

EASE 30th Anniversary

Interviews with Honorary Life Members



STEPHEN LOCK

Mini bio: After qualifying at Cambridge and Barts Hospital, Stephen Lock became a clinical haematologist for 10 years, entering full-time journalism at the *BMJ* in 1965 and becoming editor in 1975. He served on the EASE Council 1982-99 and as its President 1982-85.

How did you become involved in EASE and what are your earliest memories?

I think I started my connection with ELSE in 1977, but my predecessor at the *BMJ* had been to the initial planning meeting. My earliest memories are of the warmth of its council and general members and of the splendid assemblies and Council meetings. A small hotel next to the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris was a favourite spot for the latter, always with time for trips to the Palace Garnier and the art galleries as well as Henri Oertli's favourite cheap restaurants, followed inevitably by the duty-free party in somebody's room.

But progress was static: the membership wasn't increasing and anyway was mainly British and medical. People weren't so well off in those days, there were no cheap flights, English hadn't become the lingua franca and, crucially, ELSE had few activities outside the assemblies. So in 1977 we started joint *BMJ*/ELSE autumn weekend workshops for editors (scientific and technical, or whatever they are called these days), first at Winchester and, after others, settling on Tunbridge Wells for its accessibility to Gatwick and the South. First of all we attracted non-medics from the UK and then newly joined members from the Nordic countries came, followed by others. It was enormous fun.

Do you have a favorite moment, memory event, conference or entertaining encounter you'd like to share?

My favourite conference must be that at Pau, organised by Henri, with an ideal mix of meetings, events and trips. The views from the town centre are spectacular and one can understand why the Victorian rich went there to mitigate the agonies of their tuberculosis. What a nice place to die.

What was your most difficult/embarrassing or nerve-wracking experience?

My wife and I were in Prague on our way to Hungary for ELSE's 4th General Assembly when we had a phone call from a friend in Bratislava saying that the Czech authorities

had refused her a visa for the conference in Budapest, where she was due to give a presentation. Asking why, she was told that no Russians had been invited to balance the speakers (this was at the height of the Cold War). Despite being told that we had twice sent invitations to Moscow and received no reply, the ukase remained: this was, after all, the country and the city of Kafka. (Needless to say, Communism did nothing to sap the ebullience of the Hungarians.)

An embarrassing possibility was averted when, organising the Cambridge meeting, we followed Henri Oertli's advice and tried out every trip with a stopwatch. The latter wasn't necessary, but at Grime's Graves going down the step ladder I found myself looking up the skirt of the person above me; fortunately this was my wife's, but the episode did enable us to advise all the party that they might prefer trousers.

What was the most glaring typo or editorial "no-no" you ever spotted in an EASE publication?

Editors see typos everywhere, but I have seen "disinterested" (meaning uninterested) in a *European Science Editing* article. But far worse are the declaratory titles, which occur in too many journals. Science is never black or white, or permanent, so why the arrogance of a conclusion that may well be superseded in a few months? And a whole page of book reviews, where every account starts 'This book . . .' shows that some editors either nod, or don't care.

What are the biggest changes in publishing and EASE you have witnessed over the years?

At a macro level, apart from the continuing proliferation of journals (which has gone on legitimately since publishing started), self-evidently the use of the internet, for all aspects of publishing. I suspect very soon subscribers will receive their journals from their computers, or have to pay a lot more for a printed copy.

At a micro level I am delighted that the 'Anglo-Saxon' pattern of writing has prevailed. No two have done more to bring this about with their books than Maeve O'Connor and Hervé Maisonneuve. I shouted with joy reading the latter's *La Redaction Medicale*, where he states 'En redaction scientifique il n'y a pas plus de place pour la modestie que pour les autres sentiments.'

Do you have any advice or lessons learned that you'd like to share with younger members of EASE?

All the elderly say this, but you would think that thirty years ago or more nobody had ever thought about many of the problems discussed today as if they were new – whether peer review, the language of science, duplicate publication, research misconduct and so on. Why is all the 'literature' over 30 years old ignored (and I don't mean my own)?



PAUL FOGELBERG

Mini bio: Born in Helsinki in 1935. MSc 1962, PhD 1970, University of Helsinki. Associate Professor, University of Oulu 1981-82, Professor in Geography, University of Helsinki 1982-98. Vice Rector, University of Helsinki 1982-98. Editor or managing editor of several periodicals in the fields of geography and geosciences. Finnish Association of Science

Editors and Journalists (Suomen tiedetoimittajain liitto), founder and first President, 1985-88, board member 1989-92; European Association of Science Editors (EASE), council member or vice President 1982-91, President 1991-94, past President 1994-97, Lifetime Honorary Member 2003.

How did you become involved with EASE and what are your earliest memories?

During the middle 1970s I became a member of the European Association of Geoscience Editors (EDITERRA) and participated actively in their conferences. Towards the end of the 1970s it was suggested to start a cooperation between EDITERRA and ELSE, the corresponding association for life science editors. Negotiations between the two organisations resulted in a project to amalgamate them, and this was planned to take place at a joint ELSE – EDITERRA conference at Pau, France, in 1982. According to the plans, the President of ELSE would be proposed as the President of the new organisation to be founded, and correspondingly the President of EDITERRA proposed as Vice President. The day before the constitutive meeting, EDITERRA held its last General Assembly, at which I was elected President. At the constitutive meeting, then, the president of ELSE, Stephen Lock was elected President of the new association later to be called EASE, and I was elected Vice President. My presidency of EDITERRA thus lasted only one day, during which I felt myself as a king for one day. My active involvement in EASE then lasted until 1997.

Do you have a favorite moment, memory, event, conference or entertaining encounter you'd like to share?

I have taken part in all EASE triennial conferences with the exception of those in 2006 and 2009. They were all well organised, and most of them were unforgettable in one way or another. One conference I remember particularly well was the one held in Helsinki in 1997. I chaired the local organising committee, in which the Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists (FASEJ) was also represented. The Opening Session of the conference was held in the main hall of the University of Helsinki, where I had a double role: as a musician in the Louhi Wind Orchestra, and as the last speaker of the session. The band played music by Fredrik Pacius (a 19th century Finnish composer of German origin) and by Jean Sibelius. It also performed at the conference banquet playing light music after the dinner during the

coffee and dance music after that. I got the impression that the musical performances were highly appreciated and contributed to the success of the conference.

A sad moment

When the Helsinki conference was over, the local organising committee met the following day to have lunch together and to discuss the outcome. It was a very happy occasion, we were pleased that everything had worked well, and I directed my thanks particularly to the secretary of the group, Päivi Helminen, the secretary of FASEJ. We all strongly appreciated the work she had done. However, there was no happy end. The following morning I got a telephone call from one of her colleagues who told me that Päivi had passed away the preceding evening. She was crossing a street on her way to a concert, when she was hit by a car driven by a drunk driver, which abruptly ended her life.

What are the biggest changes in publishing and EASE you have witnessed over the years?

Probably few generations have experienced such drastic changes in publishing as mine. The changes have been mainly technical, but also sociological. When I started my career as an editor in 1970, there was no Internet, no computers, no mobile telephones, no faxes, and just a few slow and impractical copying machines. Manuscripts were written using traditional typewriters; books and journals were printed in letterpress according to the method developed by Johann Gutenberg in the 15th century, albeit in a much more sophisticated way. Also the relationship between authors and editors was more autocratic than today: many authors had the attitude of a king, expecting the editor to be an obedient servant.

I would summarize some of the changes during the past 40 years as follows:

- The printing process: a transformation from letterpress first to phototypesetting and offset, then to computerised text production followed by either offset or electronic printing.
- The author's role: formerly delivering a typewritten manuscript to be processed by the editor, possibly mailed back for revisions, finally to be typeset by the printers. Now: the author produces a manuscript in digital form, and thus takes over some of the former duties of the printer: typesetting by printers has become obsolete.
- The editor's role: nowadays the editor is an interactive cooperative partner of the author in creating the final version of the manuscript to be printed.
- The consumer's role: the importance of printed paperbound information is declining with more and more information becoming available online.
- The ways of communicating between author and editor: formerly it was ordinary mail, now e-mail is used for sending manuscripts and for the interactive editorial processing of them. No more the sending to and fro of figure and photograph originals. Data sticks or compact discs are also often used, particularly for greater amounts of information.