food. A good opportunity to savour the Irish local diet.”

“Packed lunches an interesting and successful idea!”

“No complaints whatsoever.”

“The catering was great and the picnics were very successful – especially as it was sunny. The cream scones were also greatly appreciated.”

“Enjoyable picnics (great idea), nice buffet and good choice of restaurant.”

“Excellent throughout, especially the picnic in the Stormont grounds!”

Venue(s)

Excellent	Good	Average	Not Good	Poor
97%	3%	0%	0%	0%

Comments:

“PRONI was brilliant, and it was good to mix the venues up a bit, so well done.”

“Liked changes of venue.”

“Stormont, PRONI, Titanic and social venues all superb.”

“Stormont is so impressive and the day in the Titanic quarter was also perfect.”

“Loved seeing Stormont – beautiful building. Hotel was great.”

“Excellent room in Stormont although difficult to hear Rob from the back of the room.”

“Really liked the varied venues and the chance to see the city.”

“It was a good idea to host the symposium in a number of different venues as this gave us an opportunity to see different parts of the city.”

“Stormont is very impressive – particularly in the sun. PRONI also good (with time, a tour would have been good!) for a change of scene – and handy for Titanic Belfast!”

“Very serene and quiet environment and an opportunity to tour the NIA buildings/precincts.”

“Sound system could have been better/better used.”

“Both venues were superb.”

“The choice of venues was well considered. It was great to be able to have a day at Stormont and to have a day elsewhere, in the city itself.”

“It was great to spend time between Stormont and central Belfast.”

“Stormont was very picturesque and the Titanic Quarter very interesting.”

“Fantastic venues throughout. I especially enjoyed the tour of Parliament Buildings and the Titanic Quarter.”

Overall Rating

Excellent	Good	Average	Not Good	Poor
92%	8%	0%	0%	0%

Comments:

“Thanks again.”

“We should include some African countries because they would benefit a lot from this. It was generally wonderful.”

“A great group of people and excellent presentations/discussions.”

“I’ve had an even better trip than expected. The chance to meet and talk with other reporters has been invaluable.”

“Hugely enjoyable, as ever.”

“Best BIPRA I’ve ever been to. Thanks so much to all the NI staff involved. Everyone has been so friendly – really enjoyed this trip to Belfast.”

“Thanks for an outstanding conference. The content and pace were spot on. We were superbly ushered too.”

“The conference was very enjoyable. I appreciated the hospitality extended by all the NI staff.”

“The best conference I’ve been to – thank you.”

“Thank you all so much for a beautifully organised, fun and informative week!”

“Thanks for super hospitality.”

“The symposium was relaxed, interesting and informative. I have recommended attending at BIPRA events to all my colleagues.”

“Thanks very much for the splendid arrangements!”

“Always excellent. The naughty chair is an excellent innovation.”

“Nice balance of thought-provoking sessions and time to network but without days being too long – time to recharge the batteries before evening events was appreciated. Well done and thanks to all involved.”

“A very well organised conference and good opportunity to network as Hansard editors.”

“Everyone did seem to mix very well indeed and the whole thing was a huge success. Hope it isn’t too long before we meet again.”

“We had a fantastic time – it’s the best BIPRA I have attended. Hope to visit Stormont again, great building!”

“It was a brilliant four days – a credit to all involved at Stormont.”

“Thank you and your staff for the superb welcome and seamless organisation, much appreciated. It was my first time to visit Stormont and I really saw it in all its glory. I thoroughly enjoyed the few days, my most memorable BIPRA yet.”

“Thank you for providing for all the delegates needs and for hosting yet another successful BIPRA Symposium!”

“It was a brilliant four days. Please extend to your team my gratitude for everything they did. The quiz took a lot of organising and worked superbly—and I speak as someone who hates quizzes! We were superbly shepherded around, including, I am told, at some ungodly hours of the day. The subjects were thought provoking and served to reinforce my view that many of the problems we face are common to us. The pace of the conference was spot on, too. I loved the trip to PRONI and have since been on its website a couple of times. The staff there were an exemplar of public service. The wee tram and Titanic were great and leavened the thinking time.

I was a BIPRA virgin. Normally one's experiences after the virgin stage are an improvement but Jersey or wherever I next attend will have a hell of a task in improving my experience."

"Thanks very much for making my first BIPRA meeting so enjoyable and memorable. I will definitely encourage more of my colleagues here to consider attending future BIPRA meetings. Thanks again for your hospitality. I hope we get the opportunity to meet again."

"A big thanks to you and your staff for a splendid BIPRA symposium. All the work you had put in was much appreciated, as indeed was your hospitality. It was great to see everyone and I thoroughly enjoyed the programme of talks, discussions and networking events. See you soon, I hope."

"Congratulations to the team in Belfast for organising such a great event. I was very impressed by the warm welcome and by how well organised all the sessions and activities were throughout."

"Extremely well planned and executed programme of talks and events. Hosting was excellent!"

"What a time we all had. Thanks to Simon Burrowes and his team for an excellent symposium."

"A very enjoyable conference and a very warm welcome in Belfast. Diolch yn fawr."